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國際學碩士學位論文

**The Incomplete Journey of U.S.-ROK-  
Japan Trilateral Cooperation:  
The Establishment and Dissolution of the Trilateral  
Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG)**

한·미·일 삼각협력 과정의 불완전한 여정:  
대북정책조정그룹회의(TCOG)의 설립과 붕괴

2013年2月

서울대학교 國際大學院  
國際學科 國際協力 專攻  
강나영

**The Incomplete Journey of U.S.-ROK-  
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Thesis by

**Stephanie Nayoung Kang**

Graduate Program in International Cooperation  
For the degree of Masters of International Studies

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
DPRK	Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea
HEU	Highly-Enriched Uranium
HFO	Heavy Fuel Oil
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
KEDO	Korea Peninsula Energy Development Organization
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (of Japan)
LWR	Light-Water Reactor
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)
MOFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Republic of Korea)
NPR	Nuclear Posture Review
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSS	National Security Strategy (of the United States)
ROK	Republic of Korea
SDF	Self-Defense Forces (Japan)
TCOG	Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

## Abstract

### **The Incomplete Journey of U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Cooperation: The Establishment and Dissolution of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG)**

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In the face of the escalating North Korean nuclear crisis in 2002-2003, the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) – a trilateral security mechanism established in 1999 by the United States, Republic of Korea and Japan – failed to coordinate the diverging policy approaches to North Korea among the three governments. Why was the TCOG effectively dissolved instead of being used to cope with the North Korean nuclear threat? Despite common values, interests, and regional security concerns, the United States, Japan and South Korea were unable to formulate a comprehensive policy approach toward North Korea. What about the regional security context and domestic political factors drove the three governments to form the TCOG in the first place, and what changed among these factors to drive them apart? This thesis argues that diverging threat perceptions of North Korea created different policy approaches to the DPRK that could not be reconciled within the trilateral framework. At a time when trilateral cooperation was essential, the three countries defined the North Korean threat in different ways to cater to their individual domestic security concerns, which produced divergent policy options and preferences. The TCOG thus lost its function as a policy coordination mechanism and ultimately dissolved into a multilateral consultative framework within the Six Party Talks.

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**Keywords:** *East Asian security, TCOG, U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation, North Korea, threat perception, Six Party Talks*  
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# **I. Introduction**

## **1. The Puzzle**

On October 4, 2002, a U.S. delegation led by James A. Kelly, then-Assistant Secretary of State, confronted the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on its highly enriched uranium (HEU) program capable of producing nuclear weapons.<sup>1</sup> Despite initially denying the allegations, the North Korean government eventually acknowledged its nuclear program and announced plans to immediately resume nuclear activities.<sup>2</sup> North Korea reaffirmed its nuclear program in December 2002 when the DPRK regime expelled inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from North Korea and on January 10, 2003, announced its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (hereafter, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT).<sup>3</sup> Washington found itself involved in a second major North Korean nuclear crisis.

The United States, Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan had been able to trilaterally cooperate to prevent an escalation of conflict during the 1993-1994 North

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<sup>1</sup> David E. Sanger, "North Korea says it has a program on nuclear arms," *New York Times*, October 17, 2003, A12.

<sup>2</sup> "Operation and Building of Nuclear Facilities to Be Resumed Immediately," *Korean Central News Agency*, December 12, 2002. See also Charles L. Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), pp. 32-40; Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), pp. 93-108.

<sup>3</sup> "North Korea expelling IAEA inspectors," *CNN*, December 27, 2002; Seth Mydans, "Threats and Responses: Nuclear Standoff; North Korea says it is withdrawing from arms treaty," *New York Times*, January 10, 2003.

Korean nuclear crisis.<sup>4</sup> Amidst another nuclear confrontation on the Korean peninsula in 2002-2003, one would have predicted convergent security interests among the three countries and high levels of trilateral cooperation on the North Korean issue – particularly within the trilateral policy coordination mechanism known as the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG). Yet the formal structure of the TCOG dissolved and the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral consensus<sup>5</sup> collapsed despite failed attempts to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. Trilateral policy coordination among the United States, South Korea and Japan proved to be an important means for dealing with the DPRK, but the three countries were not able to integrate their different policy approaches to North Korea during the 2002 nuclear crisis.

