

RESTORING THE NEXUS OF HISTORY-THEORY- DOCTRINE IN MILITARY THOUGHT: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ARMY

A Monograph

by

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2013-01

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23-MAY-2013		2. REPORT TYPE SAMS Monograph		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) June 2012 – May 2013	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Restoring the Nexus of History-Theory-Doctrine in Military Thought: Implications for the Republic of Korea Army				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Major Kwonyoung Park (Infantry, ROK Army)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) AND ADDRESS(ES) School of Advanced Military Studies 250 Gibbon Ave. Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301 U.S. Army Command and General Staff				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT Military thought is the result of continuous intellectual activities and evolves into its contemporary context through the dynamic interaction of history, theory, and doctrine. In terms of this, the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army has a unique situation and its military thought did not follow this more general evolutionary process. Even though the Republic of Korea, today, has achieved an unprecedented economic development within a few decades and surprised the world with its accomplishments, the ROK Army did not develop its own military thought within this historical backdrop, but instead has had military systems imposed on it from the outside. Since its inception, there has been a strong tendency for the ROK Army to adapt the U.S. Army's lessons learned and depend on the U.S. military thought. As a result, the current doctrine of the ROK Army represents neither its historical lessons nor culturally-based modes of thinking. It mostly adopted the lessons learned from its ally. The purpose of this monograph is to understand the importance of military thought with its inherent context, illuminate the prevailing ROK army's military thought, and identify the source of the disconnection between history, theory, and doctrine. This monograph then explores what impact these disconnects had on the development of military thought and provides implications on how to develop its own military thought of the ROK Army in the future.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Military Thought, ROK Army, History, Theory, Doctrine, Critical Thinking, Critical Analysis, Learning Organization, PME, ROK-US Alliance, KMAG, Disconnection, Leadership and Education, Korean Way of War					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 41	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON COL Michael Lawson
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 913-680-5299

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL PAGE

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Monograph Title: Restoring the Nexus of History-Theory-Doctrine in Military Thought:
Implications for the Republic of Korea Army

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

RESTORING THE NEXUS OF HISTORY – THEORY – DOCTRINE IN MILITARY THOUGHT: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ARMY, by Major Kwonyoung Park, 41 pages.

Military thought is the result of continuous intellectual activities and evolves into its contemporary context through the dynamic interaction of history, theory, and doctrine. It occurs within a well-established paradigm, or set of military ideas, which determines what and how military phenomena are to be observed and understood through the lens of its context. In terms of this definition, the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army has a unique situation and its military thought did not follow this more general evolutionary process. Instead, Korea's military development has been shaped by its turbulent modern history from the late 19th century and the Japanese annexation (1910-1945) to the Korean War (1950-1953) and its close relationship with the United States. Even though the Republic of Korea, today, has achieved an unprecedented economic development within a few decades and surprised the world with its accomplishments, the ROK Army did not develop its own military thought within this historical backdrop, but instead has had military systems imposed on it from the outside.

Since its inception, the ROK Army accepted and assimilated the U.S. Army's military thought, doctrine, and weapon systems rather than developing its own military thought. Further, because of the close relationship between the ROK and U.S. Armies, there has been a strong tendency for the ROK Army to adapt the U.S. Army's lessons learned and depend on the U.S. military thought. As a result, the current doctrine of the ROK Army represents neither its historical lessons nor culturally-based modes of thinking. It mostly adopted the lessons learned from its ally.

The ROK Army doctrine, as a guide, continuously strives to provide the authoritative stability required for common aim and action, not just in the present, but also for some finite period into the future. To do this, however, the ROK Army doctrine should be firmly rooted in the context of Korean history and theory, as well as be challenged by other elements. It must be a living intellectual body of thought that draws on the past, lives in the present, evolves, develops, and, if necessary, gives way to a new thinking relevant to the present or anticipated future operational conditions and changing weapons technology.

The purpose of this monograph is to understand the importance of military thought with its inherent context, illuminate the prevailing ROK army's military thought, and identify the source of the disconnection between history, theory, and doctrine. This monograph then explores what impact these disconnects had on the development of military thought and provides implications on how to develop its own military thought of the ROK Army in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

“Critical analysis is being the application of theoretical truths to actual events, it not only reduces the gap between theoretical truths and actual events, but also accustoms the mind to these truths through their repeated application.”

—Carl von Clausewitz, *on War*¹

Military thought is the result of continuous intellectual activities and evolves into its contemporary context through the dynamic interaction of history, theory, and doctrine. It occurs within a well-established paradigm or set of military ideas which determines what and how military phenomena are to be observed and understood through the lens of its context.² In terms of this definition, the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army has a unique situation and because of this, its military thought did not follow this evolutionary process. Instead, Korea's military development has been shaped by its turbulent modern history from the late 19th century and the Japanese annexation (1910-1945) to the Korean War (1950-1953) and its close relationship with the United States.

Even though the Republic of Korea, today, has achieved an unprecedented economic development within a few decades and surprised the world with its accomplishments, the ROK Army did not develop its own military thought within this historical backdrop, but instead had military systems imposed on it from the outside. During the last 5,000 years of history, the Korean Peninsula was often invaded or ruled by outside powers: China and Japan. In the beginning of its modern history, the ROK was a country that had just been freed from thirty-five years of Japanese occupation and exploitation and was suffering from an extreme shortage of

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 156.

² Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of War: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009), 21.

economic resources.³ The Japanese occupation tremendously influenced the modern Korean military. With demilitarization and the ensuing cultural genocide brought on by the thirty-five years of that occupation, an intellectual vacuum formed within the Korean military. In spite of its liberation from the Japanese colonial era, the Republic of Korea had to rush into the Korean War against the North Korean communists in 1950 without independently organizing and developing its newly created military.

As a result, the legacy of the Korean War and its aftermath forms the primary foundation of the current military thought of the ROK Army. Since its inception, the ROK Army has accepted and assimilated the U.S. Army's military operational theory, doctrine, organizational structures, and weapon systems rather than developing these aspects of its military based on its own military thought. It is not extraordinary for a developing army to follow or adopt the physical manifestations of a more developed army's thought, especially as the result of shared wartime experiences during the Korean War. The necessity for interoperability under the ROK-US military alliance further drove the ROK Army's adherence to American military thinking rather than developing its military thought within its own unique context. These factors contributed to the strong tendency for the ROK Army to adapt the U.S. Army's lessons learned and depend on the U.S. military thought in its development over the last sixty years.

However, in terms of the evolution of military thought, the ROK has different historical and cultural backgrounds, and even ways of thinking. Furthermore, the over-dependence on an American approach to war has caused disconnections of evolution of military thought in the ROK Army in terms of the interrelations between history, theory, and doctrine. If the ROK Army

³ Ernest Graves, "ROK-U.S Security Cooperation: Current Status," in *The Future of South Korean-US Security Relations*, eds. William J. Taylor, Jr., Young Koo Cha, John Q. Blodgett, and Michael Mazarr (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 14.

proceeds along this path, these disconnections will likely only continue to widen in the future. Ironically, the current strategic environment on the peninsula is now providing the necessary impetus for the ROK Army to prepare for the future by developing its own military thought and increasing its self-sufficiency under the stronger ROK-US alliance system.

The purpose of this monograph is to understand the importance of military thought within its inherent context, illuminate the ROK Army's prevailing military thought, and its development in the pre-colonial and modern era, then, identify the source of the disconnection between history, theory, and doctrine. This monograph then explores what impact these disconnects have had on the development of military thought and provides recommendations on how the ROK Army might develop its own military thought in the future.

