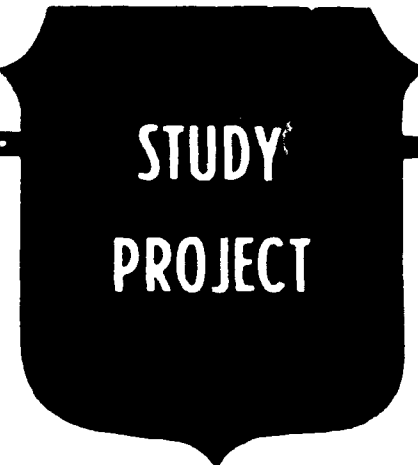


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A POST COLD WAR MILITARY STRATEGY  
FOR NORTHEAST ASIA

BY

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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A POST COLD WAR MILITARY STRATEGY FOR NORTHEAST ASIA

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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## INTRODUCTION

"In Asia, His (Gorbachev's) Cold War's Over," proclaimed the editorial headline in the March 27th, 1990, edition of The New York Times. The thrust of the editorial was that although the Soviets have unilaterally reduced their military forces in Asia, the United States' response was short-sighted in announcing only token reductions. "The opportunity cries out for more forward-looking diplomacy and bigger cuts."<sup>1</sup>

The editorial is correct but for all the wrong reasons. Although the Soviet actions in withdrawing 200,000 troops, removing 400 medium-range missiles, cutting the Soviet Asian Fleet by a third, and withdrawing its deployed forces in Asia (notably in Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay) represent a major development, it is not a significant reduction of the military capabilities that could threaten U.S. regional interests. What the repositioning of these forces reflects is a new Soviet military strategy that enhances their capabilities by allowing for the restructuring of resources and force modernization. Conversely, America's small scale reductions signify only a minor adjustment in U.S. military strategy.

As the editorial suggests, the United States must think "as big as Mikhail Gorbachev does,"<sup>2</sup> because Congress won't fund the resources necessary to protect U.S. interests unless there is a long term strategy. The burden is clear. The United States military must develop an affordable strategy to protect America's enduring interests in Northeast Asia.

## BACKGROUND

For years, the United States' strong military presence has been the cornerstone for regional security in Northeast Asia. The United States justified the forward deployment of troops in East Asia as an element of the strategy to contain communism. Recent changes in threat perceptions, combined with budgetary pressures, are causing a comprehensive reevaluation of the U.S. national security policy. The outcome of this policy review and the military strategy that results will be critical to the long term well being of the United States.

The Cold War is not over in Northeast Asia and is not likely to be until the Korean question is resolved. Of all the volatile situations in the world, none presents a more dangerous scenario for the United States than Korea. Despite the increasing political and economic isolation of North Korea, Kim Il Sung continues to iterate his desire for a unified Korea under his communist leadership. The prospect of another war in Korea is particularly disconcerting because of the competition that it would create among the four major regional powers, each having vital interests in the outcome. Assuming that U.S. policy toward the Republic of Korea (ROK) remains supportive, what new military strategy can be devised to achieve national security objectives and avoid war?

The Bush administration has pledged continued U.S. support to Seoul as a matter of policy.<sup>3</sup> Secretary of Defense Cheney has outlined a national security strategy for the region in support of that policy. The rationale for a continued military presence in the Asia-Pacific region over the next decade, including a forward presence on the Korean Peninsula, is articulated in an April 1990 DOD report to Congress.<sup>4</sup> The core of the new strategic framework, often referred to as the Nunn-Warner report,

hinges upon minor adjustments to force levels and increased defense cost sharing and insists on no abrupt changes to the U.S. security posture.

The new national strategy proposes an increased emphasis be placed on allied participation but fails to take into full account what changes are occurring in those allied countries and in the region. Growing nationalism, rapprochements with the Soviet Union, budgetary pressures and concerns over a U.S. hegemony in the new international order following the Gulf War will likely result in a vastly different Asian environment.

Secretary Cheney's report emphasizes that it only outlines the parameters for force restructuring and reduction within the national security strategy. It will be the military commanders who must design their forces to accomplish the objectives by formulating and implementing a military strategy. The formulation of that strategy must include a basic analysis of national security objectives and the potential threats to those objectives, a relatively simple task. But as Clausewitz wrote, "everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is easy."<sup>5</sup>

Determining such a military strategy in the uncertain environment of an emerging multipolar world and a rapidly declining defense budget is more than mildly challenging. It requires vision. The consequences of not staying ahead of regional dynamics will be the failure to maintain American influence and, perhaps, stability within Northeast Asia. Such a result would be catastrophic in terms of U.S. economic, political and ideological interests and could be equally as devastating for American interests in the new world order.

## SCOPE OF RESEARCH PAPER

This paper will review United States interests in Korea, both stated and implied. Any future policy and strategy toward Korea needs to be considered within the whole regional context, however, not merely in bilateral terms. It is necessary to consider the regional dynamics of China, Japan, and the Soviet Union when examining options in Korea. If the United States is to retain its influence in Northeast Asia, it must come to grips with the winds of change that are buffeting the region.

Following an analysis of the elements of the national security strategy framework, this paper will examine the intended application of those elements in Northeast Asia as outlined in the Nunn-Warner report. Pointing out obvious shortfalls, the paper will then propose an alternative strategy that will achieve the long term U.S. objectives on the Korean Peninsula.

There are assumptions made in outlining this new strategy. First, specific U.S. interests may vary slightly, but the overall vital concern for Northeast Asia will not change. Despite new developments springing from events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the Gulf War, political and economic developments in the Americas, and the formation of an European economic community, the United States continues to have vital interests in maintaining stability in Northeast Asia.