The puzzling dissolution of the TCOG raises several significant questions. The TCOG had been formulated with the purpose of consolidating trilateral cooperation based on an assumption that “[e]ffective trilateral policy coordination regarding North Korea was a prerequisite for successfully handling any serious problem that arose” on the Korean peninsula.<sup>6</sup> Despite the utility and importance of a trilateral coordination mechanism in dealing with the North Korean security issue, why did the TCOG collapse in the face of a North Korean security crisis? Why did the three strategic partners choose to pursue divergent and conflicting policy approaches to North Korea, outside of a

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<sup>4</sup> See Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Phrase borrowed from a statement made in an interview with a U.S. Department of State official, June 14, 2006 as quoted in Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 425.

<sup>6</sup> James L. Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism: Improving U.S.-Japan-Korea Cooperation to Manage Complex Contingencies* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005), p. 4.

trilateral framework, at a time when trilateral policy coordination should have been considered most essential?

This thesis finds that diverging threat perceptions of North Korea led the United States, South Korea, and Japan to pursue conflicting policy approaches to North Korea that could not be coordinated within a trilateral framework. The three governments placed priority on different threats in relation to their own key foreign policy objectives, in turn, producing divergent domestic policy approaches to the DPRK. Even before the escalation of the 2002-2003 North Korean nuclear crisis, the three governments displayed signs of divergence in their threat perceptions which adversely impacted the overall trilateral coordination process. As a result, the TCOG failed to serve its function as a policy coordination mechanism for the U.S., ROK and Japan, and formalized trilateral policy coordination on North Korean issues under the TCOG dissolved into a new and expanded multilateral consultative process.

## **2. Significance of U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Cooperation for Regional Security**

The U.S.-ROK-Japan triangle is both a unique and important three-way relationship in Northeast Asia. Unlike other triangular relationships in the region, U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral relations are distinctly characterized by the U.S. 'hub and spokes' arrangement,<sup>7</sup> which the United States uses to justify a steady military presence in the

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<sup>7</sup> Victor D. Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Winter 2009/10), pp. 158-196; Dennis C. Blair and John T. Hanley Jr., "From Wheels to Webs: Reconstructing Asia-Pacific Security Arrangements," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 7-17.

region through its separate bilateral alliances with the ROK and Japan.<sup>8</sup> The U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral relationship is essential to deter the North Korean security threat and counter China's rising power and influence.<sup>9</sup> Because Japan, South Korea and the U.S. each hold a vital security role in the region, the "real key to long-term stability in Northeast Asia is the U.S.-ROK-Japan strategic alliance" based on a cooperative and "strategically coherent entity."<sup>10</sup> The three countries share not only common security and economic interests, but also have "underlying shared values, ideational, and cultural foundations"<sup>11</sup> which make them "natural partners for promoting peace and security in East Asia."<sup>12</sup>

Even the weakest link in the triangular relationship – ROK-Japan bilateral relations – can overcome political contentions to pursue common interests under a trilateral framework. Growing interdependence among the three countries after the Cold War period highlights the importance of trilateral cooperation to reduce

