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## **Reductions for Peace: Realigning U.S. Policy in South Korea**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**T**he United States currently stations over 28,000 troops in South Korea (the ROK) to help guard it against attacks from North Korea (the DPRK). These troops are a legacy of a different time. The ROK has become wealthier and more powerful since 1953 when it came under the protection of the United States. Now, the ROK can surely defend itself from the DPRK without a foreign troop presence, a development that should drive a rethink in U.S. policy.

If the shift of power on the Korean Peninsula makes a rethink of U.S. policy possible, then the risk of war with the DPRK makes such a rethink prudent. The United States can pursue its interests in Korea more wisely by implementing a “reductions-for-peace” approach that gradually reduces U.S. forces in South Korea to zero, with a timeline determined by military considerations and in consultation with Seoul. This approach would be more likely than current U.S. policy toward the DPRK to extract meaningful steps from Pyongyang toward improved relations with the ROK and/or the United States, lowering the risk of war. U.S. troop reductions should be accompanied by dropping the longtime U.S. insistence on full denuclearization of the DPRK and by attempts to reverse attendant United Nations sanctions on the DPRK.

The reductions-for-peace approach is feasible because the ROK does not need U.S. forces or extended deterrence for its safety, making U.S. troop withdrawal consonant with U.S. interests in a safe and secure ROK. It holds a chance for furthering U.S. interests because U.S. forces pose a threat to the DPRK; removing them can induce the DPRK to take meaningful steps toward peace, which would lessen the risk of a war that could harm U.S. interests. The reductions-for-peace approach would mark a stark departure from traditional U.S. policy toward Korea, but such a departure is necessary to better align U.S. foreign policy interests and practice.

# U.S. Interests in Korea Are Too Broadly Defined

## The U.S. Should Focus on Core Interests

In order to properly judge and make recommendations for U.S. policy in South Korea/the Republic of Korea (ROK), U.S. interests must first be defined. What are the United States's foreign policy interests? More specifically, what are U.S. interests in Korea, and how does the U.S.-ROK relationship affect those interests?<sup>1</sup> Finally, how could the U.S.-ROK relationship be modified to best further U.S. interests?

U.S. foreign policy interests must account for any entities or forces that threaten near-term U.S. security or the long-term foundations of U.S. security. U.S. security in the near-term means maintaining U.S. territorial integrity and homeland security. In the long-term, it requires sustaining economic growth, a robust population, and global stability to the extent required by these first two foundations. Given these assumptions, U.S. foreign policy interests in Korea are:

1. Preventing an attack on the U.S. homeland.
2. Preventing catastrophic war that threatens global stability and/or substantially disrupts commerce.<sup>2</sup>
3. Maintaining as much international trade as possible at cost.
4. Preventing the rise of a regional hegemon that threatens to attack the U.S. homeland, trigger catastrophic war, and/or reduce international trade flows.
5. Combatting transnational threats to the U.S. homeland, international stability, and/or international trade, including but not limited to climate change and its effects, biological pathogens, and violent nonstate groups.

Existing U.S. nuclear and conventional capabilities are more than capable of deterring or defeating an attack from the only two East Asian actors with a real chance of going to war with the United States, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and North Korea/the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).<sup>3</sup> However, changes to existing U.S. policy toward Korea can still further interest one, as the size of the

threat from the DPRK can be reduced. The United States and the ROK remain at war with the DPRK, for the Korean War only left off with an armistice.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the DPRK lays claim to the territory of a country that the U.S. has pledged to defend (the ROK), tying together interests one and two.<sup>5</sup> The danger of war between the DPRK and the United States, either through direct confrontation or U.S. support for the ROK in a war with the DPRK, is therefore a real possibility. That there are U.S. troops in the ROK and nuclear weapons in both U.S. and DPRK arsenals ensures any such war would likely be consequential for Washington.<sup>6</sup> Thus, without even turning to military forces in Korea, there is room for risk reduction in U.S. policy toward the DPRK.<sup>7</sup>

Interests two and three – preventing catastrophic war and maintaining international trade – would be damaged by a war between the United States and the PRC, which would threaten global stability and trade given both countries' large landmasses, populations, economies, nuclear arsenals, and militaries.<sup>8</sup> U.S.-PRC relations also factor into interest four, preventing the rise of a power in Asia that threatens U.S. interests. The PRC is currently the world's only contender for a regional hegemon other than the United States, given its massive economic growth and corresponding military buildup.<sup>9</sup> PRC hegemony in East Asia would be a concern if the PRC was likely to take trade-dampening actions in the South China Sea (SCS).<sup>10</sup> If PRC actions in the SCS threatened U.S. vital interests, then the ROK may factor into U.S. responses.<sup>11</sup> The U.S.-ROK alliance's role in U.S. policy toward the PRC is not merely hypothetical.<sup>12</sup> In 2017, the United States deployed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile batteries to protect the ROK from North Korean intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). But because of Korea's proximity to the PRC, Beijing viewed the move as a U.S. attempt to protect the United States from Chinese ICBMs, and boycotted South Korean imports as a result.<sup>13</sup>

The fifth and final interest – combatting transnational threats – demands cooperation. The United States and the PRC are the two largest state emitters of carbon dioxide by far, demanding cooperation between them if climate change reduction is to be substantial.<sup>14</sup> Proposals to roll back the DPRK's nuclear program often cite the risk of cash-strapped Pyongyang selling

nuclear matériel to “undeterrable” non-state actors.<sup>15</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic, which has ravaged the United States and other countries, originated from the PRC, in part because of Beijing’s opaque political system.<sup>16</sup> If the U.S.-ROK alliance can help secure more cooperation with the ROK or the PRC on climate change mitigation, nonproliferation efforts, and/or pandemic prevention than would otherwise be possible, then the alliance would also further U.S. interest number five.

## **The U.S. Should De-emphasize Peripheral Interests**

The foregoing list of vital U.S. foreign interests as applied to Korea excludes several interests frequently claimed to be core U.S. foreign policy interests in East Asia:

1. Maintaining a “liberal, rules-based” international order.
2. Maintaining overseas bases not necessarily needed to guarantee a swift and effective U.S. response to future contingencies (but supposedly helpful for other reasons, such as “preserving credibility”).
3. Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear weapons states.
4. Spreading democracy and liberal governance to nondemocratic and/or illiberal states.

First, to the extent that a liberal international order exists, the United States cannot do much to arrest its decline. For one, the very existence of a liberal international order is often exaggerated. A diffuse (i.e., multipolar) distribution of power pushes states to behave “agnostically” (that is, willing to subordinate liberal governance to security concerns).<sup>17</sup> Multipolarity increasingly defines the international system – a result of power shifts, not state policy.<sup>18</sup> So, a liberal international order is increasingly thin and the United States cannot do much to affect that.<sup>19</sup>

In itself, maintaining overseas U.S. military garrisons like the one in the ROK is not a vital U.S. foreign policy interest, either.<sup>20</sup> Such garrisons may well enable quick response times to future threats yet still be an overall drag on U.S. interests. Considering future contingencies, the U.S. presence in Korea should only be kept if it is a net benefit to U.S. interests.

Nor do nuclear nonproliferation or democracy promotion comprise vital U.S. foreign policy interests in East Asia. Given that nuclear weapons – even in the hands of states like the DPRK – cannot readily be sold to non-state users or used to coerce other states, nuclear proliferation does not threaten U.S. security enough to make nonproliferation a vital interest.<sup>21</sup> And, while there is evidence that democracies do not fight each other as much as nondemocracies fight each other or democracies, the idea of a “democratic peace” does not mean that attempting to *spread* democracy would be worthwhile for the United States.<sup>22</sup> In fact, U.S. attempts to spread liberal democracy have led to disastrous wars that have wasted thousands of lives, trillions of dollars, and substantial political attention and capital.<sup>23</sup> Though one can speculate as to whether a more liberal, democratic world would better serve Washington’s vital foreign policy interests, attempting to force such a world into existence is not worth the cost for the United States.

The United States should therefore approach Korea policy with five security concerns: protecting the homeland, preventing catastrophic war, maintaining international trade at cost, limiting the expansion of any aggressive regional hegemon in Asia, and fighting transnational threats.

## **The U.S. Alliance with South Korea is Unnecessary to Protect South Korea**

How can U.S. policymakers use and, if need be, modify the U.S.-ROK military alliance to best serve U.S. interests? A brief overview of the U.S.-ROK military alliance from its inception to the present followed by an assessment of the alliance now will help provide context for the answer.

### **South Korea Once Needed U.S. Support**

Extensive U.S. involvement in Korea began with the end of World War II. The United States and the Soviet Union, reluctant allies during the war, occupied the southern and northern halves of the Korean Peninsula, respectively, after defeating Japan in August 1945. This ended nearly 1,300 years of unity on the peninsula, leading in 1948 to the declarations of a communist DPRK north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel (led by Kim Il-sung) and a non-communist ROK south of the

38<sup>th</sup> parallel (led by Syngman Rhee), both claiming all of Korea.<sup>24</sup> U.S. troops left the ROK in 1949. Though Washington did not want the South to fall to the communist North, it also did not want to get dragged into a war by the South, which was engaged in border skirmishes with the North throughout 1949.<sup>25</sup> In June 1950, the two Koreas went to war and the North nearly conquered the South. The United States intervened to save the ROK. A stalemate ensued; major fighting ended in 1953 with an armistice drawing up a demilitarized zone (DMZ) along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>26</sup> In October 1953, the United States signed a mutual defense agreement with the ROK guaranteeing U.S. protection of the ROK and allowing Washington to station military forces in the ROK.<sup>27</sup>

By this time, both Koreas were still very much third world countries.<sup>28</sup> This gave the United States leverage in the U.S.-ROK relationship and helped push the ROK to be a close, if not always loyal, U.S. ally during the Cold War.<sup>29</sup> Of course, Korea was used to playing the middle or small power role. After all, it is neighbors with China and Japan.<sup>30</sup> But the U.S.-ROK alliance was novel in at least one way. Washington stayed in the ROK because it could provide South Koreans something they had not traditionally desired: protection from other Koreans.<sup>31</sup>

## South Korea Can Now Deter North Korea Itself

Several factors crucial to the formation of the U.S.-ROK alliance no longer obtain. First, the balance of power in the ROK-DPRK civil war has flipped. Whereas the DPRK nearly overtook the ROK in 1950, the ROK now has a large economic and technological lead on the North. The DPRK is poor and pinned down by an autarkic command economy, kleptocratic statism, and its *juche* ideology of national self-reliance. Meanwhile, after embracing rule of law, trade, and capitalism, the ROK has become one of the world's wealthiest and most advanced states – by some measures, its gross domestic product is 50 times that of the DPRK's.<sup>32</sup>

This reversal of fortunes means that the ROK would have the ability to deter a North Korean attack without *any* outside help if it was given enough time to translate its latent power (wealth) into military capa-

bilities.<sup>33</sup> This is despite the DPRK's nuclear capability – were the ROK to lose its current protection under the U.S. nuclear “umbrella” and judge the benefits of a domestic nuclear capability to outweigh the costs, it could have a deliverable nuclear weapon in a year or two, owing to its advanced civilian nuclear power and rocket technology.<sup>34</sup> (Alternatively, it could field an advanced conventional force without nuclear weapons.) Similarly, the DPRK's massive military spending as a proportion of GDP and military manpower as a proportion of general population would not prevent the ROK from gaining a military advantage. Decades of robust economic and population growth in the ROK enable it to field a qualitatively superior military at acceptable financial costs and conscription rates compared to the DPRK.<sup>35</sup> For the last year for which there is available data, the ROK's defense budget was tenfold the DPRK's.<sup>36</sup>

Second, the U.S. strategic position has changed substantially since the U.S.-ROK alliance began in 1953. The ebb of the “communist threat” in Asia after the death of Stalin, the death of Mao, U.S.-Soviet détente in the 1970s, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 gradually eroded the containment rationale for U.S. protection of the ROK.<sup>37</sup> With the subsequent easing of the U.S. position in East Asia by the 1980s – and especially given the ROK's growing ability to defend itself against the DPRK – the main U.S. rationale for a military presence in the ROK diminished.

