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SOLVING LONG DIVISION

The Geopolitical Implications of Korean Unification

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About This Report

Many assessments discuss how the Korean Peninsula may be unified through negotiation, regime collapse, or war. Division is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, and yet reunification may also occur abruptly. Without forecasting whether, when, and how unification might occur, this report seeks to address some of the profound challenges that would be raised a decade or so after unification took place. These critical issues include shifting relations among the countries of Northeast Asia, the survival or demise of the U.S.-Korean alliance, the missions and capabilities of the armed forces of a united Korea, the existence or disposition of nuclear weapons, and the relevance of nuclear deterrence over the peninsula. Undoubtedly, the pathway to unification would affect all of these post-division issues. But despite this uncertain variable, simply waiting for unification before thinking further about these issues would be imprudent. For the purpose of our analysis, we make several baseline assumptions: namely, that unification occurs with some conflict short of major war and without the use of nuclear weapons; that the U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance has performed in a manner largely as expected in Seoul and Washington; that China seeks to play a larger role in the peninsula's future than it has in recent decades but that it does not seek to occupy it; and that Seoul continues to desire a strong alliance with the United States but without antagonizing China. In fact, this report's analysis goes beyond these baseline assumptions, which are fleshed out in the introduction, but they provide our starting point. The aim is not to debate unification but to further consider its geopolitical implications. Temporally, this analysis focuses on the state of these issues about a decade after the two Koreas have been unified; the reason for this is to avoid an analysis of *how* unification occurs and instead focus on *what* unification may portend with respect to salient security issues. Solving long division may be easy or hard, but if it is solved it will not be the end of critical problems.

Key Judgments

- Unification of the Korean Peninsula would challenge the most fundamental prevailing assumptions about power, interstate relations, and nuclear weapons in Northeast Asia. While there is no clear path to ending seven decades of division on the peninsula, there is nevertheless a resurgent debate over the shape and implications of unification. What some, such as South Korean President Park Geun-hye, have referred to as a potential "bonanza," others would view as a potential calamity. At a minimum, Korean unification would raise significant strategic questions about Northeast Asian security, U.S. foreign and defense policy, the Korean armed forces, and the regional role of nuclear weapons and deterrence. Korean unification is likely to represent both an extraordinary opportunity as well as one of the most complex political and economic processes in modern history.
- The peninsula stands at the geopolitical crossroads of Northeast Asia and at the strategic intersection of China, Japan, Russia, and the United States. While gaining the approval of the neighboring nations is not a precondition for unification, obtaining international and regional support will be vital for successfully building and sustaining a unified Korean state.
- A key unknown is whether a unified Korea would turn inward to China and the Asian continent, continue to look outward as a maritime power aligned with the United States, or pursue a "Hermit Kingdom" strategy while focusing on integrating the peninsula. From the American perspective, the priority should be on encouraging a unified Korea's continued alignment with the United States and its further emergence as a middle power that takes on an increasing share of global responsibilities.
- Since unification is more likely to be a process than a single event, the prospect of reassessing U.S. relations with the peninsula will be a gradual one. Yet at some point during this process the alliance will face existential questions: In the absence of a North Korean threat, the alliance must either be repurposed and recalibrated, or simply wither and end. The United States will have an interest in a continued alliance for reasons that go beyond the threat posed by Pyongyang, and a U.S.–United Republic of Korea (UROK) alliance could serve as a key stabilizing force in Northeast Asia.
- A staunchly shared commitment to regional stability, as well as to open markets, liberal democracy, and a rules-based order, would provide the foundation for a post-unification alliance. In the immediate aftermath of unification, questions will linger about stability on the peninsula, and the U.S. alliance can help dampen the prospects of conflict. In the longer term, the alliance – including American troops on the peninsula, their only presence on the Asian mainland – can help ensure that a broader balance of power in Northeast Asia endures.
- Several structural implications would flow from the shift to a U.S.-UROK alliance. The Combined Forces Command (CFC) might be replaced by a U.S. Korea Command (USKORCOM), the means by which U.S. forces would support the UROK Joint Chiefs of Staff. A USKORCOM would serve both as a facilitator between the United Nations Command (UNC) and the UROK military leadership and as a tangible American commitment to peace and stability on the peninsula.
- A newly unified Korean military would, in this scenario, reset around three revised strategic goals. First and most importantly, Korean forces would guard against the possibility of aggression or coercion by outside powers and so would need to focus on imposing unacceptable costs on foreign adversaries who threaten Korean sovereignty. Second, the Korean military would need to sustain mobility and power projection as far as the Indian Ocean in order to protect sea lines of communications. And third, Korean forces may be necessary to ensure internal security, especially in northern Korea in the immediate aftermath of unification.

- Long-range precision-guided munitions and information warfare are the most likely major features of future conflict, especially among East Asian militaries. At the same time, substantial naval modernization is likely to continue across Asia while the maritime areas of the Indo-Pacific grow in importance to surrounding nations. These developments suggest that air and maritime forces should represent the priority in post-unification Korean military budgets.
- Two major factors are likely to influence the geographic distribution of Korean forces on the peninsula in the medium term after unification – military basing infrastructure and U.S. military presence. In the northern half of Korea, surviving North Korean military infrastructure could serve as useful bases and facilities for Korean forces. At the same time, Korea would likely face Chinese resistance to U.S. forces deployed north of the 38th parallel.
- Assuming that a unified Korea would maintain the ROK's non-nuclear commitments, a key question will revolve around the means by which to physically secure and dispose of the nuclear weapons and materials of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In a peaceful and stable reunification scenario, these issues could be dealt with in a deliberate and consultative fashion, likely involving intensive engagement by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), other international bodies, as well as the United States and potentially other countries with particular interests in and/or expertise on the problem.
- In a scenario in which conflict erupts between the two Koreas – especially one in which the DPRK threatens to employ its nuclear forces – the priority for the ROK, the United States and CFC would be to deter and defend against any attack involving nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and to secure North Korean nuclear sites as quickly as possible after a potential northern collapse.
- In either a peaceful or post-conflict unification scenario, a unified Korea (and the United States) would need to discuss Beijing's concerns about the disposition of nuclear weapons and facilities on the peninsula. The allies would also need to assess the credibility of America's extended deterrence over a unified Korea and the diplomatic implications of continuing it.
- Unification is not yet on the horizon, but neither can it be said that the division of the peninsula is a permanent feature of East Asia. Because a unification process could be jump-started by sudden change inside North Korea, it is incumbent on the United States, the Republic of Korea, and other governments to think now and in more operational terms about the possibility of future unification and its manifold implications for the alliance, the region, and beyond.

Introduction

The unification of the Korean Peninsula would challenge the most fundamental prevailing assumptions about power, interstate relations, and nuclear weapons in Northeast Asia. Although there is as of yet no clear path to ending seven decades of division on the peninsula, a resurgent debate about the possibility of unification raises serious questions that deserve greater discussion than they have heretofore received. South Korean President Park Geunhye has contended that unification could represent a "bonanza" for the Korean people.[1] Others are far less sanguine, and predictions about unification scenarios often run a narrow gamut between instability and calamity.

If, when, and how Korea might reunify remains unknown. It may take place peacefully, as Park hopes, or violently and amid chaos, as others fear. A soft or hard landing may depend on the speed of unification. A gradual process – a "soft landing" – could allow for a relatively smooth transition, while war or a collapse in the North – a "hard landing" – could see the abrupt absorption of North Korea into a unified state.

The alliance between the United States and the ROK has thus far deterred a reprise of 1950, when Kim Il Sung received a green light from Stalin and Mao for North Korea to invade the South and attempt unification by force and under Pyongyang's rule.[2] Deterrence worked over such a long time that the prospect of unification through northern invasion eventually gave way to the hopeful notion of a negotiated confederation – the animating idea behind Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy of the late 1990s.[3] Today, amid persistent questions about the longevity of the Kim family dynasty, both military and diplomatic means of unification have yielded to theories of sudden regime collapse (through a *coup d'état* or rebellion) or miscalculation (following, for instance, a provocation that escalates into outright conflict, possibly along the lines of the August 2015 tensions along the Demilitarized Zone).[4]

While there are many pathways to unification, this study begins with a set of middle-ground baseline assumptions about how unification is likeliest to unfold. First, we believe that unification very likely would occur without the use of nuclear weapons. Obviously this assumption is highly path-dependent, and yet nuclear weapons have not yet been used outside of the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan to end the war in the Pacific 70 years ago. Nuclear war may happen by accident or out of desperation, and yet the deliberate firing of a nuclear weapon into a subregion of major powers would represent a colossally dangerous event. If nuclear incidents were isolated, then the analysis of this report would not be changed. If, however, conflict were to escalate into nuclear war, then the geopolitical implications of Northeast Asia would not be the most profound question.

A second assumption is that China will seek to exercise influence over but not occupy a unified Korea; even if the Chinese were to intervene initially, they are likely to withdraw any deployed forces in the medium term after unification. Historically, China has preferred influence to occupation, and even a stronger China would be cautious about occupying a territory where all of its citizens have been indoctrinated to defend it from all outsiders. While China is very likely to want to secure its border, there are natural barriers that provide this function along the 880-mile border: namely, the Yalu and Tumen rivers and Paektu Mountain. Any initial occupation force on both sides of the border could reasonably be expected to return to the other side of these natural barriers, although this would not preclude various types of security and law-enforcement officials remaining inside as part of a higher level of cooperation between China and a unified Korea.

Third, we assume that violence will largely subside within a decade of unification and perhaps much sooner, although some remnants of insurgency may persist. The duration of any insurgency is impossible to predict, and certainly recent insurgences in the Middle East and Southwest Asia suggest that civil wars can grind on for a long time despite outside intervention. But we use the plausible baseline assumption of a relatively peaceful peninsula as a means of considering the geopolitical implications of a truly unified Korean Peninsula. We fully recognize far less peaceful scenarios may be equally plausible.

The Assumptions Leading to a Unified Republic of Korea

This report postulates the creation of a Unified Republic of Korea (UROK) emerging from the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) based on the assumptions in the above table. The report evaluates the security landscape of the Peninsula approximately 10 years after unification. Central to the analysis of this report are the potential geostrategic consequences of unification.

A fourth assumption is that the economy of a united Korea will experience real growth within a decade after unification but that this growth may well take place at a rate considerably slower than that suggested by the term "bonanza." Once again, we are staking out the middle ground, between a renewed Asian tiger economy and a peninsula mired in civil war.