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<sup>8</sup> L. Gordon Flake, "U.S. Perspectives on Trilateral U.S.-Japan-Korea Relations," in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations: A Working Group Report of the CSIS International Security Program* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Strategic and International Studies, 2002), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Michael McDevitt, "The Current State and Future Prospects for Trilateral Security Cooperation," in Tae-hyo Kim and Brad Glossermmam eds., *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Balancing Values and Interests* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), p. 28. A trilateral strategic alliance does not imply a formal treaty alliance among the three countries. For more on the "virtual" alliance, see Ralph A. Cossa, "U.S.-Japan-Korea: Creating a Virtual Alliance," *PacNet*, No. 47 (December 1999); Ralph A. Cossa, "US-ROK-Japan: Why a "Virtual Alliance" Makes Sense," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Summer 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Toby Dalton and Scott Snyder, "Ties that Bind? Culture, Values, and Ideation in U.S.-ROK-Japan Security Cooperation," in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Balancing Values and Interests*, p. 125; see also 김태효, "한-미-일 안보협력의 가능성과 한계," 「외교통상부정책 연구시리즈」 (2002-3) [Tae-hyo Kim, "ROK-U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation: Possibilities and Limitations," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Policy Research Studies* (March 2003)].

<sup>12</sup> Hyeran Jo and Jongryn Mo, "Does the United States Need a New East Asian Anchor? The Case for U.S.-Japan-Korea Trilateralism," *Asia Policy*, No. 9 (January 2010), p. 69.

misunderstandings among the three states,<sup>13</sup> especially when their individual security policies and interests directly or indirectly affect each other. The U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security relationship has “a profound impact on the broader geopolitical environment” and “will help to define...other [important] regional triangles and broader multilateral configurations.”<sup>14</sup> Some scholars argue that U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral relations can become an “anchor for a cooperative framework for regional security in Asia” and that a “strengthening of trilateral relations will provide the seed for the growth of...dependable expectations...into a Northeast Asian security community.”<sup>15</sup>

### **3. Importance of the TCOG for U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Cooperation**

#### *Distinct from the Past: Function, Format, and Institutionalization*

Although the TCOG can be characterized as an ad hoc minilateral grouping created to expressly address the North Korean issue, the TCOG has significant implications for U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation and for multilateral institutions in Northeast Asia.<sup>16</sup> The necessity for security cooperation among the United States, Japan and South Korea was realized during the Cold War era, and the 1965 Treaty of Basic Relations between Japan and South Korea gave birth to the U.S.-ROK-Japan

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<sup>13</sup> Yong-Ok Park, “A ROK-U.S.-Japan Security Triangle Revisited,” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Summer 1989), p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Ralph A. Cossa, “Preface,” in Cossa, ed., *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a “Virtual Alliance”* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1999), p. xv.

<sup>15</sup> For analysis on the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral relationship as a regional anchor, see Jo and Mo, “Does the United States Need a New East Asian Anchor?” pp. 67-99. For the second quotation, refer to Blair and Hanley, “From Wheels to Webs,” p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> For more on East Asian multilateralism and ad hoc, minilateral approaches, see Bates Gill and Michael J. Green, “Unbundling Asia’s New Multilateralism,” in Michael J. Green and Bates Gill eds., *Asia’s New Multilateralism: Cooperation, Competition, and the Search for Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

triangle by creating a linkage between the two non-allied states.<sup>17</sup> The North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993-1994 solidified this trilateral relationship and “laid the groundwork for intense, virtually continuous negotiations among Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo over what would be demanded of – and offered to – the North.”<sup>18</sup> The U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework and formation of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) placed great emphasis on trilateral coordination to deal with North Korea.<sup>19</sup> Although the KEDO was a trilateral effort to address the North Korean nuclear threat, the fact that the Agreed Framework was a product of U.S.-DPRK negotiations essentially turned trilateral cooperation under the KEDO into a means to an end.<sup>20</sup>

Yet the TCOG was established with solid agreement and active participation among the three countries in devising a comprehensive and integrated approach to North Korea.<sup>21</sup> The TCOG can be seen as a representative and genuine effort toward trilateral

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<sup>17</sup> For an analysis of the 1965 Basic Treaty, see Victor D. Cha, “Bridging the Gap: The Strategic Context of the 1965 Korea-Japan Normalization Treaty,” *Korean Studies*, Vol. 20 (1996), pp. 123-160.

<sup>18</sup> Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. xix.

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed account of the Agreed Framework and the KEDO, refer to Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, pp. 331-370.