Second, the sources of potential threats to U.S. interests in the region will remain relatively constant. Despite the hopeful diplomatic signals coming out of Moscow, America must remember that the Soviet Union is still the only nation capable of threatening its survival. Many of the Soviet Union's long term domestic problems could be solved by hegemony over the industrially rich Northeast Asia region. China's intentions in the region are still very fluid given the internal problems

faced by this military power. Additionally, prospects for a peaceful unification of Korea are growing but it is equally clear that Kim Il Sung has not altered his objective of "reunification of the country, united firmly behind (his) party. . . ."6

The third assumption is that no abrupt or major changes in U.S. security posture will take place which would confuse allies and potential adversaries, as well as destabilize the Northeast Asia region.<sup>7</sup> This assumption regarding military strategy will not apply if the new strategy accomplishes its objectives. Although the military objectives in Korea will not change radically, increased expressions of nationalism, fiscal realities, and other regional developments will significantly affect the availability and utility of American military resources to achieve those objectives. This requires change to the military concepts of forward presence, collective security and warfighting philosophy in Northeast Asia.

#### REGIONAL DYNAMICS AND CHANGING INTERESTS

Clausewitz wrote that "one country may support another's cause, but will never take it so seriously as it takes its own."<sup>8</sup> That axiom can go a long way toward explaining the presence and nature of U.S. military forces on the Korean Peninsula since 1945. First and foremost, the United States maintains military forces in Korea to promote its own national objectives; serving the interests of its regional allies is secondary. Just as the foundation of the "new world order" changes, so must the United States make changes to protect its own serious interests. Being cognizant of regional dynamics, however, is critical to correctly altering the U.S. course.

In 1950, the Republic of Korea's cause against communism was taken seriously because it served U.S. interests. "The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war," reported President Truman.<sup>9</sup> America responded in kind, pursuing its policy of containment. After the Korean Armistice, America's continued military presence was justified as a deterrent to further attempts at expansionism despite the absence of a region-wide consensus on the communist threat.

Although marked by a decisive U.S. setback, the Vietnam experience again displayed American willingness to use military force to stop the "falling dominoes" threatened by communist expansionism. It can be argued that the Vietnamese Communists won a Pyrrhic victory compared to the gains in U.S. influence that resulted from its post war activities, particularly the China-U.S. rapprochement. From the American perception, the "China card" has paid dividends in checking Soviet and other regional expansionism.

China had been seen as a threat to regional stability since the Korean War. Beginning in 1985, however, Beijing demobilized nearly 25% of its military strength and is considering another reduction of 300-500,000 troops.<sup>10</sup> The Soviet Union and China participated in force reduction talks in 1990 resulting in limits to the deployment of troops along the extensive Sino-Soviet border. These reductions in military capabilities, coupled with expanded economic ties to Seoul and Tokyo, lend credence to the argument that the PRC leadership is unlikely to cause an unprovoked expansionist threat in Northeast Asia. China's role in the "new world order," however, is still a mystery.

Previous to the violent crack down on pro-democracy demonstrations in May-June 1989, the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) regime was encouraging economic modernization by increasing international contacts. International trade relations were reaching significant proportions before the Tiananmen disaster caused economic and political sanctions. Although it appears that China has regained internal stability, there remain signs of Chinese paranoia. The Gulf crisis revealed a China that was initially willing to join in international efforts to reverse the invasion of Kuwait. The PRC quickly reverted, however, to a more neutral, indirect role in the cooperative security efforts dominated by the United States by abstaining (but not vetoing) on key United Nations Security Council resolutions involving the use of force against Iraq. One motivation for this shift in position, it can be argued, was Chinese concern about Washington's unchecked world wide dominance in this first Post Cold War crisis. Nevertheless, their early collaboration in the United Nations did not go unnoticed, suggesting that Chinese cooperation in future stability efforts in the region may be possible.

In sum, China has remained an Asian power useful in maintaining the regional balance of power, but with a limited global reach. While currently fixated upon internal economic and political matters, the Chinese must still be considered a major regional actor in Northeast Asia. The United States is serving its best interests by maintaining friendly relations with the PRC, thus promoting both regional and global stability by maintaining a balance of power vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Additionally, the U.S. must recognize that Beijing's vast economic potential could balance Tokyo's Pacific dominance if U.S.-Japanese competition transforms into confrontation.

The remarkable changes that have taken place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union since 1989 have also had a significant effect on the regional dynamics of Northeast Asia. Despite its political and economic problems, the Soviet Union is still a military superpower with vital regional interests and should be a dominant factor in any formulation of U.S. strategy.

Since Mikhail Gorbachev's speech in Vladivostok in 1986, the Soviet Union has modified its approach to Northeast Asia. It previously based its relations with friendly regional countries such as Vietnam and North Korea upon military issues. Since that speech, Gorbachev has repeatedly called for reducing military deployments, easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, establishing confidence-building measures in the Seas of Japan and Okhotsk, and increasing Moscow's involvement in regional economic activities.<sup>11</sup> As the Soviet head of the Pacific Regions Studies Department of the Institute of World Economy recently explained, "Economic development of the Far Eastern region and Soviet Pacific coast area may be elevated to the first place as a national goal."<sup>12</sup> This leaves little doubt that the Soviet Union would like to become more deeply involved in the Asia-Pacific region. As its political and economic ties grow, Soviet influence would likely attempt to fill any vacuum left by the United States in the region.

Japan is an economic superpower and, unlike the Soviet Union and China enjoys a generally stable domestic political situation. Japan's primary interests center around its economy and its inextricable relationship with the United States which has both economic and security advantages. "Japan is a conservative, status quo oriented country concerned to preserve its economic interest in virtually all parts of

the world," writes Professor Takashi Inoguchi of Tokyo University. "It is a country of economic interdependence. Without being able to sustain these webs of interdependence it cannot survive. It has a strong interest in maintaining stability and preventing military conflict."<sup>13</sup>

Aware that the Soviet military posture in Asia has not significantly changed, the Japanese are wary of any U.S. withdrawal from the region. Until the American presence becomes such a major source of friction that it offsets economic and political advantages, it will be welcome to Japanese policy makers.

