

UNITED STATES KOREAN POLICY AND WORLD ORDER*

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The role of the United States in South Korea traditionally viewed as one of peacemaking and stabilizing force in a volatile region of Asia, when scrutinized from a normative perspective (using the world order values of peace, economic well-being and social justice), makes it clear that past and present US support for the Republic of Korea (ROK) has served precisely the opposite purpose. By channeling massive amounts of military and economic aid into South Korea, and by stationing troops there, the US has

helped frustrate the goal of unification and preserved the corrupt and repressive regime of President Park Chung Hee. US encouragement of Japanese investment in South Korea has resulted in a classic case of economic dependency: unfavorable balance of trade and growth without development. The paper comes to the conclusion that as long as the US persists in maintaining its presence in Korea and its anachronistic global perceptions, American foreign policy cannot hope to serve human needs or further a just and peaceful world order.

Introduction

When two elephants fight it is the grass which suffers
—A Swahili saying
A shrimp gets crushed to death in the fight between whales
—An old Korean saying

These two adages nicely capture the conventional wisdom about the predicament of the weak in the world of the strong. But do they still hold true in today's world? The dramatic OPEC oil embargo of late 1973 has not

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only inflicted a mortal wound on the old economic order; it has also shaken up our perceptual paradigm about the putative helplessness of the underdogs in contemporary global politics. In the wake of this transformation of world politics in the 1970s, a new 'wisdom' has been advanced in international relations research in the form of the 'tyranny of the weak' hypothesis. US-Korean relations is a case in point. Can it be said that the Park regime in Seoul perfected the art of tyranny, not only in its domestic politics, but also in its relationship with the United States?

The crisis in the US-Korean relationship, triggered by Park Chung Hee's massive violation of human rights at home and the Koreagate scandal in the United States were parts of the larger systemic crisis afflicting US alliance politics throughout the world in the mid-1970s. In the wake of the OPEC oil embargo, the Third World has successfully turned global politics from a geopolitical to an ecopolitical direction. This has in effect deprived the United States of international fora for continuing its geopolitical game. Despite some changes and variations in managerial and representational style, the dominant approach of the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations to global ecopolitics was one of 'damage limitation'. Furthermore, the United States has been challenged strategically and militarily by the Soviet Union. Thanks to the stimulus received from its humiliating retreat during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviet Union has been caught up in the strategic arms area, and has thus neutralized whatever geopolitical leverage the United States might have enjoyed owing to its nuclear superiority.

Moreover, the sudden collapse of America's treasured domino in Indochina in 1975 called into question the viability and effectiveness of US ability and/or willingness to defend the remaining dominos in its fractured global alliance network. Faced with this system-wide crisis, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger assured audiences at home and abroad in his press conference of 1 May, 1975, that 'the forward defense areas must continue to be Western Europe and Korea, and indirectly Japan.'¹ In spite of the Koreagate scandal, then, Korea has achieved the dubious distinction of being the last frontline domino in Asia, to be protected at any cost as part of the US effort to maintain its hegemonical position.

Much of the discussion and debate on US-Korean relations in both policy-making and academic circles centers on tactical and managerial aspects of the problem. This paper consciously shies away from such an approach by focusing, instead, on the invisible hands of deep-rooted values and norms guiding the actual behavior of US Korean policy. In short, this

¹For partial text of this press conference, see Se-Jin Kim (ed.), *Documents on Korean-American Relations 1943-1976* (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1976), p. 486.

paper adopts a value-centered approach based on the assumption that a value-neutral approach, especially with regard to the politics of the two Koreas marked by a perennial legitimacy crisis, is morally dishonest, conceptually elusive, and substantively policy-irrelevant.² US Korean policy will be examined critically within the framework of an explicit set of such humane world order values as peace, economic well-being, social justice (human rights), and ecological harmony.³

Since this normative-globalist approach to the study of US foreign policy differs significantly from traditional and contemporary mainstream approaches, its key assumptions and heuristic framework must be presented at the outset.

First, this approach argues that the traditional concept of *national* interest or *national* security has long since outlived whatever usefulness it may have had and, in fact, has now become dangerously maladaptive and anachronistic in meeting the new requirements of survival in the nuclear-ecological age. Unless or until this traditional conception of national interest is drastically reformulated to be compatible with global/human values and interests, only the parochial interests of the topdogs at home and the hegemonical interests of the United States abroad will be served.

Second, this approach is premised upon a belief in the common interest of the human species and the wholeness of the planet. It assumes a complementarity, if not complete identity, of needs and aspirations among peoples otherwise divided by national territories. We will note later, for example, how the interests of the American and Korean peoples are mutually complementary.

Third, if US politics is the authoritative allocation of values – and few political scientists would deny this today – US foreign policy can be defined as the externalization of a value-allocating and value-realizing process. Hence, a normative analysis is well suited for dealing with fundamental questions pertaining to US foreign policy. What basic values are embedded in the structures of US foreign policy machinery and have guided US Korean policy? How does US Korean policy fit into the authoritative allocation of values in American society? That is, whose interests are served and whose

²For my further analysis of this problem, see Samuel S. Kim, 'Research on Korean Communism: Promise versus Performance', *World Politics* 32, January 1980, pp. 281–310.

³For an excellent study of US foreign policy employing this set of world order values, see Robert C. Johansen, *The National Interest and the Human Interest: An Analysis of US Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980). For normative studies of the Korean problem, see Glenn D. Paige, 'On Values and Science: The Korean Decision Reconsidered', *American Political Science Review* 71, December 1977, pp. 1603–1609; and Yoshikazu Sakamoto, 'Korea as a World Order Issue', *Alternatives* III, 3, March 1978, pp. 385–413.

interests are denied or shortchanged in this value-realizing process? Likewise, how does US Korean policy help or hinder the realization of the aspirations and needs of the Korean people? Finally, one may ask: Is US Korean policy a typical or an atypical case; i.e., does it confirm or rebut the normative thrust of US foreign policy in general?

The national interest versus the human interest⁴

The monetary and human costs of US involvement in Korean affairs since the end of World War II, especially since the outbreak of the Korean War, are staggering. If accepted in a 'value-neutral' manner, the data in Table 1 suggest that no country in modern times has helped another country in so generous a manner and for so long a period. When we examine the underlying normative structures of US Korean policy, however, America's interest in Korea was more geopolitical than human, more instrumental than intrinsic.

*Table 1**
US monetary and human costs incurred in the course of
its involvement in Korea, 1946-1976:

I. US Casualties During the Korean War (1950-1953):	
Deaths in battle	33 629
Other Deaths	20 617
Wounded	103 284
Total	157 530
II. Nonreimbursable monetary costs (FY 1946-1976):	
Estimated Korean War costs	\$ 18 billion—\$ 79.1 billion
Estimated costs of maintaining US military forces in South Korea in FY 1954-1976	\$12.0 billion
Military aid : grants in FY 1950-1976	\$ 5.5 billion
Economic aid : grants in FY 1946-1976	\$ 3.9 billion
Total	\$39.4 billion—\$100.5 billion
III. Credits :	
Military Aid : FMS credits in FY 1971-1976	\$ 0.4 billion [*]
Economic Aid : Loans in FY 1946-1976	\$ 1.2 billion
Total	\$ 1.6 billion

*Sources: Adapted from Nathan N. White, *US Policy Toward Korea: Analysis, Alternatives, and Recommendations* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), p. 53; *China and US Far East Policy 1945-1966* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p.19.

⁴This formulation follows Johansen's book, *The National Interest and the Human Interest* (f.n.3).

Symbolically and strategically, Korea has been viewed since the Korean War as a frontline country in the defense of America's alliance network in Asia. Whether intended or not, the practical import of this geopolitical strategy – i.e. the value impact of this policy – ran counter to meeting the fundamental aspirations and needs of the Korean people.

In order to develop this argument – which undoubtedly defies the professed values of US policy-makers and the mainstream thesis in Korean studies – we need to distinguish the *frustrated* aspirations and needs of the Korean people from the *implicit* values of the ruling elites in South Korea. The aspirations and needs of people in both North and South Korea may be generalized as including (1) *peaceful national reunification*, followed by (2) *self-determination* in political development, (3) *self-reliance* in economic development, (4) *self-realization* in moral and intellectual development (universalized human rights yearning), and (5) *self-dignity and self-respect* as a legitimate member of the family of nations. Certainly, these do not represent the implicit values of the political elites charged with the formulation of the national interest, but they do represent the deep-rooted aspirations which have been denied free expression. As such, they come closer to being idealized norms than expressed beliefs. To the extent that US Korean policy is guided by the human interest, however, there should be no conflict between the aspirations and needs of Americans and Koreans.

To be sure, the five aspirations and needs of the Korean people listed above are imbued with strong nationalistic overtones that may seem at odds with the humane values of a just world order. It is difficult, however, to imagine how a strong and unified Korea, which had satisfied some or all of these national needs, could pose a threat to its powerful neighbors (the Soviet Union, China, and Japan), let alone the world order. On the contrary, a weak, divided, and frustrated Korea has been, and continues to be, a world order problem. Be that as it may, Korea's modern history has given special urgency and intensity to this strong nationalist yearning. The fact that Korea has always been a victim of aggression, never an aggressor itself, adds a measure of legitimacy to its national aspirations.