Fifth, U.S. military forces are likely to remain present on the peninsula even a decade after unification, albeit south of the Han River and in fewer numbers than the current deployment of 28,500 troops. This is less an assumption than a strategic argument, and one that is rationalized in the section on the future of the alliance. Without a buffer from China, Korea will want the United States as a distant balancer; and if U.S. forces were withdrawn from Korea, there would be immense pressure on U.S. forward-deployed forces in Japan. We thus make the case for some forward-deployed U.S. forces because of enduring interests in a Seoul-Washington alliance. The U.S. military presence in a unified Korea might well consist of rotational forces designed for joint exercises, with Korea providing cooperation and access rather than large, permanent bases. In the context of Korean and American domestic democratic politics, however, calls for drawing down most if not all forces could easily prevail at any time.

Sixth and finally, political integration will almost certainly prove harder than in Germany, although we expect North Koreans to have earned the right of suffrage within a decade after unification. These suppositions (while highly debatable) provide the point of departure for the subsequent discussion in this report. They are not a forecast but are instead meant as a springboard for considering the most salient geopolitical implications of unification. Perhaps a moderate set of baseline assumptions will prove to be far off the mark, should unification occur; but we have taken plausible assumptions as a means of trying to isolate the geopolitical implications of unification.

Korean unification would represent both an extraordinary opportunity and one of the most complex po-

litical and economic processes in modern history. Unlike unified Germany, which became the largest and most powerful nation in Europe, unified Korea will stand at the geostrategic intersection of four of the world's most powerful nations. While garnering regional consensus on unification from its neighbors is not a precondition for South Korea as it was for West Germany, obtaining regional and international support for a Seoul-led model of unification will be critical to the successful integration of the two Korean states. To this end, President Park has made noteworthy efforts to win regional support – particularly from China – for her vision of gradual and peaceful unification with Pyongyang.

KOREAN UNIFICATION WOULD REPRESENT BOTH AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY AND ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROCESSES IN MODERN HISTORY.

Yet more steps will be necessary. Officials in Seoul and Washington, who have prepared extensive contingency plans (including for securing North Korea's nuclear arsenal), should deepen their strategic consultations and be prepared to operationalize their policies in the event of a sudden collapse in the North or other surprise event.[5]

The potential geostrategic consequences of unification remain under-researched. Much of the literature on unification diplomacy and its related policies remains limited to analyses of regional powers' current views on unification, their differing strategic interests on the Korean Peninsula, and the costs and benefits of unification from the perspective of neighboring nations. Studies that have considered longer-term effects of unification have focused on either domestic or inter-Korean factors and do not examine the midterm geostrategic consequences of unification for the Northeast Asian region.

The peninsula stands at the geopolitical crossroads of Northeast Asia and the strategic intersection of China, Japan, Russia, and the United States, making the geostrategic considerations of Korean unification more complex and multifaceted than any other unification scenario in history, including that of Germany. Also, the potential stakes of Korean unification are enormous, given North Korea's burgeoning nuclear weapons program and other weapons of mass destruction, its arsenal of long-range ballistic missiles, and its massive conventional military force comprising some 1.19 million personnel. While gaining the approval of the neighboring nations is not a precondition for unification, obtaining international and regional support for it will be vital for successfully building a unified Korean state.

Park and her administration have articulated this point. Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, for instance, has stated that "the next four years will be a watershed moment for establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula" and promised that he would "earnestly work with the international community to create a favorable environment for peaceful unification."[6] Park has also injected newfound momentum into the Republic of Korea's "unification diplomacy" (or *tongil woegyo)* and its policies to "establish a support base for Korea's unification through cooperation and coordination with China-U.S.-Japan, and to disarm the factors that would impede unification."[7] Park put reunification on the global agenda in a major speech in Dresden, Germany, in March 2014.[8] With her Dresden declaration, she intensified efforts to inform the international community of Seoul's efforts to engage the North, to improve strained inter-Korean relations, and to lay the foundation for eventual unification through trust-based initiatives. As a result, Beijing has expressed its support for the Dresden initiative as well as for "the ROK and DPRK improving their relations through dialogue, promoting reconciliation and finally realizing an independent unity."[9] Chinese President Xi Jinping has declared that China supports an independent, nonnuclear and peacefully unified Korean Peninsula.[10]

Yet, Beijing has not always been supportive of unification, and there are concerns in South Korea that China may revert back to supporting the status quo over all the uncertainties that could accompany unification.[11] Furthermore, Pyongyang has proved unresponsive to Park's Dresden initiative and has outright rejected her subsequent initiatives since

then.[12] Considering the paucity of dialogue between the two Koreas and the potentially destabilizing effect that engaging the South on unification could have on the Kim Jong Un regime, it is unlikely that any efforts by Seoul to engage Pyongyang would be met by serious and sincere efforts to promote unity.

In light of these considerations, greater efforts are necessary to further increase international support and narrow any gap between views in Seoul and Washington with regard to a unification strategy. Admittedly, the United States and the ROK have increased their efforts to tacitly prepare for the challenges of unification by forming a combined division consisting of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division and a ROK brigade-level unit to execute "strategic operations," such as eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, senior U.S. policymakers have praised Park's Dresden declaration.[13] However, as a practical matter, strategic planning efforts remain notional and limited to only the very initial period of unification.[14] Without significant action, the United States could find itself unprepared for the pace and breadth of change ushered in by sudden Korean unification.[15] As a result, greater effort is necessary to break through the inertia and to catalyze newfound momentum behind joint strategic preparation.

WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ACTION, THE UNITED STATES COULD FIND ITSELF UNPREPARED FOR THE PACE AND BREADTH OF CHANGE USHERED IN BY SUDDEN KOREAN UNIFICATION.

To do this, the discourse on unification should expand to consider the potential midterm geostrategic consequences of unification and to map out plausible alternative futures for a unified Korea. During the last several years, much of the literature has focused on analyzing the regional powers' policy regarding the diplomatic efforts that could be undertaken to increase support for a Seoul-led unification.[16] Others have taken a traditional approach and focused on analyzing the post-unification consequences from a strictly bilateral standpoint.[17] Those that have adopted a larger regional perspective have focused on the long-term end-state vision of what a unified Korea could do as a global leader and in promoting regional multilateral cooperation.[18] Even these studies, however, have often presented idealized end-state visions without describing the means by which Korea would get there and the challenges it would have to overcome in the midterm. While these works have added to the discourse on unification process and strategy, greater examination into unification's midterm geostrategic consequences is necessary.

In fact, changes in the post-unification environment could produce tectonic shifts in the region and create new strategic priorities for the regional powers, in turn leading to new challenges for Korea and the United States. On the one hand, Korean unification could shift the U.S. priority from deterring Pyongyang to a far more general concern about ensuring regional stability. On the other hand, a failure among regional powers to cooperate on critical issues could generate tension and even lead to conflict in East Asia. For example, the failure to implement transparency measures, rule of law practices, and denuclearization policies during unification could affect the duration and extent of U.S. congressional support for a unified Korea.[19] Additionally, a dearth of Korean-Chinese-U.S. cooperation on the potentially long-term task of denuclearization could have implications for regional proliferation (for instance, the failure to get Russia involved in accepting nuclear fissile material could complicate the denuclearization process). Furthermore, disagreements on the future of long-range missiles in the region could exacerbate the current asymmetric arms race, while lingering territorial disputes and historical issues in the post-unification era could heighten the frequency and the means by which conflicts erupt in the region.

This report examines the impact of unification on several critical issues. It begins by examining how the regional security environment might be changed in the aftermath of Korean unification and how the interests of Korea's neighboring powers, especially China, could be affected by unification. It then proceeds with a discussion of the implications

of unification for the U.S.-Korean alliance. The report next turns to a third issue, relating to the future composition and missions of Korean military forces, and then considers implications for nuclear weapons and deterrence. Finally, it offers brief conclusions for today's policymakers and analysts.

Regional Security Environment

A unified Korea's foreign policy orientation is one of the most profound questions regarding unification's impact on regional security. One way to examine the question is to consider the degree to which a unified Korea turns further toward China and continental Asia, seeks to retain a significant outward maritime posture aligned with the United States and other global actors, or turns neutral and isolationist by focusing on rebuilding while balancing the outside powers.

A Continental, Maritime, or Hermit Kingdom Orientation?

A future united Korea would be unable to escape the geostrategic competition of Northeast Asia. All four surrounding powers – the United States, China, Russia, and Japan – would seek to influence the process and outcome of unification. Each state would be seeking to mitigate potential deleterious fallout from unification, while turning the prospect of a truly unified peninsula to its greater advantage.

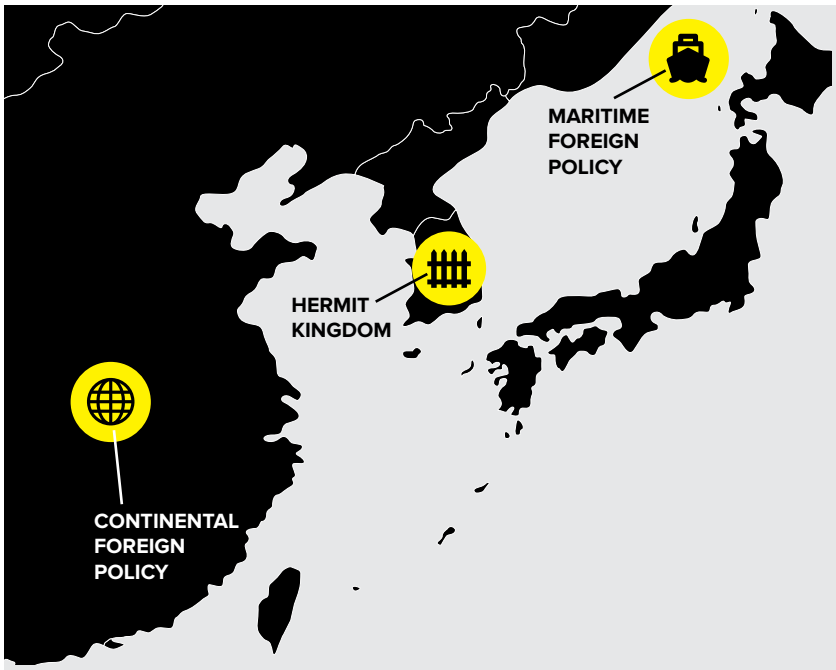
Of particular importance to the discussion of the East Asian regional order after unification is the relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC). U.S.-China relations continue to evince a mixture of economic interdependence and geopolitical competition. Traditionally, the United States has sought to prevent a Eurasian hegemon, but there remains a question as to how China's emergence as a power coupled with a hypothetical Korean unification might shift U.S. strategy to playing more of an offshore balancing role, not least because far fewer, if any, U.S. forces would be likely to remain permanently based on the Korean Peninsula. Such a consideration would follow lively debate in the military and policy communities, though the United States would undoubtedly continue to play a major role as a naval power, air power, and nuclear power, even absent a troop presence on the peninsula.