Its regional neighbors are also concerned that Tokyo will perceive a need to develop a full scale military capacity of its own if Japanese security is not guaranteed by the Americans. "The prospect of Japanese remilitarization is a nightmare to all Asian peoples, and particularly to us," commented a Chinese analyst. "Everyone feels safer because Japan is under U.S. Control and once this is gone, we cannot feel secure."<sup>14</sup>

Japan's recently improved relations with Moscow have raised other concerns within the region. The official Japanese Government position regarding the Soviet Union is that Moscow still remains a threat to their security. In the most recent "white paper," which is the most authoritative unclassified assessment of the Japanese security situation, Tokyo does not specifically identify the Soviet Union as a "threat." The paper does recognize, however, that, "The presence of massive Far Eastern Soviet forces makes the military situation tense around Japan"<sup>15</sup> suggesting that there is no basic change in the military circumstances surrounding Japan. As Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu recent explained, "It is still uncertain where the reforms in the Soviet Union are headed, and the basic fact remains that the country is a military super power."<sup>16</sup>

Conversely, a recent poll in Japan revealed that one out of four Japanese felt that the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union were either "very good" or "pretty good."<sup>17</sup> Additionally, based on their behavior it appears that few Japanese believe that the Russians pose a serious short or mid-term problem. High level Soviet visits to Japan, increased dialogue, and Japanese flexibility on the sensitive issue of the disputed Northern Islands indicate a movement toward a more normal relationship evolving between Moscow and Tokyo.

The Japanese are likely to keep their distance from Moscow, however, as long as the United States' presence ensures regional stability and Tokyo does not perceive an American retrenchment from the region. If regional stability can be achieved with little impact on Japanese resources, Tokyo is likely to concur with any reasonable U.S. security position that preserves the status quo. More importantly, it is in the interest of the United States to keep a military presence in the area to ensure access and economic leverage in the future.

Relations between Beijing and Tokyo are improving. At the 1990 Houston Economic Summit, Japan pushed for the relaxation of sanctions imposed against China after the Tiananman massacre. As noted by the Asia 1991 Yearbook, "Japan's sudden burst of assertiveness on behalf of China may have been partly motivated by the meeting between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov and South Korean President Roh Tae Woo in early June, presaging an early agreement to establish diplomatic relations between Moscow and Seoul. . . ." <sup>18</sup> Japan is likely to continue to cultivate Chinese and North Korean relations in order to balance Soviet influence on the Korean Peninsula. Strong Sino-Japanese relations will also serve to limit total dependence upon the United States.

As this review of the regional dynamics surrounding the Korean Peninsula indicates, Northeast Asia consists of nations that have both interdependent and competing interests. If the Northeast Asia balance of power is to be maintained while the United States is simultaneously reducing its available defense resources, then U.S. allies must assume a larger role in regional stability and increase their security participation. Because of the global implications of the use of such weapons, this is particularly germane if nuclear proliferation occurs on the Korean Peninsula. Additionally, bilateral security arrangements, a pillar of the U.S. national security strategy, need to be reviewed and, where appropriate, expanded to multilateral treaties. Given the cultural and historical background of America's two strongest regional allies, Korea and Japan, fully integrated bilateral relationships with the United States may have to serve as a cover for a defacto Japanese-Korean-U.S. alliance.

The United States is likely to see rapid regional change within the next five years as Asian nations interact more among themselves in pursuit of their own interests. The critical U.S. policy issue will be to find a new foundation for American relationships with its regional allies if security and defense issues become a secondary but still significant concern. The military challenge will be to devise a concept of employment for more limited, affordable forces that will still be able to achieve essentially the same U.S. military objectives currently being accomplished with larger forces while simultaneously avoiding unnecessary conflict with other regional powers.

## EMERGING AMERICAN INTEREST

Before a definitive strategy can be devised, a review of long term U.S. interests must be made and compared with a threat appraisal. The difficulty for policy makers in this process is that of selecting appropriate and limited regional objectives, rather than those objectives which would be the best that could be desired if resources were unconstrained. What America needs is a set of regional objectives that support U.S. interests and which the U.S. can afford.

Congress is well aware of this criterion and the requirement for the Administration to exercise practical judgments in the process. Realizing the limits of a Pax Americana and in search of a "peace dividend" to relieve domestic budgetary pressures, Congress attached to the FY-90 DOD Authorization Act a requirement for a national security policy review for Asia. In response, the Presidential DOD report titled A Strategic Framework for the Asian-Pacific Rim: Looking Toward the 21st Century (the aforementioned Nunn-Warner report)<sup>19</sup> was presented. This document identified U.S. regional interests in East Asia, including the usual "boilerplate" objectives of protecting the United States and its territories from attack, supporting the global deterrence policy and fostering the growth of democracy and human rights. Other stated interests in the region included preserving U.S. political and economic access, maintaining the balance of power to prevent regional hegemony by any one power, strengthening the Western orientation of Asian nations, ensuring freedom of navigation, and deterring nuclear proliferation.<sup>20</sup>

Implied among these stated U.S. interests is the requirement to maintain stability and the status quo throughout the region with due regard for Soviet power and consideration of China's role. Despite

economic and trade imbalance difficulties, the United States has prospered from its relationship with its Northeast Asia allies. The Pacific Rim has surpassed Europe as America's largest overseas trading partner and will likely serve as a counterbalance to a possible European economic cartel in the 1990s. Regardless of the shape of any new security environment in Asia, it is advantageous to limit the Soviet Union's regional power and influence. Despite the Chinese Government's human rights violations and the violent political crackdown which ended the popular demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, it is in America's best interest to have China remain as a friendly, stabilizing regional influence.

In the eyes of many, the Pacific Ocean should remain an American lake, but U.S. access to its Asia Pacific bases is being challenged, not by hostile fleets, but by the dynamics of the political environment. For example, in the Philippines, where fragile democratic institutions must respond to domestic calls for a more sovereign posture, there is a real possibility that the status quo will not be maintained. The circumstances following the 1997 Chinese annexation of Hong Kong, the unification of Taiwan with China, the militarization of Japan or an increased Soviet influence in the region could be other threats to the regional balance of power that would endanger U.S. influence. Even such an otherwise positive development as the reunification of the Korean Peninsula could result in economic and military competition that would foster instability within the region.

In summarizing U.S. implied interests in Northeast Asia, it can be argued that a status quo relationship would benefit the United States more than the regional developments that appear to be evolving.

Unfortunately, the continuing changes in perceptions of regional threats, political and economic developments within the region, and technological and scientific advances that shrink the world will ensure that sovereign nations will not maintain their regional status quo relationships with the U.S. but will instead seek out and develop their own best courses of action. The ability of the U.S. to manage the changing environment to achieve its national objectives will be limited by its resources and the interests and actions of other nations.