Growing political pressure in the ROK to wrangle Operational Control Authority (OPCON) from U.S. forces to ROK forces in the event of conflict in Korea illustrates an increased recognition of this phenomenon – even Seoul realizes it can afford to exclude Washington from existential security questions.<sup>38</sup> None of this should come as much of a surprise. At the end of the Korean War, the ROK's security position was particularly bad and Washington's interest in a robust presence south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was particularly strong. This conduced to a strong U.S.-ROK military alliance. But both the ROK's insecurity and Washington's desire to contain its adversaries from the Korean Peninsula have waned substantially since 1953.<sup>39</sup> The upshot: Washington's second interest in Korea – preventing catastrophic war – no longer requires a U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula. Taken along with the possible gains of troop withdrawal, this makes prudent a U.S. reduction in



forces in the ROK.

## ***Si Vis Pacem: U.S. Military's Contribution to Peace***

At the ROK's current levels of military power and force readiness, how necessary are U.S. forces for defending it? First, the U.S. military presence will be judged against the main threat it is meant to deter: a North Korean invasion of the ROK. A short overview of the current U.S. military presence, prefaced by a brief historical context, will follow. Lastly, DPRK military capabilities and the prospect of the ROK defending itself – including the feasibility, cost, and timeline of the ROK replicating the capabilities currently provided by the U.S. military presence – will be examined. The conclusion: The ROK could compensate for losses in military capabilities with its own force procurement and development if U.S. troops left gradually, meaning U.S. troop withdrawal would not hurt the U.S. interest of preventing war in Korea.

### **Threats Addressed by U.S. Forces in Korea**

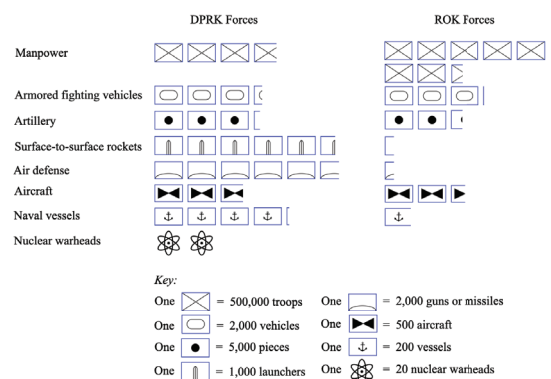
Since 1957, U.S. combat forces in the ROK have been organized as U.S. Forces Korea (USFK). In 1978, responsibility for South Korean security was partially shifted to the ROK in the form of the joint ROK/U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC).<sup>40</sup> USFK and CFC exist to deter against an invasion of the ROK by the DPRK or repel such an invasion should deterrence fail.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the DPRK's military capabilities are essential to understanding the main purpose of USFK.

The inter-Korean military balance is skewed in favor of the DPRK in terms of quantity but in favor of the ROK in terms of quality. According to 2021 estimates by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a London-based think tank, and the ROK Ministry of National Defense, the Korean People's Army (KPA) – the DPRK's military – has 1.28 million active-duty troops and 600,000 reserve troops.<sup>42</sup> This gives the KPA around twice as many active-duty troops as the ROK, which has around 599,000 active-duty troops and 3.1 million reserve troops. The KPA also has more tanks, surface-to-surface fires, and ships than the South.<sup>43</sup>

But, across land, sea, and air domains, ROK forces are far more technologically advanced than their

North Korean counterparts. The ROK has more intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft than the DPRK – capabilities crucial for surveying the DMZ to anticipate and defeat any KPA military incursions.<sup>44</sup> Owing to dynamic domestic technology and industrial sectors and extensive arms sales from the United States, the ROK also has more advanced tanks, airplanes, and missile defense systems than the DPRK.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, ROK forces have been assessed as better trained than their DPRK counterparts.<sup>46</sup> Now, according to *Jane's World Armies*, the ROK Armed Forces “is capable of defending against a North Korean conventional attack without substantial US ground forces on the DMZ.”<sup>47</sup>

**Fig. 1: Order of Battle on Korean Peninsula<sup>48</sup>**



This means two things for a possible DPRK invasion of the ROK. First, the technologically inferior DPRK would be expected to adopt a blitzkrieg strategy to try and neutralize ROK and U.S. forces in the ROK before U.S. (and, possibly, U.S.-allied) reinforcements could arrive.<sup>49</sup> Second, because its strategy emphasizes speed, the DPRK may consider using its chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons in an attack.<sup>50</sup> U.S. military commanders have assumed that the DPRK would use these weapons in an invasion.<sup>51</sup>

Recent analyses estimate a DPRK invasion would look like the following. The DPRK would fire around 6,000 of its long-range artillery and rocket systems at Seoul and military targets around it.<sup>52</sup> The KPA would also launch cruise and ballistic missiles at ROK and U.S. airbases in order to deny air superiority to U.S.-ROK forces – a key advantage they have over the North. KPA special operations forces would likely try to infiltrate ROK Armed Forces positions behind the front lines via tunnels and aircraft.<sup>53</sup> The KPA Ground Forces would push south to take the peninsula as quickly as possible – starting with Seoul, located just

55 km south of the DMZ.<sup>54</sup>

## Ready to “Fight Tonight”: Current U.S. Forces in Korea

In this contingency, what capabilities would USFK provide in defense of the ROK? In times of peace, USFK is meant to help deter a North Korea invasion.<sup>55</sup> Should deterrence fail and the DPRK invade the ROK, U.S.-ROK forces would need to repel the KPA ground advance, which also entails minimizing damage to U.S. and ROK military forces, infrastructure, and civilians.

Supporting the first mission of repelling a North Korean advance, U.S. air and ground forces would help ROK forces hold the line against KPA troops by preventing further advances and disrupting North Korean supply lines as they stretched further south, buying time. And, since buying time allows reinforcements to enter the fight on the side of U.S.-ROK forces, holding firm and delaying the KPA’s advance are to the advantage of U.S.-ROK forces.<sup>56</sup>

There is also the second mission of minimizing the damage to the ROK of a North Korean attack. U.S. air, artillery, and missile defense forces could substantially blunt the impact of North Korean long-range fires and ground attack aircraft. U.S. ground attack aircraft, artillery, and surface-to-surface missiles could neutralize North Korean artillery, ballistic missile launchers, cruise missile launchers, and possibly airfields – either once an attack began or to preempt an attack if U.S. commanders were certain an invasion was imminent.<sup>57</sup>

Later in a conflict, U.S. Navy vessels could provide offshore support for this mission using cruise missiles. Overhead, U.S. fighter aircraft could neutralize inferior North Korean fighter and ground attack aircraft to limit the damage these forces could do to U.S.-ROK military sites.<sup>58</sup> Lastly, U.S. missile defense batteries could be deployed to try and intercept at least some of the KN-02 and KN-24 conventional-tipped short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) that the KPA would likely launch at Seoul and other military targets.<sup>59</sup>

In sum, USFK would provide substantial support for the U.S.-ROK missions of halting KPA forces and limiting damage in the event of a DPRK invasion of

the ROK. The rapid reaction time required by these missions is captured in USFK’s motto: “ready to Fight Tonight and win.”<sup>60</sup> Note that homeland security is not an essential part of USFK’s mission; U.S. conventional forces elsewhere and nuclear forces are sufficient for deterring and/or defeating attacks on the United States.

**Fig. 2: U.S. Forces Korea\*.<sup>61</sup>**

Force Element	Headquarters	Manpower (est.)	Notable Equipment
Eighth U.S. Army	Camp Humphreys, ROK	20,000 soldiers	• MBTs • IFVs • Attack helicopters • Transport helicopters • MRLs • SAMs • Missile interceptors
Seventh Air Force	Osan Air Base, ROK	8,000 airmen	• Fighter/bomber aircraft • Ground attack aircraft • ISR aircraft
Commander U.S. Naval Forces Korea (CNFK)	Yongsan Garrison, ROK	300 sailors	
Marine Forces Korea (MARFORK)	Yongsan Garrison, ROK	100 Marines	
Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR)	Camp Kim, Yongsan, ROK	100 operators	

\**MBT* = main battle tank; *IFV* = infantry fighting vehicle; *MRL* = multiple rocket launcher; *SAM* = surface-to-air missile

## South Korea Can Replicate USFK Capabilities

The main capabilities that the ROK would have to replicate should the United States reduce and/or withdraw its forces from the ROK are long-range precision strike and ISR.<sup>62</sup> The ROK Armed Forces have already deployed advanced long-range precision strike capabilities in the form of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters and ballistic and cruise missiles in line with the Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation (KMPR) strategy, which aims to destroy DPRK artillery and ballistic missiles and wipe out North Korean leadership if the DPRK launches a first strike on the ROK.<sup>63</sup> These assets are also part of “Kill Chain,” a system for preemptively degrading DPRK nuclear and missile capabilities should the ROK detect an impending attack. Along with Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD), a strategy for defending against multiple incoming DPRK missiles, KMPR and Kill Chain have been part of ROK military strategy since

2016 (though in 2018 KMPR and Kill Chain were redesignated as the “Strategic Strike System”).<sup>64</sup> To be sure, the ROK may feel more vulnerable to a devastating first strike by the KPA on its long-range precision strike assets if U.S. forces draw down or leave. After all, USFK can call on carrier strike groups for offshore long-range assets that are largely invulnerable to the KPA, which does not have precision anti-ship missiles.<sup>65</sup> However, the ROK Armed Forces have already started to fill this gap by purchasing new missile defense systems in line with KAMD and by developing a light aircraft carrier and nuclear-powered submarines – platforms that can give Seoul offshore, and thus more secure, aerial and missile capabilities.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, the ROK has steadily been improving its ISR capabilities to match existing U.S. assets – in December 2019, the ROK began receiving RQ-4 Global Hawk drones bought from Northrop Grumman, giving it the ability to surveil large swaths of territory and thus keep an eye on DPRK troops.<sup>67</sup> Seoul is also investing hundreds of millions of dollars in space research in order to develop satellite-based assets.<sup>68</sup> If U.S. troop withdrawal was stretched out over a few years, ROK forces would likely be able to meet the long-range precision strike and ISR demands of Kill Chain and KMPR with indigenous capabilities. This time would also allow the ROK to realize its five-year defense reforms for 2021-2025, make adjustments to compensate for the loss of U.S.-ROK military exercises, and complete transfer of wartime OPCON from U.S. to ROK forces.<sup>69</sup>

Although a recent report on the ROK’s military readiness also identifies shortcomings in modernization efforts and reserve unit training, these weak spots are not independent of the U.S. force presence. Far from it, if U.S. troops left, a self-interested Seoul could surely find the political support needed to meet more ambitious budget and training targets.<sup>70</sup>

Of course, if U.S. forces leave, the ROK may also feel it should build its own nuclear weapons – even if the United States does not withdraw its formal defense obligation to the ROK, Seoul may see a U.S. defense promise without forward-deployed U.S. forces as incredible.<sup>71</sup> (Alternatively, the ROK may decide to not nuclearize and remain nuclear-latent, given its increasingly advanced non-nuclear military.<sup>72</sup>) But this

should not be a cause for concern. If the ROK decides to build its own nuclear weapons, the United States can unambiguously maintain its nuclear umbrella over the ROK until Seoul has the secure second-strike capability (SSC) needed to lower the risk of a North Korean strike on ROK nuclear weapons facilities.<sup>73</sup> Whether the ROK chooses to forego or pursue nuclear weapons, deterrence can be maintained on the Korean Peninsula without U.S. presence.