There are at least three possible descriptions of a united Korea's foreign policy orientation that fall along a spectrum of partnership with the United States on one end and with China at the other extreme. First, there is the possibility of a unified Korea that retains tight security ties with the United States. A unified Korea resembling the present-day ROK would still engage China in an effort to dissuade it from revisionism or coercion, but it would also seek to mollify China in order to maintain a stable regional balance of power. The U.S. alliance with a unified Korea might be expected to tighten or loosen depending on Seoul's perception of China's intentions, capabilities, and behavior.

ALL FOUR SURROUNDING POWERS – THE UNITED STATES, CHINA, RUSSIA, AND JAPAN – WOULD SEEK TO INFLUENCE THE PROCESS AND OUTCOME OF UNIFICATION.

A second possible foreign policy orientation of a united Korea might be characterized by neutrality. This might mimic Roh Moo-hyun's notion of Korea as a regional fulcrum or balancer. However, even a unified Korea might lack the power to play such a pivotal regional role. Among other things, a unified Korea would want to preserve U.S. security support and good economic ties with China, as a means of achieving a sustainable balance of power in Northeast Asia. But perhaps a unified Korea, playing to its pre-modern tendency to avoid regional politics and mitigate the chances of being subdued by surrounding great powers, would at least for a time seek a "Hermit Kingdom" strategy of neutrality, eschewing close relations with all, focusing on accelerating the integration and development of a unified peninsula. However, isolation and neutrality might in fact turn out to be sources of instability for Korea, should major-power competition continue or rise.

Three Futures for Korean Foreign Policy



CONTINENTAL FOREIGN POLICY
The UROK could turn eastward toward continental Asia and become openly pro-China.

This could lead to UROK defense and security policy drifting away from the interests of the U.S. and its regional allies.

HERMIT KINGDOM
The UROK may choose to turn inward, focusing largely on peninsular integration and development.

This could lead to instability for the UROK, particularly should major power competition continue or rise.

MARITIME FOREIGN POLICY
The UROK could maintain the status quo, retaining close security ties with the United States while simultaneously engaging with China.

This would maintain a stable regional balance of power.

A third possibility is that unified Korea turns more toward continental Asia and becomes openly "pro-China" in its foreign policy orientation. While one can imagine Beijing encouraging such a course, the desire for exercising independent, sovereign authority is readily apparent and deeply rooted in both halves of the peninsula. In addition, such a foreign policy pathway would likely be unattractive to Korea because stability is essential for coping with the numerous challenges of the unification process. Furthermore, Korea has historically been committed to liberal market economic order and has democratic values entrenched, and China's differences in political and economic outlook may likely undermine these interests.

China has emerged as a new pole in the region, and its rivalry with the United States under the surface has a large impact on a united Korea's calculus for a regional strategy. The bipolar structure in Northeast Asia is unlikely to change, and however a united Korea chooses to define its diplomacy this fact alone is unlikely to affect this polarity. Thus, in some ways, a unified Korea may resemble a more "normal" Asian country, one that exercises varying degrees of "balancing" and "bandwagoning" behavior among the regional powers, depending on shifting situations.

A wild card in the post-unification regional order is Russia. Along with China, Russia seeks – and will continue to seek – Korea's integration into Eurasia, rather than encouraging its liberal democratic orientation. Beijing and Moscow both seem to agree that the U.S.-ROK alliance (as well as the U.S.-Japan alliance) should be limited and weakened if possible. The collapse of the North Korean regime would be seen by Moscow as a breakdown of the 1945 world order and would mean that winners and losers have been identified. China and Russia would seek to limit the United States' footprint on the Korean Peninsula, with red lines that might include no absorption of North Korea, no troops above the 38th parallel, and no close alignment with the United States in foreign policy. If Russia and China are united on any issue, it is due to a desire to keep the United States and external forces from influencing their internal affairs, including their authoritarian governments.

South Korea has sought to play a middle-power role to restructure social, political, and economic issues in East Asia, and may be able to play a role where the United States cannot, including Far Eastern Russia or even China, in addition to small regional states in Northeast and Southeast Asia. As China and Russia seek greater international involvement, a partner such as Korea may prove valuable.

South Korea's cultivation of a role as a global middle power has largely been facilitated by the alliance with the United States.[20] Kim Dae-jung declared a "support policy" for U.S. overseas operations in Afghanistan in 2001, sent troops to help the United States in Iraq in 2003, and deployed naval forces to assist U.S.-led counterpiracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden in 2009. Many in South Korea advocate transforming the U.S.-ROK military regional partnership into a more global partnership and hope to see more transformation after unification.

However, even many U.S. experts are skeptical about a unified Korea's regional role. The ROK's increasing prominence in tackling global issues constitutes an important trend, but Seoul has had a challenging time seeking to rise above the singular issue of managing peace on the peninsula. North Korea has a way of simultaneously highlighting South Korea's success as a G-20 economy and liberal democracy, but preventing too many regional and global issues from distracting the need to focus on Pyongyang's provocations and uncertain future. One question, therefore, is how much this lack of deep engagement in regional security issues is distorted by the North Korea question and how much is it a "natural set point" for Korean foreign policy. A stable, unified Korea would be in a position to play a larger regional role, and yet even a unified Korea would be busy striving to balance relations among China, Japan, and Russia. One cautionary omen is that Seoul has faced considerable hurdles in advancing bottom-up subregional integration in Asia through its Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative.

Meanwhile, Japan's strength within the region has been compromised, and Tokyo's actions may be seen through the prism of its China policy. Some Koreans voice concerns over the current Japanese government's focus on military power and revisionism rather than fully redressing historical grievances and distrust. While the ROK government has tried to separate its concerns over history and other issues so as not to undermine security cooperation with Japan, there is an undeniable foot-dragging quality to Tokyo-Seoul cooperation. This drag on cooperation is likely to carry over into something as sensitive as involvement in helping with a unified Korea.

The nascent restructuring of the East Asian order may mean that a united Korea has a role to play in supporting development and democracy promotion where larger countries such as the United States may find involvement problematic. A united Korea that extends South Korea's current middle-power aspirations, central in many South Korean strategists' minds today, might play a role in helping restructure social, political, and economic spaces, especially in countries overly reliant on China. South Korea's developmental experience is already being exported to countries in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and lessons that South Korea might learn through integration and unification with the North would likewise prove valuable to others; further contributions with the United States as partner or supporter would likely produce effective economic outcomes and impact China's regional expansion.

China's Relations with a United Korea

Two geostrategic implications of unification's impact on Korea-China relations center on the possibility of greater Chinese hegemony, in which a unified Korea is treated as a modern tributary state of Beijing, and the possibility of a united Korea as an outlet for Korean nationalism.

China's use of its economic influence to shape a united Korea's diplomatic and security policy would color Korea-China relations. In the process of Korean unification, it is natural that the northern region will need China's support. Additionally, given China's vested economic interests in the current North Korean territory and the geoeconomic potential of northern Korea as an outlet to the Pacific, China would have a more active role in development of northern Korea than any other state in the region. In the same sense, considering the value of northern

Korea as a land bridge to the Chinese market, Seoul will also play an active role in developing northern Korea to bridge the gap between the developed South and the underdeveloped North.[21] If Beijing tries to leverage its economic influence to coerce a unified Korea's political and security policy, Seoul would almost surely consider the Chinese move as a threat to Korean sovereignty.

BEIJING WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY MEET CLOSER U.S.-KOREAN TIES WITH MORE COERCIVE MEANS.

Koreans are no strangers to deflecting outside interference, but a united Korea may heighten concerns in Seoul that the massive Chinese economy and overwhelming physical proximity would lead to excessive reliance on Beijing.[22] In this context, some Koreans view the recent controversy over the possible deployment of the United States' Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system as a harbinger of Chinese heavy-handedness on the Korean Peninsula.[23] Consequently, the Korean fear of being turned into a modern tributary state of China would call for retaining a strong relationship with the United States as a distant balancing power. But Beijing would undoubtedly meet closer U.S.-Korean ties with more coercive means.[24]

Additionally, Korean nationalism within a newly united state would significantly impact relations with all surrounding powers. To unify the Korean Peninsula and tie former North and South Koreans together, a unified Korea would need a common touchstone shared by all Koreans. However, excessive Korean nationalism could drive a united Korea to claim responsibility for the Korean-speaking Chinese population beyond the boundary of the peninsula, such as those in the northeast Chinese provinces in Manchuria, and the unified country would have to be careful to prevent a spillover of nationalism. A united Korea's claim, whether historical or cultural, over the Korean Chinese population in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture may prompt China to take forceful, pre-emptive action[25] to prevent separatism from spreading.[26] In this context, it may have been the Chinese fear of division that drove Beijing to initiate a Northeast Project in the early 2000s as a precautionary measure to avert such a spillover of Korean nationalism.[27]

Why would China, a country of some 1.3 billion people, fear the nationalism of some 80 million Koreans? In brief, a rapprochement of China's Korean population and a united Korea could awaken a search for national identity within these communities in China. This awakening could inspire separatist movements in other sensitive regions.[28] For example, if Korean nationalism extends to the Korean Chinese in Manchuria, it may be interpreted as defying Beijing's central rule and seen as stimulating a "splitist" movement in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan. The national identity of the Korean Chinese may be shaken by the Korean nationalist influence that would possibly allow more Korean Chinese to gain work permits in Korea.[29] If Korean nationalism grows, a united Korea may even seek to pursue a policy of trying to serve as the protector of all Korean nationals, something that China would certainly find objectionable.[30] Excessive Korean nationalism would seriously undermine the stability and security of the Chinese Communist Party. Consequently, Seoul will have to be very mindful of the implications of unification on self-determination aspirations among communities within China and neighboring countries. Ideally, Korean nationalism would be diverted inward toward domestic reconstruction and national integration.