US response to Korean national aspirations

A brief historical synopsis shows the intensity of the Korean yearning for national unification and the extent to which US policy has helped or hindered this national process. Korea existed as a homogeneous and unified political entity for over 1000 years, sharing a common territory, language, race, customs, history and strong and powerful neighbors to envy and resent. It was

not until the turn of the century, however, that Korean nationalism began to take its modern shape under the impetus of imperialistic penetration. Korea soon became a strategic crossfire in imperialistic rivalry. From China's vantage point, Korea was a *cordon sanitaire* against Japanese continental expansionism. Lying in the path of Russia's southward expansion, Korea also became a major focus of strategic interest for Russian foreign policy in the Far East. For Japan, Korea served, not only as an indispensable bridge-head for its continental expansionism, but also as a major source of agricultural supplies for Japanese industrialization, militarization, and continental expansionism.

Thus, during the heyday of international social Darwinism and imperialistic power play, Korea was inevitably transformed into a vortex of great-power rivalries. The opening of Korea, then known as the hermit kingdom of Asia, is vividly described in a leading history text in the following terms :

Not one power but five pushed their way into Seoul—Chinese and Japanese troops, Russian, British, and American diplomats, together with Catholic and Protestant missionaries, all exerted their several influences in this hermit kingdom that lacked any tradition or experience of multi-state foreign relations.⁵

It is of some historical significance in this connection that US diplomatic presence, which started in 1882 with the signing of a friendship and commerce treaty, was terminated in 1905 by a classical imperialistic deal (the Taft-Katsura agreement) under which Japan recognized America's dominant interests in the Philippines in return for US recognition of Japan's dominant interests in Korea. Five years later, when Japan transformed her protectorate over Korea into complete annexation, the United States did not even bother to protest.

Of course, what eventually served as the most potent catalyst and the sharpest focus for the development of Korean nationalism was the oppression and exploitation of Japanese colonialism for some 36 years. Viewed against this historical background, no political leadership in the North or the South can claim political legitimacy without anti-Japanese imperialism credentials and without appealing to the national aspirations and needs of the people. Likewise, no foreign power can establish or sustain its 'legitimacy' in the eyes of the Koreans without having helped the national reunification process.

The United States involvement in Korean affairs was resumed with the most auspicious set of expectations on the part of the Korean people. First, the United States was perceived as having had no colonial or imperialistic involvement in Korea or elsewhere. The fact that Korea proved to be one of

⁵John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation* (Boston; Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 468.

the rare 'success' stories of American protestant missionary activities abroad may be attributable, in part to this Korean perception and in part to the identification of most American missionaries with the causes of the Korean nationalist movement during the period of Japanese colonialism. Just as the American missions in Korea provided sanctuaries for Korean nationalists at home, the United States itself became an important operational base for exiled Korean nationalists, including Syngman Rhee.

Secondly, the *traditional* American values as embodied in the Declaration of Independence and, more recently, in the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination captured the national imagination of Koreans and became a legitimizing symbolism for many Korean nationalists. Finally and most importantly, the United States was the leader of the Allied Powers which had defeated the hated enemy state, Japan. Hence, the United States was pictured by many Koreans as the national savior with all the goodwill, responsibility and promise that such symbolism entails.

Contrary to widely held opinion, the division of Korea at the 38th parallel was neither a secret deal made at the war-time conference nor an inevitable outcome of the cold-war rivalry. The Cairo Conference communique declared, *inter alia*, that 'the aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.'⁶ The formal Yalta Agreement makes no reference to Korea, although the Korean question was tangentially discussed. Roosevelt proposed a Soviet-American-Chinese trusteeship of 20 to 30 years; Stalin merely noted that the period of trusteeship should be as short as possible and that the British should be invited to join the trusteeship. Both leaders agreed that foreign troops should not be stationed in Korea.⁷

Curiously, Truman did not raise the Korean issue at the Potsdam Conference. Molotov and Stalin posed the Korean trusteeship question, but Churchill cut them off while Truman made no attempt to restore the

⁶US Department of State, *In Quest of Peace and Security: Selected Documents on American Foreign Policy, 1941-1951* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1951), p. 10.

⁷For detailed accounts of this and related events, see Soon Sung Cho, *Korea in World Politics 1940-1950: An Evaluation of American Responsibility* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 1967); and Gregory Henderson, 'Korea', in Gregory Henderson, Richard Ned Lebow, and John G. Stoessinger, *Divided Nations in a Divided World* (New York: David McKay Co., 1974), pp. 43-96. It should also be noted here that all American documentary materials have been published. To check evidence supporting the main line of argument presented here, the reader should consult the following: US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers; The Conferences of Malta and Yalta* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955), especially pp. 359-361; US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1945: The British Commonwealth and the Far East*, Vol. VI (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969).

discussion. It was only with the entry of Soviet troops into Korea on 10–11 August, 1945, that Washington became concerned. A hasty *ad hoc* meeting in the US War Department was called. Two young lieutenant colonels – Dean Rusk and C.H. Bonesteel III – proposed a plan for the Soviet Union to receive the Japanese surrender north of the 38th parallel and the United States south of that line. This proposal was hastily incorporated into General Order No. 1 and was cleared with the Russians who raised no objections. There was nothing legally or militarily to prevent the Soviet troops from moving all the way to the end of the Korean peninsula. Yet, to this point, there is no documentary evidence of any Soviet intransigence on the Korean issue. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were too preoccupied with the larger pieces on their geopolitical chessboard to follow up on their tongue-in-cheek agreement on a Korean trusteeship. Be that as it may, General Order No.1 was sent to General McArthur for implementation. What happened afterward is a familiar story that need not be recounted here. Though the plan was intended as an *ad hoc* zonal device for dividing up surrender arrangements, the United States cannot escape the major responsibility for the original conception of the division of Korea. Between the Cairo Conference and the Potsdam Conference, Korea was a forgotten country in the making of US foreign and military policy.

With the onset of the cold war, US Korean policy became part of the grandiose calculus of US global geopolitics. Against this background, the US military government in South Korea suddenly discovered in Syngman Rhee a potential leader who could provide ‘stability’ through the establishment of a viable anti-communist state in the southern half of the peninsula. Although Rhee resumed his ‘diplomatic’ activities in the United States in 1941 and sent numerous appeals to the State Department for US recognition, he was virtually ignored by the US government until 1945. According to Robert T. Oliver, a pro-Rhee biographer,

In the latter part of 1942, Rhee was flatly informed by Dr. Hornbeck that in the opinion of the State Department he was wholly unknown inside Korea and the provisional government was no more than a self-constituted club with limited membership among a group of expatriates.⁸

From 1946 through the outbreak of the Korean War, US policy focused largely on legitimizing the anti-communist government in the South. On 14 November, 1947, for example, the United Nations General Assembly

⁸Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1954), p. 182. For my analysis of the developmental problems of Korean nationalism, see Samuel S. Kim, ‘The Developmental Problems of Korean Nationalism’, in Se-Jin Kim and Chi-Won Kang (eds.), *Korea: A Nation in Transition* (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1978), pp. 169–199.

approved a US-sponsored resolution calling for general elections, to be held throughout the Korean peninsula the following year, under the auspices of the UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCK). When UNTCK was denied access to the northern half of the peninsula, the US military government decided to hold elections under its control. Many Koreans boycotted the elections, fearing that they might legitimize and perpetuate the division of Korea. As subsequent development proved, these fears were fully justified.

Following the elections, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was established in the South on 15 August, 1948, an event which was soon reciprocated by the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the North on 9 September. Taking advantage of its 'automatic majority' in the United Nations, the United States involved the world organization in the politics of legitimizing the ROK government. On 12 December, 1948, the General Assembly adopted a resolution by a vote of 48:6:1, recognizing the government of the ROK as 'a lawful government' (*'un gouvernement légitime'* in the French text), although the language of the resolution was ambiguous as to whether such legitimization applied to all or only the southern half of the Korean peninsula.⁹ Presumably on the basis of this resolution, the ROK government has since maintained that: 'The legitimacy of the Seoul government as the sole lawful polity representing the Korean peninsula and people [has been], continuously endorsed by the world organization under whose auspices and supervision the Republic of Korea government was elected'.¹⁰

Apart from the legal validity of this resolution, UN involvement in the politics of competitive legitimization has not helped the unification process in Korea. In subsequent years, the United States lavishly expended its political and diplomatic capital on behalf of the ROK. By getting itself so deeply and one-sidedly involved in the politics of competitive legitimization of the two Koreas in the international community, the United States has in effect bastardized the unification process.

⁹The key declaratory paragraph of the resolution reads: '*Declares that there has been established a lawful government (the Government of the Republic of Korea) having effective control and (sic) jurisdiction over that part of Korea where the Temporary Commission was able to observe and consult and in which the great majority of the people of all Korea reside; that this Government is based on elections which were a valid expression of the free will of the electorate of that part of Korea and which were observed by the Temporary Commission; and that there is the only such Government in Korea.*' See *Official Records of the Third Session of the General Assembly*, Part I, 21 September–12 December, 1948: *Resolutions* (Palais de Chaillot, Paris), p. 25 (emphasis added).

¹⁰*The Korea Herald* (Seoul), editorial, 17 September, 1978, p. 4; editorial, 10 July, 1979, p. 4.

Recently released documents shed light on American conceptualization of the United Nations during the heyday of American domination. Contrary to the popular notion that the United Nations was the primary instrument of world order in the 1950s, US policy-makers viewed the world organization primarily in terms of 'its usefulness to us in the event of general war, its usefulness to us during a twenty or thirty year period of a war of nerves'.¹¹ In short, US support to the ROK in the United Nations was part of a broader conceptualization of American global geopolitics.