To achieve these ends, this monograph first researches the evolution of military thought and defines it with its basis in the nexus of history, theory, and doctrine. The historical context in which the ROK military developed its current military thought, with special emphasis on the legacy of the Korean War, is then examined. This history helps to identify the disconnection between Korea's historical context and its American-derived theory and doctrine. The impact of this disconnection, both positive and negative, on the continued development of the ROK Army is then explored, with a particular emphasis on the ROK Army's leadership and education as part of the doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) paradigm. Finally, the monograph concludes by assessing potential implications for the future development of Korea-centric military thought through a restoration of the nexus theory, history, and doctrine, and through establishment of a learning organization, with particular heed paid to the upcoming transition of wartime operational control to the ROK military in 2015 and its aftermath.

EVOLUTION OF MILITARY THOUGHT

History – Theory – Doctrine Nexus

Military thought is a very comprehensive concept and difficult to define. However, thought generally refers to any mental or intellectual activity involving an individual's subjective consciousness. It can refer either to the act of thinking or the resulting ideas or arrangements of ideas. Similar concepts include cognition, sentience, consciousness, and imagination. Because thought underlies almost all human actions and interactions, understanding its physical and metaphysical origins, processes, and effects has been a longstanding goal of many academic disciplines including, among others, biology, philosophy, psychology, and sociology.⁴ By logical extension, military thought refers to the act of thinking or the results that derive from continuous intellectual activities about military affairs. Significantly, military thought evolves through the dynamic interaction of history, theory, and doctrine. In this sense, it is crucial to note the role of discourse in establishing and perpetuating the context because the use of discourse implies much more than speech acts or written communication. Antoine Bousquet's perspective on science, culture, and discursive resonance describes the power of discourse as permitting the arrangement of bodies of military ideas through the production and circulation of the conceptualizations, theorizations, representations, and practices. Like science, military thought is always a collective enterprise conducted within a military community, which shares and produces the ideas, norms, and practices that constitute military discourse. Theories and concepts are not produced in a vacuum but are the result of an accumulation of experiments, publications, and debates and only gain broad currency through their review by the military

⁴ *Webster's II New College Dictionary* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999), 1147.

community.⁵ As a result, military thought can determine the context, as well as what and how military phenomena are to be observed and understood through the lens of history, theory, and doctrine. At the same time, it is a very natural and inherent activity within militaries and wholly an intellectual process. It should not be the result of the adaption or insertion without critical analysis because of the significance of context. Therefore, military thought should always be examined by its interrelations of theory, doctrine, and historical context. Before exploring how these three interrelate, it is worthwhile to examine each separately.

History is the story about the past and a record of what things happened and people did. History, says noted historian E. H. Carr, is

“A continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past. History is the long struggle of man, by the exercise of his reason, to understand his environment and to act upon it. Past, present, and future are linked together in the endless chain of history.”⁶

To this extent, military history provides a reference point for anyone seeking to learn about war.

As Clausewitz argues,

“Historical examples clarify everything and also provide the best kind of proof in the empirical science. This is particularly true of the art of war. Military history in all its aspects is itself a *source of instruction* for the critic, and it is only natural that he should look at all particular events in the light of the whole.”⁷

The distinguished historian Sir Michael Howard once admitted that the past, which he aptly referred to as an “inexhaustible storehouse of events,” could be used to “prove anything or its contrary.”⁸ Still, the study of history can aid in training a person’s judgment through better

⁵ Bousquet, 20-22.

⁶ E. H. Carr, *What is History* (New York, NY; Penguin Books, 1964), 30, 134.

⁷ Clausewitz, 165.

⁸ Michael Howard, “The Lessons of History: An Inaugural Lecture given in the University of Oxford, March 1981,” in *The Lessons of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ.

understanding of the context in which events occur. Further, even though historical examples do not and cannot predict the future, they can teach us to avoid the errors and mistakes of our predecessors. Thus, it is imperative that military professionals learn from historical examples.

Theory, in generic terms, can be described as a “coherent group of general proposition used to explain a given class or phenomenon.”⁹ The word “theory” is frequently used to refer to a number of other types of formulations, usually abstract, including vague conceptualizations or descriptions of events or things, prescriptions about what are desirable behaviors or arrangements, or any untested hypothesis or idea. More realistically, however, theory refers to abstract statements that are considered part of scientific knowledge in either the set-of-laws, the axiomatic, or the causal process forms.¹⁰ Military theory, in the broader definition of the term, can be described as a comprehensive explanation of all the aspects of warfare, its pattern, and inner structure, and the mutual relationships of its various components or elements. It also encapsulates political, economic, and social relationships within a society and among the societies that create conflict and lead to war. Sound military theory explains how war is conducted and what actions will likely lead to victory. It also includes descriptions of how military force might be used to prevent the outbreak of war.¹¹ The primary purpose of any theory is to clarify concepts and ideas that have become confused and entangled.¹²

Press, 1991), 491.

⁹ Webster’s *Third New International Dictionary*, Unabridged (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1981), 666.

¹⁰ Paul Davidson Reynolds, *A Primer in Theory Construction* (New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1971), 11.

¹¹ Henry Eccles, *Military Concepts and Philosophy*, cited in J.P. Storr, *Human Aspects of Command* (Wiltshire, UK: Directorate General of Development and Doctrine, British Army,

Doctrine is a term that has abundant interpretations. The use of doctrine in a military sense appeared only in the twentieth century, although its first use is murky. Doctrine, in basic terms, can be “something that is taught, a principle or position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of belief, a principle of law established through past decisions.”¹³ The U.S. Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army*, specifically expresses doctrine as a common body of knowledge that soldiers and army civilians use to educate and train. The purpose of doctrine is to guide, explain, educate, and to provide the basis for further study and informed debate.¹⁴ The narrow definitions of military doctrine place far more emphasis on understanding the nature of war at present and attempting to predict it in the future. The evolution of doctrine draws on the events of the battlefield to guide change. In those circumstances, the development of doctrine is dependent on the ability of the military to learn and apply lessons to the conflict at hand.¹⁵ In this sense, military doctrine has considerable impact on how the military thinks, what experience is carried forward, and how the military currently fights, trains and adapts to changing operational conditions and then looks to the future.

Doctrine is distinguished by two characteristics. The first is its approval by an authority, typically the government. The second is that the approving authority mandates its use by all the

2003), 3; Julian Lider, *Military Theory: Concept, Structure, Problems* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 15.

¹² Clausewitz, 132.

¹³ Webster Dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/doctrine> (accessed December 12, 2012).

¹⁴ *British Defense Doctrine Joint Warfare Publication* (JWP) 0-01, 1st Ed. 1999, 1.2.

¹⁵ Paul Latawski, “The Inherent Tensions in Military Doctrine,” *Sandhurst Occasional Papers* No. 5 (2001), 4.

armed forces or by a particular service. Historically, in peace and war, the U.S. Army consistently adhered to its doctrine.¹⁶ For industrial age armies, the general purpose of doctrine remained relatively unchanged. Doctrine continued to provide guides for action or to suggest methods that would probably work best. Similarly, doctrine facilitated communication between Army organizations. By defining terms and providing general concepts, it enabled the numerous arms on the battlefield to act together in a coherent manner and be successfully orchestrated. Doctrine also assisted in the development of organizations and weapons systems, for it established the potential functions of the various systems and the parameters under which units were organized. This enabled the Army's leaders to favor the development of a particular organization or weapon system. Thus, doctrine affected several widespread and important aspects of the Army.¹⁷

The Importance of Its Interrelation

Military thought is the result of the interaction of history, theory, and doctrine. Without the interrelation of those three elements, no state can adequately understand and develop its military thought. There are two reasons why the interrelation of history, theory, and doctrine is so important.