#### THE CHANGING THREAT

Even before the Nunn-Warner report codified the regional interests of the United States, Defense Secretary Cheney, in remarks to the Japanese National Press Club on February 23, 1990, noted that neither the Soviet Union nor any other source of regional insecurity had disappeared. "The Soviets retain enormous military capability, including a massive inventory of nuclear weapons targeted against the United States and its allies. . . . The past year's events do not justify dismantling the security structures that have served us so well in the post-war period."<sup>21</sup> It must be recognized that this statement was made before the Soviet Union opened full diplomatic relations with Seoul, sided with the United States in passing United Nations resolutions in the Gulf Crisis, and improved relations with Japan. Despite the enormous political and economic problems that are facing Moscow, it is certain that the Soviets can play a pivotal role in future regional security issues.

Although Moscow and Beijing's intentions in Northeast Asia are far from altruistic and must be reviewed with caution, the most serious of short term regional threats in Northeast Asia emanates from Pyongyang.

Despite the growing dialogue between North and South Korea, there has been no reduction in military capabilities north (or south) of the Demilitarized Zone. In conventional terms, North Korea has the sixth largest armed force in the world. Recent modernization efforts by Pyongyang have included the addition of top line Soviet aircraft and an expanded missile capability.<sup>22</sup> As Secretary Cheney noted, "The North Koreans continue to spend inordinate amounts of money to sustain the buildup of their military might and to establish military superiority on the Korean peninsula. Their decision to sacrifice economic and social development for the sake of their armed forces has perpetuated a serious imbalance on the peninsula that continues to pose a threat to the Republic of Korea."<sup>23</sup>

Even more foreboding is the threat of North Korea developing nuclear weapons. Kim Il Sung is reportedly well along on his efforts to obtain a nuclear weapons capability from his unsafeguarded reactor at Yongbyon some 100 Kilometers north of Pyongyang. An agreement allowing International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection of North Korea facilities should have been signed within eighteen months after North Korea's 1985 accession to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.<sup>24</sup> Instead, Pyongyang has refused to agree to the inspections until, "the United States removes its nuclear threat to us."<sup>25</sup> The implications of this refusal are significant. Soviet intelligence is reported to have informed the United States that the Pyongyang regime is within six months of acquiring nuclear weapons.<sup>26</sup> In South Korea there are discussions about the possibility of a preemptive strike against Yongbyon just as Israel struck Iraq's Osiraq reactor in 1981.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, while the Soviets remain a superpower in military terms and

must also be factored into any long term threat analysis, especially if they show greater interest in gaining influence in the region; while China could become a peril to regional security if it is impelled to react to instability that threatens its interests; while it can be argued that the remilitarization of Japan is both the most serious long term threat but also the most unlikely unless an American retrenchment becomes obvious; the North Korean threat remains the pivotal security issue in Northeast Asia. Therefore, a viable U.S. national security strategy in Korea to counter that threat is the most critical desired outcome of any strategic assessment.

#### THE NEW LOOK FOR AMERICAN MILITARY STRATEGY

On August 2, 1990, President Bush spoke at the Aspen Institute Symposium in Aspen, Colorado. He began his remarks with the observation that a great deal had changed in the forty years in which the Institute had been in existence. He noted the significance of the most recent changes involving the Soviet Union and Europe. "The changes that I'm talking about have transformed our security environment. We're entering a new era: the defense strategy and military structure needed to ensure peace can and must be different."<sup>28</sup>

The architects of this different strategy will be challenged to protect U.S. interests across a wide spectrum of contingencies with a smaller structure primarily because of new perceptions of the Soviet threat. Although there is ample evidence that the military capability of the Soviet Union is actually improving, Americans want to believe that the Cold War is over. The consequences of these perceptions are diminishing defense budgets and reduced military force structure. These

reductions will have a profound effect upon both the evolving national military strategy and military plans for Northeast Asia.

The end of the Cold War found America's grand strategy of containment dependent upon the concept of deterrence which required generous resources for modernization and growth. A large military force enabled the United States to execute the desired flexible response inherent in the deterrent strategy. U.S. forces were forward deployed in large numbers to provide a forward defense and serve as a visible reminder of our commitment to our allies. Strong alliances allowed the United States to practice coalition warfare that maximized allied economic and military strengths. Force projection capabilities allowed the United States to escalate by either reinforcing our forward deployed units or projecting power into areas where we had no permanent presence. In sum, deterrence, strong alliances, forward deployed forces, and force projection were the pillars upon which the Cold War strategy rested.<sup>29</sup>

What changes are occurring in this post Cold War Era? In theory, very few. In a statement before the House Armed Services Committee on 19 February 1991, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin L. Powell noted, "Despite the dramatic changes in the international environment, the broad national security interests that give focus to U.S. military objectives, strategy and forces remain largely constant." As General Powell described the strategic underpinnings, he stated that ". . .our military strategy continues to rely on the basic elements that made possible the historic success of containment and assured the favorable outcome of dozens of lesser military conflicts and missions over the past 45 years."<sup>30</sup>

General Powell included in his concept of the national military

strategy the elements of deterrence, power projection and collective security. In recognition of the smaller force resulting from this era, the Chairman substituted the element of forward presence for forward deployed forces. He did not attempt to distinguish between the "forward deployment" term of the Cold War era and "forward presence" except to say that forward presence should provide "visible deterrence, preserve regional stability, and promote U.S. influence and access."<sup>31</sup>

Brigadier General Daniel W. Christman, the U.S. Army's Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy, amplified the distinction between forward deployment and forward presence. "Reflecting the reductions anticipated in our forward deployed forces and the need to focus on alternatives to automatic reinforcement of those forces in time of crisis, (former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William J.) Crowe gave new emphasis to the terms 'forward presence' and 'force projection' in our strategic lexicon . . . As a result, robust forward deployments will give way to 'presence'--a term which encompasses peacetime force levels overseas ranging from periodic maritime deployments to a corps on the ground if U.S. and host nation interests and policies require it."<sup>32</sup>

Judging from these strategists' views, the national military strategy emerging from the new world order will continue to rely on the concept of deterrence but with a much smaller force structure. This smaller force will have to have great aggregate utility in order to be capable of a wide range of flexible response. Collective defense arrangements will involve burden sharing to lessen the strain on limited U.S. resources. Budgetary constraints and allied perceptions of diminishing threats will cause the American armed forces to be in a forward presence vice

force deployed posture. With fewer forces deployed overseas, it can be logically argued that there will be a requirement for more forcible entry capability in the force projection structure.