The Korean War proved to be a blessing in disguise for US strategic planners. Despite America's growing engagement in the cold war in Europe, as evidenced by the establishment of the NATO in 1949, the budgetary constraints posed by US domestic politics prevented the Truman Administration from extending US military networks to all the anti-communist countries in Asia. Faced with the imbalance between ideological commitment and military power, America's Asian policy prior to the Korean War pivoted around the 'protection' of Japan. This is illustrated by the hands-off posture adopted by the Truman Administration following the communist victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949. That Korea was not on America's geopolitical chessboard is also evidenced by Secretary of State Dean Acheson's policy statement of 12 January, 1950, which excluded the Korean peninsula from the US defense perimeter.

The Korean War served as a legitimizing event to fully militarize and globalize America's cold-war geopolitics. It immediately stimulated an increase of \$38.5 billion in military spending. One alliance system after another was established in the Asian and Pacific region. Korea was once again placed on America's geopolitical chessboard as an important pawn to be defended at any cost. Note the introduction of US tactical nuclear weapons into South Korea in 1957. That the United States also introduced nuclear-tipped Matador missiles into Taiwan in the same year suggests Chinese targets. In the course of building this military alliance with the ROK, Washington viewed the unification process as an ideological Trojan horse aimed at subverting and communizing the faithful ally, the ROK. In short, the defense of the ROK government and the defense of America's global position were symbolically and strategically equated. In the context of the Korean peninsula, America's military presence has since been justified and legitimized in the name of preserving peace and stability, that is, maintaining the *status quo* of divided Korea.

¹¹US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954*, Vol. III: *United Nations Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 5.

Peace, reunification, and US troop withdrawal

To the extent that one accepts the values inherent in cold-war geopolitics, the US Korean policy of the 1950s and 1960s has a logic and rationale. However, to maintain the essentially same policy in the 1970s and beyond, despite drastic changes in the strategic landscape of Asia and systemic changes in the international environment, makes little sense. Some may argue that US troop withdrawal from South Korea represents a significant change in US Korean policy. There is a close parallel between such an argument and the old campaign argument by politicians running for reelection that a given Soviet-American arms control agreement has capped the volcano of the strategic arms race.

The original idea of reducing US troops in the ROK germinated in the so-called Nixon Doctrine (or Guam Declaration) of 25 July, 1969, in which President Nixon, singling out 'Communist China', identified 'the greatest threat to the peace of the world' as emanating from Asia. 'But as far as our role is concerned,' Nixon noted, 'we must avoid that kind of policy that will make countries in Asia so dependent upon us that we are dragged into conflicts such as the one that we have in Vietnam.'¹² As an application of the Nixon Doctrine, the decision was made to withdraw 20 000 US troops by 30 June, 1971, and to provide funding for a five-year plan to modernize the ROK armed forces. That this was more of a tactical concession to domestic opponents of the war in Indochina than of any revision of the concept of Korea as a linchpin of US security policy in the Pacific in the post-Vietnam era may be seen in the 1971 state of the world message: 'It [the Nixon Doctrine] serves the domestic imperative of restraint in our international role, without sacrificing our interests in Asia or defaulting on our obligations.'¹³

The Ford Administration flatly declared that it had no plan to reduce US forces in Korea. The controversy thus started with Jimmy Carter's 1976 campaign promise to withdraw US ground troops and his initial attempt to carry out this promise in 1977. In a letter to Park Chung Hee dated 25 July, 1977, Carter specified:

- (1) that the troop withdrawal plan signifies no change in US defense commitment;
- (2) that withdrawal is to take place in four to five years;
- (3) that there will be indefinite stay of US air force units, military intelligence and logistic support personnel;
- (4) that US naval deployment in the area is to be continued; and
- (5) that additional foreign military sales credits would be forthcoming.

¹²Kim, *Documents on Korean-American Relations 1943-1976* (f.n.1), p. 360.

¹³*US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: Building for Peace*, A Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon, President of the United States, 25 February, 1975 (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1971), p. 94.

This withdrawal plan was further modified in 1978 by allowing two combat battalions scheduled for withdrawal in 1978 to remain at least until the end of 1979.¹⁴

Moreover, the Carter Administration made two significant decisions in 1978. The first was to increase the number of US tactical aircraft. The second and more significant decision was to integrate American and South Korean war systems in the form of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command in order to carry out joint planning and coordination in war and peace. As if these were not enough, the Carter Administration announced that any further military withdrawal would be held in abeyance until a reassessment of North Korea's military capabilities was completed. What is revealing here is the use or misuse of intelligence data to support a predetermined political judgement. For example, both Richard C. Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance stated before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that 'it is already clear that we will significantly increase our estimates of some categories of North Korean strength,' while admitting that the US intelligence community had not yet completed its reassessment study.¹⁵

Against the background of progressive abandonment of rhetorical commitment to world order values (disarmament, human rights, troop withdrawal from Korea, etc.) made during the inaugural phase of his administration, Carter succumbed to the forces of reaction at home and abroad by journeying to Seoul to embrace – and to place the American stamp of approval on – the dictatorial regime of Park Chung Hee. In an exchange of toasts in Seoul, Carter declared :

Our military commitment to Korea's security is strong, unshakable, and enduring. The security interests of four great powers intersect in this very region today. That is why the maintenance of peace on the Korean peninsula is so vital to the international community.¹⁶

Both the timing of the Carter visit and this statement in Seoul suggest a total insensitivity of Carter to the loud voices of the oppressed in South Korea. Just as Carter blindly embraced the Shah of Iran in the last months of his oppressive rule, turning a deaf ear to the legitimate voice of national revolutionaries, so did he also embrace Park on his last legs of oppressive rule. In so doing, he betrayed a broad centrist coalition of opposition which included the New Democratic Party (NDP) led by Kim Young Sam, Catholic and Protestant leaders, intellectuals, university students, industrial workers and farmers.

¹⁴Chong-Shik Chung (ed.), *Korean Unification: Source Materials with An Introduction* (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1979), Vol.II, pp. 144–145.

¹⁵See *Department of State Bulletin* 79, April 1979, pp. 17–23, 24–26 for the texts of Holbrooke's and Vance's statements.

¹⁶*Department of State Bulletin* 79, August 1979, p. 15.

In the presidential statement of 20 July, 1979 – the latest authoritative stand of the United States on the troop withdrawal plan – Carter declared that withdrawals of combat elements of the 2nd Division would remain in abeyance and the timing and pace of any future withdrawal would be reexamined in 1981. Significantly, Carter now added a new condition for withdrawal – namely, a reduction of tension in the Korean peninsula.¹⁷ There is no evidence that the Carter Administration is able or willing to learn a necessary lesson from the demise of the Shah in Iran or from the demise of Park in South Korea. The lesson is simple enough: that US military presence, far from serving as a stabilizing and legitimizing force, not only increases tension in the area, but also works toward delegitimizing the client regime by showing it to be a puppet that cannot stand on its own feet.

President Carter's sudden discovery of 'the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War' in the Persian Gulf gave birth to the inauguration of the Carter Doctrine in January 1980.¹⁸ The impact of the new doctrine on US Korean policy is already visible. On 11 February, 1980, the Pentagon announced that \$110 million had been earmarked for military construction of US forces in Korea for FY 1981, more than a three-fold increase over the \$33 million allocated for FY 1980. In addition, the Pentagon decided to introduce and deploy in South Korea a squadron of A10 close support aircraft, coupled with the introduction of the sophisticated sentry aircraft E3A AWACS (Airborne Warning And Control System) into the Far East.

On the next day, 12 February, General John A. Wickham, Jr., the United Nations commander who also heads the ROK-US Combined Forces Command, announced a revival of a 'containment policy' in Korea. Assistant Secretary Holbrooke then disclosed in late February the administration's intention to propose a supplementary request to further increase military assistance to the ROK for FY 1981. On 1 March, 1980, the ROK and the United States started a 51-day combined ROK-US war exercise euphemistically dubbed 'Team Spirit '80'. This so-called 'realistic war game' involved some 150 000 ROK and US troops in a simulated war exercise of three phases – strategic deployment, field exercise, and redeployment of US forces back to home stations.¹⁹

The miscarriage of the troop withdrawal plan is suggestive of the normative and behavioral problems of US foreign policy in the 1970s. In the face of a

¹⁷ *Department of State Bulletin* 79, September 1979, p. 37.

¹⁸ See Department of State, *President Carter: State of the Union Address*, 23 January, 1980, Current Policy No. 132, pp. 1–4.

¹⁹ For detailed descriptions and reportings on the events described here, see *The Korea Herald* (Seoul), 13 February, 1980, 14 February, 1980, p. 4; *Newsreview* (Seoul), 9 February, 1980, p. 6; 23 February, 1980, p. 8; and 8 March, 1980, p. 11.

declining global geopolitical position as the champion of the *status quo*, US policy-makers have transformed Korea into the last refuge of the cold-war conception of *Pax Americana*. Revealingly, the fundamental change in the strategic landscape of Asia brought about by detente and power realignments – note Sino-American and Sino-Japanese cooperation, on the one hand, and Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Soviet conflict, on the other – has made no discernible normative or strategic impact on US Korean policy. US policy-makers tenaciously, and almost autistically, adhere to the view that world peace still depends upon US military strength.

American defeats in Vietnam, Iran, and Nicaragua are failures attributable to a normative anachronism – i.e., failure to change US values and norms to be more harmonious with the irresistible currents of historical process – not a failure resulting from the absence of military power. Without a thoroughgoing restructuring of the value system guiding US foreign policy, changes in foreign policy are likely to be no more than *ad hoc* tactical gimmicks.