First, it is difficult to separate military history from thought about war, because the past has generally been used as the source of examples and ideas, and military history has usually been integral to military thought.¹⁸ Military history itself is an endless interaction between past

¹⁶ Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine; From the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 5.

¹⁷ Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of U.S. Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-1976* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2001), 1.

¹⁸ Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 5.

and present. This history provides reference points for those seeking to learn about war. However, it is the most difficult to understand that the only real lesson from history is that there are no overall theories or doctrines, not any scientific ones at least. Each case is unique; there are too many variables to try to reduce history to a set of rules or lessons learned. History is evolutionary, not static, and the same can be said about warfare. An understanding of this dynamic is one way to avoid misusing history, and this understanding is to be gained by studying the subject in breadth, depth, and context.¹⁹ At the same time, wars are never fought in a vacuum but are an integral part of the general history of an era, and therefore, understanding the historical context in which wars are fought is equally important.²⁰ Historical examples can be used as an explanation or application of an idea or to support a certain theoretical statement or construct. Those clarify or provide evidence in support of statements and theoretical constructs. Therefore, a closer look at the use of historical examples will enable us to distinguish four points of view: an explanation of an idea, the application of an idea, to support a statement, and to deduce a doctrine—the proof is in the evidence itself.²¹ In terms of its relationship with theory, military history is the very foundation of military theory and universal theories of war are typically derived from historical observation.

Most theorists, when developing a military theory, study many different wars, campaigns, and major operations to find common lessons and trends that transcend a particular instance. That is important, since theoretical results need to be derived from military history, or at least checked

¹⁹ Robert M. Epstein, *Napoleon's Last Victory and the Emergence of Modern War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 1-2.

²⁰ Milan Vego, "On Military Theory," *Joint Forces Quarterly* issue 62, 3rd Quarter (2011), 63.

²¹ Clausewitz, 171.

against it.²² The result will, of course be a limited theory, based only on facts recorded by historians. A great advantage offered by this method is that theory will have to remain realistic. However, theoretical discussion is easily misunderstood or not understood at all without the use of empirical evidence. A useful theory should fully consider the effect of current, emerging, or future technologies, yet it must not rely on those exclusively. A sound theory must be general and adaptable, focusing on timeless ideas rather than fleeting ones.²³ If a theory and the empirical evidence that supports it is presented in the appropriate fashion, in detail, other scientists feel that they can verify the results for themselves, and this increase their confidence in the usefulness of the theory.²⁴

Therefore, historical examples should always be understood and analyzed by proper theoretical efforts. Undoubtedly, the knowledge basic to the art of war is empirical. Historical examples clarify everything and provide the best kind of proof.²⁵ To be more relevant, military history should be fully and carefully analyzed and reproduced by proper and critical intellectual efforts. If it is exercised only in recreating our own past without fully understanding the context, the value of history as training of the judgment and of the imagination is very limited.²⁶ In terms of this, theory plays an important role as an intellectual tool in terms of interrelation with history.

Second, theory and doctrine mutually support each other as a cohesive body of thinking and a tangible tool. Though theory is inevitably to be derived from historical observation and the

²² Ibid., 144.

²³ Milan Vego, 59.

²⁴ Paul Davidson Reynolds, 18.

²⁵ Clausewitz, 170.

²⁶ Michael Howard, 497.

useful explanation about war, abstract concepts and reasonable explanations of military phenomena alone cannot be used to train units to fight and win on the battlefield. They should create a more specific and tangible tool in terms of its applications. This tool is doctrine. Significantly, doctrine provides the vital link between theory and practice. However, various theoretical explanations provide different sets of reasonable ideas that may conflict. While military theorists validate their adherents' ideas, they typically have no authority to direct their action. Military activity in war demands an authoritative basis for common coherent action. Doctrine, as "authoritative guidance," standardizes terminology, training, relationships, responsibilities and progress among all military forces and should be published under the authority of military leadership. As the U.S. Joint Publication (JP 1), *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the U.S.* expresses "the purpose of doctrine is to aid thinking, not to replace it. It must be definitive enough to guide operations while versatile enough to accommodate a wide variety of situations. It should foster initiative, creativity, and conditions that allow commanders the freedom to adapt to varying circumstances."²⁷ The purpose of doctrine is to provide a cohesive body of thinking to approach the business of war. However, establishing such a body of thinking is the central challenge of its development.²⁸ To accomplish this task, doctrine should be examined and tested by theoretical study with its context continuously. Theory provides doctrine conceptual ideas that shape how the mind thinks about fighting and is the creative and imaginative force within the parameters of doctrine. It is crucial to apply doctrinal ideas to reality based on critical theory and abundant historical examples. Through these efforts, military professionals can make a sound judgment in the complex environment.

²⁷ Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), A-1.

²⁸ Paul Latawski, 24.

In sum, history lays the foundation for theory and theory provides a framework of understanding war and particular phenomena. Additionally, based on the study of history and theory, doctrine can be developed and applied to the current operating environment. Without historical study, theory might lose empirical relevance. Even worse, without critical and theoretical analysis, doctrine can become dogma. This interrelation between these three elements is very iterative and these iterations help to evolutions in military thought.

To understand Carl von Clausewitz, for example, the interaction between history, theory, and doctrine must necessarily be considered together. Influenced by the French Revolution and the Scientific Revolution, Clausewitz studied historical examples of Fredrick the Great and Napoleon, then attempted to clarify concepts and ideas that had become confused and entangled. He believed that the main purpose of theory was to cast a steady light on all phenomena, and thus show how one thing is related to another, while keeping important and unimportant elements separate.²⁹ In addition to the growing influence of science in the 19th century, the philosophical changes brought about by the Enlightenment also shaped the ideas of Clausewitz. He was especially influenced by the ideas of the German Romantic Movement embodied in Immanuel Kant.³⁰ Clausewitz believed that theory does not to provide rules and regulations for action nor does it prescribe a certain road that an officer should follow. Rather, theory should develop a way of thinking. Therefore, military theory, as Clausewitz argued, was most valuable when used to analyze and critically assess all the components and elements of warfare. Today, Clausewitz's military theories still provide sound foundations both for the understanding of historical examples

²⁹ Ibid., 26.

³⁰ Robert Pellegrini, *The Links between Science, Philosophy, and Military Science: Understanding the Past, Implications for the Future* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, August 1997), 21.

and for the successful conduct of a future war. Doctrine derived from his theoretical ideas also provides a guide for anyone who wants to study war and to conduct war in the future. What he significantly emphasizes is that the interrelation between history, theory, and doctrine must be of the nature of observation, and an analytical investigation leading a close acquaintance with the subject, and when applied to experience-in this case to military history-it leads to thorough familiarity with it. As Clausewitz is represented by military intellectuals as one of dominant military thinkers in the 19th century, his arguments about the interrelation between three pillars are the essential processes to establish military thought that still remains same and was never changed.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF KOREAN MILITARY THOUGHT

The ROK Army has unique military traditions and culture at the heart of its history and yet these have influenced the development of its military thought in some atypical ways in recent history. To fully appreciate this process, it is necessary to examine the interaction of the three elements with both traditional Korean military thought and with modern Korean military thought, which has been largely externally influenced. Therefore, this monograph divides the Korean military history into two periods; the pre-Japanese colonial era (Chosŏn dynasty of the late 19th Century) and modern era (from Independence to the present).