Geoeconomic Dimensions of Unification

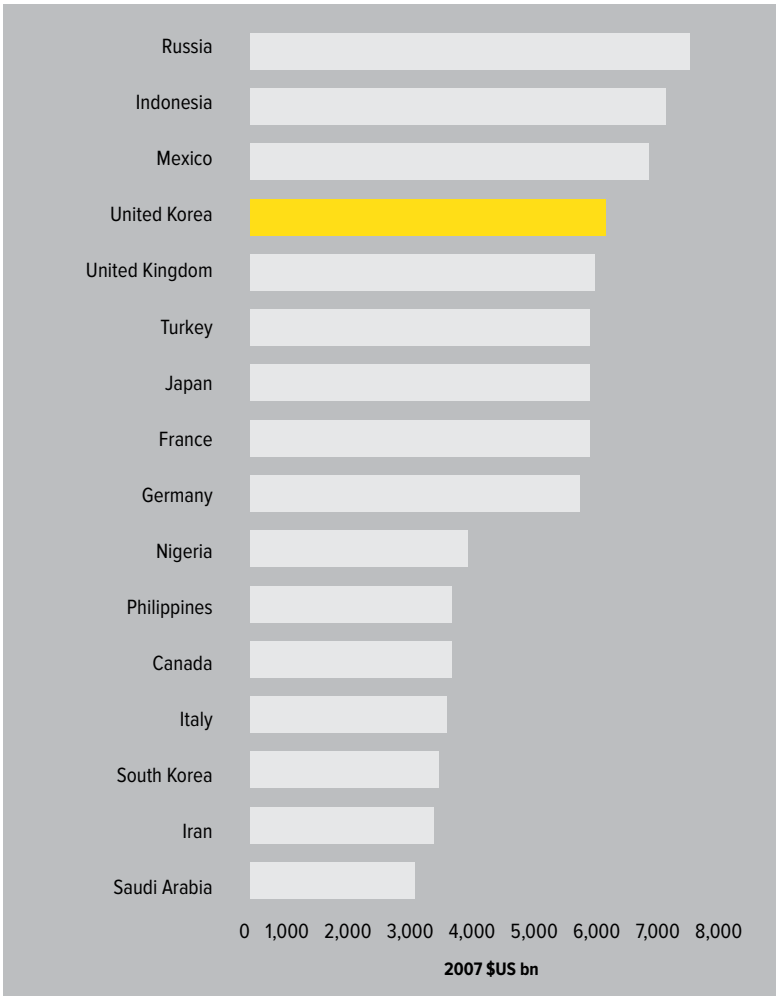
Although often overshadowed by great-power relations and military issues, some of the salient geopolitical implications of Korean unification are decidedly economic in nature. This has been obvious to South Koreans, at least since 1990, after West and East Germany were suddenly unified following 45 years of separation. While official policies of both North Korea and South Korea outline a gradual and consensual process for unification, the more likely unification scenario would be abrupt, with collapse of the North Korean regime and absorption by the South in a way some observers associate with the German case. At least German unification enjoyed political legitimacy, as it was voted upon by the East German legislative body and was a planned, democratic process. In Korea's case, the "bonanza" of economic benefits from unification that Park has predicted is questionable. While unification would in the long term accelerate peninsular economic growth and reduce poverty, its price tag would be enormous, perhaps exceeding $1 trillion. That amount, economists estimate, would put the North's per capita income at 60 percent of the South's, a ratio considered a key threshold for social stability.[31]

South Korean studies of inter-Korean economic integration after unification fall under three general theoretical models: 1) integration after North Korea's spontaneous transition to a market economy; 2) rapid integration after sudden collapse; and 3) gradual integration after sudden collapse.

The first model should be thought of as a merger of two market economies rather than one socialist and one market economy. This model describes two different processes: one that occurs with the denuclearization of North Korea (which would be supported by the outside world and in which integration would be easy, due to legal issues discussed further below) and one that occurs without denuclearization, which at this time seems more probable and would be relatively slower and without as many positive results. This second type would be weighed down by an inefficient state sector. In the third case, the whole northern part of the peninsula would likely remain a special economic zone with policies leading to eventual integration of the two economies.

UROK Bonanza? Maybe over time.

Goldman Sachs forecasts the world's largest economies in 2050. A united Korea would be the 4th largest economy, excluding China, US, India, and Brazil.



Source: Goohoon Kwon, "A United Korea? Reassessing North Korea Risks (Part I)," Global Economics Paper No. 188, (Goldman Sachs, September 21, 2009), 4.

In all likelihood, unification may result in a fourth, hybrid project involving all three models to varying degrees. North Korea has already embarked on some limited reforms of its economy.[32] Black and gray markets aid, to a very limited degree, in North Koreans' understandings of market systems. At the

future point of integration, North Korea could likely no longer be thought of as a socialist economy, but the differences between the two economies would pose great challenges to a united Korean government, needing both quick fixes and longer, more complicated reforms.

Several factors will contribute to the rate of economic integration and growth, much of it having to do with the former North Korea's ability to and speed in adopting South Korean market systems and technology. Additionally, the amount of controlled labor sent from the North to the South would impact which industries grow and the overall rate of growth.

Another area for early consideration would be U.S. policy issues. Current policy prohibits cross-border Korean trade with the United States, and new legislation in the United States would be needed to uphold and revise trade agreements with a united Korea. Because of the nature of U.S. policy, revisions would require congressional action rather than diplomatic policy. To the extent the United States is keen to accelerate economic integration, the 2012 Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement already provides a mechanism (Annex 22-B) for liberalizing trade with the northern part of the peninsula, at least in the Kaesong Industrial Complex. Of course, labor rights in Kaesong would need to be improved in order to allow U.S. investment.

While the private sector has an important role to play in economic integration and growth, the public sector will be deeply involved. The fiscal situation of the United States means its financial contributions might be limited and would not be guaranteed. The largest contributions for recovery and integration would need to come from the ROK first and would very likely be followed by China and possibly Japan. Other international organizations would also have important roles to play in funding the unification process and supporting economic growth.

Regional stability and the economic and security interests of all regional stakeholders, not only the Koreas, would be served by helping build as much international cooperation as possible prior to integration of the two economies. However, such greater involvement may also mean contesting and contested economic development; uncertainty about competition over regional order or the U.S.-Korea alliance would mean the unified Korean Peninsula could be a source of unity or a source of friction. China would likely seek to play a major role in rebuilding North Korea and supporting the new Korean economy, exacerbating the competition.

U.S. Navy Korea Flickr

The littoral combat ship USS Fort Worth *with the guided-missile destroyers USS* Michael Murphy *and USS* John McCain *conduct joint exercises with the ROKS* Eulji Mundeok *and ROKS* Jeju *during Foal Eagle 2015. The annual training exercise is designed to increase readiness and maintain stability on the peninsula, strengthen the ROK-US alliance, and promote peace and stability in the region.*

The U.S.-Korean Alliance

At some point in the process of unification, the U.S. alliance with a unified Korea would face an existential crisis. All options would be on the table save one: staying unchanged. The U.S.-ROK alliance has been defined and founded on its role as a deterrent to the North Korean threat.[33] Absent that threat, the need for the alliance would be called into question.

Strategic thinkers seem to believe unification will be not an event, but a protracted period during which issues will be negotiated at length. Thus, it is at least conceivable that a U.S. alliance with Korea could remain as salient in a post-unification environment as it is today. After all, unification is not the same thing as stability, and myriad obstacles stand in the way of true integration of the two Koreas. Part of the discussion of a United Republic of Korea (UROK) and its decisionmaking vis-à-vis a U.S. alliance is likely to depend on the wider regional strategic environment, and that environment will be contested. For instance, during private discussions it is apparent that some experts believe East Asia may see the emergence of two blocs: one dedicated to liberal democracy and another dedicated to semi-authoritarian political institutions. In an environment of uncertainty, decisionmakers would be wary to discard an existing policy instrument that has been deemed a success. Additionally, there are the sunk costs associated with the alliance. That is, the existing alliance infrastructure, from the hardware of basing arrangements and defense equipment to the software of personnel and command structures, is already established, and reorientation to an alternative system of alliance would likely be time-consuming, cumbersome, and arduous.

Both history and contemporary international relations seem to consign the Korean Peninsula to ma-

jor geopolitical competition. The fact that unification is highly contingent means there is a wide range of possible outcomes for the peninsula's strategic considerations. On one end is what those in the United States might term a best-case scenario: peaceful unification with a soft landing, in which a united Korea remains allied with the United States, is denuclearized, and reaches an understanding for peaceful coexistence with China. This scenario assumes that the United States has played a supportive role in the unification process, making clear contributions in support of the emerging Korean state. A countervailing scenario, however, is the possibility of a regional nightmare: unification achieved after a hard landing marked by conflict, chaos, and civil strife. Moreover, if many Koreans perceived the United States to be culpable in forestalling peaceful unification, perhaps in tandem with Japan, then presumably a unified Korea increasingly would be drawn into China's ambit. The resulting united Korea might well lean inward into continental Asia and away from the maritime Pacific. A third possibility is a Korea that retreats to within its new unified borders and seeks to balance the outside powers, including both China and the United States. It is also possible to imagine a hybrid orientation that offers elements of all three of these seemingly distinctive dispositions.

Closely connected to the question of the future of the U.S.-Korean alliance is Korea's dependence on U.S. military power for its security. If a unified Korea sees no immediate threat posed by China, Russia, or Japan, then Seoul may well seek to reduce its ties with the U.S. military; indeed it may even de-emphasize its own armed forces in the aftermath of vanquishing a North Korean threat. However, surrounding powers, lingering instability on the peninsula, and uncertainty about a unified Korea's future role are likely to remain powerful catalysts for hedging in the form of security ties and defense forces.

Based on our conversations with experts, currently some in South Korea do see the value of continuing the alliance with a new rationale: providing insurance against drastic regional reordering, which has been termed "order insurance." The concept of order insurance differs from hedging or balancing in that it is a strategy to avoid defaulting to a balancing or hedging strategy in the future; instead, it seeks to build security arrangements that prevent an undesirable future security situation. This insurance not only enables the allies but also protects the regional order. As was seen in early South Korean modern history during the Rhee Syngman period, the alliance may help control allied behavior and temper the battle lines of regional rivalries (either Russo-U.S. or Sino-U.S.) to support East Asian stability.

AT A MINIMUM, AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND A UNIFIED KOREA WOULD NEED A NEW RAISON D' ÊTRE, TRANSCENDING THE STRONG ADHESIVE OF A NORTH KOREAN THREAT.

There is no guarantee that the U.S. alliance with Korea would endure the shock of unification. Even if the alliance between the United States and South Korea did endure, perhaps becoming the U.S.-UROK alliance, many might not recognize it. At a minimum, an alliance between the United States and a unified Korea would need a new raison d' être, transcending the strong adhesive of a North Korean threat. Command arrangements would also be irrevocably altered, and so, too, would the array of missions.

Once stability on the Korean Peninsula is secure, a united Korea's historic interest in ensuring security from all neighboring powers could easily create new fissures in the Washington-Seoul relationship. Those fissures are already visible today as Seoul moves to improve relations with Beijing and ties between Seoul and Tokyo remain strained. Without an overriding interest in deterring North Korean aggression and countering Pyongyang's nuclear weapons, the U.S.-ROK alliance could falter or at least lose cohesion in the transition to a U.S.-UROK relationship. As the United States eases up on a tight security partnership, China might wish to extend its influence on the Asian mainland by forging even closer integration with a unified Korea. This might leave the maritime powers of the

Cheong Wa Dae

U.S. President Barack Obama and ROK President Park Geun-hye chat during the ROK-U.S. Summit in October 2015.