Applying these national tenets to a regional strategy for Northeast Asia will pose many crucial questions. What will constitute "forward presence" on the Korean Peninsula? What size of force will the political and fiscal realities allow? What impact will burden sharing have on the collective security arrangements now in existence? Will the domestic politics of Japan and Korea allow their politicians to pay more for fewer U.S. forces?

The answers to these political questions will define the framework of a military strategy in Korea. As Clausewitz noted, "Subordinating the political point of view to the military would be absurd, for it is policy that creates war."<sup>33</sup> Regional and domestic political goals will have primacy over military concerns. Given the global milieu of Glasnost and Perestroika, it is not what the generals need to conduct a credible military deterrent in Korea that will determine force structure, it will be what policy makers believe is affordable given an acceptable level of risk. This is where Korea, Clausewitz, and the new Post Cold War strategy must come together.

#### STRATEGIC SHORTFALLS AND SOLUTIONS

As the elements of the new National Military Strategy are applied in Northeast Asia, there will be difficulties. The regional strategy outlined by the Nunn-Warner document, as suggested by the Times editorial,<sup>34</sup> falls short of the required action. While setting forth a strategy extending into the 21st century, Nunn-Warner fails to fully

optimize U.S. alternatives that will affect the defense of Northeast Asia within the next five years.

Clausewitz makes an interesting observation. "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking . . . This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."<sup>35</sup> Today's strategists must anticipate that technology and doctrine will make the kind of war fought in the 1990s entirely different from the Korean War fought forty years earlier. The revamped strategy must also be aware of all important elements in the contemporary environment including accelerated rate of change. Again, Clausewitz in describing the first of all strategic tasks, "All planning, particularly strategic planning, must pay attention to the character of contemporary warfare."<sup>36</sup>

The Nunn-Warner report outlines an emerging strategy with three shortfalls. The first shortfall concerns the traditional approach to the defense of Korea. The United States should reconsider the wisdom of fighting another conventional land war on the Asian continent with large numbers of American troops. The concept of projecting a massive U.S. land force upon the Korean Peninsula if hostilities break out needs to be carefully reconsidered recognizing that the ROK Army of the 1990s is not the constabulary force it was in 1950.

The second shortfall in the proposed strategy concerns permanent stationing of American ground combat forces in the initial defensive line. There is a need for Washington to stand by its Korean ally to deter an attack. It can be argued, however, that fiscal constraints will cause the future composition and size of the ground forces to be

reduced to a point where they will serve no other useful purpose in the initial fusillade than to cement the American political will with American blood. Such an approach is morally indefensible. Whatever small American force remains in Korea must provide a valuable military contribution to its allies in addition to providing a credible deterrent.

The third shortfall is a failure to recognize that the very nature of coalition warfare is unwieldy. The proposal of gradually turning battlefield leadership over to Korean generals as the United States moves from a leading to a supporting role needs examination. In a region where multilateral security alliances are rare, the United Nations Command is an invaluable element of deterrence as well as a mechanism for legally justifying the critical use of Japanese territory in the case of hostilities. Given the regional dynamics, it is doubtful that South Korea could assume the lead in multilateral security relationship involving other than ROK and U.S. forces.

The Nunn-Warner report does not appear to adequately take into account that the regional environment has changed, affecting both the threats to U.S. interests and the methods that must be used to protect those interests. Fiscal realities, nationalism, nuclear proliferation, and the uncertainties of a new world order dictate that a new military strategy be developed to reduce the risk to America's vital interests in this important region. In determining the pitfalls in the path outlined by Nunn-Warner, we can protect U.S. regional interests, not by crisis reaction, but by a long term strategy based upon the principles outlined by the National Command Authority. The command relationships of the coalition, the size and composition of the force structure remaining in Korea, and the actual plan for employing American forces in fighting

a war against Pyongyang are but three of the underpinnings that need strengthening to ensure U.S. interests are protected.

#### FORCE PROJECTION: THE CONTINENTAL STRATEGY

Each year from early February to mid-April, tens of thousands of U.S. troops participate in the largest field training exercise in the free world . . . Exercise Team Spirit in Korea. This combined exercise is important to the readiness of all allied forces defending Korea as it allows them to practice the skills necessary for immediate transition to war on the Korean Peninsula. It usually involves the deployment of tens of thousands of U.S. ground troops to augment their Korean counterparts and the few permanently assigned American soldiers in the frozen rice paddies and hills of Korea. It is a practice war, but is the United States practicing for the next war or simply rehearsing the last war's campaign plan? More centrally, is the warfighting strategy to defend Korea correct if it relies upon a massive infusion of combat land forces to augment the already substantial ranks of the Republic of Korea army? Should the United States continue the continental strategy involving the projection of large numbers of U.S. ground troops to defend Korea? This writer's answer is no.

Large scale force projection of ground combat elements is not the most effective use of the U.S. military if there is a short notice war on the Peninsula. The United States would not have the time to deploy sufficient ground combat forces to influence the fight against the one million man North Korean Army prepositioned along the DMZ. Additionally, the initial wave of U.S. air and naval assets would have to be diverted from their proper role of blunting the North Korean attack and assisting

the outnumbered ROK Air Force, to protecting sea lines of communication for U.S. ground forces to use in their protracted deployment.