Having greatly exaggerated the geopolitical value of Korea as a frontline domino state and having repeatedly promised to maintain stability in the Korean peninsula as an integral component of American global strategy, US policy-makers have unwittingly maximized the weaker partner's 'negative power' to the point where the Seoul regime can dictate US Korean policy. It may not be an exaggeration to say that US policy (or non-policy) toward Pyongyang is being dictated in Seoul. Seoul's influence in the making and execution of US Korean policy is exercised by demonstrating its fragility, its unreliability, its unpredictability, or its mischief-making power to suck Washington into an unwanted conflict.²⁰ To the extent that a 'tyranny of the weak' phenomenon is thus introduced into the asymmetrical alliance relationship between the two, it is largely of America's own making. The Seoul regime knows how to initiate and orchestrate any number and variation of acts designed to provoke certain predictable responses from Pyongyang, which can then be used in confirming the original premise of Kim Il Sung's aggressive designs and intentions. This is the familiar sociological phenomenon in which the image of the enemy inexorably works toward its self-fulfilling prophecy.

The supremacy of geopolitical values in US Korean policy has yielded a deceptive appearance of 'peace' in the Korean peninsula. But in the long run and in a broader conception of peace defined in both positive and negative as well as physical and structural dimensions, it actually helps

²⁰For an excellent analysis of the 'tyranny of the weak' hypothesis in the context of relationships between the two Koreas and their larger allies, see Astri Suhrke, 'Gratuity or Tyranny: The Korean Alliances', *World Politics* 25, July 1973, pp. 508–532.

institutionalize two competing war systems in both Koreas with their respective external support and linkage. At best, then, US policy has preserved an 'unprincipled' peace, hampering the reunification process. Judged by the normative criteria of meeting the human needs of the American and Korean peoples, the opportunity costs of US policy have been unacceptably high.

Rule by violence

Washington's adherence to stability as the supreme value in its Korean policy encouraged the Park regime to rule by oppression. The United States has adopted two contradictory approaches to human rights globally. It has taken a *delinkage approach* toward dependent client states such as the ROK, where it does enjoy decisive political, military, and economic leverage to improve human rights practices. On the other hand, it has taken a *linkage approach* toward adversary states such as the Soviet Union, where it has little leverage on the issue. In short, the human rights issue has become a political expedient to be used *vis-a-vis* adversaries and to be ignored or soft-pedaled *vis-a-vis* allies.

In the context of the US-Korean relationship, US policy-makers have adopted what may be called an 'embarrassment limitation' approach designed largely to enhance the chances of Congressional approval of military aid to the ROK. In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 1 March, 1979, pertaining to FY 1980 assistance proposals for East Asia, Richard C. Holbrooke made a remarkable statement revealing the underlying values guiding US policy in Asia:

Our security assistance is considered by the nations of East Asia to be of great material and psychological value. The overall objective of the FY 1980 security assistance program which we are requesting for East Asia is to provide *access to the military wherewithal to cope with internal and external threats* and to provide psychological reassurance of US dedication to the goal of regional security and stability (emphasis added).²¹

It should be noted that 65.8% of the FY 1980 request for East Asia was earmarked for the ROK. Is it possible that Holbrooke was requesting military aid for the Seoul regime so as to provide it with the 'military wherewithal' to cope with *internal threats* posed by the opposition party members and human rights activists? The Carter Administration's approach to the human rights crisis in South Korea (note also a similar approach to Pakistan

²¹Department of State Bulletin 79, April 1979, p. 20.

in the wake of the Afghan crisis) clarifies the value priorities of US foreign policy.²²

The abuse of human rights in South Korea is symptomatic of the deep normative and structural crises of the Park regime. First of all, there is a linkage between legitimacy and rule by oppression. To the extent that a given political order is not accepted as legitimate by the populace, the regime can sustain itself – and usually not too long – only by resort to coercive force. While the pursuit of political legitimacy has been the central concern of both Koreas, the legitimacy crisis was especially acute for the Park government.

To begin with, Park's background as an officer in the Japanese imperial army in Manchuria from 1943 to 1945 *ipso facto* disqualified him as a credible national leader. Furthermore, he came to power through a military *coup d'état*, overthrowing the only liberal democratic government in recent Korean history. By euphemistically dubbing the day of the coup as the May 16th Revolution, Park tried to legitimize his act as one of patriotism. 'We were doctors,' he rationalized, 'attempting to save a desperately ill patient.'²³ This merely showed Park's narrow conception of the 'health' of the nation as well as his total lack of sensitivity to populist yearning for reunification.

Under the impetus of the liberalizing policy of the Chang Myong (John Chang) government in 1960–1961, pent-up popular emotions for reunification found unprecedented and untrammelled expression. In seizing power, Park and his colonels interpreted such explosion of popular unification sentiments as a sign of 'social disorder'. Confirming popular suspicion of his national loyalty, Park then normalized relations with Japan under questionable circumstances – namely, protracted and geopolitically motivated pressures from the United States and overwhelming opposition from virtually all political and social sectors of Korean political life. Spontaneous demonstrations which broke out throughout the country were crushed by military force.

Of course, Park's legitimacy crisis was greatly accentuated by his counterpart in the North, Kim Il Sung. While Park was collaborating as an officer in the Japanese Imperial Army in Manchuria, Kim Il Sung was leading a band of nationalist guerrillas fighting against the Japanese. The symbolic contrast of the pro- and anti-Japanese backgrounds of the two leaders is also reflected in the names they respectively adopted: Park at this time was known as Lt. Masao Takagi (it should be pointed out in fairness that the Koreans were forced to Japanize their names and by September 1940, some 16 million

²²For a trenchant normative analysis of US Korean policy in the context of the human rights issue, see Richard A. Falk, 'Human Rights and US Policy Toward Korea', *The Korea Review* 3, First Quarter 1979, pp. 1–17.

²³Park Chung Hee, *To Build a Nation* (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1971), p. 14.

Koreans or 80% of the total population had complied) while Kim changed his name from Kim Song-ju to that of the legendary national hero, Kim Il Sung (Kim Il Song, according to the McCune-Reischauer romanization system).

Despite his failure to create a democratic and humane government, Kim Il Sung has coped remarkably well with his own legitimacy crisis. He has done so by removing factional opposition from within, by neutralizing the dysfunctional pressure of external control or intervention through the formulation and development of a self-reliant and independent policy known as *chuch'e* (or Juche), and by gaining wide diplomatic recognition and representation in the global community.²⁴ Yet Kim Il Sung had set to himself what seems to be the impossible task of national reunification as the ultimate source of full legitimacy for his regime and leadership. 'The strongest impression I gained during a five-week visit to the North in 1972,' writes Selig S. Harrison, 'was that Kim could not abandon, or appear to abandon, the unification goal without seriously tarnishing his leadership image.'²⁵

Lacking any traceable claim to political legitimacy, then, Park inevitably fell back on the use of brute force to sustain his political authority. The abuse of human rights in South Korea was also a function of Park's political personality. In an age of media politics, Park did not have a 'videogenic personality'. Nor did he bother to learn on the job politics as the 'art of the possible'. Having spent virtually all of his adult life in the military, he developed a highly exaggerated conception of control through the use of military force. Apparently modeling himself after the Meiji elites of Japan (1868-1912), he was intent on crushing all opposition standing in his way of building 'rich nation and strong army'.²⁶

In the normative domain of unification politics, Park's approach was defensive and negative. He conceptualized unification as a zero-sum game. There is a close linkage between Park's zero-sum unification strategy and his abuse of human rights in South Korea. As a token gesture to nationalist yearnings, Park did permit the National Assembly to conduct hearings on the unification issue in 1966-1967. But a flood of nationalist sentiment soon made Park realize that unification was too 'dangerous' an issue for free-wheeling national discussion.

The notorious Anti-Communist Law of 1961 served as a sweeping 'legal'

²⁴For further elaboration of this point, see my 'Research on Korean Communism' pp. 300-306, and 'Pyongyang, the Third World, and Global Politics', *Korea and World Affairs* 3, Winter 1979, pp. 439-462.

²⁵Selig S. Harrison, 'The United States, Japan, and the Future of Korea', in Franklin B. Weinstein (ed.), *U.S.-Japan Relations and the Security of East Asia* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978), p. 191.

²⁶See Chong-Sik Lee, 'South Korea 1979: Confrontation, Assassination, and Transition', *Asian Survey* 20, January 1980, pp. 64.

instrument for suppressing symbolic and substantive expression that the regime defined as 'anti-state' or 'pro-communist', and for containing the unification issue within the straitjacket of zero-sum game tactics and strategies. In effect, the Park regime forged the national unification movement and the human rights movement into a single mass opposition movement.

More ironically and tragically, advocates of national unification and human rights, like their counterparts during the period of Japanese colonial rule, were forced to operate underground or abroad. On 1 March, 1976 (note the symbolic linkage to the famous March 1st Uprising of 1919 against Japanese colonial rule), 18 prominent human rights activists, including such celebrated opposition leaders as Yun Po-son and Kim Dae Jung, signed the 'Declaration for Democratic National Salvation' (also known as the Myong Dong Declaration). The rapid and brutal response by the government to prevent circulation of the Declaration and to imprison its signers confirmed the 'illegitimacy complex' of the Park regime. The Myong Dong Declaration not only called for the restoration of democratic government, but strongly implied that Park himself was sabotaging the unification process in order to perpetuate his personal power:

The tragic division of our land for thirty years since liberation has given an excuse for dictatorships in both north and south, and has caused the withering of the spiritual and material resources which should have been mobilized for national prosperity and creative development. For the north and south to have a combined standing army strength of over a million men, and to maintain these forces with modern weapons, would be beyond the productive capacity and economies of the Korean peninsula without foreign military aid. We cannot bear to see a situation in which the wisdom and originality of our compatriots is destructively wasted in this fashion. Accordingly, National Unification is today the supreme task which must be shouldered by all the Korean people. The barrier dividing north and south must be brought down by the combined strength and wisdom of all 50 million Koreans. *If any individual or group uses or obstructs National Unification for its own strategic purpose, it will be impossible to escape the strict judgement of history* (emphasis added).²⁷

That Park's repressive rule was fully institutionalized in the 1970s in the form of the Yushin Constitution (1972) and other hideous devices, such as Emergency Measure No. 9 (1975), is well known and needs no recounting here. Of course, human rights violations are not unique to South Korea. The 1977 Amnesty International report identified at least 116 countries with serious human rights violations.²⁸ The latest annual report of the State Department of human rights entitled, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1979*, released in February 1980, also provides a synoptic report on human

²⁷Cited in Selig S. Harrison, *The Widening Gulf: Asian Nationalism and American Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1978), p. 230-231.