Military Thought of the Pre-Colonial era

The traditional military thought of Korea is closely related to its geographic condition. Since the foundation of Korea as a state in BC 2333, the rise and fall of dynasties in Korea roughly coincides with the rise and fall of dynasties in China and Japan.³¹ Korea paid a price for

³¹ Yong-ho Choe and Peter H. Lee, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 182.

those centuries of peace with neighbors. Under this security environment, Korea's most important security issue was to defend itself from outside attack. Thus, the traditional military thought of Korea was significantly related with how to prepare for war and how to conduct war to achieve its national objectives.³² The dominant military thought of Korea in the pre-colonial was 'Martialism,' or Sang-Mu Spirit (상무정신). The concept of Sang-Mu Spirit generally means to cherish or admire "Martiality" (Mu-무). In broad terms, this meant having an enterprising spirit for defense of the fatherland. The Korean concept of martiality is slightly different from that of Western states in that it is not merely about warfare and military factors, but also the academic and philosophical skill required to temper military capability with civility, virtue, and wisdom. In terms of this, Sang-Mu Spirit, as the essence of Korean military thought, represents the synchronization of military and administrative organization and preparedness in both peace and war, making it the most valuable ethos of people. As a result, through most of its history, the rise and fall of Korea depended on whether Sang-Mu Spirit was deeply rooted in the mind of Korean people.³³

Based on its military thought, the Korean people maintained a single nation-state based on a common linguistic and cultural heritage for over 1,000 years; specifically, the Koguryo (37 BC-688 AD), Unified Shilla (668 – 935), and Koryeo (918-1392) Dynasties.³⁴ For example, Koguryo, as a full-fledged aristocratic state, extended its territory to the Liaodong Peninsula and a

³² Young-Jun Kim, "Evolution of Korean Military Thought and Its Future Development." (Graduate School of Peace and Security, Sangji University, 2009), 11.

³³ Kun-Bum Lee, *Textbook for Moral Education* (Seoul: Minister of National Defense of the ROK, 2008), 332-333.

³⁴ Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War* (Seoul: Korea Institute of Military History, 1997), 1-6.

considerable portion of Manchuria (Northeast China) during the kingdoms' peak period.³⁵ Based on Sang-Mu Spirit, Koguryo developed its way of war—Fortification with Scorched Earth (*Chung-ya-ib-bo*, 청야입보) for defense, and Protracted Approach (*I-il-dae-ro*, 이일대로) for offense.³⁶ Korea's armies sustained this tradition up to the Koryeo and early Chosŏn Dynasty. During this period of time, Korea, guided by Sang-Mu Spirit, maintained full combat readiness based on a total war concept, while developing military organization, training and innovative weapon systems, such as the invention of gunpowder, the howitzer, multiple launch bows, and an ironclad warship known as a Turtle Ship. As stated above, the traditional military thought of Korea was well developed and could achieve national objectives only when it was deeply embedded in the mind of people and synthesized with leadership and war command as the essence of spirit.

³⁵ Britannica Online Encyclopedia.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/321038/Koguryo> (accessed February 12, 2013)

³⁶ Both *Chung-ya-ib-bo* (청야입보) and *I-il-dae-ro* (이일대로) were based on a protracted approach concept. *Chung-ya-ib-bo*, as a basic concept of defense, was to build strongpoints or fortifications considering terrain features in peacetime, then conduct protracted defense. *I-il-dae-ro*, as a basic concept of offense, lures the enemy into an unfavorable position to counterattack him. Both of them focused on combination of defense and counterattack, rather than conducting a preemptive attack. Park, Hwee-Rhak, *The Development of Operational Art of the Korean Military* (Joint Staff School, National Military University, 2005), 34- 35.



Figure 1. The Turtle Ship (*Geobukseon*) and Multiple Rocket Launcher (*Hwacha*)

Source: https://www.warmemo.or.kr/new/sub03/sub03_02_02_04.jsp (accessed April 11, 2013).

However, with no active military threats to remind Koreans of the need to maintain a strong national defense, Korea's Confucian pacifism became dominant in the late 19th century. As a result, military technology stagnated and military training was neglected. Significantly, geography and politics during this period placed the Korean peninsula the crossroads of confrontation and conflict. On a geostrategic level, Korea represents the regional focal point of neighboring powers.³⁷ Although the rulers of the "Hermit Kingdom" of Chosŏn (1392-1910) wished to keep its doors closed to the outside world, they lacked the technological means to repel foreign powers armed with modern military hardware and capitalist ideology. By the mid-nineteenth century, Korea was a country with a growing sense of foreboding, as they found themselves faced with increasingly insistent Western demands for trade and diplomatic relations. The dual burden of domestic disquiet and foreign threat created a sense of crisis in the minds of

³⁷ Young Whan Kihl, "The Korean Peninsula Conflict: Equilibrium or De-escalation," *East Asian Conflict Zones*, ed. by Lawrence E. Grinter and Young Whan Kihl (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1987), 98.

many Koreans. This atmosphere of anxiety gave rise to the negative response to Western civilization.³⁸

Internationally, the Ch'ing Dynasty (China) vied with Japan for influence in the Korean peninsula, and this Sino-Japanese rivalry shaped the international context for the *I-mo-kul-lan* Mutiny of 1882 and the *Gap-sin-jong-byun* coup d'état of 1884 in Chosŏn. These two critical events consolidated China's position in Chosŏn. Ten years later, when Japan emerged victorious from the Sino-Japanese War (1895), it rapidly increased its own influence in Korean peninsula. During these and later conflicts, when Korea suddenly needed a strong army to defend its sovereignty, no such army was there. Ironically, if Korea had not been lulled into complacency by its success in preserving peace along its borders for over two centuries, it might have been more successful in protecting those borders when it was finally confronted by a series of major military challenges at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁹

As Japan was undermining Chosŏn as a sovereign nation, a number of Koreans engaged in an armed struggle against Japan by forming "Volunteer Armies for Justice," or "Righteous Armies." From 1895 on, they actively resisted against the well-equipped Japanese Army. However, by the time the Annexation Treaty was forced upon the Korean people in 1910, accelerated by Japan's decisive victory in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan's heavy-handed suppression of armed struggle made it virtually impossible to resist.⁴⁰ During the occupation that would last until allied forces liberated Korea at the end of WWII, Korea still sustained its military thought of Sang-mu Spirit through continuously engaging in militia activities and anti-Japanese

³⁸ Ibid., 227.

³⁹ Yong-ho Choe, 5.

⁴⁰ Korea Institute of Military History, 1-6.

movement. However, unfortunately, the Sang-Mu Spirit was unable to save the nation from Japanese domination and or withstand the military thinking of the allied occupation forces.

Modern Military Thought of the ROK Army

Modern military thought of Korea can be traced to its independence from Japanese occupation in 1945 and the establishment of Republic of Korea government on May 10, 1948. Immediately after the Japanese surrender in World War II, the U.S. and the Soviet Union occupied Korea, dividing the country along the thirty-eight parallel latitude line. With a legitimate government in place, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered the withdrawal of its occupation forces to commence on January 15, 1949. A regimental combat team remained behind to continue training the nascent Korean military. This regiment left Korea on May 10, 1949, however, leaving behind a poorly trained and equipped South Korean military force to cope with its own security.⁴¹ In its place, the U.S. established the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), which was officially established on July 1, 1949, under the command of Brigadier General W. Lynn Roberts. The KMAG was the forerunner of the present Joint U.S. Military Assistance.⁴² KMAG played a major role in shaping the ROK Army, Coast Guard, and National

⁴¹ Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1961), 33.