United States and Japan in an awkward situation of offshore balancing vis-à-vis the mainland Asian powers. Where Russia fits into this equation is even more a question mark, but it may be left with little recourse to following Beijing's lead in Asia.

This scenario of entropy in U.S.-Korean relations would almost certainly become a reality should Washington lose significant clout or political will to remain fully engaged in Northeast Asia.

A Transitional Alliance

The end of the North Korean threat would not necessarily spell the end of the alliance. For instance, we can imagine a looser alliance predicated on common values and dedicated to contributing to general regional stability, and order might arise in its place. Indeed, the foundation for a value-based alliance has already been laid.[34] But the notion of a more value-based alliance raises the question of precisely what shared values will animate this future U.S.-UROK alliance, and how durable shared values will be in the face of clashing national interests or shifting domestic politics.

A decade after unification, there are apt to be lingering questions about the value of retaining the alliance between Seoul and Washington. At least in the short run, there should be ample utility in not discarding the alliance. Even peaceful unification would leave two different societies with starkly different mindsets and systems to be sorted out. A quarter century after unification, Germany is today the most powerful country in Europe; but even President Park recognizes that Korean unification is likely to be more tortuous than that of Germany, if only because of the relative lack of cross-border ties.[35] Take into account bloodshed, nuclear weapons, a backward economy, and entrenched indoctrination, and the notion of peacefully integrating with North Korea is at best problematic.

A transitional alliance rooted in common values and the maintenance of general order might also prevail because it has a history of success. After all, such an alliance would have emerged, presumably, out of the crucible of liberal democracy. The Kim family dynasty and its policies of *Juche* (self-reliance) would be on the losing end of history, and policy elites in both Seoul and Washington would not be willing to suddenly toss out the strong bonds that made unification possible. The staunch commitment to the 1953 U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, having successfully neutralize the North Korean threat, could be repurposed to achieve what that historic document called "Collective defense for the preservation of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive and effective system of regional security in the Pacific area."[36] At least among South Koreans, the idea of a post-unification alliance remains popular,[37] and the high vote of support would certainly suggest that most ROK citizens would like to see the alliance continue well after the North Korean threat disappears.

Finally, a post-unification alliance could also take root based on a common vision for the global order. This could include an expanded approach to an array of international issues, from refugees, climate change, and peacekeeping to pandemics, natural disasters, piracy, and terrorism. In fact, an October 2015 summit that focused on new frontiers suggests some of the dimensions of a potential post-unification alliance.[38] Although a military alliance would not be necessary to advance common interests across the spectrum of global issues, the existence of such close cooperation between the national security institutions of the two countries would make it easier to cooperate on these issues than in the absence of an alliance. Seoul would want to play – and be expected to play – a larger role in global affairs, and retaining a close alliance with the United States could facilitate that role.

In fact, the ROK's commitment to the goals of liberal democracy and global security has been amply demonstrated. South Korea was the largest U.S. ally in the Vietnam War[39] and the second-largest contributor (after the United Kingdom) to the United States' Iraq War stabilization efforts.[40] South Korea also sent a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to Afghanistan and has sent aid and troops to Somalia, Lebanon, and South Sudan, among other places. Promoting liberal democracy by contributing to global security would be another goal for the U.S.-UROK alliance.

First-Order Operational Questions

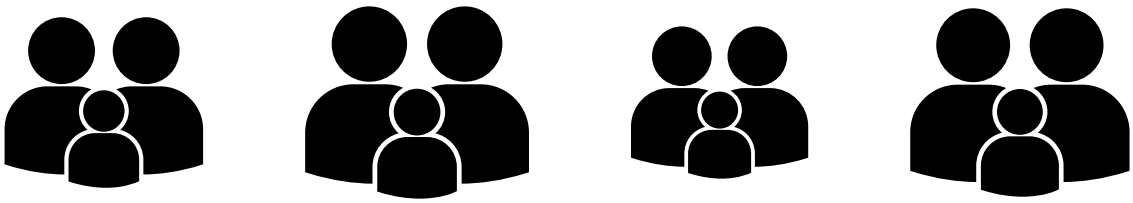
Without an operational component, an alliance based on values and general order would atrophy and eventually be no more than an alliance in name. Converting current command arrangements into something that would be politically sustainable and militarily operational would not be easy. The long, drawn-out political debate over the shift of full wartime operational control from the United States to the ROK suggests the potential sensitivity of these issues within the context of Korean domestic politics.

What is the future of the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command or, alternatively, what replaces it? One possibility would be to replace the CFC with a U.S. Korea Command.[41] USKORCOM, which might provide a useful hedge against China, could also be a vital bridge between U.S. forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) of a united Korea. USKORCOM could also facilitate military relations with the United Nations Command, assuming that peninsula issues justify that institution's existence.

WITHOUT AN OPERATIONAL COMPONENT, AN ALLIANCE BASED ON VALUES AND GENERAL ORDER WOULD ATROPHY AND EVENTUALLY BE NO MORE THAN AN ALLIANCE IN NAME.

In a changing security landscape, USKORCOM could assuage a newly unified Korea's defense concerns. On the one hand, the new command could reassure Koreans that they would not be left to fend off the predations of large neighbors; on the other hand, USKORCOM could help keep a unified Korea from seeking nuclear weapons to guarantee its defense. There is historical precedent for a fear of abandonment driving nuclear programs, and it

The US-ROK Alliance is Strong and Lasting
Recent polls suggest that both the U.S. and South Korea populations continue to positively assess the alliance, even after unification.



59%

South Koreans prefer the U.S. over China (31 percent) as South Korea's future partner.[42]

70-80%

South Koreans categorize U.S.-ROK relations as cooperative.[43]

47%

Americans support the use of US troops to defend South Korea.[44]

72%

South Koreans positively assess U.S. leadership in global affairs while 52 percent said about the same China.[45]

is worth recalling that such a fear and the loss of confidence in a strong alliance drove President Park Chung-hee to pursue his secret nuclear program in the 1970s.[46] Therefore, USKORCOM might serve as a safety mechanism to safeguard against a power vacuum and to reassure a united Korea that it will not be left completely on its own to deal with a volatile region.

USKORCOM could also facilitate military contact with any remaining multinational forces of United Nations Command member states and the unified Korean military leadership, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[47] USKORCOM might resemble the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) based in Stuttgart, Germany. EUCOM plays a role of facilitator between U.S. European allies and NATO. In the absence of a multilateral security alliance like NATO, the United States Korea Command would need to facilitate trilateral coordination among the UROK, JCS, the UNC, and USKORCOM.

Until northern Korea is fully stabilized, the UNC would logically play a role connecting international humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping efforts with the military activities of a united Korea. While this is highly speculative, it is at least conceivable that a revamped UNC could endure even after northern Korea is stabilized. The repurposed UNC could coordinate with the UROK military to facilitate a larger Korean role in global security. If the UNC is dissolved, this might be yet another reason for a united Korea to seek a level of military integration through USKORCOM.

Another first-order question concerns whether U.S. troops remain on the peninsula even a decade after unification and their number if they do. A virtual alliance is possible, but probably only by maintaining a minimally credible troop presence in order to avoid a vacuum of power. Although the circumstances would be entirely different, it is instructive that in both Iraq and Afghanistan, options for residual troop presence often ranged from 1,000 to 10,000 troops. The number of troops remaining on the peninsula might evolve naturally in stages, with downsizing occurring in response to achieving particular levels of stability.

Nonetheless, assuming that political leaders could broker a deal that serves the mutual interests of both countries, and assuming the command and control and troop-size arrangements were seen as adding value to both these independent, democratic states, then the issue becomes where to base U.S. troops. Out of deference to China's security concerns, it seems unlikely that U.S. forces would be positioned above the 38th parallel near the northern border. This suggests that U.S. forces might be located somewhere in present-day South Korea but still convenient for the coordination between UROK military forces and those of a U.S.-led command. This reasoning is consistent with the current relocation plan for U.S. forces on the peninsula. According to the plan, all U.S. forces will be organized into two main hubs located south of the Han River, in the Osan area, about a two-hour drive from Seoul, and in the Southeast, near Busan, Chinhae, and Daegu.[48] As long as the United States maintains a military presence south of the Han River, it would be able to fulfill its purpose of providing insurance without unduly upsetting neighbors, especially China.

In sum, unification would be a shock to the alliance. However, there are a number of reasons that a transitional alliance would likely endure. A power vacuum would be a real fear for Seoul and Washington. Additionally, proximate Chinese power means that Seoul would likely maintain the United States as a distant balancing power; and the U.S. fear that a united Korea might have to acquire nuclear weapons to guarantee its security in Northeast Asia would militate arguments for disbanding the alliance. More positively, the alliance could build on already identified new fronts in bilateral relations, centered on common values and regional and global order. While a smaller U.S. military presence might remain to avoid the alliance's devolving into a virtual one, forces would most likely be based within the area of present-day South Korea.

The Korean Armed Forces

The structure of South Korea's military forces has evolved over time to keep pace with a changing North Korea threat. North Korea's greatest military advantage has always been its numerical superiority in ground forces, which has necessitated a large but numerically incommensurate South Korean army. In order to offset North Korea's large conventional force during the early decades of the Cold War, South Korea depended on technological superiority, in conjunction with U.S. troop contributions. As North Korea gradually acquired cruise and short-range ballistic missile capabilities in addition to its conventional forces, the U.S. nuclear umbrella and alliance missile defense capabilities took on greater salience. Qualitatively superior forces remained the South Korean advantage in the Korean Peninsula's military balance.

Resetting Strategic Priorities

But a military force structure concentrated on North Korea is a historical aberration. After unification, Korean force structure will need to return to its traditional mission of hedging against external threats: that is, defending against predation by outside powers. Korea's foreign policy toward China, Russia, and Japan need not be hostile, but Korean military forces must be capable of defending its sovereignty against external militaries. Timelines for weapon systems' procurement, development, and training inevitably stretch across multiple fiscal year budgets, making dramatic pivots in military force structure impossible to do quickly. This time constraint on force structure development places a priority on shaping the Korean military to manage external threats even without a designated adversary.

To hedge against the possibility of rapidly changing intentions on the part of outside powers, therefore, Korea's post-unification force structure would need to focus primarily on imposing unacceptable costs on foreign adversaries that threaten Korean sovereignty. The Korean military would not need to be able to defeat or destroy another nation's military; it only needs to be capable of withstanding an assault and frustrating the military ambitions of others.