²⁸See *Amnesty International Report 1977* (London: Amnesty International, 1977), p. 9.

rights conditions in each of 154 countries throughout the world and presents a rather depressing picture for the global crusaders of human rights.²⁹

Perhaps what makes the South Korean case rather unique is the global extension of its domestic abuse of human rights. Human rights violations are not merely sporadic lapses of local police; they are institutionalized in domestic and foreign policy. Only a few examples may suffice here.

First, there is Park's military support of the US war in Indochina. Park's decision to send Korean combat troops to Vietnam was made during his meeting with President Johnson in May 1965, the same period as the Japanese normalization treaty crisis. What is revealing here is that Park, while begging for the continued presence of the US troops in Korea for 'national' survival, managed to send a total of 360 000 ROK troops and some 16 000 civilian contract workers on rotation as mercenaries (\$1.5 billion over 5 years) for a foreign imperialistic power engaged in an aggressive war against another Asian nation. Note that, like Park himself, Thieu had once served the French colonialists against his own people. Note also that this decision provoked widespread protests, causing the government to respond with severe reprisals and the National Assembly to resort to its standard trick of authorizing the troop commitment 'in the absence of opposition members who were boycotting'.³⁰ Most shamefully, the ROK mercenary troops in Vietnam are believed to have left 'behind them a record of beastility that will have earned for them for years to come the hatred of all Vietnamese'.³¹

Second is the operation of KCIA in the so-called East-Berlin case. Extending its tentacles to Europe, the KCIA arrested, in mid-1967, over 100 Korean

²⁹ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1979*, Report Submitted to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives and Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate by the Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980). For less comprehensive companion reports on human rights conditions for selected countries in the preceding years, see *Human Rights Reports* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977); *The Status of Human Rights in Selected Countries and the US Response* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977); *Human Rights Conditions in Selected Countries and the US Response* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978); and *Report of Human Rights Practices in Countries Receiving US Aid* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979).

³⁰ US Congress, House Committee on International Relations, *Investigation of Korean-American Relations*, Report of the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations (hereafter cited as the Fraser Committee report), 95th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978), p. 27.

³¹ Anthony Kahng, 'Will South Korea Be Another Vietnam?' in Yung-Hwan Jo (ed.), *US Foreign Policy in Asia: An Appraisal* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 1978), p. 243. See also James Aronson, 'South Korean Mercenaries in Vietnam: An Expose of the Nixon Doctrine Ingredients - Murder, Rape, Arson', *Korea Focus* 2, January-February 1973, pp. 21-30; and Frank Baldwin, 'America's Rented Troops: South Koreans in Vietnam', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 7, October-December 1975, pp. 33-40.

artists and intellectuals. It was alleged that those arrested, most of whom had received their academic training in West Germany, had formed an espionage ring operation on behalf of the Pyongyang government. Over 20 of them were actually kidnapped from West Germany. Kim Hyung Wook, who was in charge of this operation as the then director of the KCIA, later testified before a US Congressional committee (and in his new capacity as a political exile in the United States) that 'three of those arrested were sent to Korea from the United States with the cooperation of the United States, after it received assurances that they would be allowed to return.'³² It should be noted that Kim Hyung Wook himself became a target of the subversive organization he had once headed after his plans to testify before United States Congress became known: he mysteriously disappeared in Paris in late 1979.

Third, the Kim Dae Jung affair is the most well-known *cause célèbre* of the KCIA's overseas subversive activities. On 8 August, 1973, while the historical North-South dialogue was still in progress, KCIA agents kidnapped Kim Dae Jung from a Tokyo hotel (one may ask whether it would be possible to do this without cooperation or at least acquiescence of Japanese police), and successfully brought him back to Seoul. Kim's 'crime' was to have nearly defeated Park in the 1971 presidential election. Moreover, during the campaign he had advocated more liberalized contacts with the North. In less than three weeks after Kim Dae Jung's abduction, Pyongyang issued an official statement suspending the dialogue.

The Kim Dae Jung affair dramatized Park's zero-sum unification strategy. In the wake of the Sino-American rapprochement, Park responded with panic by opening up the first round of the North-South dialogue for national reunification. He even agreed to sign 'the three principles for unification of the fatherland', issued in the form of the North-South joint communique of 4 July, 1972. As will be shown later, however, these principles totally contradicted Park's own words and deeds before and after the communique.

The appointment of KCIA Director Lee Hu-rak as Park's chief negotiator for the North-South dialogue on national unification was indicative of Park's lack of sincerity, for Lee Hu-rak's appointment was a direct insult of Pyongyang. (Note also in this connection the establishment of the National Unification Board in 1969 in the headquarters building of the Anti-Communist League in Seoul.) That Pyongyang initially accepted Lee without much ado shows the extent to which it was willing to proceed with the unification issue. And that Pyongyang broke off the first round of the dialogue following Kim Dae Jung's abduction, under the supervision of Lee's KCIA, also shows the limits of its tolerance with Park's zero-sum unification

³²The Fraser Committee report, p. 28.

strategy. Pyongyang signed off with the declaratory statement that 'Li Hu Rak and other hooligans of the "Central Intelligence Agency" of South Korea must no longer be allowed to participate in the dialogue.'³³

Finally, there is the South Korean influence campaign in the United States, better known as the Koreagate scandal. It was originally discussed and approved in a series of meetings in the Blue House (the South Korean counterpart of the White House) in the fall of 1970 and later implemented by the KCIA. The original objectives were to insure congressional approval of the \$1.5 billion military aid package for the period 1971–1975 and to prevent further withdrawal of US troops from Korea. 'From 1972 onward,' concluded the final report of the Fraser Committee, 'there was another important objective – to convince Americans that Park's new system of government was justified for reasons of national security and economic development.'³⁴ The report further noted that the KCIA operational plans included:

- (a) Recruitment of Americans to advocate South Korea's policies, especially members of Congress, academicians, journalists, businessmen, and clergymen;
- (b) Visits to Korea by influential Americans;
- (c) Countering of criticism of the Park Government among Koreans living in the United States, partly by infiltrating the Korean community with undercover agents;
- (d) Use of commissions from US-financed rice sales for KCIA activities;
- (e) Prevention and countering of North Korean activities in the United States; and
- (f) Obtaining US Government classified information by cultivating officials.³⁵

The government took what may be called the 'I need not know' approach to the unfolding scandal. As early as 1971, appropriate executive agencies had sufficient knowledge of these activities to warrant action. Instead, they 'were allowed to continue until a major scandal erupted 5 years later'.³⁶ In a sense, then, the government was a silent partner in the Koreagate scandal during the first half of the 1970s. Furthermore, the three-year investigation which started with a bang died with a whimper. In August 1979, the Department of Justice dropped all charges against Tongsun Park, marking the official denouement of the Koreagate scandal.

In the end, violence in a physical and structural sense is the only thread that ties together the inception, development, and demise of the Park regime. Lacking political legitimacy, the regime could only rule by repression. Yet, each repressive measure further eroded the base of its political support and

³³For an English translation of the statement of Kim Yong Ju on the North Korean decision to suspend the dialogue issue on 28 August, 1973, see Se-Jin Kim (ed.), *Korean Unification: Source Materials with an Introduction* (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1976), pp. 345–348. (The quotation in the text appears on p. 348.)

³⁴The Fraser Committee report (f.n.30), p. 4.

³⁵*ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁶*ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

broadened the base of its opposition, calling, in turn, for ever-increasing recourse to force. To cope with this self-created and self-perpetuating crisis, Park gradually turned the country into a garrison state in the 1970s. In the light of bizarre events leading to and following Park's assassination on 26 October, 1979, the Seoul government has shown all the earmarks of what Samuel Huntington has called the 'praetorian regime'.³⁷ Revealingly, Kim Jae-kyu, KCIA director and Park's assassin, declared in the final statement at his trial: 'If May 16th (Park's military coup in 1961) and Yushin were not illegal, it follows that the October 26th Revolution also cannot be illegal.'³⁸ That Kim Jae-kyu could logically characterize his killing of President Park a patriotic revolutionary act, and that his fate (before he was hanged on May 24, 1980) became another catalyst in the unfolding crisis in South Korean politics shows the extent to which Park's own political legitimacy had been eroded even among his supporters.

Development of a dependent capitalism

In the litany of American policy-makers, South Korea, despite its failures in human rights, is one of the two star graduates (the other being Taiwan) of the US postwar experiment in foreign aid (see Table 1 on p. 422). 'Faced by rapid export expansion,' concluded a recent study by the Central Intelligence Agency, 'South Korea has emerged as the fastest growing economy in the non-OPEC Third World. Since 1965, South Korea's GNP has grown almost 11 percent annually in real terms while per capita GNP has increased 8.5 percent per year.'³⁹ Per capita GNP has grown from \$200 in 1968 to an estimated \$1624 in 1979.⁴⁰

Much of this 'economic miracle' can be attributed to the phenomenal growth of exports from \$55 million in 1962 to \$835 million in 1970 to \$15 billion in 1979. In 1976, for example, exports and GNP stood at \$7.7 billion and \$21.6 billion, respectively, or at the ratio of 1:2.8. Directly and indirectly, US economic, military, and political support played an indispensable role in this economic transformation. First, US military assistance in grants estimated at \$5.5 billion for FY 1950-1976, or as high as 95%

³⁷See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 78-83, 192-263.