<sup>20</sup> Arguably the Clinton administration did not treat Japan and South Korea as “equal negotiating partners” when it signed the Agreed Framework bilaterally with North Korea. See Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 159; Scott Snyder, “The Fire Last Time,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 4 (July/August 2004), pp. 144-148.

<sup>21</sup> The TCOG was established in accordance with the Perry Process and a resultant report which was “devised... in close consultation with the governments of the ROK and Japan, and [had] their full support.” The comprehensive policy was “a joint strategy in which all three... countries play coordinated and mutually reinforcing roles in pursuit of the same objectives.” See William J. Perry, U.S. North Korean Policy Coordinator and Special Advisor to the President and the Secretary of State, “Review of United States Policy toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations,” Unclassified Report, Washington, D.C., October 12, 1999 ([http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/991012\\_northkorea\\_rpt.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/991012_northkorea_rpt.html)). Accessed on October 25, 2012.

policy coordination<sup>22</sup> – distinct from and more significant than previous forms of trilateral cooperation – due to its function and level of institutionalization. First, the TCOG was created to institutionalize consultation and mediation among the three countries and their separate policies toward North Korea.<sup>23</sup> Rather than formulating new policy approaches to North Korea under a trilateral framework, the TCOG’s function was to oversee and coordinate minor differences in common and consistent domestic policies toward North Korea.<sup>24</sup> The greatest utility of the TCOG was its role of reinforcing solidarity among the three countries and simultaneously consolidating policy approaches between the two-way relationships within the trilateral coordination framework.<sup>25</sup> Second, the TCOG achieved a higher level of institutionalization and formality than past forms of trilateral cooperation. The TCOG format was characterized by trilateral meetings among senior-level officials who had the authority to coordinate policies toward North Korea and advise the heads of state in their respective countries.<sup>26</sup> The TCOG was also designed to consist of separate bilateral discussions before a trilateral consultation

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<sup>22</sup> 전진호, “동북아 다자주의의 모색: KEDO 와 TCOG 을 넘어서,” 「일본연구논총」 제 17 권 (2003), p. 43 [Jin-Ho Jeon, “Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Beyond KEDO and TCOG,” *Japanese Studies*, Vol. 17 (2003)].

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> 이즈미 하지메, “한미일 3 국간 대북정책 협조: 현황과 과제 – 대북정책조정감독그룹(TCOG)을 중심으로,” 「극동문제」 제 24 권 7 호 (2002), pp. 54-55 [Izumi Hajime, “ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Cooperation towards North Korean Policy: Present Situation and Problems – Centering On the TCOG,” *Far East Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 7 (2002)].

<sup>25</sup> Jeon, “Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Beyond KEDO and TCOG,” p. 59.

<sup>26</sup> At the first TCOG meetings, the U.S. delegation was led by William Perry, North Korea policy coordinator, who had the authority and capacity to direct U.S. policies toward North Korea. The Japanese delegation was led by Kato Ryozo, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and later ambassador to the U.S., who was well-respected in Washington and had experience in regional affairs. The South Korean delegation was led by Lim Dong-won, senior secretary to President Kim Dae-jung, who advised the president on foreign policy and had extensive experience dealing with North Korea. Refer to Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, p. 179.

session was held,<sup>27</sup> which allowed for increased mediation and understanding of each countries' positions and interests – particularly between the weak ROK-Japan link. Additionally, high-level policymakers in each of the three countries planned to meet quarterly, but in fact, met even more frequently in the early years of the TCOG.<sup>28</sup> The trilateral meetings were followed by a joint press statement released by the three delegations to reaffirm their trilateral cooperation and unity on the North Korean issue. As a result, the TCOG process was distinct in that “it formalized and established routines for trilateral policy consultations on the North Korean issue, as well as how it connected the three-party discussions to a high-level interagency in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in South Korea and Japan.”<sup>29</sup>