The foregoing assessment illustrates how preventing inter-Korean war, and thus the first two U.S. interests in Korea, do not demand a U.S. force presence. Now, the U.S. military presence’s effect on other U.S. interests in Korea will be assessed. The financial cost of the alliance will be disregarded here. To be sure, the alliance costs U.S. taxpayers a substantial amount (\$13.4 billion from 2016 to 2019) in absolute terms. But in relative terms, this sum is not much for Washington.<sup>74</sup> Ultimately, given that improved relations between the DPRK and the ROK and/or the United States are in U.S. interests and that the U.S. military presence can be reduced to secure this, reducing troops is in U.S. interests regardless of financial savings. This next section will lay out why and how U.S. forces in Korea can be leveraged for peace.

## **Reductions for Peace: Suggestions for U.S. Policy in Korea**

The United States should withdraw forces incrementally from the ROK, eventually to zero troops, while maintaining the continued U.S.-ROK mutual defense promise. The United States would trade away its forces in the ROK in exchange for the DPRK taking steps toward a more peaceful ROK-DPRK relationship – a “reductions-for-peace” approach. This policy allows for continued ROK security while furthering U.S. interests at minimal cost.

The next section will establish that U.S. troop withdrawal would not hurt U.S. interests three through five in Korea. Having already established that the first two U.S. interests, protecting the United States and preventing war, would not be hurt by a U.S. troop withdrawal, the strategies of past ROK leaders will be reviewed to show why and how U.S. troop reductions can further U.S. interests.



## Withdrawal Would Not Hurt Other Policy Priorities

By pushing the DPRK to engage in serious diplomacy with the ROK and eventually the United States, a reductions-for-peace approach would decrease the risk of war involving the DPRK and thereby further U.S. interests.<sup>75</sup> Besides this, how would the reductions-for-peace approach serve other U.S. security priorities? There is no reason to believe the reductions-for-peace approach would harm U.S. priorities three and four: maintaining international trade and containing the PRC peacefully if need be.<sup>76</sup> The reductions-for-peace approach certainly would not compromise U.S. security needs regarding the PRC or trade because the PRC does not pose an immediate threat to the territorial integrity of other states (save small border disputes) or international waterways.<sup>77</sup> Should the PRC pose a threat to U.S. interests that could be addressed by U.S. forces like those in Korea, more extensive U.S. forces in nearby Japan or a re-stationing of U.S. forces in the ROK – perhaps aided by prepositioned stocks left behind – could answer the call.<sup>78</sup>

Though other analyses of U.S. policy in Korea have instead suggested that USFK may be crucial to U.S. policy toward the PRC, this is not borne out by the evidence.<sup>79</sup> Regarding U.S. hopes that the ROK could base U.S. kinetic assets, Beijing's sanctioning of the ROK over its THAAD deployment ensures Seoul will not be keen to join any anti-PRC missile network anytime soon. Nor does the ROK provide any added benefit for Washington in terms of non-kinetic assets. Though the AN/TPY-2 radar accompanying the THAAD batteries in the ROK offers a way for Washington to identify decoy warheads on Chinese ICBMs that Japan-based U.S. radar does not – which is likely why Beijing protested U.S. deployment of THAAD in the ROK in the first place – it appears the PRC countered this potential threat to its secure SSC by deploying multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles on its ICBMs.<sup>80</sup> What added utility is provided by U.S. assets in the ROK specifically can be overcome easily by the PRC.

Additionally, the unique nature of U.S. interests in

Korea due to its relationship with the DPRK suggests that other, perhaps more necessary alliances (such as the U.S.-Japan one) would not fall apart for lack of U.S. credibility following a U.S. troop withdrawal from the ROK.<sup>81</sup> Keeping U.S. military forces in Korea is not necessary for furthering U.S. interests three or four.

Furthermore, the reductions-for-peace approach is compatible with the last U.S. priority in Korea because it does not hamper Washington's ability to work with the ROK on transnational issues.<sup>82</sup> On such issues – climate change, pandemic containment and response, and violent non-state groups – allies are critical. But there is no reason that the ROK would be less cooperative with the United States if U.S. troops were withdrawn.

## Evidence from Past Engagement: Alliance Effects on Peace

U.S. troop withdrawal is clearly acceptable for interests three through five. Once again, on interest two (which is tied up with interest one by the U.S.-ROK defense treaty) a U.S. troop withdrawal is acceptable, since it need not existentially threaten the ROK. Moreover, a U.S. troop withdrawal is likely to *further* U.S. interests one and two in Korea by making war less likely. As history indicates, a withdrawal of U.S. troops in the ROK is likelier to advance peace than a continued U.S. presence in the South.

This pattern has held across all seven ROK administrations since the end of the Cold War – even as Seoul's privileged position over the DPRK has enabled it to chart a more independent foreign policy. To be sure, South Korean domestic politics matter: Progressives and conservatives in the ROK differ on their views of governance, Japan, and how to best engage the DPRK. But the U.S.-ROK alliance's downer effect on inter-Korean diplomacy is consistent. Consider Seoul's move in the late 1980s to normalize relations with North Korea's great-power backers, the Soviet Union and the PRC – a policy known as the “Northern policy,” or *nordpolitik*. Nordpolitik was enabled by Washington's growing more relaxed toward Asia as the Cold War wound down, but it also owes much to decisions by the ROK's liberalization after its first democratic elections.<sup>83</sup>



Though the ROK's first democratically elected president, Roh Tae-woo, and his successor, Kim Young-sam, oriented the ROK's foreign policy around *nordpolitik*, Kim's entire term was overshadowed by the nuclear issue: after it was found to be enriching plutonium for possible use in nuclear bombs in violation of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), the DPRK threatened to withdraw from the treaty. The United States, which was intensely focused on nonproliferation, then directly entered talks with the DPRK without going through the ROK.<sup>84</sup> In Washington, Cold War-era rhetoric of mobilizing for war and nuclear threats displaced the previously relaxed approach to East Asia, dampening Kim's efforts at dialogue just as ROK-DPRK talks had been bolstered by the 1991 removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from the ROK.<sup>85</sup>

The U.S.-ROK alliance's diminishing effect on peace continued under the administrations of progressives Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) and Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008) and those of their more U.S.-aligned successors, conservatives Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) and Park Geun-hye (2013-2017). Kim's "Sunshine Policy" of diplomatic and economic engagement with the DPRK aimed for cooperation despite Pyongyang's political and human rights issues. It was embodied in the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC), a facility just north of the DMZ employing both South and North Koreans. Though Washington pushed to pressure Pyongyang on its nuclear progress even more under Roh, he still continued the KIC. Under Roh, U.S. troops levels decreased substantially for the first time since 1992.<sup>86</sup>

Meanwhile, Lee and Park hewed rigidly to the U.S. insistence that the DPRK stop testing and developing the nuclear weapons it reasonably believed necessary for its survival. This approach did not bode well for peace: In 2010, the DPRK shelled Yeonpyeong Island in the largest open DPRK-ROK exchange of fire since the 1953 armistice, substantially cooling inter-Korean relations. Unsurprisingly, the attack was preceded by a large U.S.-ROK combined arms military exercise and a South Korean statement that Seoul may request a restationing of U.S. nuclear weapons in the ROK.<sup>87</sup> Under Park, the KIC was scuttled and North Korean nuclear tests were met with only more provocative

U.S.-ROK military exercises, driving a cycle of mistrust and animosity.<sup>88</sup>

Clearly, a strong U.S.-ROK alliance has enabled some ROK governments to take a tough approach to the DPRK, despite the alliance between the ROK and the United States being inherently threatening toward Pyongyang. The administration of President Moon Jae-in is the exception that proves the rule: working with U.S. President Donald Trump's unconventional approach to alliances and a Pyongyang negotiating from a position of strength after testing nuclear weapons systems, Moon was able to secure DPRK participation in the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, ROK (under a unified flag with the ROK at the opening ceremony), followed by suspended U.S.-ROK military exercises and summits between North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un and both Moon and Trump.<sup>89</sup>

Perhaps normalized North-South relations, or even just an end to the North-South arms race, is all that can be achieved in the near term. But whatever is most achievable will come by prioritizing durable peace over immediate security – a dynamic difficult to find in the U.S.-ROK alliance. This is because the ability of the United States and the ROK to invade the DPRK, embodied in U.S.-ROK military exercises, remains viable for Washington even if it drops all denuclearization rhetoric but retains U.S. forces in Korea. Therefore, a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops – not just an abandonment of the denuclearization approach to the DPRK – is required to extract possible peace dividends from the DPRK.



Republic of Korea (Dec. 6, 2016) Rear Adm. Brad Cooper, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea (CNFK) tours YP-do base during a visit to Yeonpyeong Defense Command. CNFK is the U.S. Navy's representative in the ROK, providing leadership and expertise in naval matters to improve institutional and operational effectiveness between the two navies and

## What Could Peace Look Like?

What would a reductions-for-peace approach look like? Peace could unfold in a number of ways, not least because the ROK (especially under a government more committed to the U.S.-ROK alliance) and possibly Japan could try and push back against troop withdrawal. On top of this, it is difficult to predict the DPRK's reactions with accuracy. However, these are considerable but not insurmountable obstacles, as ultimate authority for withdrawing U.S. troops still lies in Washington.<sup>90</sup> Considering past engagement with the DPRK and the logic of confidence-building measures (CBMs), a peace could look like the following: the United States withdraws troops from the ROK while allowing for Seoul to fully meet its own defense needs, drops the denuclearization demand, and works to repeal attendant United Nations (UN) sanctions. In exchange, the United States pushes the ROK and the DPRK to implement military-to-military exchanges, arms limitations and reductions, and talks on peace and normalization (all the while engaging in U.S.-DPRK peace talks, as well).

An end goal of full U.S. troop withdrawal could be stated openly or kept secret, but in effect it should not matter too much, given that the DPRK would likely try to wait out an incremental withdrawal made conditional on DPRK actions. (It is not clear if Pyongyang would find any number of U.S. troops acceptable.<sup>91</sup>) With or without active U.S. encouragement, any government in Seoul confident in the ROK's indigenous security capabilities would be driven and comfortable enough to take advantage of the new security environment and begin engaging with the DPRK. Washington could then help guide CBMs between the Koreans and move to arms control and CBMs between itself and the DPRK.

## Out with the Old: Drop Denuclearization and Sanctions

To get the DPRK to the table, the reductions-for-peace approach would have to be paired with two adjustments to current U.S. policy. The United States would first have to drop its demand of North Korean denuclearization. While Washington

would not have to officially recognize the DPRK's nuclear program, it would no longer attempt to reverse it. This seems necessary to advancing DPRK-ROK and/or DPRK-U.S. peace given the last major peace development, the April 2018 Panmunjom Declaration between Kim Jong-un and Moon. It read that "South and North Korea confirmed the common goal of realizing, through complete denuclearization, a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula," affirming that Pyongyang views nuclear weapons to be essential to its defense so long as the nuclear-armed United States has forces in Korea.<sup>92</sup>

Crucially, U.S. forces would be withdrawn at a pace allowing the ROK to build up the aforementioned capabilities needed to confidently deter the DPRK and, should deterrence fail, repel a DPRK invasion. This way, force reductions would not create any windows of opportunity that may tempt a DPRK attack.<sup>93</sup> Note that a withdrawal need not entail an end to the U.S.-ROK mutual defense promise. However, maintaining the treaty is not essential to reductions-for-peace, as the ROK can defend itself without U.S. extended deterrence. Moreover, if troop withdrawals succeeded in reducing ROK-DPRK tensions, then war could become unlikely enough to render U.S. forward-deployed forces unnecessary for making credible the U.S.-ROK mutual defense promise.<sup>94</sup> The withdrawal would still substantially reduce North Korean threat perceptions from the United States because USFK, and the exercises it conducts with the ROK, drive the DPRK's insecurity. Without a forward presence, the mutual *defense* commitment can become far more defensive in the DPRK's eyes.<sup>95</sup> All things equal, however, it would be politically easier for a U.S. president to build support for and execute force reductions without ending the alliance.