³⁸For an English translation of Kim Jae-kyu's final statement at his trial, see *Monthly Review of Korean Affairs* 2, February 1980, pp. 1-2.

³⁹Central Intelligence Agency, National Foreign Assessment Center, *Korea: The Economic Race Between the North and the South*, ER 78-10008 (January 1978), p. 1.

⁴⁰See *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1979* (f.n. 29), p. 477.

of ROK defense budget in 1961, freed the Park government from the crushing burden of heavy defense spending. This military grant assistance does not include the cost of maintaining US military forces in Korea, estimated at \$12 billion for FY 1954–1976. Second, US economic assistance in both grants and loans amounted to some \$5.7 billion for FY 1954–1976. In the 1950s, the South Korean economy depended on US economic grants for survival. In the 1960s, the United States played a key role in transforming the structure of the economy, reducing in the process its contribution to the ROK budget from 39.2% in 1961 to 5.1% in 1970. As will be shown later, Seoul's economic dependence on Washington was reduced by increasing its dependence on Tokyo. And, finally, participation in the Vietnam War brought some \$1.5 billion worth of benefits to the South Korean economy.

In assessing the US role in the transformation of the South Korean economy, it is important to distinguish the quantitative economic concept of growth from the qualitative social concept of development. The former is defined and measured in a value-neutral manner as an increase in GNP or per capita GNP in the national economy. The latter is a broader social concept in which development is defined and measured in essence as a value-realizing process. In a normative approach, we need to ask: What are the values guiding the development strategy of South Korea? Whose interests are being served or shortchanged in this process? What is the internal structure of the economy in relation to political development; i.e., do the structural changes in the economy move in the direction of dependent or self-reliant development? And in the context of Korean politics, what is the relationship between development strategy and unification strategy?

Structurally and conceptually, Seoul is as dependent today on Washington for military security as it is on Tokyo for economic security, making it a model of dependent client state. There is no doubt that the United States played the key role of matchmaker in the normalization of ROK–Japanese relationship in 1965. From the very beginning, the central objective of US policy-makers was twofold: (1) to preserve US geopolitical dominance in East Asia by linking its bilateral alliance system with Japan (the linchpin of America's Asia policy) with its bilateral alliance system with the ROK (a vulnerable frontline domino state in the volatile Korean peninsula); and (2) to minimize economic costs by supplanting US economic aid outlays in Korea with Japanese investment capital. The two objectives were mutually complementary, because the accumulation of Japanese investment capital in the ROK could only create vested interests among the Japanese business community in a *status quo* situation on the Korean peninsula. It is reasonable to conclude that the rapid and deep penetration of Japanese multinationals into the Korean economy since 1965 has exceeded the best expectations of US policy-makers, on the one hand, and has confirmed the worst fears of

the Korean people, on the other.

From the very beginning of the controversy surrounding the normalization treaty, most Koreans had instinctive nationalist fears that any open-door policy toward Japan could only result in the restoration of a center-periphery relationship. For all of his reactionary leadership, Syngman Rhee shared this nationalist sentiment and successfully resisted US pressures. According to one of his closest associates, Rhee

sincerely believed that we could not afford to fall into the Japanese lap economically or politically without perpetuating the division, without driving another big wedge into the already existing national cleavage. And the Communists would call us Japanese stooges. ...and that would develop into a situation where the Southern Koreans would be driven by force of circumstances toward the Communists. . . Our national survival requires that we do not get mixed up with the Japanese pending reunification.⁴¹

Writing in 1964 for America's establishment journal, *Foreign Affairs*, Pyong Choon Hahm (who later joined the Park government as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and also as Ambassador to the United States) sharply responded to 'the sermonizing attitude of Americans in accusing us of being narrow-minded and spiteful toward the Japanese' by reminding them that 'our experience with the Japanese is something no other people can understand.' He then stated a consensus in the Korean intellectual community:

The Japanese Government has been stressing only the commercial advantages to be derived from normalization, thus increasing the fear of the Koreans that the Japanese will take over their weak economy. Another factor militating against improved relations has been the impression given that the Japanese are seemingly to be brought in to do what the United States has so far been unable to achieve. We cannot believe that the Japanese have a magic formula for developing our economy that the United States does not possess. *We fear that the inevitable outcome of economic cooperation with Japan is that our economy will become an appendage of the booming Japanese economy* (emphasis added).⁴²

On the day the normalization treaty was to be concluded, the *Dong-A Ilbo*, the most widely read and respected newspaper in Seoul, ruefully editorialized:

A great and grave turning point, which will tragically affect us and our offspring is about to be effectuated. It is indeed a national tragedy that the normalization agreements, the contents of which are unsatisfactory to almost every citizen, are to be formally signed while the opposition wages extreme struggle, the doors of schools are closed down, and hunger

⁴¹Yun Tai-pyun, Rhee's prime minister (1953) and foreign minister (1953-55), in an interview with the Dulles Oral History Project, Princeton University, Seoul, 29 September, 1964, pp. 8, 20.

⁴²Pyong Choon Hahm, 'Korea's "Mendicant Mentality"?' *Foreign Affairs* 43, October 1964, pp. 170-171.

strikes and demonstrations occur among the students.⁴³

President Park simply brushed off widespread opposition to the signing of the normalization treaty as being premised on an erroneous notion that the Koreans were so weak that they could not avoid being subjugated by the Japanese. 'What Park refused to recognize,' writes one pro-ROK scholar, 'was that the students and intellectuals were not expressing a lack of confidence in their own strength, *vis-a-vis* Japan, but in that of the Korean leadership.'⁴⁴

As earlier noted, Park was intent on following the Meiji model of 'rich nation and strong army'. Specifically, his legitimacy-seeking path followed almost single-mindedly the export-oriented strategy of economic growth. In order to make the country attractive to foreign investment and to make Korean products competitive in the foreign markets, Park not only opened the Korean doors wide but also forcefully brought about such 'necessary' structural changes as special tax exemptions, low wages, labor-management peace, and export subsidies. All social and industrial disturbances were artificially suppressed in order to create the image of 'political stability'. Note that safety, a function of political stability, together with the rate of returns and liquidity, constitutes one of the three key factors attracting foreign investment. Finally, the continued presence of US troops was projected as an additional safeguard for foreign investment.

Under such inducements, foreign investment capital began to flow, making up almost half of the total investment finance in the second half of the 1960s.

Table 2 shows the predominant position of Japan in the South Korean economy. The cumulative total of \$544 million is an underestimation; a more reliable source based on Japanese Finance Ministry puts the cumulative total at \$785 million as of the end of 1977.⁴⁵ An asymmetrical dependent relationship, however, is clearly indicated by the fact that this total represents 61.6% of all foreign investments in South Korea but only 3.5% of total Japanese investments abroad.

The horse-rider economic relationship between South Korea and Japan is also reflected in the ever-widening gap in trade between the two countries. As Table 3 shows, South Korea accumulated a total trade deficit of \$9.6 billion in 1966-1977, the so-called 'period of economic miracle'. Ironically, such huge trade deficits with Japan have been somewhat offset by trade

⁴³*Dong-A Ilbo* (Seoul), 22 June, 1965; translated and cited in Joungwon Alexander Kim, *Divided Korea: The Politics of Development 1945-1972* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 262.

⁴⁴*ibid.*

⁴⁵See 'Where Tokyo's Money Goes', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 June, 1979, p. 74.

*Table 2**
Foreign investment in the ROK, in 1962-1977 (in thousand dollars) (approval basis)

Country	Number	Amount	Percentage of total
United States	107	169 856	19.2
Japan	699	544 238	61.6
Europe	36	80 256	9.1
Others†	32	88 600	10.0
Total	874	882 950	100

†Panama, Hong Kong, Canada, Bermuda, Iran, Bahama and International Finance Corporation.

*Source : *The Korea Herald* (Seoul), 4 October, 1977, p. 3.

*Table 3**
Korea-Japan trade balance, 1966-1977
(in million US dollars)

Year	Exports to Japan		Imports from Japan		Trade Balance	
	Amount	% of total	Amount	% of total	Amount	% of total
1966-1970	626	25.2	2 930	41.7	-2304	50.7
1971-1977	8 535	25.8	15 801	36.9	-7265	75.3
1966-1977	9 161	25.7	18 731	37.5	-9569	64.0

*Source: Office of Customs Administration as published in *The Korea Herald*, 30, June, 1978, p. 5.

surpluses with the United States (\$529.6 million in 1976 and \$671.2 million in 1977). In 1979, South Korea's export-oriented economy produced a record high trade deficit of \$4.3 billion on a customs clearance basis. As expected, a lion's share (\$3.3 billion) went to Japan, but for the first time since 1975 the United States also enjoyed a trade surplus of \$219.3 million.⁴⁶ These figures suggest the symptoms of deeper structural deformities of the South Korean economy.

Japanese investment in South Korea, as shown in Table 2, is equity investment. As such, it represents only the tip of an amorphous iceberg comprised of widespread covert financing through dummy partners and other schemes designed to evade the statutory 50% limit on the foreign share of new joint ventures, a policy enacted in 1974 as a token gesture to the rising anti-Japanese sentiments in the country. The actual amount of Japanese direct and indirect investment in South Korea is difficult to calculate. 'All told,' according to one outside estimate, 'enterprises with estimated net assets of

⁴⁶*The Korea Herald*, 7 May, 1980, p. 2; 9 May, 1980, p. 3.