### *The TCOG as a Potential Building Block for Northeast Asian Security Architecture*

In light of the current breakdown of the Six Party Talks, the TCOG can play a significant role in building the foundation for a multilateral Northeast Asian security structure. Because the TCOG was created and functioned as an ad hoc mechanism among common allies to address the North Korean issue, scholars argue that its ability to become a multilateral consultative body in Northeast Asia is limited and too narrowly focused with the exclusion of China and Russia.<sup>30</sup> Yet cooperation among strategic partners who share mutual interests, formal military ties, and common values in a region racked by cultural and historical differences, security dilemmas, and competing

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<sup>27</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> The TCOG ended up meeting eight times in 1999. Refer to Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, pp. 10-12.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Jeon, “Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Beyond KEDO and TCOG,” pp. 43-45.

ideological systems will be essential for the formation of any type of multilateral security architecture.<sup>31</sup> Blair and Hanley argue that, “[t]rilateral consultation and policy coordination...have been exceptionally important...[thus] expanding the agenda of the TCOG to a broader set of security issues...[would] offer opportunities for growing...into a Northeast Asian security community...[and as a result] transform the current system of bilateral arrangements into a more open web of security relations.”<sup>32</sup> The TCOG also provides “a symbol of security cooperation that gives Japan and South Korea an enhanced role as security contributors, rather than security consumers.”<sup>33</sup> Bilateral alliances based on equal partnerships, rather than patron-beneficiary relationships, will give South Korea and Japan greater incentives to take on more active security roles in the region and promote cooperation with other states on common regional security issues. The TCOG can evolve from an ad hoc minilateral to a broader security framework with more participant countries focusing on a larger range of security concerns. Dalton and Snyder claim that “[w]hile these developments may seem distant today, TCOG lays the foundation for such a security community.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For emphasis on common values/ideas/systems among the U.S., ROK and Japan, see Kim, “ROK-U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation: Possibilities and Limitations,” pp. 26-27; Dalton and Snyder, “Ties that Bind?” in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, pp. 132-136. For study on the differences inherent in East Asia as obstacles to regionalism and multilateralism, see Aaron Friedberg, “Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1993/1994), pp. 5-33.

<sup>32</sup> Blair and Hanley, “From Wheels to Webs,” p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Dalton and Snyder, “Ties that Bind?” in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, p. 124.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

### *The TCOG as an Important Subject of Research*

Due to the institutionalized nature of the TCOG in U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral relations and its potential to create the building blocks for a Northeast Asian security structure, the TCOG will have significant implications for both policymakers and researchers who examine the roles of the U.S. alliance system and Korean peninsula in East Asian regional security. Crises on the Korean peninsula not only directly affect South Korea, but also its geopolitical neighbors, Japan, China and Russia, and its military ally, the United States. The North Korean security issue continues to be a focal point of Northeast Asian security and efforts to resolve peninsular crises will require trilateral coordination among the United States, South Korea and Japan. Ralph A. Cossa states:

Actions taken by any one of the parties vis-à-vis North Korea almost always immediately affect all three nations. Of equal concern are North Korean attempts to play one nation against the others, which can only be countered by close, constant coordination among the United States, Japan, and South Korea.<sup>35</sup>

Trilateral coordination and comprehensive objectives are important for formulating effective strategies toward the North and preventing the DPRK from exposing weaknesses in the trilateral relationship. The TCOG was established based on the notion that there is “a clear and common understanding among Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington on how to deal with Pyongyang” and that such common ground could be incorporated into a formalized policy coordination process.<sup>36</sup> Through the TCOG, the

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<sup>35</sup> Ralph A. Cossa, “U.S.-ROK-Japan: Strengthening the Ties that Bind,” in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, p. 192.

<sup>36</sup> Perry Report.

three countries were able to 1) increase understanding of separate policy objectives and methods, 2) reduce concerns if approaches were not completely in sync, 3) coordinate individual policies, and 4) present a more unified voice in dealing with Pyongyang.<sup>37</sup> Despite limitations to the TCOG process that are inherent in attempts to coordinate separate domestic policies, the TCOG has proven its value role in dealing with North Korea and creating an important foundation for coordinative efforts. Thus, an examination of the TCOG will have significant policy implications for current and future U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation and will be the main subject of this study.