Of course, the longstanding U.S. policy of denuclearization is not comprised of only USFK and rhetoric. There are also the UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions in place on the DPRK since it detonated its first nuclear bomb in 2006.<sup>96</sup> Working to reverse sanctions would be in order for Washington, as it would further entice Pyongyang to take steps toward peace.<sup>97</sup> Dropping the denuclearization demand would remove the reason for sanctions and thus justify their reversal.

Dropping the denuclearization demand and corresponding international sanctions is crucial to a re-

ductions-for-peace approach. This would remove the central justification for Washington's continued state of war with Pyongyang; paired with U.S. troop withdrawals, this could actually convince North Korea that its largest security threat is subsiding. The nuclear nonproliferation regime, to the extent it serves U.S. interests, is not nearly as relevant here as is the DPRK's severe military disadvantage against two powerful allies with which it remains at war. No state facing such an uncertain security environment has ever given up its nuclear weapons. Policies based on the premise that the DPRK will be the first to abandon its nuclear weapons should be abandoned.

## **U.S. Reductions Would Further Peace**

The reductions-for-peace approach would be feasible because the DPRK finds U.S. forces on the peninsula threatening – USFK, not to mention the rest of the U.S. military that it would drag into a war, give the ROK the means to plausibly defeat and possibly invade the DPRK.<sup>98</sup> Paired with U.S. rhetoric favoring (or at least contemplating) regime change in the DPRK and U.S. regime change actions in nuclear-aspirant Iraq and Libya over the past two decades, the DPRK reasonably views USFK as a real threat and demands it leave.<sup>99</sup> This means USFK can be used as leverage to try and drive Pyongyang to improve relations with Seoul and/or Washington.<sup>100</sup> The signaling runs both ways: Seoul would also take seriously the idea that it must provide for its own security once U.S. protection leaves.<sup>101</sup>

There is the possibility that Pyongyang ignores U.S. troop withdrawals and waits until all troops are gone to sit down with Seoul or Washington. This is not a problem because all parties will still be incentivized to talk even after all U.S. troops leave – the ROK and the United States because engaging in extraneous arms races with the DPRK is risky and needlessly expensive, and the DPRK because “locking in” a now-improved security environment would be in its interests. U.S. troop reductions are needed for peace and would prove durable against hardball diplomacy.

## **Withdrawals Force Engagement and Increase Cooperation**

Troop withdrawals could push the Koreans closer to

peace in a number of ways. Because the U.S., the ROK, and the DPRK have no existing limits on their military forces with respect to the Korean Peninsula, CBMs directly related to military forces can be implemented with real effect.<sup>102</sup> The ROK and the DPRK could work out limits on the types of weapons each side can field (likely chemical weapons and short-range missiles for the DPRK and air and ground forces for ROK forces), concentrations of forces, and the number of patrols allowed in disputed waters west of the Korean Peninsula, reducing the risk of dialogue-imperiling confrontation.<sup>103</sup>

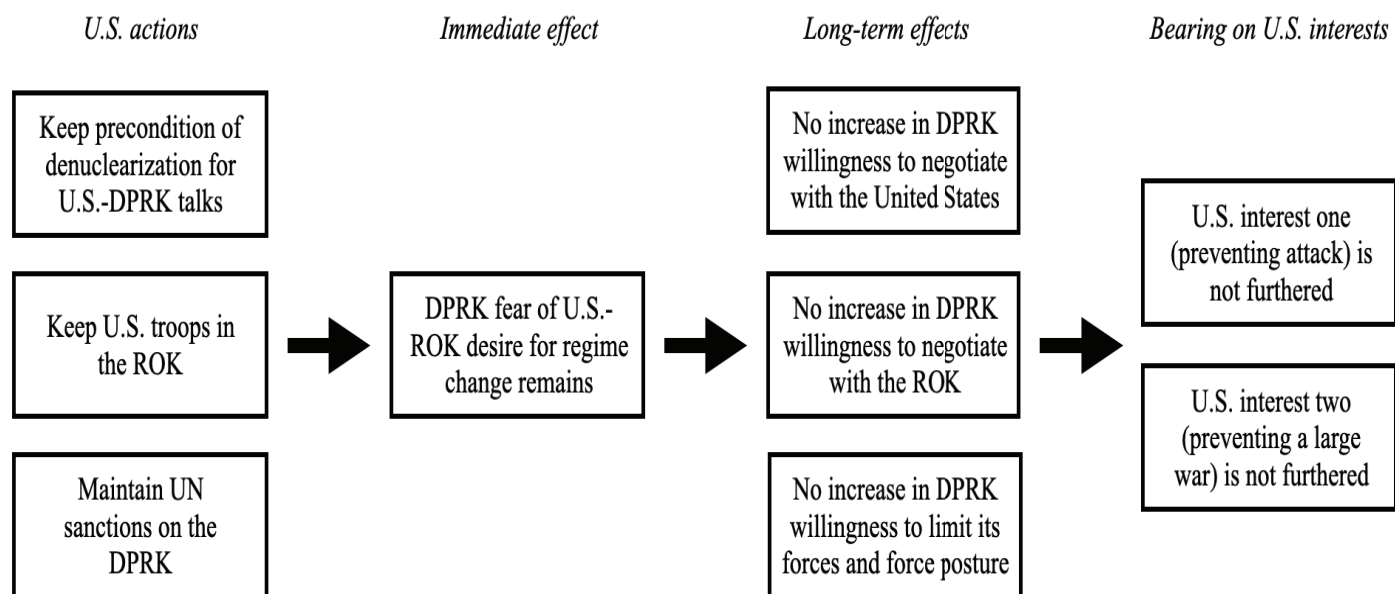
Cooperation is not just limited to arms control. Drawing off of negotiations from the Cold War, each side could station military observers near the other's military forces to lower the risk of surprise attack.<sup>104</sup> The ROK and the DPRK could also negotiate exchanges of officers and military academy professors to pave the way for more serious CBMs to improve transparency and lower the risk of war, such as regularized exchange of information on military expenditures and the locations of land mines and other military forces. CBMs could entail talks over the disputed waters in the Western/Yellow Sea, negotiation of a bilateral photographic collection system akin to the Open Skies Treaty, and building a new liaison office, too.<sup>105</sup>

Outside of ROK-DPRK security discussions, the United States could engage with the DPRK directly – perhaps starting with talks over the return of Korean War veterans' remains – to improve relations and trust. Eventually, the goal would be a U.S.-DPRK peace treaty.<sup>106</sup> If Washington could secure this, it would reduce the risk of U.S.-DPRK confrontation and thus further U.S. interests one and two in Korea.

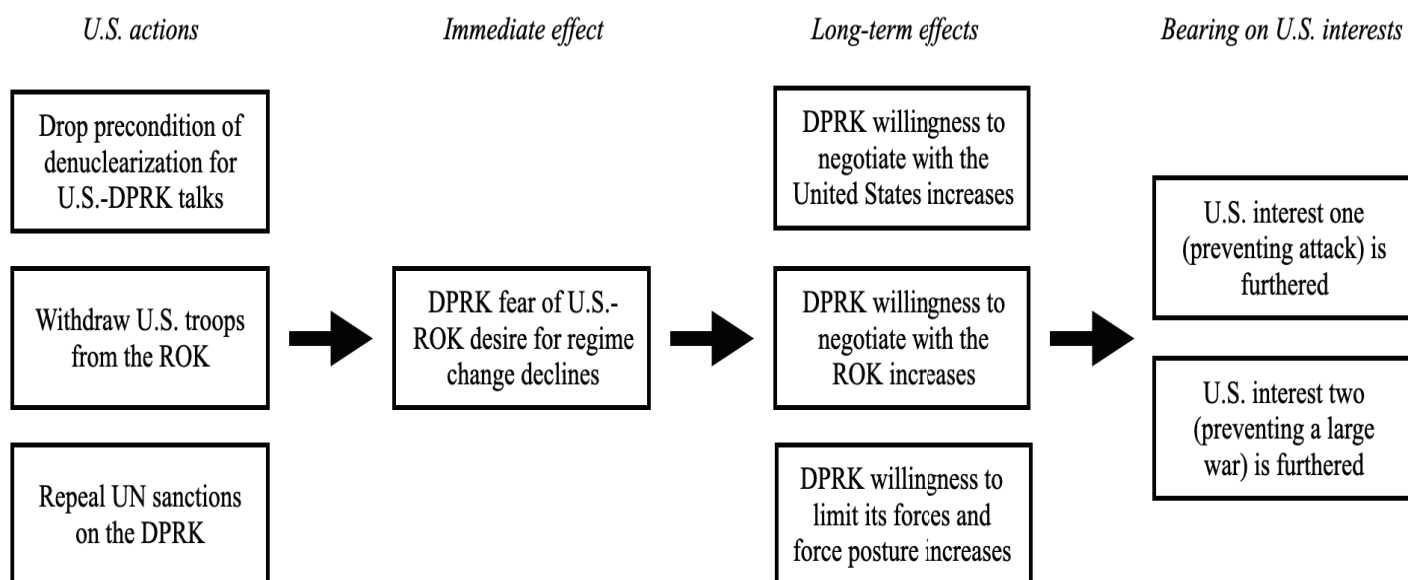
Though such steps may seem small, they would serve U.S. interests by enhancing trust and dialogue between the two Koreas and thus reduce the risk of catastrophic war in Korea.<sup>107</sup>



**Fig. 3: Current U.S. Policy**



**Fig. 4: Suggested U.S. Policy**





## Conclusion

U.S. military forces in the ROK currently play a role in preventing inter-Korean war and, should deterrence fail, would play a key role in protecting the ROK from the DPRK. But the ROK can afford to defend itself from the DPRK; the U.S. presence is unnecessary. Not only would gradually withdrawing U.S. troops from the ROK do no harm to this core interest or the other U.S. interests of maintaining trade, containing potential hegemons, or combatting transnational threats, but it would also further prospects for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The ROK's impressive economic growth and technological advancement in recent decades have made possible its military rise, making indigenous deterrence of the DPRK possible within only a few years' time. There is thus an opportunity for the United States to relieve the DPRK of its main security threat: war with the U.S.-ROK alliance. Exploiting that opportunity begins with withdrawing U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula on a timeline determined after consulting with ROK political and military leaders, as these troops drive Pyongyang's insecurity and thus push it away from potential confidence-building, peace, and normalization talks with the ROK and the United States. Without the U.S. troops in Korea, there are no U.S.-ROK exercises; without those, CBMs, arms control, and other steps toward peace are likely to occur.

This is not to say that there would be peace on the Korean Peninsula or a united Korea but for USFK and the U.S.-ROK military alliance. Korea's split in the 1940s and its remaining so today can be attributed to more than just the U.S. presence in the South. But the threat posed by Washington toward Pyongyang means that more peaceful inter-Korean relations are more likely when Seoul acts outside the U.S.-ROK alliance, and worsening inter-Korean relations (up to and including violence) are more likely when Seoul and Washington recede into what is familiar: prioritizing security and the alliance over long-term peace. Eliminating that option by removing U.S. troops from Korea would better serve U.S. interests than current U.S. policy.