⁴² The original Korean relationship with U.S. dates back to 1882 and the signing of a vague Korean-American Friendship Treaty. The first training mission from the U.S. to Korea was a four-man team headed by Brevet Brigadier General William McEntire Dye in 1888. Although the mission was disbanded after only a year, Dye remained in Korea helping the royal family until 1899. Then, with the Japanese occupation, there was a forty-year hiatus in official contacts between Korea and the United States. Korea, with the urging of China, sought the treaty hoping that it would blunt the Japanese ascendancy in the region. The United States agreed in principle to the treaty based upon possible. However, soon after signing the treaty the U.S. promptly forgot it and remained silent when Russia and Japan occupied and divided the Korean peninsula in 1896. Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1982), 4.

Civil Police force in the year between the formation of KMAG and the North Korean invasion on June 25, 1950.

When the Korean War unexpectedly began without proper warning and preparation, South Korea had no choice but to withdraw. Many of the troops were scattered across the country on anti-banditry missions and other internal security tasks. Training was incomplete, with fewer than half of the sixty-seven battalions having passed the battalion phase of their training by the end of 1949. The ROK had no heavy artillery, no tanks, no antitank weapons, and no air power.⁴³ In the initial dark and tumultuous days of this unexpected war, American soldiers paid a bloody price for the unpreparedness. Even while the U.S. Army faced difficulties with the combination of the terrain, weather, and enemy tactics, its doctrine was systematically assimilated into the ROK Army. During the war, American officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) from KMAG were assigned to every Korean unit, from battalion up, to provide advice and liaison. For the fledgling ROK Army, this help was invaluable.⁴⁴

The Korean War ended in July 1953. Shortly after signing the armistice, the Republic of Korea and the United States negotiated a Mutual Defense Treaty that was ratified by the U.S. Senate on November 17, 1954.⁴⁵ The treaty also had special significance in that it granted the United States the right to forward base American air, land, and sea forces on ROK territory, while simultaneously providing for South Korean defense and regional security.⁴⁶

⁴³ Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (New York: A Da Capo Press, 1967), 11.

⁴⁴ Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 191.

⁴⁵ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Treaty Provisions Relating to the Use of United States Forces for Mutual Defense*, 84th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 27 December 1956), 6.

⁴⁶ U.S. Congress, *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Troop Withdrawal*

During the early 1960s, the U.S. military assistance elements in Korea reached a peak. The evolution of U.S. military assistance reflects the changing nature of military cooperation between the two countries. Security cooperation between the ROK and the U.S. began with the provision of training and logistic support to the newly formed ROK armed forces. However, the nature of U.S. assistance changed a great deal in the intervening forty-odd years. Through the 1960s, U.S. grants for training, equipment, and logistic support were central to the relationship between the two countries. Then, in the early 1970s, in keeping with a worldwide change in emphasis, the U.S. shifted from making grants to making loans for the purchase of equipment. Finally, in 1987, as the U.S. cut foreign aid across the world and Korea gained a favorable balance of trade, the credit program for Korea ended, leaving only training under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program.

This evolution of the U.S. security assistance program for the ROK reflects the tremendous progress made by Korea, transformed from a very poor country, debilitated by fifty years of war and occupation, to a self-sufficient, modern industrial state. For many years, Korea relied heavily on these U.S. military advisors for advice on training and employment of U.S.-provided equipment. As the graduates of the ROK Military Academy rose in the officer corps and gained experience, they were able to assume greater responsibility for shaping all aspects of the forces. They no longer needed the extensive advice that the U.S. provided in earlier times. Today, the Korean officer corps has the education, experience, and overall professionalism to guide its own training and acquisition of equipment.

From the Republic of Korea, 95th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 9 January 1978), 8.

There are several important observations about U.S. security assistance to Korea. First, the end of assistance is a triumph for the aid program. Self-sufficiency of the recipient is the ultimate goal of every U.S. aid program, and both countries should be proud of the fact that Korea has “graduated.” Second, the security assistance program has left a tremendous legacy in Korea in terms of the skills and professionalism of the ROK armed forces and the excellence of their equipment.⁴⁷

In light of Korea’s extraordinary success and trade growth, South Korea’s economic self-sufficiency allowed it to expand its military industrial capacity and produce the combat arms necessary for force modernization to reach its goal of military self-sufficiency. Since the Korean War, U.S. forces in Korea had the greatest impact on the ROK Army development in terms of its doctrine, training, and equipment. For doctrine, the ROK army typically accepted U.S. doctrine with indiscretion, before the ROK Army established its own doctrine development institutions in the 1970s.

Table 1. The development of the ROK Army doctrine

Year	Manuals	Operational concept	Publication
1963	Field Manual 100-5	Attrition by fires	First
1978		Offensive Defense	2 nd Edition
1983		Offensive Maneuver	3 rd Edition
1989		All-Battlefield Offensive and Simultaneous Battle	4 th Edition
1996		Ground Forces Way of Operations Offensive: High-speed Maneuver Defensive: Deep Defense along the Avenues of Approach, Offensive Rear Area Operations	5 th Edition
1999	FM 100-1 Ground Operations	Offensive and Simultaneous Integrated Battle	6 th Edition
2005	FM 0 Capstone		7 th Edition
2010	Concept of	Offensive and Simultaneous	8 th Edition

⁴⁷ Ernest Graves, 19-21.

	Ground Forces	Integrated Battle	
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Source: ROK Army HQs, FM 0: *Capstone Concept of Ground Forces* (Daejun, Korea: HQDA, 2005), Appendix 2-1.

As Table 1 shows, the ROK Army's doctrine development has generally consisted of adopted and translated U.S. Army doctrine. The ROK Army, for example, developed its ground forces doctrine by adopting the 1985 Airland Battle doctrine of the U.S. In 1988, the ROK made minor modifications to the concept and renamed it, changing the name again in 1999. However, the basic concepts of Airland Battle, as envisioned by the U.S., remained at the core of this doctrine.⁴⁸ As a result, the ROK Army focused on developing of each unit's OPLAN and tactical preparation, rather than developing its own broad concept of fighting and the doctrine to support it.

Since the establishment of ROK Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) in 1981, the ROK Army accelerated its modern doctrinal development. The ROK Army expended a great deal of creative efforts to try to develop its own operating concepts of fighting or Korean way of war within its own operating environment. However, in spite of the differences of historical examples, lessons learned, capabilities, and even culture, most U.S. Army doctrines were assimilated to the ROK Army through only simple translation and without critical analysis. Furthermore, there is a strong focus on 'how to fight' doctrines without serious examination of Korean historical and theoretical foundations. As a result, the ROK Army's military thinking has evolved while tending to ignore the interrelation of history, theory, and doctrine within a Korean context.

⁴⁸ Hwee-Rhak Park, 42-43.

THE DISCONNECTION AND ITS IMPACTS

Disconnection of History-Theory-Doctrine

The Republic of Korea (ROK) Army's evolution in military thought has not developed independently. The main reasons are a series of turbulent events: Japanese occupation with demilitarization, its independence from Japanese occupation in 1945 and subsequent national foundation in 1948, the Korean War in 1950-53, and finally, its rapid development since the end of the war. The legacy of the Korean War and its aftermath forms the primary foundation of the current military thought of the ROK Army.