A secondary mission for the Korean military will likely be sustained mobility and power projection as far as the Indian Ocean. Korea is reliant on international trade for its export-driven economy, and most trade takes place by ship. Korea is also projected to be reliant on energy imports for decades to come, especially from the Middle East, and its energy imports and trade rely on sea lines of communication (SLOCs) that cross the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, and various straits connected to the South China Sea. Modern Korea has historically been able to rely on the United States to keep these SLOCs open, but as military technologies evolve and spheres of influence become more contested, U.S. power projection will increasingly rely on coalitions with regional allies and partners.

A third-tier mission of the Korean military may be internal security, especially in northern Korea. If pockets of violent resistance persist in northern Korean territory after unification, Korea will need to retain a standing army capable of fighting a small counterinsurgency campaign and maintaining internal security inside a northern Korean territory that could continue to show signs of occasional instability. In this respect, a post-unification Korean military may undergo a transition similar to U.S. force structure after a decade of war in Afghanistan and Iraq: retain sufficient ground forces to conduct a counterinsurgency mission, but shift investment priorities and overall force size to those capabilities most needed for emerging, long-term strategic priorities.

Priority Force Structure

Korea happens to be located in the most militarily high-technology neighborhood in the world, which matters because the size and shape of military force structure depends not only on the missions that must be executed, but on prevailing militarily relevant technologies as well.[49] Given current trajectories, long-range precision-guided munitions and information warfare are the most likely major features of future conflict – especially among East Asian militaries.[50] In addition to these trends, naval modernization is happening across Asia, while maritime areas of the Indo-Pacific are becoming more important to surrounding nations.[51] Taken together, these convergences give reason to expect that air and maritime forces will need to become the priority forces in post-unification Korean military budgets, if not earlier.

Korea Aerospace Industries, LTD

Protecting UROK sovereignty and improving power projection capabilities are likely to be the two top strategic priorities of the armed forces of the United Republic of Korea (UROK). This image is a concept version of the proposed next generation Korean fighter KF-X.

Although there is some overlap, each mission of a post-unification military emphasizes a different force structure mix. A force structure aimed at defending Korean sovereignty looks a bit like an anti-access force designed to discourage foreign coercion through direct cost imposition and stymying the force projection of other powers. In the air, this means denying logistics and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities of outside threats, possibly by targeting air tankers and

Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS). An ample inventory of surface-to-air missiles, mobile missile launchers, and ISR assets such as satellites, manned aircrafts, and unmanned aircrafts will be critical to prosecuting an air denial campaign.

A FORCE STRUCTURE AIMED AT DEFENDING KOREAN SOVEREIGNTY LOOKS A BIT LIKE AN ANTI-ACCESS FORCE DESIGNED TO DISCOURAGE FOREIGN COERCION THROUGH DIRECT COST IMPOSITION AND STYMYING THE FORCE PROJECTION OF OTHER POWERS.

Denying naval force projection by outside powers will require targeting their sealift capability (transport and landing assets), necessitating a large arsenal of strike assets such as ballistic and cruise missiles, and torpedoes launched from multiple platforms including air fighters, frigates, destroyers, and submarines. Additionally, naval ISR assets such as unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) and unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) will be needed to watch the territorial waters around the clock. Third, adversaries' ground force projection should be denied by intercepting ground lines of communication. In order to do so, future Korean forces should be capable of watching adversaries' logistics forces with ISR assets and delivering precision strikes as required. Therefore, reliable ISR assets, well-trained special operations forces, unmanned drones, and precision-guided munitions will be of critical importance.

In addition to protecting maritime sovereignty, future Korean forces will have to secure stable sea lines of communication and protect freedom of navigation of Korean vessels in international waters, in conjunction with other like-minded foreign military forces.[52] In an effort to do so, the post-unification Korean navy must be able to conduct anti-piracy operations, maritime rescue operations, distant patrol, and direct surface and subsurface combat in waters away from Korean ports. To execute these operations, the Korean navy should possess logistics capable of providing fuel, food, munitions, personnel, and maintenance services for combatant vessels operating to protect Korean maritime freedom of navigation in distant waters. In this context, combat logistics ships – such as a replenishment oiler – will help sustain distant naval operations. The Korean navy will also require a precision-strike capability that can counter or prevent a possible blockade of SLOCs by foreign powers or pirates. Seaborne surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), air defense systems, close-in weapon systems (CIWS), and nuclear powered submarines will be crucial. Korea's naval forces will also need to be survivable, but a survivability requirement can be achieved in multiple ways, ranging from a high number of redundant assets to stealth and electronic warfare.

A third-tier mission of a post-unification Korean military is to maintain internal security in northern Korea. This mission will require that Korean force structure include a counterinsurgency-trained standing army sufficient to maintain public order, as well as special operations forces to counter the remaining pockets of insurgency in urban and mountainous settings. Korean special forces should be capable of fighting urban guerrilla warfare. As many mountains near population centers in northern Korea are deforested – due to extreme famines and poor resource management – insurgents will be unable to take shelter and continue resistance in such terrain, making it more likely that they will hide in urban areas. In order to identify and capture urban guerrillas, doctrine for urban guerrilla warfare will be more important than physical assets. In case insurgents take shelter in densely forested highlands remote from population centers to continue fighting, post-unification Korean forces should focus on controlling networks that facilitate supplies of food and weapons. For these purposes, a large number of small tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) equipped with thermal optical sensors and capable of flying through or above wooded areas would be sufficient to support the counterinsurgency mission.

For all of these diverse missions, Korean forces require a unified chain of command that supports maximum "jointness." There is likely a lead service for each mission – the army may lead counterinsurgency and navy may lead SLOC defense, for

example – but each mission requires supporting elements from the other military services.

Priority Force Posture

Two major factors are likely to constrain the geographic distribution of Korean forces on the peninsula – military basing infrastructure and the U.S. military presence. Korea's alliance with the United States will prove an important way to achieve its two priority missions: avoiding predation by outside powers and securing South Korean trade and energy flows. At the same time, Korea would likely face Chinese resistance to U.S. forces north of the 38th parallel. In the northern half of Korea, surviving North Korean military infrastructure will serve as useful bases and facilities for Korean forces.

We might therefore expect any U.S. military footprint in Korea to remain south of the 38th parallel unless Korea demands otherwise. If Chinese forces stay out of northern Korea after unification, then the United States can do so as well, should that be Korea's preference. The northern half of Korea will require a substantial Korean military presence, however, to prosecute any counterinsurgency mission and as a pragmatic means of reintegrating soldiers from the North Korean People's Army (KPA) into the Korean armed forces.[53] Former KPA soldiers will need gainful employment, but bringing them into southern Korea would introduce many logistical, training, and likely social costs.

In support of Korea's likely second-tier mission, regional mobility and power projection, Korea will need to build on its existing expeditionary capability (company-level deployments of amphibious forces), which, while limited, can already deploy on short notice across the region. Because this mission would likely be pursued in concert with other nations, such as the United States, it would not necessarily need an independent regional basing infrastructure, aerial refueling capability, or entire aircraft carrier strike groups – as long as it is willing to rely partly on coalition partners. It would, however, need to establish strategic planning mechanisms to reach mutual understandings with other regional militaries about making long-term investments in complementary capabilities.

GlobalSecurity.org

The ROK Navy's plans for a naval base on Jeju Island, depicted here, illustrate the possible future military force posture of a UROK focused on securing sea lines of communication.

Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence

How will unification affect nuclear weapons and the role of nuclear deterrence on the Korean Peninsula? The reunification of the Koreas will represent a dramatic change to one of the world's most intractable nuclear weapons and proliferation challenges – the nuclear arsenal of the DPRK. Whether peaceful or violent, such reunification will presumably by definition mean the end of the North's nuclear weapons program. But it will also raise a host of issues about the disposition of the DPRK's arsenal and extensive associated infrastructure and the newly unified Korea's obligations and commitments to the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Furthermore, a joined Korea will also raise significant questions about the applicability of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence, which has formed a constituent part of the Republic of Korea's security for many decades, as well as relevance of the nuclear forces of China, North Korea's sole ally for many decades, and Russia.

A Non-Nuclear Unified Korea

The Republic of Korea has committed to a range of nuclear nonproliferation obligations, most notably to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which Seoul signed in 1968. Under the NPT, South Korea has agreed to possess only nuclear technology designed for peaceful purposes.[54] The ROK has also adhered to the Additional Protocol, which allows the International Atomic Energy Agency a high degree of compliance inspections and monitoring.[55]

Seoul has also steadfastly reiterated its commitment to the 1992 Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which states that "South and North Korea shall not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons" and affirms that "South and North Korea shall use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes."[56] As a member of the IAEA and a signatory to the NPT as well as other important nonproliferation agreements, South Korea is one of the United States' strongest partners committed to peaceful nuclear energy and nonproliferation.

IT IS NEAR CERTAIN THAT THE RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ACTORS SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA, AND PROBABLY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, WOULD EXERT INTENSE PRESSURE ON A UNIFIED KOREA TO MAINTAIN ITS COMMITMENT AS A NON-NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATE.

At the same time, South Korea is quickly becoming a critical player in the international nuclear power industry. Most recently, South Korea signed a deal with the United Arab Emirates to deliver four nuclear reactors to meet the Emirates' rising demand for electricity.[57] Such deals are likely to increase in the future as world demand rises for a clean, stable source of energy and nuclear power becomes a key element of South Korea's National Strategy for Green Growth.[58] In accordance with its Additional Protocol, Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and associated compacts with the Republic of Korea, the IAEA verifies that South Korea's nuclear power program is exclusively for peaceful purposes.

In the event of unification, these commitments would presumably be extended to apply to a reunited Korea. From a security perspective, while Korea would still likely find itself in a tense neighborhood, surrounded by major powers, the immediate threat that had catalyzed some interest in a ROK nuclear weapons arsenal would have disappeared. Moreover, it is near certain that the relevant international actors such as the United States and China, and probably the international community as a whole, would exert intense pressure on a unified Korea to maintain its commitment as a non-nuclear weapons state.

What Would Happen to North Korea's Weapons and Associated Infrastructure?