- 1 “Korea” will refer to the historically unified landmass and nation that today is congruent with the states of North Korea and South Korea.
- 2 Avoiding government spending on unnecessary or overly costly projects, including military alliance commitments and arms races, is part of avoiding catastrophic war. Exploring the net effect on entanglement of a troop withdrawal from Korea would entail a full analysis of the PRC’s interests and perceptions of U.S.-ROK relations and should thus be left to future research.
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- 11 Clint Work, “The US-South Korea Alliance and the China Factor,” *The Diplomat*, August 26, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/08/the-us-south-korea-alliance-and-the-china-factor/>.
- 12 Avoiding escalation is crucial for pursuing U.S. interests in Korea, as military allies such as the ROK can exacerbate other threats to U.S. security, leading to risk-inducing security dilemmas and expensive arms races (clearly to the detriment of general U.S. foreign policy interests). See the concept of “reckless driving” in Barry R. Posen, “The Perils of Liberal Hegemony,” in *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 65-67, <https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9781501700729/restraint/>. It is worth noting that Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s January 1950 speech in which he placed the ROK outside the U.S. defense perimeter in Asia – an event that is often blamed for the DPRK’s invasion of the South five months later – was in fact a public-facing gesture meant to prevent the gung-ho ROK president, Syngman Rhee, from dragging Washington into a war (Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2010), 72, <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/35571/the-korean-war-by-bruce-cumings/>). For more on the recklessness of Rhee as a U.S. ally, see Victor D. Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Winter 2009/2010),

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30 David C. Kang, “Hierarchy, Balancing, and Empirical Puzzles in Asian International Relations,” *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Winter, 2003/2004), 165-180, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4137481>.

31 Ray Acheson et al., *Path to Peace: The Case for a Peace Agreement to End the Korean War* (Korea Peace Now! Women Mobilizing to End the War, 2021), <https://koreapeacenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Path-to-Peace-WEB.pdf>.

32 Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, “The Making of Prosperity and Poverty,” in *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Currency, 2012), 72-73, <http://whynationsfail.com>; Seth, *History of Korea*, 399-432. On *juche*, see Grace Lee, “The Political Philosophy of Juche,” *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 2003), 105-112, <https://www.time.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/korea1.pdf>. On South Korean investment and research and development, see Leigh Dayton, “How South Korea made itself a global innovation leader,” *Nature*, May 27, 2020, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01466-7>. For the GDP figure, see Michael J. Mazarr et al., *What Deters and Why: The State*



of *Deterrence in Korea and the Taiwan Strait* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2021), 26, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR3100/RR3144/RAND\\_RR3144.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR3100/RR3144/RAND_RR3144.pdf).

33 The DPRK's nuclear weapons program does not give it much offensive capability against the ROK so much as it deters attack by the United States or the ROK. The North's nuclear weapons stockpile is still small and its nuclear weapons delivery technology is still fairly basic (Mary Beth D. Nikitin, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons and Missile Programs," *Congressional Research Service*, April 14, 2021, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/IF10472.pdf>). On living with North Korea's nuclear weapons, see Doug Bandow, "Avoiding a Korean Calamity: Why Resolving the Dispute with Pyongyang Requires Keeping the Peace," *Cato Institute*, April 26, 2018, <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/avoiding-korean-calamity-why-resolving-dispute-pyongyang-requires-keeping-peace>; Zack Beauchamp, "The case for letting North Korea keep its nukes," *Vox*, September 8, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/world/2017/9/8/16256880/north-korea-nuclear-weapons-test-containment>; and Robert A. Manning, "Reality Check #5: Learning to live with a nuclear North Korea," *Atlantic Council*, April 26, 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/reality-check/reality-check-5-learning-to-live-with-a-nuclear-north-korea/>.

34 Mark Fitzpatrick, *Asia's Latent Nuclear Powers: Japan, South Korea and Taiwan* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 36-64, <https://www.amazon.com/Asias-Latent-Nuclear-Powers-Adelphi-ebook/dp/B01BMC-QSVY?asin=1138930806&revisionId=&format=4&depth=1>; Rachel Oswald, "If It Wanted To, South Korea Could Build Its Own Bomb," *Pulitzer Center*, April 11, 2018, <https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/if-it-wanted-south-korea-could-build-its-own-bomb>; "South Korea," *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, October 2018, <https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/south-korea/>.

35 Declining South Korean fertility rates are sparking changes to ROK conscription, but Seoul seems to be addressing this with new plans for structuring the military (Kelly Kasulis, "South Korea wants to draft more men for its shrinking military — and punish those who dodge," *PRI: The World*, December 9, 2019, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-12-09/south-korea-wants-draft-more-men-its-shrinking-military-and-punish-those-who>; Park Chang-kwoun, "The Moon Jae-in Administration's Defense Reform 2.0: Direction and Considerations," *Korea Institute for Defense Analyses*, August 31, 2018, 2, <http://www.kida.re.kr/cmm/viewBoardImageFile.do?idx=26186>). For a general discussion on the relationship between wealth, population, and power, see John J. Mearsheimer, "Wealth and Power," in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), 55-82, <https://wnorton.com/books/9780393349276>.

36 Haena Jo, "North Korea: sidelining economic development to prioritise strategic weapons?," *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, July 10, 2020, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2020/07/north-korea-defence-policy-strategic-weapons>; "Chapter Six: Asia, The Military Balance," *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, Vol. 121, No. 1 (2021), 276, <https://doi.org/10.1080/04597222.2021.1868795>. If anything, the actual gap in available capabilities is larger than the defense budget figures represent, as the DPRK likely has to prepare forces for the contingency of Japan entering an ROK-DPRK conflict on the side of the U.S. and the ROK, while the DPRK cannot similarly rely on a network of allies.

37 Cumings, *The Korean War*, 11-12; Work, "The US-South Korea Alliance." On the Soviet Union's shift to less antagonistic priorities later in the Cold War, see Rachel Esplin Odell, *Mare Interpretatum: Continuity and Evolution in States' Interpretations of the Law of the Sea*, submitted to the Department of Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, 2020), 225.

38 Jina Kim, "Military Considerations for OPCON Transfer on the Korean Peninsula," *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 20, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/military-considerations-opcon-transfer-korean-peninsula>.

39 Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 10-11.

40 "Mission of the ROK/US Combined Forces Command," *United States Forces Korea*, accessed May 8, 2021, <https://www.usfk.mil/About/Combined-Forces-Command/>.

41 These missions cover the most plausible scenario for war on the Korean Peninsula: a DPRK invasion of the ROK. This analysis does not give separate consideration to the possibility that the DPRK may plan an invasion of the ROK, the ROK would learn of the invasion before it happened, and the ROK would thus decide to preemptively attack the DPRK – a contingency for which the ROK has produced the strategy "Kill Chain"

(“Missiles of South Korea,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Missile Threat*, July 30, 2020, [https://missilethreat.csis.org/country\\_tax/south-korea/](https://missilethreat.csis.org/country_tax/south-korea/).)

42 This figure does not include the roughly 5.72 million “paramilitary” forces under the Worker-Peasant Red Guard and People’s Guard militia. According the U.S. Department of the Army, many of these forces are unarmed (Headquarters, Department of the Army, *North Korean Tactics* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, July 24, 2020), 60, <https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/atp7-100-2.pdf>).

43 “Chapter Six: Asia, The Military Balance,” *IJSS*, 218-313.

44 Ibid., 274-280; Mark Episkopos, “How South Korea’s ‘Kill Chain’ Could Strike North Korea First in a War,” *The National Interest*, March 26, 2021, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/korea-watch/how-south-korea-s-kill-chain-could-strike-north-korea-first-war-181181>.

45 Haena Jo, “Flying against the odds: North Korea’s air force,” *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, February 10, 2020, <https://www.iiiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2020/02/north-korea-air-force>; Bryan Port, “Defense Readiness and the U.S.-ROK Alliance,” in *Korea Net Assessment: Politicized Security and Unchanging Strategic Realities*, eds. Chung Min Lee and Kathryn Botto (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020), 43-54, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Korea\\_Net\\_Assesment\\_2020.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Korea_Net_Assesment_2020.pdf).

46 John Gordon IV et al., *Army Fires Capabilities for 2025 and Beyond* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), 27-28, [www.rand.org/t/RR2124](http://www.rand.org/t/RR2124).

47 Quoted in Mazarr et al., *The State of Deterrence*, 29.

48 Presenting such an overview of the quantitative military balance obscures to a large degree the qualitative advantage the ROK enjoys in nearly all of these categories over the DPRK. For DPRK forces, “troops” was calculated by adding the number of non-paramilitary active and reserve forces listed under the “Capabilities” section of the DPRK entry in “Chapter Six: Asia, The Military Balance,” *IJSS*, 275-276. “Armored fighting vehicles” was calculated by adding the number of main battle tanks (MBTs), light tanks, infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), and armored personnel carriers listed under the “Army” section of this same entry; “artillery” was calculated by taking the “Artillery” figure listed under the “Army” section of this same entry, minus the number of multiple rocket launchers (MRLs); “surface-to-surface rockets” was calculated by adding the number of MRLs (5,500) and short-range ballistic missiles (24) under the “Army” section of this same entry; and “air defense” was calculated by adding the number of guns under the “Air Defense” subsection under the “Army” section of this same entry (11,000) and the number of surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) listed under the “Air Defense” subsection under the “Air Force” section of this same entry (350). Since the figures for aircraft and naval vessels were lower in the *IJSS* chapter than in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” *Office of the Secretary of Defense*, December 15, 2017, <https://media.defense.gov/2018/May/22/2001920587/-1/-1/1/REPORT-TO-CONGRESS-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-DEMOCRATIC-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-KOREA-2017.PDF>, the latter report was used so as to overestimate DPRK forces, if anything. “Aircraft” was taken from OSD, “Military and Security Developments,” 19; “naval vessels” was taken from OSD, “Military and Security Developments,” 20. “Nuclear warheads” was taken from Shannon N. Kile and Hans M. Kristensen, “World Nuclear Forces,” Chapter 10 in *SIPRI Yearbook 2020: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 378, [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/yb20\\_10\\_wnf.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/yb20_10_wnf.pdf). Totals for DPRK forces came out to 1.88 million troops, 6,592 armored fighting vehicles, 16,100 artillery pieces, 5,524 surface-to-surface rockets, 11,350 air defense guns or missiles, 1,400 aircraft, 820 naval vessels, and 40 nuclear warheads. For ROK forces, “troops” was calculated by adding the number of non-paramilitary active and reserve forces listed under the “Capabilities” section of the ROK entry in “Chapter Six: Asia, The Military Balance,” *IJSS*, 276-280. “Armored fighting vehicles” was calculated by adding the number of MBTs, light tanks, IFVs, armored personnel carriers, and engineering vehicles listed under the “Army” section of this same entry (5,752) to the number of armored fighting vehicles under the “Marines” section of this same entry (266); “artillery” was calculated by taking the “Artillery” figure listed under the “Army” section of this same entry, minus the number of MRLs (no numbers were given for the “Artillery” details under the “Marines” section); “surface-to-surface rockets” was calculated by adding the number of MRLs (334) and short-range ballistic missiles (30) under the “Army” section of this same entry; “air

defense” was calculated by adding the number of guns under the “Air Defense” subsection under the “Army” section of this same entry (477) and the number of SAMs listed under the “Air Defense” subsection under the “Air Force” section of this same entry (168); “aircraft” was calculated by adding the number of helicopters under the “Army” section (507) to the number of aircraft under the “Naval Aviation” section (62) to the number of helicopters under the “Marines” section (5) to the number of fixed-wing aircraft (579), helicopters (49), and unmanned aerial vehicles (13) under the “Air Force” section of this same entry; “naval vessels” was calculated by adding the number of submarines (18), principal surface combatants (23), patrol and coastal combatants (84), mine warfare ships (11), amphibious and landing ships (35), and support ships (11) under the “Navy” section of this same entry. Totals for ROK forces came out to 3.699 million troops, 6,018 armored fighting vehicles, 11,903 artillery pieces, 364 surface-to-surface rockets, 645 air defense guns or missiles, 1,215 aircraft, 182 naval vessels, and zero nuclear warheads (though the U.S. is understood to be willing to use its own nuclear weapons to defend the ROK).