Since its inception, the ROK Army has accepted out of necessity the U.S. Army's military doctrine and weapon systems and assimilated those rather than developing military thought that is more consistent with its culture and history. Undoubtedly, the ROK-US military alliance system heavily influenced the development of the ROK Army since the Mutual Treaty in 1953. The necessity to ease cooperation within the ROK-US military alliance is one of dominant factors that stunted the evolution of ROK Army doctrinal concepts within its own context. However, there are fundamental differences between the two countries regarding the employment of the military. The U.S. military is an expeditionary force that fights its wars outside the homeland, rather than a self-defense force like that of the Republic of Korea. Thus, the lessons learned by the U.S. Army are far different from the ROK Army in terms of its missions and operating environments. Furthermore, both armies have different histories, culture, experiences, and even ways of thinking. Even though both the ROK and U.S. Army possess similar experiences, military thought in terms of political, social, and cultural context must necessarily be considered differently. As the result, there are two distinct disconnections of history-theory-doctrine in the ROK Army.

First, there is a strong tendency toward doctrine-oriented development. Since its inception, the evolution of the ROK Army doctrine depended on the lessons learned from the

U.S. Army. As a result, rather than developing doctrine by synthesizing historical examples and theoretical analyses within its own context, the ROK Army heavily focused on doctrinal development that ignored the essential interrelation of three elements. More seriously, while focusing itself on each unit's operations plans and tactical preparations rather than developing its own concept of fighting and doctrine, the ROK Army lost the connection of history, theory, and doctrine as well as forgot the importance for the developing its own military thought. Even when it adopted U.S. Army doctrine and applied to the current fighting concept, the ROK Army did not thoroughly study and analyze the context of American doctrinal concepts.⁴⁹

Interestingly, the U.S. Army has also adopted foreign ideas from other militaries. As Walter Kretchik examines in his book, *U.S. Army Doctrine (2011)*, keystone doctrine was the outcome of national and institutional values and expectations, yet the manual's percepts were hardly based upon American thought alone. More often than not, authors borrowed foreign ideas and recast them in an American light. Over the span of their history, the publications gleaned ideas taken from British, French, German, Italian, and Soviet thought, among others.⁵⁰ However, over time U.S. Army doctrine changed considerably. The changes that took place were influenced by a variety of factors, including diverse purposes and situations, improved technologies, and the development of strategic capabilities. The competing or conflicting demands of these various influences often affected the formulation and dissemination of tactical doctrine. Army doctrine evolved amid great cycles of change, with new methods appearing only to be overwhelmed by the resurgence of older methods or the appearance of even newer methods. Multiple revolutions in tactical doctrine occurred in the late 1950s, early 1960s and early 1970s, as the Army shifted the

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Walter E. Kretchik, 279.

focus of its doctrine from conventional, to nuclear, to counterinsurgency, to conventional operations. The combination of these changes has contributed to modern Army tactical doctrine being more complex than at any other time in American history.⁵¹

Unfortunately, the ROK Army did not have the same trajectory or opportunities to test the relevance of its adopted doctrines. Unlike its ally, the ROK Army did not spur the development of doctrines with political, social, and cultural context through the theoretical and historical analysis. The strong tendency of tactical doctrine-heavy development lost its balance of interrelation of history, theory, and doctrine in terms of establishing its own military thought. In addition, it strengthened the negative aspects of doctrine. Doctrine's primary weaknesses are inflexibility, the inability to improve, and resistance to any change that threatens the relevance of the organization that is the proponent for the doctrine. In J.F.C. Fuller's *The Foundation of the Science of War*, Fuller cautioned military professionals regarding the principle danger of making military doctrine too prescriptive. Specifically, he stated

The danger of a doctrine is that it is apt to ossify into a dogma, and be seized upon by mental emasculates who lack virility of judgment, and who are only too grateful to rest assured that their actions, however, inept, find justification in a book, which, if they think at all, is in their opinion, written in order to exonerate them from doing so. In the past many armies have been destroyed by internal discord, and some have been destroyed by the weapons of their antagonists, but the majority have perished through adhering to dogmas springing from their past success- that is, self-destruction or suicide through inertial of mind.⁵²

In terms of this, the current doctrine of the ROK Army has not followed the inherent intellectual process of incorporating theory and history and thus has eventually degraded its most important function. The ROK Army doctrine must be an expression of core beliefs and values of

⁵¹ Robert A. Doughty, 1.

⁵² J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundation of the Science of War* (London: Hutchinson and Co. LTD., 1926), 254.

its service members. It should provide its service members a common understanding, a common purpose, and common language. In order to do this, the ROK Army doctrine should be understood by understanding not only its content, but also its context. It requires a context of the character of conflict if it is to make any sense of the present and future.⁵³

Second, and closely related to the first, there is a disconnection from weak historical and theoretical studies in the current ROK Army. The current doctrine of the ROK Army represents neither its historical lessons nor empirical relevance of its own. Instead, it mostly adopted the lessons learned from its ally. The ROK Army doctrine, as a guide, continuously strives to provide the authoritative stability required for common aim and action, not just in the present, but also for some finite period into the future. To do this properly, however, ROK Army doctrine should be firmly rooted in the context of Korean history and theory, as well as be challenged by other elements. It must be a living intellectual body of thought that draws on the past, lives in the present, evolves, develops, and, if necessary, gives way to a new thinking relevant to the present or anticipated future operational conditions and changing weapons technology.⁵⁴ However, rather than developing its own ideas within the context of both historical and theoretical base, Western military concepts like maneuver warfare, 'Blitzkrieg doctrine,' Network Centric Warfare (NCW), Effect-Based Operations (EBO) influenced the ROK Army. There are also great illusions about decisive victory by dominant information and technology superiority on the Korean peninsula. Many leaders want to create a form of kind of super-maneuver doctrine, through a combination of new technologies and new operational concepts, capable of rapidly and decisively defeating an adversary.

⁵³ Paul Latawski, 24.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to find evidence of theoretical study in the current education systems of the ROK Army. A comprehensive understanding of military theory could help military professionals to appreciate strengths and weaknesses of military doctrine.⁵⁵ Theory would become a guide to its service members who wants to learn about war from books; it would light their way, train their judgment, and help them to avoid pitfalls. Moreover, the additional purpose of theory is the accumulation of knowledge and its proper arrangement in order that each person need not have to clear the ground and toil through afresh.⁵⁶ It provides the badly needed broader and deeper framework for understanding the entire spectrum of warfare. The lack of an accepted body of theory leaves a void in the basic philosophy that should guide people in distinguishing between cause and effect, trivial and important, and peripheral and central.⁵⁷

More seriously, however, study of history is neglected by a majority of officers and even school institutions. The expression ‘military doctrine’ can also provoke a vision of intellectual rigidity where the firm foundation of experience can represent an unhelpful ossification of past military practice. Nevertheless, to ignore the past and not bring a historical perspective to military doctrine carries the risk of replacing enduring principles of war with a mindset that marches to the drumbeat of intellectual fashion. Fashionable ‘big ideas’ may be nothing new in the history of war and neither is their impact so profound as to change its nature or character. History provides the critical reality test that separates empty jargon from revolutionary change. A sound theory is essential both for the understanding for past wars and for a successful conduct for a future one. It approached the substance of war analytically. Consequently, a certain kind of reciprocity

⁵⁵ Milan Vego, 60.

⁵⁶ Jehuda L. Wallach, *The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 4-5.