Assuming that a unified Korea would maintain the ROK's non-nuclear commitments, the first and most pressing question that would arise in the event of unification would be the disposition of the DPRK's nuclear weapons arsenal and its associated infrastructure, and above all how physically to secure and dispose of the DPRK's nuclear weapons and materials. In a peaceful and stable reunification scenario, these issues could be dealt with in a deliberate and consultative fashion, likely involving intensive engagement by the IAEA, other international bodies, as well as the United States and potentially other countries with particular interests in and/or expertise on the problem. Given U.S. expertise in the location, accounting for, and elimination of weapons of mass destruction (important since North Korea also possesses large stocks of other such weapons), it would likely be necessary for the United States to play a major role in the disposition and elimination of North Korea's nuclear and other WMD programs.[59]

A partial analog to what might take place would be the 2005 elimination of Libya's WMDs and associated infrastructure, which took place in a consensual setting once Moammar Gadhafi agreed to give up his weapons programs.[60] The North Korean nuclear weapons program, however, is dramatically larger and more advanced than Libya's was and is of direct interest to a larger and more powerful group of neighboring states, represented for example in the Six Party Talks.[61] It therefore likely would involve a more complicated and internationalized process than the Libya scenario.

After the immediate effort to secure positive control and account for North Korea's nuclear weapons (and other WMD), the international – and particular-

ly U.S. – focus would likely shift to ensuring the continued progress, verification, and completion of the denuclearization process. This would likely evolve into more of a WMD elimination and nonproliferation effort along familiar, established lines, involving IAEA participation and likely that of officials implementing the letter or intent of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and other WMD-related treaties and legal agreements to which Korea is and would presumably be a party.

IT IS LIKELY THAT CONTINUED VERIFIABLE FORSWEARING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BY KOREA WOULD BE SEEN AS A CRUCIAL PART OF STABILITY IN PREVENTING AN ARMS RACE IN THE REGION.

In addition to these formal processes, it can be assumed that Korea's neighboring countries, such as China and Japan, as well as the United States would take a keen interest in monitoring this process. It is likely that continued verifiable forswearing of nuclear weapons by Korea would be seen as a crucial part of stability in preventing an arms race in the region.[62] But any discussion about the implications of unification on nuclear weapons hinges on whether and how much conflict was involved in the transition to a unified Korea.

In the event that reunification was the product of a conflict involving the two Koreas, the perspective on dealing with the North's nuclear weapons program would be very different. In a wartime scenario, especially one in which the DPRK could be expected to consider employment of its nuclear forces, defense against or deterrence of nuclear and other WMD attack would be the top priority for the United States, the ROK, and the Combined Forces Command. Depending on the size and maturity of the North's nuclear arsenal, these equities might lead the allies to seek to pre-empt and disarm the DPRK of its nuclear and other WMD forces. On the other hand, given the size and sophistication of the North's WMD and delivery systems, the combined forces might elect to induce North Korea not to employ these weapons, for instance by pledging to refrain from striking at certain targets.[63] In addition, the allies might seek to use threats and inducements to persuade leadership elements of the DPRK regime, particularly military commanders with responsibility for the disposition and employment of nuclear weapons, to refuse orders to use WMD.[64]

At some point in a conflict that was leading to reunification, however, the effort would focus on isolating and securing North Korean nuclear weapons and associated facilities. The primary goal would be to locate, isolate, seize, secure, and potentially destroy North Korean nuclear weapons, including ballistic missiles and their launch vehicles, as well as nuclear weapons-grade material at storage facilities. These actions might have to be taken in a prompt manner to prevent the use of nuclear weapons in war and also prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, material, technology, and expertise to other state and non-state actors and terrorist organizations. With the likelihood of a massive humanitarian crisis occurring at the same time as the conflict, counterproliferation efforts across the land border to the north as well as maritime interdiction efforts would present a tremendous challenge. Locating, isolating, and securing uranium enrichment facilities, fuel fabrication facilities, reprocessing facilities, and the nuclear reactors themselves would also be critical. As the conflict proceeded and more allied forces flowed into theater, however, there would eventually be more bandwidth to secure other parts of the North Korean nuclear weapons program, including uranium mining, milling, and conversion facilities.

In the aftermath of such a war, denuclearization efforts would likely be considerably more intense and could take place in an unstable or even violent or lawless atmosphere. Even in the event of the surrender or collapse of the DPRK regime, securing North Korea's arsenal and associated infrastructure could be exceptionally difficult and demanding, as such an eventuality might lead to state collapse or even insurgency. This could lead to a situation analogous to the Iraq scenario in 2003–2004, in which WMD identification, location, and elimination activities took place in a contested and dangerous

Disarming North Korea[65]

Dismantling North Korean weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery will be essential for maintaining regional stability after unification.

This map shows selected major bases and facilities. Map is not drawn to scale.

environment, which could greatly complicate these efforts. It is therefore likely that such a scenario would see a lasting presence of outside actors with interests in ensuring the positive control and disposition or destruction of North Korea's WMD arsenal. This could present possibly significant political challenges in the context of reunification, integration, and pacification of the North.

Over time, however, the conflict scenario would likely join with the peaceful unification scenario as, once the ROK and other actors had adequately accounted for and secured the DPRK's nuclear and WMD arsenal and infrastructure, a similar set of expectations about the unified Korea's nonproliferation commitments and implementation processes would likely form. That said, there would likely be a more intense desire on the part of local and other interested actors to guarantee denuclearization in light of the chaos that would accompany a conflict scenario. Countries would likely be keen to see greater efforts made to ensure that all weapons, material, and other items had been secured. This could generate political tensions over other states' expectations for what Korea would need to do to satisfy its nonproliferation and counterproliferation obligations.

Nuclear Deterrence and a Unified Korea

We turn now to the implications of a unified Korea for nuclear deterrence affecting the peninsula and particularly for the U.S. extended deterrent that has traditionally covered the Republic of Korea. The unification of the Koreas, under whatever circumstances, would represent a revolutionary change for the security situation on the peninsula and thus would have dramatic implications for the influence and role of nuclear weapons there. Assuming a unified Korea would maintain the ROK's non-nuclear commitments, the most important issue in this vein would likely be how the reunification would affect the traditional extended nuclear deterrent guarantee of the United States to the Republic of Korea. Would this still apply to a united Korea? If so, how? Would there be restrictions or caveats added to its coverage?

At the most basic level, the primary driver of this would be the newly unified Korea's attitude toward the United States. If this Korea sought to maintain the U.S.-ROK alliance, then it can be assumed that Washington would likely be amenable to doing so as well. And, if the alliance were to continue, it is reasonable to assume that it would have a strong nuclear component, both because of the strong traditional nuclear element in the alliance and the general truism that the United States reserves the ability to use nuclear weapons to defend its allies, but also because a unified Korea would still find itself in an uncertain and possibly dangerous regional environment, surrounded by powerful countries, several with nuclear arsenals of their own.

ASSUMING A UNIFIED KOREA WOULD MAINTAIN THE ROK'S NON-NUCLEAR COMMITMENTS, THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THIS VEIN WOULD LIKELY BE HOW THE REUNIFICATION WOULD AFFECT THE TRADITIONAL EXTENDED NUCLEAR DETERRENT GUARANTEE OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

If, on the other hand, Korea wished to dispense with the alliance, then of course the U.S. nuclear umbrella would recede from the peninsula. This would immediately raise questions in the region and beyond, however, about the new Korea's strategic intentions and its attitude toward nuclear weapons in particular. Given the strategic environment likely to continue to prevail in the region, such an abandonment of the U.S. alliance would likely raise questions that the unified Korea was either tilting toward an alliance with another state, most likely China, or that it would eventually seek its own nuclear weapons arsenal to enable a more independent course. This could lead to significant regional and international pressure on the unified Korea to clarify its intentions and, in the absence of such reassurance, could contribute to arms racing dynamics in the region, particularly vis-à-vis China and Japan (and thus the United States as well). In other words, abandonment of the alliance with the United States would be very likely to generate regional and

IN THE CASE OF A UNIFIED KOREA, IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR THE UNITED STATES TO EXTEND ITS DETERRENT TO NORTHERN KOREA WITHOUT THE FORCE DEPLOYMENTS NEEDED TO BACK UP THAT DETERRENT.

international nonproliferation anxieties, in addition to the range of other strategic issues it would catalyze. A unified Korea would have an incentive to maintain the alliance with Washington, then, to mitigate these nonproliferation and arms racing problems, *inter alia*.

Assuming that a unified Korea elected to maintain the alliance with the United States, a major factor driving this issue would be the attitude and interests of an increasingly powerful China. Beijing has consistently telegraphed, when it has not directly stated, that it would regard the extension of American military power into Northern Korea with the gravest concern, if not hostility.[66] Indeed, the PRC went to war with the United States and South Korea in 1950 in large part because of the approach of U.S., ROK, and U.N. forces to the Yalu River border dividing North Korea from China.[67] It can therefore be expected that China would press for the restriction or even elimination of the U.S. nuclear umbrella over Korea, since Beijing could contend that, with the unification of the two Koreas, the threat that had provided the primary rationale for U.S. extended deterrent had disappeared. Indeed, China might plausibly argue that a unified Korea no longer had need of such an alliance relationship with the United States.

Dealing with Beijing's concerns along these lines would likely occupy a significant place in the diplomatic priorities of a unified Korea (and in those of the United States). Determining methods to reconcile the extended deterrent over a unified Korea but doing so in ways that did not unduly provoke the PRC or unwisely or incredibly extend that umbrella's reach would be a major issue for both Washington and Seoul. Key questions would include:

- Would the nuclear umbrella extend geographically to the Yalu border with China?
- Would there be typologies of deterrence? Would the nuclear guarantee only apply against certain countries or types of threat?
- Would there be changes to deployments of U.S. forces on the peninsula that would affect the nuclear umbrella?

One equivalent context for this situation would be the attempts of the United States and NATO to reconcile the expansion of the NATO alliance with efforts to palliate Russia and reduce its fears and potential for misunderstanding. This took the form of pacts such as the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 and the prominent "three no's," stipulating that, under the strategic environment then prevailing, the alliance would not deploy nuclear weapons (*inter alia*) into the territories of those member states admitted after the Cold War.[68] That said, while this attempt might be seen as an analog, it is highly unclear that it is one to be mimicked, given both the hostility between Russia and NATO today and the fact that those commitments have left the alliance's newer members more vulnerable due to the deficit of alliance force presence there. In some sense, such an effort represents an unstable middle, in which the security commitment is extended but the force posture needed to make it credible is not. In the case of a unified Korea, it might be difficult for the United States to extend its deterrent to northern Korea without the force deployments needed to back up that deterrent. This will likely be a crucial issue, especially in light of the likelihood that the United States and China will have clashing interests in Asia in the coming decades.

Conclusion

At a time when the Kim regime appears fully entrenched in Pyongyang and tensions on the peninsula are rising, imagining Korean unification scenarios may seem a quixotic exercise. Yet history suggests that such events may unfold with little prior warning and great rapidity. Choices that Washington and Seoul make now have the potential to influence the contours of Korean unification, whether that process begins in 20 days or 20 years.