\$1.7 billion either were directly Japanese-controlled in 1976 or were dependent on Japan for their raw materials, equipment, and spare parts.⁴⁷

In order to create an environment conducive to foreign multinationals, the Park regime has, in effect, transformed the country into an 'enclave economy' epitomized by the so-called 'free trade zone' (FTZ). The FTZ is an artificially created environment characterized by an exceptionally favorable infrastructure, special tax exemptions or privileges, low wages, export subsidies, prohibition of strikes, and a cozy but corrupt alliance with local ruling politicians. The FTZ has also become a 'free pollution zone' for many Japanese industrial enterprises. As Yoshikazu Sakamoto has shown, the FTZ and similar special arrangements 'facilitate investment by allowing Japanese businessmen to relocate pollution-emitting industries from their own country, where government regulations and public pressures have increasingly created an unfavorable and unprofitable climate for these industries'.⁴⁸

The continuing trade imbalance with Japan presents a serious debt service problem for the South Korean economy. In 1974, for example, new loans and debt service payments stood at \$932.7 million and \$568 million respectively. In other words, some 58.4% of new loans were used for amortization, aggravating Seoul's dependence on Tokyo. There is no way for Seoul to sufficiently increase its exports to Japan to narrow this trade gap. Even if this were possible, 'it would mean little reduction in Seoul's basic dependence on Tokyo since many South Korean export products are assembled from Japanese components and less than half of their value represents value added in South Korea'.⁴⁹

The dependency problems of chronic trade deficits, foreign loans and other devices of Japanese economic penetration, on which the 'prosperity' of the export-oriented economy of South Korea so precariously rests, clarify the deep-rooted values guiding the development strategies of both countries. Japan's economic policy toward South Korea is not an isolated or atypical case. It is just one more application of Tokyo's own domestic economic strategy, as dramatized in former Prime Minister Tanaka's grand design for remodeling the Japanese archipelago, has been characterized by exploitation of cheap domestic labor, relocation of pollution industries in politically least resistant zones, and a search for natural resources, as well as by the corrupt alliance of the *zaibatsu* and the ruling élites.

The extension of this domestic development strategy to its trade, investment, and 'aid' policies toward Asian countries has produced structurally

⁴⁷Harrison, *The Widening Gulf* (f.n.25), p. 227.

⁴⁸Sakamoto, 'Korea as a World Order Issue' (f.n.3), p. 395.

⁴⁹Harrison, *The Widening Gulf* (f.n.25), p. 227.

similar characteristics: (1) chronic trade imbalances in favor of Japan, resulting from the exchange of unequal values; (2) vertical division of labor and specialization in trade patterns, with Japan exporting high-priced capital, technology, and manufactured goods and importing low-priced labor and raw materials; (3) adherence to a cold war alliance policy evident in Japan's extremely close ties with the pro-American halves of the divided countries in Asia (South Vietnam before its demise, Taiwan before and after the derecognition, and South Korea); and (4) corrupt collusion between the political-economic top dogs in the center (Tokyo) and their counterparts in the peripheries (Seoul, Saigon, Taipei, Bangkok, Djakarta, Manila, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur).⁵⁰

The phrase 'establishment of a correct sense of values' was a recurring one in President Park's rhetoric. Park's development strategy and his response to the deepening dependency problems show the deep-rooted values guiding his political leadership. In the Darwinian jungle of international trade, one may ask what goods could South Korea offer that would enjoy competitive advantage in the international division of labor and specialization? Certainly not technology or raw materials. The export-oriented strategy has the inherent structural imperative of exporting 'labor' packaged in a variety of forms. Viewed in this light, it is not surprising that South Korea has largely failed to diversify its foreign markets. As of 1977, for example, the United States topped Korea's foreign markets by 33.3% followed by Japan (19.6%) with the remainder scattered insignificantly among European and Middle Eastern countries.⁵¹

Labor exportation has taken several forms. As already noted, South Korea exported soldiers as 'cheap' mercenaries to Vietnam for the United States, and was amply 'rewarded' in more than one way. Subsequently, some 20 000 skilled and semiskilled construction workers were exported to the Middle East to earn petrodollars. Of course, Park's major specialty was the exportation of labor-intensive products. One can easily see here an 'exchange of unequal values', as there is an inverse relationship between the profitability of exports and the poverty of industrial workers (especially female textile workers) who produce them. The special labor law enacted on 1 January, 1970, prohibiting labor union organizing, collective bargaining, and strikes by workers in companies in Korea with any foreign investment, has served as a legal shield to preserve an uneasy truce between industrial poverty and labor-management stability. As of the end of 1979, for example,

⁵⁰For a trenchant analysis of Japan's overseas economic policy along the lines presented here, see Nagasu Kazuji, 'The Super-Illusions of an Economic Superpower', *The Japan Interpreter* 9, Summer-Autumn 1974, pp. 149-164.

⁵¹See *The Korea Herald*, 23 December, 1977, p. 3.

the monthly income for an average worker was \$255, a 5.6% increase from the previous year compared to the 32% increase in consumer price for the same period. The 5.6% annual increase in wages stands in contrast with the 15.5% increase in labor productivity. It should also be noted in this connection that in 1979 it cost \$455 per month to maintain a family of five at the absolute subsistence level.⁵²

As if these policies were not enough – and they were not enough to bridge the ever-widening trade gap or to reduce the ever-increasing foreign debts – the Park regime even resorted to the ‘exportation’ of Korean women. On 12 April, 1973, Min Kwan-sik, in his capacity as minister of education, visited a South Korean high school in Tokyo and made a speech to the school’s board of directors and staff, in the course of which he is reported to have lavished special praise on ‘the laudable patriotic sentiments of the large number of South Korean *kisaeng* and nightclub hostesses who have come to Japan and are working day and night selling their...for the nation’.⁵³ These ‘patriotic’ *kisaeng* – the Korean counterpart of *geisha* who used to be an accomplished performer in music and dance, but who now serves as a licensed prostitute – were issued ROK passports stamped with ‘Artistic Delegation’!

The Japanese rush on flesh for sale, euphemistically known as ‘blossoming *kisaeng* tourism’, has reached the point where *Time* magazine could characterize South Korea as ‘Japan’s bordello’. Curiously enough, the normalization of relations between Tokyo and Beijing, while accelerating Tokyo–Taipei trade relations, had an immediately depressing effect on carnal relations. The number of Japanese tourists to South Korea more than doubled in one year (1971–1972) reaching some 190 000. From January through November of 1973, 600 000 foreign tourists were admitted into South Korea. Of these, some 80% were Japanese, most of whom came in all-male group tours riding the crest of South Korea’s popularity in Japan as a man’s inexpensive ‘paradise’. An American tourist, shoved around at Seoul’s Kimpo International Airport by a mass of male tourists from Tokyo, is reported to have asked: ‘Does the US have to post 40 000 G.I.’s in Korea to defend these guys’ right to have a good time?’⁵⁴ A response of one Korean *kisaeng* to an American correspondent’s inquiry is equally revealing: ‘It’s hard for us to accept some (Japanese male tourists) – but we must work not only for ourselves and our families but for our country’s future. Our country needs more

⁵² *Dong-A Ilbo*, 24 March, 1980.

⁵³ Cited in Chung Kyungmo, ‘The Second Liberation of South Korea and Democratization of Japan’, *The Japan Interpreter* 9, Summer–Autumn 1974, p. 179.

⁵⁴ ‘South Korea: The Seoul of Hospitality’, *Time*, 4 June, 1973, p. 45.

money for its economic development.⁵⁵

The export-oriented strategy of economic growth has forced many Korean firms to depend on excessively large foreign loans. Since the acquisition of these loans required government approval and repayment guarantees, the Park regime was able to extort kickbacks ranging from 10 to 20% of the loan amount. Thus, a corrupt alliance of mutual enrichment between ruling politicians and industrial entrepreneurs was established and institutionalized. In addition, the Park regime made a standard practice of extorting 'political payments' from foreign firms doing business in Korea to fill the coffers of the ruling party. The Fraser Committee discovered that at least \$8.5 million of American corporate funds were diverted to the ruling party during the 1971 presidential election campaign alone.⁵⁶ There is no reason to believe that Japanese multinationals were exempt from such a corrupt alliance aimed at sharing the spoils of political-industrial collusion.

There is now growing evidence that the Tokyo-Seoul relationship is gradually expanding into a cold-war military alliance under the protective umbrella of the US military presence in East Asia. At the ROK-Japan Parliamentarians' Conference held in Tokyo in September 1971, Min Ki-sik, Chairman of Military Affairs Committee of the National Assembly and a member of the 32-member ROK delegation, is reported to have said to Prime Minister Sato Eisaku: 'If Japan does not help us, South Korea will be destroyed. We want you to think of the ROK as part of Japan and give us some real military assistance.'⁵⁷ The actual degree of ROK-Japan military cooperation in the 1970s, however, has been shrouded in secrecy.

Nevertheless, the year 1979 highlighted Japan's growing military role in the Korean peninsula. In April, the Korean-Japanese Defense Conference on Security Affairs was established, followed by epoch-making visits to South Korea by the chief of staff of the Japanese Land Self-Defense Forces in April and by the Director-General Yamashita of the Japanese Defense Agency in July. This chain of events provoked a strong emotional response from Pyongyang. In Pyongyang's perception, Tokyo and Seoul 'have already established a system to deal with such issues as the exchange of military intelligence, joint military exercises, standardization of weapons and ammunition, and the integration of their command network'.⁵⁸

Behind the facade of the constant hoopla about the 'economic miracle' lies the ominous reality of the development of underdevelopment. Indeed,

⁵⁵*ibid.*

⁵⁶The Fraser Committee report (f.n.30), pp. 240-244.