According to the current Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command and Combined Forces Command, General Robert W. RisCassi, the North Koreans (DPRK) have stationed approximately 65% of their massive land army within 100 kilometers of the DMZ. "The military threat from the DPRK is a combined arms threat," remarks General RisCassi, "with the primary component a powerful ground attack . . . Early on, the air forces of the DPRK must be denied air superiority and their naval forces cannot be permitted to interdict the crucial sea lines of communication providing vital reinforcements and sustainment."<sup>37</sup>

If ever there was a case for the "Nixon Doctrine,"<sup>38</sup> this is it. The host nation should provide the manpower for the land forces with the United States employing the technology and infrastructure inherent in its air and naval forces. This strategic shift would require the ROK armed forces to concentrate more on their defensive capabilities and on increasing confidence building measures on both sides of the DMZ. Although our treaty commitment to South Korea must be honored, it does not require that the United States provide large ground combat forces to augment the 650,000 man active ROK Army or their four and one half million man reserve.<sup>39</sup>

#### DETERRENCE AND FORCE STRUCTURE

In the evolving world of geo-economics, it is essential that the United States preserve its economic and political influence in Northeast Asia. Much of America's influence in the region stems from providing a reasonable expectation of regional security. American military presence in the region is a very visible sign of commitment. In order

for the proposed reductions and restructuring of forces to be consistent with the emerging National Military Strategy, the remaining U.S. military presence must be revalidated to insure it satisfies regional collective security requirements, promotes U.S. influence and access and serves as an effective conventional and nuclear deterrent.

The current forward deployed force has proven to be an effective deterrent at the present level. The continued reduction of this force structure promulgated in the Nunn-Warner document will cause a recalculation by both friends and foes. Washington's announced reduction by 10%-12% of the 135,000 man Asia-based U.S. force by December 1992 will result in the withdrawal of some 5000 ground troops and 2000 air force personnel from Korea.<sup>40</sup> This will weaken the remaining combat brigades of the U.S. Second Infantry Division and the infrastructure to support U.S. Air Force units deploying into Korea.

Although exempt from any other significant role outside the peninsula, the ground combat troops remaining in Korea would have little military significance in hostilities between the one million man North Korean Army and the 650,000 man ROK Army. In the air, the 469 generally more capable combat aircraft of the ROK Air Force, with augmentation of significant ROK air defense forces, would likely hold its own against the 716 combat aircraft of North Korea.<sup>41</sup> It can be argued that even before the current reductions, the U.S. military presence offered little more than a "speed bump" than a real obstacle to a North Korean attack in terms of conventional military capability. With the planned reduction, these ground combat forces offer even less.

What do American military forces in Korea contribute? While writing of the remarkable trinity necessary to successfully prosecute a war

(the government, the commander and his army, and the people) Clausewitz stated, "The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people."<sup>42</sup> There is nothing that will kindle the will of the American people faster than the killing of American servicemen in the first volley of an attack by Pyongyang. Under the proposed strategy, the small number of U.S. ground troops are important because American casualties would have great impact on political will and serve as a credible deterrent to North Korean aggression. Kim Il Sung surely realizes that he will have to shed American blood in any attack on the South, resulting in American resolve to continue a war in which U.S. troops are already participating.

A flaw in this strategy is that the outnumbered but substantial American ground combat units are not the only types of units that can serve as a trip wire to ensure an American response. Deterrence can be achieved by opting to station fewer U.S. personnel performing critical combat support (rather than combat) roles if early closure with the attacking enemy is guaranteed.

Another flaw in the current strategy is the assumption that the permanent stationing of U.S. forces will continue to be welcome in Korea. Although as recently as November 1990 both Washington and Seoul reiterated their commitment to retain U.S. troops in Korea for as long as the U.S. and Korean governments and people want them there,<sup>43</sup> there is growing pressure on both sides of the Pacific to bring the troops home.

According to a January 1990 poll taken by a South Korean newspaper, 64% of the South Koreans interviewed believed that U.S.-South Korean relations are in trouble, and 41% agreed that anti-Americanism is a serious problem. Although 55% wanted no change in the American presence,

37% wanted some level of reduction up to and including total withdrawal.<sup>44</sup>

Other significant factors affecting U.S. presence are the Soviet Union and changing South Korean attitudes toward the United States. Despite the substantial assistance given by the U.S.S.R. to their North Korean arch-enemy, the South Koreans tend to see the Soviets in a much more favorable light. On 1 January 1991, full diplomatic relations were opened between Moscow and Seoul and trade between the two countries continues to grow. As a Council on Foreign Relations fellow observed, "For domestic purposes, (ROK) President Roh Tae Woo wants to adopt a policy more in line with growing South Korean nationalism--a policy of avoiding excessive dependence on the United States."<sup>45</sup> As another Korean analyst noted, "The U.S. is now perceived by many South Koreans not so much as a beneficent patron as a self-interested partner."<sup>46</sup>

The growing nationalistic sentiment in public demonstrations coupled with increasing trade tensions lend credence to the belief that there is a growing anti-American movement. If you couple these sentiments with the North Korean argument that unification can only happen after the Americans leave the peninsula, then the conclusion could be that Americans will be going home sooner rather than later unless something in the equation changes.

On the U.S. side, there is deep skepticism regarding the necessity for a permanent U.S. military presence. Senator Dale Bumpers summed up the minority view in June 1989 while introducing a bill to force a reduction of approximately 10,000 U.S. Army personnel stationed in the Republic of Korea: "What is going on when we are maintaining 43,000 troops at a cost of \$2.6 billion to maintain the defense of a nation that is twice as big as its neighbors, has an 8 times bigger economy

and which has a \$10.6 billion trade deficit against Uncle Sam?"<sup>47</sup>

A third issue that will affect the deterrence that U.S. military forces provide in Korea involves Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons. The extended nuclear deterrence that Japan and the Republic of Korea have long enjoyed may be altered if Kim Il Sung is successful in his weapons development efforts.

At the request of the United States, South Korea gave up its nuclear weapons program in the 1970s.<sup>48</sup> If the North continues on its reported path of development of a nuclear weapon, Seoul will have the options of developing its own weapons or continuing to depend upon the extended nuclear deterrence of the United States. Will America's deterrence in fact extend to Korea if nuclear weapons are used by Pyongyang? Japan might also begin its own development program if the U.S. nuclear umbrella appears to be ineffective.

Mindful that the Soviet Union and China might rush into any regional situation if the nuclear taboo was broken, the United States justification for retaliating against a nuclear attack in Korea would have to be significant. This issue must be answered by a strategy that places at risk U.S. assets of sufficient value to convince North Korean planners that Washington would retaliate against any nuclear attack on regional allies. One such asset is U.S. troops, but the structure and types of forces that are left in Korea must be redefined if the United States hopes to keep a military presence and influence in Korea.