49 Kim Min-seok, “The State of the North Korean Military,” in Lee and Botto, *Korea Net Assessment*, 21; South Korean Ministry of National Defense, *2018 Defense White Paper* (Seoul, South Korea: Ministry of National Defense, 2019), 21, [http://www.mnd.go.kr/cop/pblicitn/selectPublicationUser.do?siteId=mndEN&componentId=51&categoryId=0&publicationSeq=846&pageIndex=1&id=mndEN\\_031300000000](http://www.mnd.go.kr/cop/pblicitn/selectPublicationUser.do?siteId=mndEN&componentId=51&categoryId=0&publicationSeq=846&pageIndex=1&id=mndEN_031300000000).

50 At their current level of sophistication, North Korean nuclear weapons could not be credibly aimed at U.S. nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) capabilities or nuclear weapons launch platforms, meaning they would only be usable as part of a surprise attack on U.S.-ROK forces in and around the ROK or to halt a U.S.-ROK threat to the regime’s survival (Adam Mount, *Conventional Deterrence of North Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Federation of American Scientists, 2019), 11, <https://fas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/FAS-CDNK.pdf>).

51 Gordon IV et al., *Army Fires*, 28; Kim, “The State of the North Korean Military,” 24; “North Korea: Chemical Weapons,” *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, April 2018, <https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/north-korea/chemical/>.

52 D. Sean Bennett et al., *North Korean Conventional Artillery: A Means to Retaliate, Coerce, Deter, or Terrorize Populations* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2020), [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA619-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA619-1.html).

53 Anthony H. Cordesman, Charles Ayers, and Aaron Lin, “The Conventional Military Balance in the Koreas and Northeast Asia,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, August 2, 2016, 72, [https://csis-web-site-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160802\\_Korea\\_Conventional\\_Balance.pdf](https://csis-web-site-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160802_Korea_Conventional_Balance.pdf); Headquarters, Department of the Army, *North Korean Tactics*, 14; Kim, “The State of the North Korean Military.”

54 Gordon IV et al., *Army Fires*, 31-35; Kim, “The State of the North Korean Military,” 21.

55 USFK helps deter a DPRK invasion of the South by providing a “tripwire”: should U.S. forces be attacked by the DPRK (which would be certain in a North Korean invasion), U.S. leaders would feel pressured to not back down and order in more U.S. forces to the fight. This makes the U.S. extended deterrence policy with regard to the ROK credible, especially in light of the DPRK’s nuclear weapons capability. For more on extended deterrence, see Sanghoon Kim, “Extended Deterrence in the U.S.-ROK Alliance: Interview with Mira Rapp-Hooper,” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, April 28, 2020, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/extended-deterrence-in-the-u-s-rok-alliance/>, and Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 46-49, <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300143379/arms-and-influence>.

56 North Korea’s only treaty facilitating substantial cooperation with another state is the 1961 Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with the PRC. However, Beijing has indicated that it would not be likely to militarily intervene on behalf of Pyongyang if the DPRK attacked the ROK. See Eleanor Albert, “The China–North Korea Relationship,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 25, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-north-korea-relationship>; Bonnie S. Glaser, “Comments: What Will China Do if the U.S. Attacks North Korea?,” *ChinaFile*, September 21, 2017, <https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/what-will-china-do-if-us-attacks-north-korea>.

57 Mazarr et al., *The State of Deterrence*, 30; Todd South and Jeff Schogol, “War with North Korea: An



inside look at how US troops would respond worldwide,” *Military Times*, May 21, 2017, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2017/05/21/war-with-north-korea-an-inside-look-at-how-us-troops-would-respond-worldwide/>.

58 Kim, “The State of the North Korean Military,” 26-27.

59 “Missiles of North Korea,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Missile Threat*, November 30, 2020, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/dprk/>.

60 “Command Philosophy,” *United States Forces Korea*, accessed May 5, 2021, <https://www.usfk.mil/About/Command-Philosophy/>.

61 A 2019 RAND Corporation study estimates that, in the event of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the United States would be able to augment USFK’s one Army division and two Air Force wings with four more Army divisions, one Marine Expeditionary Force, five additional Air Force fighter wings, two bomber wings, and three additional U.S. Navy carrier strike groups. This includes two U.S. Air Force air wings, one U.S. Marine Corps air squadron, and one U.S. Navy fleet currently based in Japan (Gordon IV et al., *Army Fires*, 27). For details on equipment under the command of USFK’s various force elements, see “Chapter Six: Asia, The Military Balance,” *IISS*, 280.

62 Precision-guided munitions are also part of the precision strike suite that the ROK would likely want to have before a U.S. withdrawal was complete. Throughout President Moon’s administration, cruise missile acquisition and development has been prioritized to this end. See Franz-Stefan Gady, “South Korea Signs Deal for 90 Bunker-Buster Cruise Missiles,” *The Diplomat*, March 14, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/south-korea-signs-deal-for-90-bunker-buster-cruise-missiles/>; Jeff Jeong, “4 questions about South Korea’s weapons wish list,” *Defense News*, June 2, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/interviews/2019/06/03/4-questions-about-south-koreas-weapons-wish-list/>; Paek Jae Ok, “Analysis of the 2021 ROK Defense Budget and Its Policy Implications,” *Korea Institute for Defense Analyses*, February 10, 2021, 4, <https://www.kida.re.kr/cmm/viewBoardImageFile.do?idx=29643>. The ROK may also wish to increase the number of troops in its armed forces to compensate for the loss of USFK and the additional U.S. forces that USFK could indirectly commit to a fight. If this is a real priority, then the Blue House should find it feasible to communicate urgency to the public and raise the political capital needed for an expansion of conscription. However, this may be unnecessary, as the quality-over-quantity edge that the ROK Armed Forces maintains over the KPA already allows Seoul to comfortably maintain much lower troop levels than the North. This echoes the strategy of offset, as opposed to overmatch, adopted by the U.S. against the Soviet Union near the end of the Cold War. For more on this and the importance of technology and strategy in modern battle, see Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton University Press, 2004), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691128023/military-power>; Robert O. Work and Greg Grant, “Beating the Americans at Their Own Game: An Offset Strategy with Chinese Characteristics,” *Center for a New American Security*, June 6, 2019, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/beating-the-americans-at-their-own-game>. Concurrently, under the 2021–2025 Defense Manpower Structural Reform plan, the ROK Armed Forces are attempting to slim down on enlisted men and increase the number of officers in their ranks (Paek, “2021 ROK Defense Budget,” 2).

63 Kim Tae-woo, “North Korea’s 5th Nuclear Test: The Fallout in Seoul,” *The Diplomat*, September 22, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/north-koreas-5th-nuclear-test-the-fallout-in-seoul/>; “Missiles of South Korea.”

64 Jun Ji-hye, “3 military systems to counter N. Korea: Kill Chain, KAMD, KMPR,” *The Korea Times*, November 1, 2016, [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/11/205\\_217259.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/11/205_217259.html); 2018 *Defense White Paper*, 69–70. For a recent procurement in line with Kill Chain and KMPR, see the unveiling of a semi-stealthy ROK-built fighter jet in Brian Kim, “South Korea unveils prototype of homegrown KF-X fighter jet,” *Defense News*, April 9, 2021, <https://www.defensenews.com/industry/techwatch/2021/04/09/south-korea-unveils-prototype-of-homegrown-kf-x-fighter-jet/>; see also “South Korea selects smart bombs, guidance kits for KF-X fighter,” *Janes Defense News*, May 28, 2020, <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/da27bd71-e47e-4cf6-81aa-456bf5824514>.

65 Kim, “The State of the North Korean Military,” 24-25.

66 On the submarine program, see Seoc Woo Kim, Jungmin Kang, and Frank von Hippel, “South Ko-



rea's risky quest to build nuclear-powered attack submarines," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November 18, 2020, <https://thebulletin.org/2020/11/south-koreas-risky-quest-to-build-nuclear-powered-attack-submarines/>. On the aircraft carrier program, see Xavier Vavasseur, "South Korea Officially Starts LPX-II Aircraft Carrier Program," *Naval News*, January 4, 2021, <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/01/south-korea-officially-starts-lpx-ii-aircraft-carrier-program/>. On KAMD acquisitions, see Gabriel Dominguez, "Deliveries of PAC-3 air-defence systems to RoKAF completed," *Janes Defense News*, December 14, 2020, <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/deliveries-of-pac-3-air-defence-systems-to-rokaf-completed>; Jeff Jeong, "South Korea moves to kick its missile defense shield up a notch," *Defense News*, August 14, 2019, <https://www.defense-news.com/global/asia-pacific/2019/08/14/south-korea-moves-to-kick-its-missile-defense-shield-up-a-notch/>; Dae Young Kim, "South Korea completes deliveries of KM-SAM Block-1 system to RoKAF," *Janes Defense News*, April 28, 2020, <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/south-korea-completes-deliveries-of-km-sam-block-1-system-to-rokaf>; Park, "Defense Reform 2.0," 2; and Shaan Shaikh, "South Korea Receives First Cheongung-II SAM Battery," *Center for Strategic and International Studies: Missile Threat*, December 3, 2020, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/south-korea-receives-first-cheongung-ii-sam-battery/>.

67 Ankit Panda, "Next RQ-4 Global Hawk Drones Arrive in South Korea," *The Diplomat*, April 20, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/next-rq-4-global-hawk-drones-arrive-in-south-korea/>.

68 David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, "Tiny Satellites From Silicon Valley May Help Track North Korea Missiles," *New York Times*, July 6, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/world/asia/penta-gon-spy-satellites-north-korea-missiles.html>; Kim, "The State of the North Korean Military," 20; Park Si-soo, "South Korea to spend \$553 million on space projects in 2021," *Space News*, February 25, 2021, <https://space-news.com/south-korea-to-spend-553-million-on-space-projects-in-2021/>. In 2020, longstanding U.S. limits on the ROK's solid-fuel rocket technology were lifted, paving the way for Seoul to soon have the low-orbit satellite-based ISR capabilities to monitor "the Korean Peninsula from the sky 24 hours a day," in the words of one national security aide to President Moon (Choe Sang-Hun, "South Korea Says It Will Launch Spy Satellites as Missile Deal Is Revised," *New York Times*, July 28, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/world/asia/south-korea-satellites-rockets.html>).

69 Lee Young-bin, "The 2021-2025 Mid-term Defense Plan for the Successful Completion of Defense Reforms and a Strong Innovative Military," *Korea Institute for Defense Analyses*, September 9, 2020, <https://www.kida.re.kr/cmm/viewBoardImageFile.do?idx=28382>; Shin Beomchul, "South Korea's Military Readiness Under Moon," in Lee and Botto, *Korea Net Assessment*.

70 Bruce W. Bennett, "South Korea: Capable Now, Questions for the Future," Chapter 9 in *A Hard Look at Hard Power: Assessing the Defense Capabilities of Key US Allies and Security Partners*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Gary J. Schmitt (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College Press, 2020), 255-292, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/921/>.

71 ROK nuclearization may be politically feasible, given that far more South Koreans have consistently supported obtaining nuclear protection (either through ROK nuclear weapons or restationing of U.S. nuclear weapons in the ROK) than have consistently opposed it (Toby Dalton and Ain Han, *Elections, Nukes, and the Future of the South Korea-U.S. Alliance* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2020), 5, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/The\\_Future\\_of\\_the\\_South\\_Korea-U.S.\\_Alliance\\_Carnegie\\_v1\\_web.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/The_Future_of_the_South_Korea-U.S._Alliance_Carnegie_v1_web.pdf)).