⁵⁷ Henry E. Eccles, 22.

emerges; the starting point of theory is the reality of war. Thus, practice puts theory under a searching examination, and the latter guides the practice.⁵⁸ There are also dangers in selectively using examples from military history. Sources for a particular example might be misleading or even utterly false. Clausewitz warned that improper use of historical examples by theorists normally not only leaves the readers dissatisfied but even insults his intelligence.⁵⁹

While contemporary military analysts and commentators, such as S. L. A. Marshall, called the German style of fighting a “Blitzkrieg,” or lightning war, and proclaimed it a revolution in warfare, their rhetoric had little substance and was intended primarily to arouse concern in the U.S. over events in Europe. In fact, an official blitzkrieg concept did not exist in German military doctrine at the time.⁶⁰ Importantly, technological superiority alone has rarely been decisive. What has been decisive has been excellence in the knowledge and application of the science of war by its military professionals.⁶¹ As Clausewitz also argues, the influence of theoretical truths on practical life is always exerted more through critical analysis than through doctrine. Critical analysis being the application of theoretical truths to actual events, it not only reduce the gap between the two but also accustoms the mind to these truths through their repeated application. Here theory serves history, or rather the lessons to be drawn from history.⁶² Understanding theory and in depth study of history are the tools needed to critically analyze the events from the past and apply them to the current situation and future events. Theory allows the

⁵⁸ Jehuda L. Wallach, 4.

⁵⁹ Clausewitz, 170.

⁶⁰ Antulio Echevarria II, *Fourth-Generation War and Other Myths*, U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institutes (November 2005), 14.

⁶¹ Wass de Czege, “How to Change an Army,” *Military Review* (November 1984), 33.

⁶² Clausewitz, 156.

military officers to mentally explore uncharted areas of their profession and shapes the individual's warfighting style.⁶³ If the ROK Army sincerely strives to develop the proper doctrine, it should restore the balanced connection of history, theory, and doctrine. As shown through history, the ROK Army has to apply intellectual rigor of its military professionals to study the interrelation of three pillars of military thought. Then, those intellectual efforts should set the foundation of military culture among its professionals and organizations.

⁶³ Joseph Gattuso, "Warfare Theory," *Naval War College Review* (Autumn 1996), 114.

The Impacts on Leadership and Education

As explored previously, the ROK Army leadership has historically over-relied on the U.S. Army. Such dependence resulted in major impacts, especially on leadership and education within the DOTMLPF construct.⁶⁴ Among DOTMLPF's seven key areas, leadership and education is one of the most critical to consider when examining the effects of current military thought, given how such thought directly impacts the distribution and levels of leadership, and the education systems of military professionals that support the military force and its operations. At the same time, leadership and education is one of the most challenging areas within which to implement change.

On the positive side, the shared wartime experiences during the Korean War and subsequent security mission meant that the most typical impact on leadership and education within the ROK Army has been to strengthen the interoperability and concept sharing with its ally. Since the start of Korean War, the ROK and U.S. have maintained and strengthened their mutual alliance successfully. The most critical element of alliance is common understanding about threat and sharing the burden as well as interoperability. Through the Combined Forces Command (CFC), for example, the U.S. introduced a great deal of new operating concepts and doctrinal terms to the ROK military and assisted in their application during regular combined exercises. In terms of the mutual military alliance, the ROK Army adopted or assimilated with the U.S. military ideas and concepts rather than distrusting or challenging them. This enabled the two countries to maintain their military alliance in the world for an unprecedented sixty years.

⁶⁴ DOTMLPF (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities) is a problem-solving construct for assessing current capabilities and managing change within the U.S. military. Change is achieved a continuous cycle of adaptive innovation, experimentation, and experience. Change deliberately executed across DOTMLPF elements enables the Army to improve its capabilities to provide dominant land power to the joint force. www.arcci.army.mil/about-arcic-dotmlpf.aspx (accessed March 10, 2013).

However, constraints limited the ROK Army development in other aspects. For example, the ROK Army had to develop its military capabilities while ensuring the security and stability for the nation's economic development in such a short period. There were not real opportunities to test and reproduce its military capabilities due to heavy burden for deterrence. The gap between military concepts and practice was filled by its ally. Thus, the lessons learned by the world's most powerful military were introduced to the ROK Army without paying costs of Korean blood and sweat.

The Professional Military Education (PME) of the ROK Army began with the assistance of the U.S. Army in 1951.⁶⁵ Through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programs, the ROK Army continued to strengthen its PME from the tactical level to the operational and strategic levels. Those military professionals with overseas training have greatly contributed to the development of the ROK military.

It is, of course, natural for a developing military to follow or adopt a more advanced military's lessons, ideas, and structures, which are the physical manifestations of military thought. The center of military thought, Azar Gat argues, has tended to follow the center of military power. Thus, during France's period of greatness, it was Jomini's interpretation of Napoleon's bold strategy that was studied throughout the Western world. In addition, when Germany became the major power in Europe with a supreme military orientation, a German military school presenting Clausewitz as its forerunner dominated military thought and the interpretation of

⁶⁵ The first overseas training of the ROK military began from September 1951. This was implemented by a directive of Gen. Ridgway (CG, UNC), then, approximately 250 officers (150 Infantry officers and 100 artillery officers) were sent to Fort Benning, GA and Fort Sill, OK. Up until 1955, about 1,200 officers of the ROK military graduated this program. *Kook-bang-il-bo* (국방일보) (14 September 2003).

military history.⁶⁶ In many ways, the U.S. has become that center at the turn of the twenty-first century.

On the negative side, there is a prevailing view about the over-reliance as an impediment to ROK efforts toward self-sufficiency. In spite of positive aspects, the dependence on the U.S. military has hindered the ROK military in its own development of military thought. There is the perception by some that constant U.S. support, training, and education have developed a passive and dependent mental attitude within some senior Korean officers.⁶⁷ More seriously, this tendency has negatively influenced the ROK Army officer education system. The military elites of the ROK are more used to translating U.S. military doctrine and applying it directly to their own situation, rather than challenging this doctrine or developing concepts that are more creative. They welcomed new theories and concepts rather than critically analyzing and examining faulty assumptions and problematic logic. Thus, before fully embracing these foreign ideas, the ROK Army officers have not examined rigorously to determine their relevance to the ROK Army situation.

In addition, there was an unfortunate lack of discourse among military professionals of the ROK Army. The ROK military, for example, accepted operational art by the influence of U.S. forces in 1989. However, the ROK military did not fully recognize the importance of operational art in terms of their own historical context. Moreover, due to the characteristics of the ROK-US's combined command structure, the adaptability of operational art was fairly limited. The ROK military's operational art, which lacked experience in planning and designing at the theater and

⁶⁶ Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 107.

⁶⁷ Suk Bok Lee, *The Impact of U.S. Forces in Korea* (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1987), 63.

major operation levels, could only remain in the conceptual sphere. The reasons why the ROK Army lacked interest and did not have any opportunity to evolve thoughts on operational art themselves were (1) the operational environment of the Korean Peninsula is fairly narrow, (2) the ROK Army focuses on defensive deployment, and (3) the ROK-US Combined Forces Command (CFC)'s application of the American model of operational art. Due to these reasons, the ROK military focused its attention on activities only at the tactical level-military employment. As a result, the ROK Army experienced a reduced level of interest in the mechanics of fighting at the operational level and relied on the U.S. military for this thinking.⁶⁸

Recently, the ROK National Defense Policy declared professional military education (PME) is one of eight key tenets of future development in the *2010 Defense White Paper*. The Minister of National Defense declared his desire to align the current PME to secure elite defense human resources that are suitable for a technology-intensive military structure, while improving the educational system for officers in a way that reinforces the efficiency and jointness of the military.⁶⁹ However, the current education curriculum is largely devoted to those subjects that purport to indoctrinate officers for their next job, rather than the empowerment of officers to use their creative intellect to be adaptive in a complex environment. Officers have to memorize decision-making processes and tactics calculations with mechanical applications, rather than identify and solve problems. The current academic environment of the ROK Army is also very competitive and rigorous, but it does not challenge officers to think critically. Critical thinking is the use of those skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desired outcome. It is used to

⁶⁸ Yang Kyu Roh, "A Study on the Change in the U.S. Forces' Operational Art and the Application to the ROK Forces" (Dissertation, Graduate School of Cooperative Course of the Military Studies, ChungNam National University, Daejun, 2010), 329-330.