The current strategic framework does not assign proper weight to the growing friction between Washington and Seoul. The highly visible U.S. military presence, growing Korean nationalism, friction over trade deficits and demands for increased cost sharing at the time that U.S.

in-country security capabilities are decreasing are likely to have a synergistic effect on the domestic politics of the prideful Koreans. The crux of the problem is to determine how the United States can quickly reduce its military presence, visibility, and defense costs without dismantling the deterrent mechanism based on the early engagement of Americans in combat.

One method of achieving this difficult task is to remove the "forward deployed" ground combat forces and replace them with high technology units such as air defense, command and control and early warning. Although smaller in size, this new force structure would enhance the defensive capabilities of the South Koreans and still provide a credible deterrent mechanism. By the nature of their supporting role, their position will ensure early engagement by any North Korean attack. Patriot air defense missile units, with the capabilities of downing surface to surface missiles, both conventional and nuclear, would be one such option. Joint Strategic Targeting Acquisition Radar (JSTARS) aircraft and Tomahawk missile equipped ships consistently exercising off the coast of Korea are other low cost/high benefit possibilities.

A special note is warranted regarding the advantages of this alternative. If North Korea is successful in developing nuclear weapons, the defense capabilities of the patriot missiles coupled with nuclear capable Tomahawk missiles might provide the North Korean leadership with some reservations on the effectiveness and utility of their weapons of mass destruction. Ship based Tomahawk missiles give the U.S. the capability of responding to a nuclear attack quickly without the political baggage associated with prepositioning nuclear weapons on foreign soil.

One final advantage of this new strategy would be its linkage to

arms control and confidence building measures on the Peninsula. If the political climate will allow, an effort should be made to couple the progressive removal of U.S. combat forces and military installations to force reduction measures matched by the North Koreans or even the Soviets, if tensions in the area dictate. Such force reductions might even facilitate movement on the unification issue.

#### COALITION COMMAND STRUCTURE

Another element of the new world order military strategy for Northeast Asia is the transition from a leading to a supporting role in the collective security equation on the Peninsula. As part of the plan outlined in the Nunn-Warner document, "we will begin to draw down ground presence and modify command structures so as to transition from a leading to a supporting role for U.S. forces."<sup>49</sup> There are at least two specific areas involving this collective security plan that deserve reinspection: the command structure and the defense burden sharing cost associated with maintaining it.

Burden sharing is directly linked with the issue of the United States moving from a leading to supporting role in Korea. More simply, the question must arise regarding who is providing the coalition leadership and who is paying the bills. Korean politicians must wonder why the Americans, while moving from a leadership to supporting role in the defense of the ROK, reduce the number of U.S. troops stationed on their Peninsula and simultaneously ask the Seoul government to pay more money to the United States for the "common defense." When this issue is brought up to the South Korean citizen, he must also question why he is paying for something he feels he has little need. According to a recent World

Opinion Update, 60% of the South Koreans responded "no" when asked, "Do you think there is a possibility of war between the south and north on the Korean peninsula?"<sup>50</sup>

Burden sharing is a source of friction that is affecting all levels of U.S./ROK relations. When \$50 million, earmarked for the U.S. Forces in Korea for labor cost sharing, was cut out of the ROK budget by the Korean National Assembly based upon a legality question, the U.S. ambassador in Korea requested that the ROK Government reconsider its decision. The U.S. request was construed as interfering in domestic affairs and encouraging Korean politicians to approve an illegal practice. "The fact that a foreign ambassador has an effect on drawing up the budget of a sovereign state arouses our indignation beyond displeasure," responded an editorial in one Korean newspaper.<sup>51</sup>

As President Roh's "Northern diplomacy" continues to be successful in isolating North Korea by economically wooing former allies of Pyongyang with diplomatic and trade relations, the South Koreans are going to become reluctant to provide more burden sharing resources. Ironically, the ROK political successes are also eroding American support for the continued U.S. military presence in Korea by reducing the perception of a regional threat.

The burden sharing psychology is now very prevalent in the U.S. Congress for a variety of reasons. The apparent success of the efforts to seek financial cost sharing for the Gulf War is certainly a factor. Additionally, tensions between Korea and the United States are being compounded by trade deficits and pressure to reduce the defense budget. As a House Armed Services Committee member recently reported, "In reviewing all kinds of burden-sharing measurements - including financial inputs

and defense inputs - the U.S. bears a substantially higher defense burden than all of its allies and has done so for many years."<sup>52</sup>

The other problem with the coalition aspects of the Nunn-Warner report is how the command structure in Korea should be modified to transition U.S. forces from a leading to a supporting role. According to the report, in phase III (5-10 years) the Koreans should be ready to take the lead role in their own defense.<sup>53</sup> There seems to be little problem for the bilateral Combined Forces Command to transition from U.S. to Korean hands; the shortfall in the strategy is the unanswered question regarding the senior command in Korea, the United Nations Command (UNC).

The UNC has played a leading role in the defense of the Republic of Korea for forty years. Of course, the powerful military forces once controlled by the Commander in Chief of the United Nations Command (CINCOMUNC) are no longer in existence. Only a small number of U.S. personnel and representatives from seven other member states remain accredited. Nevertheless, the UNC has great utility as a symbol of multilateral interest in the Korean question and thus as a deterrent against further North Korean aggression. It is also the command framework for multinational operations in Korea and the justification for a Status of Forces Agreement providing for the use of UN bases in Japan. Additionally, the UNC headquarters is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the Korean Armistice Agreement.

The Korean War did not end in a peace treaty. The Korean truce talks ended in July 1953 with the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of an Armistice, which continues to this day. If the United States, to which the UN Security Council has delegated the responsibility to provide the military leadership of the UNC, transitions

to a supporting role, what happens to the multilateral security arrangement currently in place?

There are no provisions in the Armistice Agreement for successor organizations to replace the UNC. It is unlikely that the Republic of Korea can legally become its successor and maintain the presence of multinational representation. Given the effectiveness of the UNC in Korea as a peacekeeping mechanism, it is equally unlikely that a more effective collective security agency could be formed to replace it given the regional aversions to multi-lateral security agreements.