⁵⁷Cited in Chung, 'The Second Liberation of South Korea and Democratization of Japan' (f.n.53), p. 181.

⁵⁸Young C. Kim, 'North Korea 1979: National Unification and Economic Development', *Asian Survey* 20, January 1980, p. 57.

South Korea has become a model of the dependent periphery state whose fast-growing economy serves as a source of profiteering for the top dogs in Tokyo and Seoul rather than as a source of meeting the basic needs of the people. South Korea's maldeveloped agricultural sector serves as a telling barometer of its developmental strategy. The South Korean self-sufficiency in food declined from 93.9% in 1965 to 80.5% in 1970, to 76.3% in 1975, and to 60.1% in 1979.⁵⁹

The continuing dependence on the United States some 27 years after the end of the Korean War and some 22 years after the departure of foreign troops from North Korea is bad enough. But the new dependence on Japan for national economic survival is doubly demoralizing and divisive, aggravating the perennial crisis of legitimacy in South Korean politics. As early as 1970, the student government of the Korean university in Seoul circulated through clandestine channels an anti-Japanese manifesto charging that Korea had already 'reentered the Japanese sphere through plots between Korean commercial-political gangsters and government-backed Korean zaibatsu. Japan wants us to be dependent and seeks to divide and rule the two Koreas.'⁶⁰ In a similar spirit, Kim Dae Jung, when asked just before his kidnapping in his *Sekai* interview if there was anything Japan could do for Korea, sharply replied: 'Don't do anything at all.'⁶¹

Perhaps the most serious political cost of Park's 'development first, unification later' strategy is the formation of strong vested interests in Japan's military-industrial-political complex for the perpetuation of the *status quo* on the Korean peninsula. Armed with Japan's increasing military cooperation and Japan-fueled GNP growth, the Park regime turned a deaf ear to the repeated proposal from Pyongyang for mutual reductions of military forces to 10 000 men each. If the Kim Dae Jung kidnapping affair was the symbolic cause for the suspension of the first round of the North-South dialogue, South Korea's adamant refusal to discuss mutual reductions of military forces was the substantive cause for the miscarriage of the dialogue. Instead, South Korea has adopted the strategy of 'bleeding North Korea dry' in the arms race.

Policy implications for the United States

US military and political support can no longer help legitimize dependent

⁵⁹*Newsreview*, 17 May, 1980, p. 21.

⁶⁰Cited in Harrison, *The Widening Gulf* (f.n.25), p. 227.

⁶¹Quoted in Nagasu, 'The Super-Illusions of an Economic Superpower' (f.n.50), p. 161.

client state in contemporary global politics. This is illustrated by the success of Pyongyang – and the failure of Seoul – in gaining membership in the nonalignment movement in 1975. The absence of any foreign troops since 1958, the pursuit of an independent foreign policy, and the self-reliant national economic development in the North stand in striking contrast to the continuing presence of foreign troops (and even joint war exercises), allied foreign policy, and dependent economic development in the South. Apart from the delegitimizing effect of US troops in the South, there no longer exists any economic and strategic imperative for US support of the ROK government. Overall military balance between North and South has existed for some time. Furthermore, in economic strength, an important component in any strategic calculation of military potential, the South has a decisive 5:1 advantage over the North in aggregate GNP. Hence, the US military presence can only be explained in terms of America's own strategic needs.

President Carter's abandonment of the troop withdrawal plan and the revival of the cold war in the wake of the Afghan crisis suggest how easily and quickly old patterns of thought can reassert themselves without any normative and structural changes in US foreign policy. The presence of US troops in Korea may still serve some US geopolitical interests in the short run, but it does not serve global human values. Nor does it serve specifically the deep national aspirations and needs of the Korean people. The presence of US troops impedes development of an indigenous social, political, and institutional equation necessary for the reunification process to take place.

Detente has become an institutionalization of Soviet-American conflict, just as SALT has become a continuation of the strategic arms race by other names and means. Detente has had no impact on US Korean policy. Curiously, however, the Sino-American rapprochement frightened both Koreas sufficiently to open up the first round of dialogue on national unification. Although this initial dialogue miscarried, both sides agreed upon the following three 'principles for unification of the fatherland' in their joint communique of 4 July, 1972:

First, unification shall be achieved through *independent efforts without being subject to external imposition or interference*.

Second, unification shall be achieved through *peaceful means and not through use of force against one another*.

Third, a great national unity, as a homogenous people, shall be sought first, *transcending differences in ideas, ideologies and systems* (emphasis added).⁶²

The continuing presence of US troops, to say nothing of joint ROK-US war exercise, is totally incompatible with the letter and the spirit of these

⁶²Kim, *Korean Unification* (f.n.33), p. 319.

three principles. Kissinger's proposal for a four-power (US, ROK, DPRK, and PRC) conference announced on 22 July, 1976, Holbrooke's repetition of the Kissinger proposal and its expansion into a six-power (adding Japan and the Soviet Union) conference announced on 6 December, 1978, and the Carter-Park joint proposal for a three-power (US, ROK, and DPRK) conference announced on 20 July, 1979, have been all rejected by Pyongyang on the grounds that they violate the three principles for Korean unification.⁶³

If present US policy is incompatible with global humane values as well as with the needs and aspirations of the Korean people, what is the alternative? The most humane and practical policy that the US could adopt is what may be called a 'disengagement-neutralization' plan. Since the original division of Korea was an American idea, the United States has a special moral responsibility to change its Korea policy to help, not hinder, the reunification process. I submit that the three principles of national unification provide a normatively just *and* strategically feasible framework within which unification can and should take place.

Importantly, these principles call, in the first place, for independent efforts free from outside interference. Intervention by outside powers has been a curse in modern Korean history. The intrusion of big-power rivalry has deprived Koreans of their right to achieve an autonomous national development.

It threatens very specifically the reunification process. To reconcile the conflicting interests and norms of the two Koreas is difficult enough; but to introduce the interests and values of external powers in the unification process is a sure recipe for failure. Even if a multi-power conference should succeed in producing a unification plan, there is no reason to believe that the plan would be more congenial to Korean interests than to the interests of major powers. In fact, an externally imposed solution for the Korean problem may create a new legitimacy problem. Consequently, any trilateral, quadri-lateral or plurilateral conference on the Korean problem stands on shaky normative and historical grounds.

The disengagement-neutralization plan proposed here seeks to help disaggregate and divert the interests of outside powers in the perpetuation of the *status quo* on the Korean peninsula.

The United States should withdraw its troops and terminate the US-ROK defense pact. This new US policy should be used as a bargaining chip with which to negotiate a termination of Soviet and Chinese defense pacts with the DPRK. Since Pyongyang's military relations with its allies are already

⁶³For details of these proposals, see Kim, *Documents on Korean-American Relations 1943-1976* (f.n.1), pp. 537-540, 542; *Department of State Bulletin* 79, February 1979, p. 31; and *Department of State Bulletin* 79, August 1979, p. 17.

more symbolic than substantive, trilateral negotiations among the United States, China, and the Soviet Union for disengagement-neutralization may be easier than many people realize. At any rate, this is a plan that has not been tried, and it deserves probing. Cross-recognition of both Koreas by all outside powers is less important or crucial at this stage; it should evolve as a natural outcome of the disengagement-neutralization plan agreed to by the United States, China, and the Soviet Union (and possibly Japan).⁶⁴

In the final analysis, the problems and challenges of US Korean policy can not, and should not, be examined in isolation. They are part of the larger normative problems plaguing America's role in the rapidly changing international environment. So long as US policy-makers are still obsessed with preserving America's receding hegemonial position, so long as American policy-makers adhere to the dangerously anachronistic *parabellum* doctrine – 'if you want peace, prepare for war' or, as Secretary of Defense Brown put it, 'We are prepared to fight because we cherish peace'⁶⁵ – and so long as US policy-makers behave as if the people's interests and needs did not really matter in the conduct of foreign policy, there is no realistic prospect that US foreign policy can move in the direction of a new world order value system.

In an eloquently argued critique of President Carter's foreign policy, Stanley Hoffmann recently advocated greater use of brain power and less of muscle power in pursuit of a more coherent and effective foreign policy.⁶⁶ This strikes me as a managerial solution to problems of value anachronism in US foreign policy. America's determination to act as a guardian of the *status quo* in the world where so much direct and structural violence is committed in the name of maintaining law and order, coupled with its determination to act as a kingmaker of rulers and regimes in the Third World, assures that it will be the inevitable target of all the discontented and the oppressed. The most fundamental problem for US foreign policy is not managerial or bureaucratic; it is the inability and/or unwillingness to change norms and values that no longer serve human needs and aspirations at home and abroad.

⁶⁴Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger in a way anticipated this proposal and responded that the only alternatives to US involvement in Asia 'are either Finlandization or Polandization'. See Kim, *Documents on Korean-American Relations* (f.n.1), p. 485.

⁶⁵Revealingly, this statement was made by Brown at the ceremony inaugurating the ROK-US Combined Forces Command in Seoul, on 7 November, 1978. See Chung, *Korean Unification* (f.n.14), p. 372.

⁶⁶Stanley Hoffmann, 'Muscle and Brains', *Foreign Policy*, No. 37, Winter 1979-1980, pp. 3-27.