With this in mind, it is time for an expanded U.S.-ROK dialogue about possible paths to unification and plans for dealing with the scenarios that may unfold. As this dialogue takes place, both Washington and Seoul should keep their desired end state firmly in mind: a unified Korean peninsula under democratic leadership, without nuclear weapons but able to defend Korean sovereignty, committed to a liberal political and market-based order, and allied with the United States in the pursuit of regional peace and stability.

Within these general principles much is to be decided, including the American force presence and missile defense posture, the nature of a unified Korea's relations with China and Russia, the international role in economic reconstruction, and more. All of these issues are ripe for discussion – not because they are imminent, but because they are important.

This report seeks to make a contribution to that discussion. By envisioning unification scenarios and their midterm implications, Washington and Seoul can – in consultation with others – begin preparing for the manifold challenges and opportunities that this historic change will portend.

Endnotes

1. President Park Geun-hye's first use of the term "bonanza" (or "jackpot," as the Korean word *daebak* is sometimes translated) to describe the benefits of unification came in a New Year's press conference in January 2014; see Aidan Foster-Carter, "Jackpot or Crackpot? Park on Reunification," *The Wall Street Journal*'s Korea RealTime blog on WSJ.com, January 22, 2014, http://blogs.wsj.com/korearealtime/2014/01/22/jackpot-or-crackpot-park-on-korean-reunification/. For a glossy description of her plan for achieving peaceful unification, see "The Road to a 'Happy Unification': The Trust-building Process on the Korean Peninsula and the Dresden Initiative" (Korea Institute for National Unification, November 2014), http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_02_01.jsp?page=1&num=190&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=DATA05&ses=&category=.

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3. For instance, see Chung-in Moon, "The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects," *East Asian Review, 12* no. 4 (December 2000), 3–36.

4. A separate essay describes four ways that Kim Jong Un and/or the North Korean regime fall from power. See Patrick M. Cronin and David Eunpyoung Jee, "How North Korea Ends: Pathways that Could Lead to Korean Unification," Korean Journal of Defense Analysis (forthcoming 2016).

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8. "Full text of Park's speech on N. Korea," *The Korea Herald*, March 28, 2014, http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20140328001400.

9. "China voices support for Park's proposal on unification with N. Korea," Yonhap News Agency, April 3, 2014, http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2014/04/03/62/0301000000AEN20140403007400315F.html.

10. "Seoul-Beijing Trust," *The Korea Herald*, July 1, 2013, http://www.koreaherald.com/common_prog/newsprint.php?ud=20130701000516&dt=2.

11. Jaechun Kim, "Dilemma on the Korean Peninsula: Bonanza or Bombs?" (The Brookings Institution, Washington, September 18, 2014) http://www.brookings.edu/events/2014/09/18-seventh-seoul-washington-forum.

12. "N. Korea Refuses Park's Liberation Day Proposals," KBS World Radio, August 17, 2014, http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/news/news_IK_detail.htm?No=104682&id=IK.

13. Chang Jae-soon, "U.S. lawmakers express support for Park's policy on unification," Yonhap News Agency, September 23, 2014, http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2014/09/23/52/0401000000AEN20140923000400315F.html.

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16. For examples of such work, please refer to the following titles: Ministry of Unification, "Tongil woegyo sebu chujin jeolryak [Unification diplomacy's detailed strategy]," 2012, http://www.prism.go.kr/homepage/theme/retrieveThemeDetail.do?leftMenuLevel=110&cond_brm_super_id=NB00012006120110005968 6&research_id=1250000-201300006; Park Jong-chul, "Tong-il Hanguk-e Daehan Gukjejeok Uryeohaesowa peyon-ik jiyeok mit Jubyeonguk Chawon [Easing International Concerns and Promoting the Benefits of a Unified Korea from a Regional and Sub-regional perspective]" (Korea Institute for National Unification, 2012), http://m.kinu.or.kr/kinu_mobile/publication/publ_list.jsp?page=1&num=142&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=DATA05&ses=&category=; Baek Jeong-ho, et al., "Obama Haengjeongbu Chulbeom ihu Dongbuka-jeolryak hwangyeong-ui byeonhwa-wa hanguk-ui dongbuka 4guk tongilwoegyo jeolryak [Changes in the Northeast Asian Environment after the start of the Obama Administration and Korea's unification diplomacy strategy toward the four Northeast Asian nations]" (Korea Institute for National Unification, 2010), http://www.kinu.or.kr/upload/neoboard/DATA02/r10-054.pdf; Bae

Jung-Ho et al., "The Perceptions of Northeast Asia's Four States on Korean Unification" (Korea Institute for National Unification, 2014), http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_02_01.jsp?page=1&num=183&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=DATA05&ses=; and Park Young-Ho, "Korea's Diplomatic Strategy for Unifying the Korean Peninsula," in *Korean Unification and the Positions and Roles of the Four Neighboring Powers,* ed. Bae Jung-Ho, (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2011), 131–153, http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_02_01.jsp?page=1&num=114&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=DATA05&ses. dy making headway in this area.admapelegationAN Bookangmyeongseong-1ST SITES deterrence over the UROK but doing so in a way

17. For examples of such works, please refer to the following articles: Ralph Hassig and Kongdan Oh, "The United States and Korean Unification," in *Korean Unification and the Positions and Roles of the Four Neighboring Powers*, ed. Bae Jung-Ho (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2011), 49–72, http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_02_01.jsp?page=1&num=114&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=DATA05&ses; and Takashi Inoguchi, "Japan's Role and Position on Korean Unification," in *Korean Unification and the Positions and Roles of the Four Neighboring Powers*, ed. Bae Jung-Ho (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2011), 73–86, http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_02_01.jsp?page=1&num=114&mode=view&field=&text=&order=&dir=&bid=DATA05&ses.

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20. Scott A. Snyder et al., *Middle-Power Korea: Contributions to the Global Agenda* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2015), http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/middle-power-korea/p36623.

21. World Trade Organization, "Republic of Korea," September 2015, http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Country=KR&Language=F.

22. As a symbol of submission to Sino-centric global order, Korea used the Chinese reign names and paid tribute to Chinese dynasties including Qing, Ming, and Yuan for centuries in exchange for peace. Korea was an independent state from China, but the Chinese interests affected the Korean autonomy from time to time. In the same way, Japan's influence greatly affected the Korean sovereignty in the late 19th century before annexation of Korea by Japan. For further details, see J.J., "Korea in Chinese history: Stuck in the middle," Banyan blog on Economist.com, April 12, 2013, http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2013/04/korea-chinese-history.

23. Yi Whan-woo, "China may retaliate for THAAD deployment," *The Korea Times*, June 29, 2015, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/07/180_181807.html.

24. Multiple experts in Washington, including Ely Ratner, argue that Beijing's foreign policy based on the "noninterference principle" is slowly loosening and moving toward a more flexible engagement to protect Chinese interests overseas. "In a report on this, Ratner and others write that "China has also been more willing to employ unilateral economic sanctions, or the threat thereof, to pressure foreign governments over key interests…." For further details on Chinese international security activism, see Ely Ratner, Elbridge Colby, Andrew Erickson, Zachary Hosford, and Alexander Sullivan, "More Willing and Able: Charting China's International Security Activism" (Center for a New American Security, May 2015), 18.

25. Andrei Lankov, "Yanbian: Korea-in-China," *The Korea Times*, October 21, 2007, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2010/01/166_12290.html.

26. Chinese history repeated division and unification every several centuries. Chinese dynasties (Han, Tang, Song, etc.) perished after division of the Chinese continent. As division of the Chinese continent has been a harbinger for the demise of a dynasty, Beijing could react sensitively to ethnic groups' identifying themselves against the principle of one China under one government.

27. Taylor Washburn, "How an Ancient Kingdom Explains Today's China-Korea Relations," *The Atlantic* (April 15, 2013), http://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/04/how-an-ancient-kingdom-explains-todays-china-korea-relations/274986/.

28. Of course, China might like the idea of closing the chapter on what has been described by some as Asia's remaining "divided nation problem" involving the two Koreas and mainland China and Taiwan. For instance, see Ezra F. Vogel, T*he Four Little Dragons: The Spread of Industrialization in East Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

29. In fact, the ROK government applies more lenient immigration policy toward Korean Chinese in the name of "Overseas Korean Visa (F-4)." If the UROK inherits the immigration policy of the ROK, there would be more Korean Chinese embraced to work in Korea. See "Korea Issues Overseas Korean Visa for the Korean Chinese (translated in English)," Inmin Net, April 11, 2012, http://korean.people.com.cn/67406/15215828.html.

30. A Russian-style "embracing" policy toward the Korean Chinese may resemble the Russian effort to legitimize its involvement in Ukraine to protect the Russian civilians after distributing Russian passports to Russian-speaking population in Ukraine. See

Adrian Blomfield, "Russia 'distributing passports in the Crimea,'" *The Telegraph*, August 17, 2008, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/2575421/Russia-distributing-passports-in-the-Crimea.html.

31. Marcus Noland, Sherman Robinson, and Li-Gang Liu, "The Costs and Benefits of Korean Unification" (Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015), http://www.iie.com/publications/wp/print.cfm?ResearchId=142&doc=pub.

32. We are indebted to economist Marcus Noland for this argument and these economic insights regarding possible Korean unification.

33. While the 1953 U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty suggests a general commitment to help each other with regional threats, "It is the understanding of the United States that neither party is obligated, under Article III of the above Treaty, to come to the aid of the other except in case of an external armed attack against such party; nor shall anything in the present Treaty be construed as requiring the United States to give assistance to Korea except in the event of an armed attack against territory which has been recognized by the United States as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the Republic of Korea." See U.S. Department of State, *Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea; October 1, 1953*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kor001.asp.

34. Officials from the United States and the Republic of Korea repeatedly refer to shared values between the two states in joint announcements, including: U.S. Department of State, Joint Declaration on the R.O.K.-U.S. Alliance and Peace on the Korean Peninsula (November 17, 2005), http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/ot/57075.htm; White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Joint Declaration in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America* (May 7, 2013), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/07/joint-declaration-commemoration-60th-anniversary-alliance-between-republ; and White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Joint Fact Sheet: The United States-Republic of Korea Alliance: A Global Partnership* (April 25, 2014), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/25/joint-fact-sheet-united-states-republic-korea-alliance-global-partnershi.

35. Tony Czuczka and Patrick Donahue, "Park Says Once-Divided Germany Is Model for Korea Reunification," Bloomberg.com, March 26, 2014, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-03-25/park-looks-to-once-divided-germany-to-spur-korean-reunification.

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