A duty officer from the UNC component of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) meets daily with his counterpart from the Korean Peoples' Army/Chinese Peoples' Volunteers component of the MAC to exercise the provisions of the Korean Armistice. Plenary (general officer level) meetings of the Military Armistice Commission have occurred nearly five hundred times since July 1953. The purpose of these meetings has ranged from serious tension reduction proposals through protests against terrorist attacks and DMZ incursions to North Korean propaganda exercises accompanying the announcement of their reaction to annual training exercises. In short, the United Nations Command and the Korean Armistice Agreement serve a very useful function in preserving peace in Korea.

When the United Nations Command announced its intention to appoint a ROK general to be Senior Member of the UNC Component of the Military Armistice Commission, the North Korean Senior Member called the action "nonsense" and said that he would not participate in future meetings.<sup>54</sup> Such a reaction may be prophetic.

Currently, one U.S. Army general is charged with both the maintenance of the Armistice through the United Nations Command (UNC) and the

operational control of U.S. and South Korean combat forces through the Combined Forces Command (CFC). Because of this arrangement with unity at the top, conflicts between these two missions can be easily resolved today. After relinquishing command of the three armies comprising the Combined Forces Command, it is unlikely that the U.S. can justify the permanent presence of an American four star general officer whose sole remaining duty would be command of a handful of UNC forces. Additionally, a ROK commander of the CFC may well have disagreements with the CINCUNC over compliance with Armistice matters. There could be a significant rift if the American general is not of equal rank of his counterpart and does not maintain a headquarters in the region.

As the ROK assumes the leading role in Korea as outlined in the Nunn-Warner document, it is in U.S. interests that the United Nations Command, under American leadership, continues to serve a useful role in support of the defense of Korea. Given the nature of its responsibilities, it is essential that a UNC headquarters element remain on the Peninsula.

The solutions to these potential pitfalls surrounding cost sharing and coalition command issues can be found in the restructuring of the U.S. forces currently in Korea, as described in the previous section, and the reassignment of additional responsibilities to the American CINCUNC. If Washington desires to support long term interests in the region, then it must consider the option of maintaining a forward based UNC headquarters in Korea, a main UNC headquarters in Japan, and perhaps a rear headquarters in Hawaii. The four star general assigned to the UNC could then also assume U.S. Army responsibilities in Northeast Asia as well as throughout the entire Pacific Command. It is imperative,

however, that the "dual hatted" headquarters in Korea and Japan remain active in UNC matters to preserve its utility in Armistice compliance, SOFA justification, and control of coalition forces.

Regarding the restructuring of the U.S. forces remaining in Korea, the few remaining units must provide defense capabilities that will be seen as critical to the ROK generals who will assume command of the Combined Forces Command (CFC) in the future. The quid quo pro for the use of those highly capable U.S. units would be subordination of the bilateral CFC to the multilateral United Nations Command. Furthermore, as the number of American units diminishes, so should the U.S. regional defense costs. In addition, the ROK's burden sharing responsibilities for the U.S. presence should decrease.

Over the next five years, the United States should protect its interests and retain UNC command. Nevertheless, to be prepared for the eventuality that the United Nations Command could dissolve, the U.S. must begin to fully integrate the numerous regional bilateral security relations that it currently enjoys. Combined air and naval exercises like PACEX 89 and PACEX 90 may initially serve as the model for more Japanese/ROK/U.S. integrated exercises. The U.S. should make a conscious effort to serve as a catalyst to expand these exercises under the bilateral security arrangements currently in force.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Niccolo Machiavelli observed, "There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things."<sup>55</sup> His observation certainly has merit when you consider the

current world situation and America's role in it. The rate of political change that has taken place in the past five years has been unprecedented, and the next five years promise to be equally as dynamic.

The United States is taking the lead in arranging the "new order of things" but is confronted by both political and fiscal challenges. The situation in Northeast Asia is particularly critical for the U.S. given the economic significance of the region and complexity of the situation. Korea is the key to stability in this region because Pyongyang is the most likely threat to regional stability.

There are five points that need emphasizing when redesigning a strategy for this region. First, given the strategic realities, it must be recognized that regional dynamics are rapidly focusing more on economics and less on security issues.

The second point recognizes there are few changes in the post containment National Military Strategy. The changes that are occurring are driven by strategic realities and fiscal constraints. The consequence is a smaller U.S. presence relying more upon collective security arrangements.

The third point focuses upon the fact that the total withdrawal of U.S. Forces from the Korean Peninsula is not in America's best interests at this time. Nevertheless, the United States is underestimating the growing rate of nationalism, the burdensome costs to allies of U.S. presence, and the impact of trade imbalances negotiations. If the hospitable environment for its deployed forces is to continue, the U.S. must quickly take the lead in designing a small, low visibility, high technology force package that will augment the ROK defensive forces.

Recognizing that the ROK Army is a credible force, making it

unnecessary for the United States to participate in a major conventional land war in Asia, is the focus of the fourth point. Both the United States and the Republic of Korea must acknowledge that Koreans must bear the brunt of ground combat while the U.S. supports with air and naval forces. The "Nixon Doctrine" will work in Korea.

The final point for consideration concerns another warfighting element. Any Korean war in which the U.S. becomes involved will require Japan's cooperation. A defacto multinational agreement for the use of their bases is essential, but neither the Republic of Korea nor Japan are prepared to publicly endorse such an agreement. The United Nations Command, however, serves many purposes including SOFA justification for the use of UNC bases in Japan. The U.S. should retain the UNC structure but should also begin to prepare for the possible dissolution of the UNC by seeking closer Japanese/ROK/U.S. security ties, initially through exercise participation. When the U.S. moves from a leading role to a supporting role, the UNC will likely be weakened. The regional allies must expand their bilateral relations with the U.S. to allow for more multilateral exercises to replace the UNC if the time comes.

The time is ripe for the implementation of this far reaching strategy. America's success in the Gulf War, increased North Korea isolation, and Soviet interest in the ROK's economy are all elements that indicate now is the time to move out smartly into the 21st Century. It is time to think and act "as big as Mikhail Gorbachev does."

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