⁶⁹ Ministry of National Defense of the ROK, *The 2010 Defense White Paper* (Seoul, Korea: ROK MND, 2010), 44.

describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed.⁷⁰ Critical thinking is a learned behavior that is underpinned by education. As most the material about critical thinking derives from the intensive study of history and theory. However, officers under the current PME system are overburdened with classes, and find themselves competing with peers for short-term gains at the cost of neglecting the development of long-term skills.

The evolution of military thought cannot be the result only by the adaption or insertion because of its significance of context. The ROK Army's over-reliance on the U.S. Army, mixed with its inherent seniority-ridden culture and collectivism, hinders the development of its own military thought of the ROK Army. More seriously, when military leadership fails to review theories critically or perceive this particular flaw in applying those in real world, the cost of implementing a false theory can be greater than expected.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A major theme of this monograph has been an interrelation between history, theory, and doctrine to develop own military thought of the ROK Army. As the monograph suggests, there is a large gap between three elements in the ROK Army. This gap is due not only to a general lack of understanding of the importance of the interrelationship, but also a lack of proper education by both institutions and the ROK Army leadership. This disconnection will exert significant influence on the future development of the military thought within the ROK Army unless effective ways are found to fill the gap. Given the volume of such study found in this monograph, it is reasonable to believe that there are two implications here.

⁷⁰ Diane F. Halpern, *Thought & Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*, 4th ed. (Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), 6.

The first and foremost significant implication that arises is the need to restore the nexus of history-theory-doctrine through critical thinking within the ROK Army. The ROK Army must set the intellectual foundation for the force through critical thinking. Military professionals have to study the interrelations of three elements and need to assess the validity of the connections between them within the appropriate context.

It is insufficient to teach military professionals only how to conduct military tasks. Military officers must also be taught the why. The starting point for understanding the why is theory and military history. History places into context the ends, ways, and means that our military ancestors used in a particular circumstance. It facilitates an analysis of why the great Captains of history acted as they did. In depth study creates a familiarity with the subject and permits a critical scrutiny of the participants and results of the battle.⁷¹ The study of history and theory reveals many important and continuing patterns of thought and behaviors. Studying theory also allows the commander to recognize discreet similarities and patterns in his environment, and weave a common thread throughout his operation. A more efficient technique is to teach a soldier how, rather than what to think. This should be the basis for military education and leader training. The societal and technological changes occurring today and for the near future are occurring at an exponential rate and demand adaptive leaders who understand their environment.⁷² In the absence of theory, military professionals easily become fascinated by the mechanical and technological features of the problem so that they neglect the fundamentals and ultimate implications.

To understand doctrine, the history and theory it is based on must be known. It is impossible to study doctrine without theorizing. Given the infinitely varied situations on the

⁷¹ Clausewitz, 141.

⁷² Huba Wass de Czege, 35.

battlefield due to changing missions, enemy, terrain, weather, and troops available, the application of doctrine requires judgment. While doctrine is important for providing models for adaptation, the prime factors remain the imagination, the inventive genius, and the will to fight. Those who write doctrine cannot conceive of every possible situation, and those who fight cannot be expected to remember every possible answer. In that sense, too many doctrinal changes or too much doctrine can weaken the soldier's understanding and reliance on doctrine. When that happens, doctrine no longer accomplishes its most important purpose.⁷³ This can be achieved by critical thinking. As Clausewitz argues

Given the nature of the of the subject, we must remind ourselves that it is simply not possible to construct a model for the art of war that can serve as a scaffolding on which the commander can rely for support at any time. Whenever the commander has to fall back on his innate talent, he will find himself outside the model and in conflict with it; no matter how versatile the code, the situation will always lead to the consequences we have already alluded to; *talent and genius operate outside the rules, and theory conflicts with practice.*⁷⁴

Second, to do this, the ROK Army has to establish a learning organization. Learning organizations are organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.⁷⁵ In addition to setting the intellectual foundations of military thought through critical thinking, establishing learning organizations is the most essential way to restore the connection of three pillars for military thought. Currently, the disconnection of history, theory, and doctrine is relatively common in the military culture of the ROK Army. However, critical thinking alone

⁷³ Robert A. Doughty, 49-50.

⁷⁴ Clausewitz, 140.

⁷⁵ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art of Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday Currency, 1990), 3.

cannot change this because the ROK Army's biggest obstacle lies in its hierarchical nature and its accompanying cultural norms. Reflective skepticism as a technique to improve judgment, and hence decisions, is very difficult to embrace if its members are not comfortable disagreeing with their superiors. This becomes especially difficult if ranking senior leaders, because of continued accolades and promotions bestowed tend to represent the egocentric tendencies.⁷⁶ Fastabend and Simpson suggested in their article, "Critical thinking is also an aspect of environment. To foster critical thinking, Army must at times leave rank at the door. 'Groupthink' is the antithesis of critical thinking and exists in organizations in which subordinates simply mimic the thinking of their superiors."⁷⁷ The ROK Army professional education system (PME) can be our most effective leverage of culture change. Many of our most important cultural shifts can trace their origins to the schoolhouse.⁷⁸

The ROK Army should restore its intellectual balance in order to solve its overdependence on external ideas and its relatively weak connection of history, theory, and doctrine within a Korean context. This can be done through mobilizing the internal creativities of the ROK Army in order to integrate rather than simply adapt external sources of theory and doctrine. The ROK Army's relevance in this ambiguous and dynamic environment is based on its ability of professionals. Examining the purpose of theory revealed that it forms the basis of the military education system.

⁷⁶ Stephen Gerras, "Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking: A Fundamental Guide for Strategic Leaders," U.S. Army War College, August 2008, 25.

⁷⁷ David Fastabend and Robert Simpson, "Adapt or Die: The Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the U.S. Army," *Army Magazine*, February 2004, 21.

⁷⁸ Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 21.

The key to the Army's early success is its lack of adherence to rigid doctrines or theories and the willingness of officers to experiment with novel pacification schemes. Today, given a highly trained professionalized military and its institutional reliance on military doctrine, one wonders if preconceived ideas are likely to lead to a strict doctrinal approach for a unique problem or to a more pragmatic and adaptive solution.⁷⁹ The determining factor in finding the correct balance between the role of doctrine in fostering cohesion and the requirement for commanders to exercise independence in judgment is found in military education. An army needs to trust the ability of officers employing doctrine to have the good judgment of knowing when and in what ways they can depart from the rigors of the doctrine. The capacity of officers to do this is based on the cultivation of intellectual curiosity and ability in the system of officer education.⁸⁰

With the looming transition of Wartime Operational Control (OPCON), currently planned for 2015, the ROK military is facing an urgent need for a Korea-centric way of military thought. The Korean people and their civilian leaders have also recognized the need for an increasing role of the ROK Army in leading the future of wartime operational control. The development of critical thinking skills within the ROK Army and development of the Army as a learning organization are imperative for restoring the connection between history, theory, and doctrine and the army's future success. These are only two of many potential solutions that can ultimately aid in the development and institutionalization of the 'Korean Way of War.'

⁷⁹ Robert Ramsey III, *Savage Wars of Peace: Case Studies of Pacification in the Philippines, 1900-1902* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2008), 121.

⁸⁰ Paul Latawski, 14.

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