72 The ROK has come up with creative solutions to effectively deterring a nuclear-armed North without building nuclear weapons itself, such as its commission in 2017 of a military unit aimed explicitly at infiltrating the DPRK and killing its leadership should war break out (Choe Sang-Hun, "South Korea Plans 'Decapitation Unit' to Try to Scare North's Leaders," *New York Times*, September 12, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/world/asia/north-south-korea-decapitation-.html>). See also Ian Bowers and Henrik Stålhane Hiim, "Conventional Counterforce Dilemmas," *International Security*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Winter 2020/21), 7-39, [https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00399](https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00399).

73 Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, "Come Home, America: The Strategy of Re-

straint in the Face of Temptation,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Spring 1997), 5-48, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/447452/summary>, especially 22-23.

74 Government Accountability Office, *Benefits and Costs Associated with the U.S. Military Presence in Japan and South Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Government Accountability Office, 2021), 43-44, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-270.pdf>; Office of Management and Budget, *A Budget for America’s Future* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2020), 109, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2021-BUD/pdf/BUDGET-2021-BUD.pdf>. Note that this averages to an annual U.S. expenditure in Korea that is on par with the DPRK’s *entire* annual defense budget (2007-2017 average by the U.S. State Department), illustrating the imbalance of conventional power on the peninsula (“N. Korea ranks No.1 in military spending as percentage of GDP,” *Yonhap News Agency*, January 9, 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200109007500325>).

75 Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” *Office of the Secretary of Defense*, December 15, 2017, 4-5, <https://media.defense.gov/2018/May/22/2001920587/-1/-1/1/REPORT-TO-CONGRESS-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-DEMOCRATIC-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-KOREA-2017.PDF>; Michael D. Swaine, Jessica J. Lee, and Rachel Esplin Odell, *Toward an Inclusive and Balanced Regional Order: A New U.S. Strategy in East Asia* (Washington, D.C.: The Quincy Institute, January 2021), 45-47, <https://quincyinst.org/2021/01/11/toward-an-inclusive-balanced-regional-order-a-new-u-s-strategy-in-east-asia/>.

76 Once again, the U.S. alliance’s possible role in U.S.-ROK trade negotiations is not seriously explored in this report. However, a commission of Korea experts noted that “the ROK has a powerful interest in American markets” in its discussion on U.S.-ROK efforts to diversify supply chains away from the PRC, providing one example of a compelling ROK interest in investment in the United States aside from the military alliance (Joseph S. Nye Jr. et al., *Special Conference on Northeast Asia and the Korea-U.S. Alliance* (Seoul, Republic of Korea: Chey Institute for Advanced Studies, 2021), 21, [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/event/210517\\_CHEY\\_CSIS\\_English.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/event/210517_CHEY_CSIS_English.pdf)).

77 The same commission of Korea experts noted that “the Chinese economic system allows China to grow quickly at the expense of its neighbors’ economies” to explain U.S.-ROK interests in “stand[ing] up against” Chinese economic but failed to note *how* the PRC has grown at the expense of the ROK, given that the ROK’s economy has grown over the past several decades and continues to grow (Nye, *Special Conference*, 19). Should, at some later date, the PRC use its military might to threaten global commons, it would be reversing its general embrace of international trade that began during the Reform Era. Of course, doing so may eat away at its large trade relationship with countries like the ROK, which would erode one of its biggest levers in international diplomacy. Thus, while countries like the ROK may be hesitating now to go along with proposals for an aggressive deployment of U.S. military forces in the First Island Chain because China does not threaten them enough to warrant such a provocative move against Beijing, the same circumstances that may make a reversal necessary would also make it feasible (Swaine, Lee, and Odell, *New U.S. Strategy*, 19-28). For proposals on a First Island Chain strategy, see Grace Kim, “South Korea Is an Island, Entire of Itself: The Missing Island in Allied First Island Chain Strategies,” *Center for a New American Security*, March 17, 2021, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/south-korea-is-an-island-entire-of-itself-the-missing-island-in-allied-first-island-chain-strategies>; James R. Holmes, “Defend the First Island Chain,” *Proceedings*, Vol. 140, No. 4 (April 2014), <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2014/april/defend-first-island-chain>; Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr., “‘Land Forces Are Hard To Kill’: Army Chief Unveils Pacific Strategy,” *Breaking Defense*, March 23, 2021, <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/03/land-forces-are-hard-to-kill-army-chief/>; Timothy M. Bonds et al., *What Role Can Land- Based, Multi-Domain Anti-Access/Area Denial Forces Play in Deterring or Defeating Aggression?* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2017), [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1800/RR1820/RAND\\_RR1820.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1800/RR1820/RAND_RR1820.pdf). For problems with the United States basing missile forces in the First Island Chain, see Stacie L. Pettyjohn and Jennifer Kavanagh, *Access Granted: Political Challenges to the U.S. Overseas Military Presence, 1945-2014* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2016), 48-49, [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1339.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1339.html); and Jacob L. Heim, *Missiles for Asia? The Need for Operational Analysis of U.S. Theater Ballistic Missiles in the Pacific* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2016), 16, [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR945.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR945.html).

- 78 See Tyler F. Hacker, “Defense Primer: Department of Defense Pre-Positioned Materiel,” *Congressional Research Service*, December 9, 2020, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11699/2>, and United States Army Central Chief of Public Affairs, “Army Prepositioned Stock – Fact Sheet,” *U.S. Army Central*, November 9, 2015, <https://www.usarcent.army.mil/Portals/1/Documents/Fact-Sheets/Army-Prepositioned-Stock-Fact-Sheet.pdf?ver=2015-11-09-165910-140>.
- 79 For suggestions that U.S. forces in the ROK could be useful for monitoring and defending against PRC forces stationed in and around the Yellow/West Sea, see Robert Dohner et al., “The Future of the US-ROK Alliance,” *Atlantic Council Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security*, February 2021, 6-7, <https://www.atlantic-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Future-of-the-US-ROK-Alliance-Report-FIN.pdf>.
- 80 On the competing hypotheses behind the PRC’s anger at U.S. THAAD deployment in the ROK, see Ankit Panda, “THAAD and China’s Nuclear Second-Strike Capability,” *The Diplomat*, March 8, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/thaad-and-chinas-nuclear-second-strike-capability/>, and Sukjoon Yoon, “Upgrading South Korean THAAD,” *The Diplomat*, May 10, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/upgrading-south-korean-thaad/>. On PRC ICBM advances, see Travis Wheeler, “China’s MIRVs: Separating Fact From Fiction,” *The Diplomat*, May 18, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/chinas-mirvs-separating-fact-from-fiction/>.
- 81 Credibility in domains aside from that of the ruptured alliance (i.e., security) can be maintained if both the former patron and beneficiary share interests in those domains, according to Iain D. Henry, “What Allies Want: Reconsidering Loyalty, Reliability, and Alliance Interdependence,” *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Spring 2020), 45-83, [https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00375](https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00375).
- 82 Trade is not considered here, as the U.S. maintains normal trade relations with many countries – including those in which it does not deploy troops. Though USFK may provide the U.S. with leverage in trade negotiations with the ROK, as illustrated by the Trump administration’s renegotiation of the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement in 2018, it is not clear whether this renegotiation effort’s contribution to U.S. prosperity is larger than the upfront cost of maintaining USFK. Determining this would be crucial for analyzing the impact of U.S.-ROK trade on the U.S.-ROK alliance. Regardless, the history of difficulties in negotiating U.S.-ROK trade agreements despite a large U.S. force presence in the ROK inclines one to doubt that USFK has substantial influence on trade dynamics. For more, see Brock R. Williams, “South Korea: Background and U.S. Relations,” *Congressional Research Service*, February 2, 2021, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10165>.
- 83 Seth, *History of Korea*, 459-462; Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 54-57. On Washington’s increasingly relaxed view of the security situation in East Asia and corresponding troop withdrawals in the early 1990s, see Dick Cheney, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1991), 10, [https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual\\_reports/1991\\_DoD\\_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-151830-167](https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual_reports/1991_DoD_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-151830-167).
- 84 Dick Cheney, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1993), 17, [https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual\\_reports/1993\\_DoD\\_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-152422-603](https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual_reports/1993_DoD_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-152422-603).
- 85 Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 68, 76-77. Seoul’s poorly received reaction to the death of Kim Il-sung in 1994 also dampened chances for a breakthrough. See “Kim Young Sam’s unpardonable crime,” *Korean Central News Agency*, June 10, 1999 <https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1452000472-946825158/kim-young-sams-unpardonable-crime/>. On Washington’s panic over North Korean nuclear weapons progress, see Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton University Press, 1997), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691010069/disarming-strangers>. On the Roh Tae-woo administration’s alleged nuclear weapons activities and temporary progress enshrined in the inter-Korean Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in February 1992, see Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 70.
- 86 Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 137; Tim Kane, “Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950-2005,” *Heritage Foundation*, May 24, 2006, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2005>.
- 87 “S. Korea Could Seek Deployment of US Tactical Nuclear Weapons,” *Voice of America News*, November 22, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20101125141401/http://www.voanews.com/english/news/South-Korea-Could-Seek-Deployment-of-US-Tactical-Nuclear-Weapons-109819069.html>; Son Won-je, “Experts cite



succession and diplomatic pressure following artillery fire,” *The Hankyoreh*, November 24, 2010, [http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_northkorea/450424.html](http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/450424.html); Wertz, “Inter-Korean Relations.”

88 Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 174-178; Daniel Wertz, “Inter-Korean Relations,” *The National Committee on North Korea*, January 2017, [https://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/inter-korean-relations#- footnote8\\_3i98d2f](https://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/inter-korean-relations#- footnote8_3i98d2f).

89 Soyoung Kim and James Pearson, “North Korea heads for diplomacy gold medal at Olympics: analysts,” *Reuters*, February 11, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-2018-northkorea-diplomacy-an/north-korea-heads-for-diplomacy-gold-medal-at-olympics-analysts-idUSKBN1FV0JV>; Frank Aum, Jennifer Staats, and Joseph Yun, “What Does the Singapore Summit Mean for South Korea, China and Japan?,” *United States Institute of Peace*, June 21, 2018, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/06/what-does-singapore-summit-mean-south-korea-china-and-japan>; Uri Friedman, “A Top Adviser to the South Korean President Questions the U.S. Alliance,” *The Atlantic*, May 17, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/05/moon-south-korea-us-alliance/560501/>; Sokolsky, “Road Map”; “Kim says he wants “denuclearization quickly” amid praise from Trump,” *CBS News*, September 20, 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kim-jong-un-north-korea-mount-paektu-moon-jae-donald-trump-progress-pyongyang-summit/>. Though the DPRK recently announced it is skipping the summer 2021 Tokyo Olympics, talks are still on for a joint ROK-DPRK hosting of the 2032 Olympics. See “Tokyo Olympics: North Korea to skip Games over Covid-19 fears,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, April 6, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56645611>, and Hiroshi Minegishi, “Olympic hopeful? Moon pins legacy on Kim Jong Un trip to Seoul,” *Nikkei Asia*, March 14, 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/N-Korea-at-crossroads/Olympic-hopeful-Moon-pins-legacy-on-Kim-Jong-Un-trip-to-Seoul>. On the DPRK’s weapons development ahead of diplomatic summits, see Ankit Panda and Vipin Narang, “North Korea’s Nuclear Program Isn’t Going Anywhere,” *Foreign Affairs*, August 13, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-08-13/north-koreas-nuclear-program-isnt-going-anywhere>.

90 Implementing the reductions-for-peace approach would also entail dropping UN Security Council sanctions on the DPRK, which requires passing new, replacement UN Security Council resolutions. However, given the United States’s large (and permanent) role on the Security Council, and the fact that most countries in the world already have normalized relations with the DPRK, a turn in global opinion such that nine countries on the Security Council vote to overturn sanctions is not hard to imagine (Raphael Ahren, “Why doesn’t the US try to repeal the UN’s anti-settlements resolution?,” *The Times of Israel*, January 2, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/why-doesnt-the-us-try-to-repeal-the-uns-anti-settlements-resolution/>; Eleanor Albert, “What to Know About Sanctions on North Korea,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, July 16, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-know-about-sanctions-north-korea>; Daniel Wertz, “DPRK Diplomatic Relations,” *The National Committee on North Korea*, August 2016, <https://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/dprk-diplomatic-relations>). For Japan’s interest in continued U.S.-ROK cooperation, see Kathryn Botto, “Overcoming Obstacles to Trilateral U.S.-ROK-Japan Interoperability,” in Lee and Botto, *Korea Net Assessment*, 69, and “A demonstration of strength by the Japan-U.S. alliance,” *The Japan Times*, March 18, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2021/03/18/editorials/quad-china-north-korea-u-s-military-senkaku-disputed-islands-south-korea-u-s-japan-relations/>.

91 A true tripwire force would be much smaller than the current U.S. garrison in the ROK; one could thus make the argument that there may be some smaller number of U.S. troops (above zero) with which Pyongyang would be comfortable. However, given that the ROK alone possesses a qualitative edge over the DPRK in many military domains, more evidence would need to be provided to argue this point convincingly. For tripwire forces and deterrence, see Dan Reiter and Paul Poast, “The Truth About Tripwires: Why Small Force Deployments Do Not Deter Aggression,” *Texas National Security Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Summer 2021), <https://tnsr.org/2021/06/the-truth-about-tripwires-why-small-force-deployments-do-not-deter-aggression/>.

92 “Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula,” *Reuters*, April 27, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-northkorea-southkorea-summit-statemen/panmunjom-declaration-for-peace-prosperity-and-unification-of-the-korean-peninsula-idUKKBN1HY193>. For the DPRK’s views on the threat of regime change from the United States, see Ankit Panda, *Kim Jong Un and the Bomb* (Oxford University Press, 2020), <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/kim-jong-un-and-the-bomb-9780190060367>.



Furthermore, U.S. officials adamant about denuclearization have frequently appeared to disregard the immense challenge of getting a nuclear-armed state to reverse its progress. The only state to build nuclear weapons before voluntarily relinquishing them, South Africa, did so in the wake of immense changes to its immediate security environment and the transition from bipolarity to unipolarity at the end of the Cold War. Similarly, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine gave up nuclear weapons inherited from the collapsed Soviet Union only after aggressive diplomacy and repeated security assurances from the United States and Russia. Such radical shifts in North Korea's security situation do not appear in the offing, to say nothing of the less than conciliatory language toward the DPRK used by U.S. officials (Uri Friedman, "Why One President Gave Up His Country's Nukes," *The Atlantic*, September 9, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/09/north-korea-south-africa/539265/>; Steven Pifer, "Why care about Ukraine and the Budapest Memorandum," *Brookings Institution*, December 5, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/12/05/why-care-about-ukraine-and-the-budapest-memorandum/>).

93 One could argue that deterrence should not be incredibly hard to maintain as the United States withdraws troops because most of the value provided by USFK is its tripwire function. See Richard Sokolsky, "A Road Map for Demilitarizing North Korea," *38 North*, July 27, 2018, <https://www.38north.org/2018/07/rsokolsky072718/>.

94 An analogy would be the Baltic states and the NATO. The U.S. is committed to the defense of Latvia, a NATO member, under Article V of the NATO charter. Latvia borders nuclear-armed Russia, and expresses concern about a potential Russian invasion. Yet, the U.S. does not maintain a permanent troop presence in Latvia. Though this is not a perfect analogy, it highlights the possibility for a mutual defense arrangement without a large troop commitment like the current U.S. one in the ROK (Paul McLeary, "Latvia Wants US Troops, And Is Ready To Pay For Them," *Breaking Defense*, July 9, 2020, <https://breakingdefense.com/2020/07/latvia-wants-us-troops-and-is-ready-to-pay-for-them/>).

95 Many clashes between the DPRK and the ROK have occurred in the Yellow Sea/West Sea along the disputed Northern Limit Line, and combined U.S.-ROK military exercises have been cited by Pyongyang in multiple statements regarding its nuclear weapons development (Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 162).

96 Albert, "Sanctions on North Korea."

97 On the failure of sanctions to work, see John Bellinger et al., "America's Use of Coercive Economic Statecraft," *Center for a New American Security*, December 2020, 5, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/americas-use-of-coercive-economic-statecraft>. As recently as March 2021, the UNSC itself admitted that sanctions on North Korea were likely impacting the economy and the welfare of the North Korean people negatively. See United Nations, Security Council Panel of Experts, *Letter dated 5 February 2021 from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1874 (2009) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006)* (New York, NY: United Nations Security Council, 2021), 58-60, [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2021\\_211.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2021_211.pdf). Of course, putting sanctions relief first would not be sufficient to get to peace, given that the DPRK has now weathered and evaded an international sanctions regime for a decade and a half, outlasting periodic predictions of the Kim regime's impending collapse (Albert, "Sanctions on North Korea"; Sang-Min Kim, "North Korea Keeps Evading UN Sanctions," *Arms Control Today*, May 2021, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-05/news/north-korea-keeps-evading-un-sanctions>). For examples of predictions of the Kim regime's collapse, see Laignee Barron, "'Materialism Will One Day Bring Change.' Why a Senior Defector Believes North Korea's Days Are Numbered," *Time*, September 18, 2019, <https://time.com/5680012/thae-yong-ho-north-korea-kim-jong-un-regime-change/>; Sang Ki Kim and Eun-Ju Choi, "The Fallacy of North Korean Collapse," *38 North*, February 1, 2021, <https://www.38north.org/2021/02/the-fallacy-of-north-korean-collapse/>; and Oriana Skylar Mastro, "5 Things to Know If Kim Jong Un Dies," *Foreign Policy*, April 27, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/27/5-things-to-know-if-kim-jong-un-dies/>.

98 Given advanced U.S. and ROK rapid strike capabilities and the still relatively primitive delivery mechanisms of North Korea's nuclear weapons, it is reasonable to believe Pyongyang does not feel it has a secure SSC. See Austin Long and Brendan Rittenhouse Green, "Stalking the Secure Second Strike: Intelligence, Counterforce, and Nuclear Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, Nos. 1-2 (2015), 38-73, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01442214.2015.1041111>.

99 OSD, “Military and Security Developments,” 4; Stacey Yuen, “How the miserable death of Moammar Gadhafi factors into Kim Jong Un’s nuclear ambitions,” *CNBC*, July 16, 2017, <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/07/10/a-possible-reason-north-koreas-kim-wont-disarm-memories-of-gadhafi.html>. The DPRK’s perception of U.S.-ROK exercises has been skeptical since the end of the Cold War. For the role that the Team Spirit exercise played in inter-Korean relations in the early 1990s, see Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads*, 69, 243. For North Korean views of U.S.-ROK exercises over the last decade, see Daniel Pinkston, “U.S.-ROK Military Exercises,” *International Crisis Group*, March 7, 2011, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/north-east-asia/korean-peninsula/us-rok-military-exercises>; Ankit Panda, “US, South Korea Call Off Foal Eagle and Key Resolve Exercises, Announce New Exercise,” *The Diplomat*, March 4, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/us-south-korea-call-off-foal-eagle-and-key-resolve-exercises-announce-new-exercise/>; Jeff Daniels, “North Korea is scaling back its annual winter military exercises,” *CNBC News*, January 30, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/01/29/north-korea-is-scaling-back-its-annual-winter-military-exercises.html>; Simon Denyer, “North Korea complains about ‘stink’ of U.S.-South Korea military exercises,” *Washington Post*, March 16, 2021, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/north-korea-complains-about-stink-of-us-south-korea-military-exercises/2021/03/15/415ba17c-85fa-11eb-8a67-f314e5fcf88d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/north-korea-complains-about-stink-of-us-south-korea-military-exercises/2021/03/15/415ba17c-85fa-11eb-8a67-f314e5fcf88d_story.html); and Choe Sang-Hun, “South Korea Will Pay More for U.S. Troop Presence,” *New York Times*, March 10, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/10/world/asia/US-troops-korea-payments.html>.

100 It is typically difficult for states with low trust to communicate if actions, weapons, or exercises are offensive or defensive (Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), 167-214, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009958>).

101 Indeed, President Park Chung-hee only began directing the development of nuclear weapons for South Korea in the 1970s after President Richard Nixon withdrew 20,000 U.S. troops from the ROK. See William Burr, *Stopping Korea from Going Nuclear*, and Leon Whyte, “Evolution of the U.S.-ROK Alliance: Abandonment Fears,” June 22, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/06/evolution-of-the-u-s-rok-alliance-abandonment-fears/>.

102 In 2017, Washington dropped limits in place since 1979 on the warhead weights of South Korean missiles – a measure originally designed to reduce the likelihood of a regional arms race, but seen by Trump and Moon as impeding the KMPR project (Franz-Stefan Gady, “Trump, Moon Reach Final Agreement to Scrap Warhead Limits For Ballistic Missiles,” *The Diplomat*, November 8, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/trump-moon-reach-final-agreement-to-scrap-warhead-limits-for-ballistic-missiles/>).

103 Sokolsky, “Road Map.” It is possible that, should tensions decrease enough, Pyongyang could assess its security environment to safe enough that it could agree on mutual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula with South Korea, as it did in the brief interlude between withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from South Korea in 1991 and the restarted North Korean nuclear weapons program in 1993 or 1994 (“North Korean Nuclear Negotiations: 1985-2019,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed May 5, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations>).

104 George Bunn, *Arms Control by Committee: Managing Negotiations with the Russian* (Stanford University Press, 1992), 44-47, [https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/publications/arms\\_control\\_by\\_committee\\_managing\\_negotiations\\_with\\_the\\_russians](https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/publications/arms_control_by_committee_managing_negotiations_with_the_russians).

105 Zdzislaw Lachowski, Martin Sjögren, Alyson J. K. Bailes, John Hart and Shannon N. Kile, *Tools for Building Confidence on the Korean Peninsula* (Solna, Sweden: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2007), 47-64, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/misc/SIPRI07Korea.pdf>. On Open Skies, see Daryl Kimball, “The Open Skies Treaty at a Glance,” *Arms Control Association*, November 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/openskies>. On the (now destroyed) joint liaison office in Kaesong, see “North Korea blows up joint liaison office with South in Kaesong,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53060620>.

106 Two such interests include the return of U.S. POW/MIA remains from the Korean War and bringing in the DPRK into international groups such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime to reduce the risk of weapons of mass destruction material being sold irresponsibly or stolen (Robert

Einhorn, “The key choices now facing the Biden administration on North Korea,” *Brookings Institution*, March 30, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-key-choices-now-facing-the-biden-administration-on-north-korea/>).

107 The first two of these interests are the aims of arms control as laid out in Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey, 1985), 2, <https://www.amazon.com/Strategy-Arms-Control-Thomas-Schelling/dp/0080323901>. On the evolution of the DPRK’s unification goals, see Sue Mi Terry, “North Korea’s Strategic Goals and Policy towards the United States and South Korea,” *International Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Fall 2013), 63-92, [http://www.icks.org/data/ijks/1482461379\\_add\\_file\\_3.pdf](http://www.icks.org/data/ijks/1482461379_add_file_3.pdf). On the updated official vision for unification in the ROK, see Tom O’Connor, “A Plan to Unite North, South Korea: ‘One People, Two Countries, Two Systems, One Market,’” *Newsweek*, April 23, 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/plan-unite-north-south-korea-one-people-two-countries-two-systems-one-market-1586091>.