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<sup>37</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. v.

## **II. Limitations of Existing Explanations and a New Analytical Framework**

### **1. Current Studies on U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Coordination**

Despite the long history of relations between the United States and its two closest East Asian allies, it was “not until the end of the twentieth century that detailed studies of trilateral relations among the United States, Japan, and South Korea began to emerge.”<sup>38</sup> Compared to the breadth of scholarly literature and policy consideration given to the bilateral U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances, research on the triangular relationship is limited, though it is gaining increasing attention.<sup>39</sup> To examine why the TCOG collapsed at a time of major security crisis on the Korean peninsula requires an in-depth analysis of the TCOG process from its establishment to its abrogation. Among current studies on U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral policy coordination and security cooperation, scholars identify several main factors to explain why South Korea, Japan and the United States trilaterally cooperate in the first place and the obstacles to trilateral policy coordination.

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<sup>38</sup> Tae-hyo Kim and Brad Glosserman, “Preface,” in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, p. x.

<sup>39</sup> This view is also shared by Cossa and Woo. Refer to Cossa, “Preface,” in *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a “Virtual Alliance”*. Cossa states that, among the other three-way relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S.-ROK-Japan relationship “attracts far less attention but... can have an equally far-reaching impact on regional security.” Ibid., p. xv; and Seongji Woo, “Triangle Research and Understanding Northeast Asian Politics,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2003), pp. 33-63.

### *Trilateral Security Cooperation in Response to North Korean Provocations*

A common argument is that the United States, South Korea and Japan trilaterally cooperate in response to North Korean military provocations. Tae-hyo Kim argues that “North Korea remains the most salient and imminent issue necessitating cooperation among the ROK, United States, and Japan.” He cites that North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD), missile program, and conventional weapons are the major security issues that the three countries coordinate on.<sup>40</sup> The combination of North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs presents serious threats to regional and international security as DPRK missiles pose “direct and serious dangers to neighboring countries” in East Asia and the North’s nuclear program and missile exports run counter to “the desire of the international community to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.”<sup>41</sup> As a result, in instances when the North Korean regime instigates military provocations, American, South Korean, and Japanese security interests coalesce as a heightened DPRK threat raises concerns for maintaining regional security and stability.

The two most evident examples of North Korean provocations prompting U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation are the North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993-1994 and the Taepodong-1 missile launch in August 1998. The North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993-1994 brought the three governments to coordinate their policy approaches to North Korea to “present a unified front to Pyongyang” and to “institutionalize the [trilateral]

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<sup>40</sup> Tae-hyo Kim, “Limits and Possibilities of ROK-U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation: Balancing Strategic Interests and Perceptions,” in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Noboru Yamaguchi, “Trilateral Security Cooperation: Opportunities, Challenges, and Tasks,” in *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a “Virtual Alliance”*, p. 19.

relationship so that it involved both Japan and Korea.”<sup>42</sup> Trilateral coordination was essential for the maintenance of the KEDO and gave Seoul and Tokyo active roles in dealing with the North.<sup>43</sup> Yet after the Agreed Framework created a temporary solution to the North Korean nuclear threat, trilateral coordination once again faced challenges as the absence of major DPRK provocations made the U.S.-ROK-Japan relationship into a “neglected triangle.”<sup>44</sup>

The Taepodong-1 missile test in 1998, coupled with suspicions of an underground nuclear site at Kumchang-ri (DPRK), once again highlighted the importance of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral coordination to contain North Korean nuclear activities. In response to DPRK provocations in the summer of 1998, despite initially divergent policies toward the North, the three governments formulated a comprehensive and integrated approach to North Korea under the Perry Process, which culminated in the establishment of the TCOG as an institutionalized mechanism for coordination.<sup>45</sup> In response to North Korean military provocations, the three countries reiterated the need for trilateral coordination based on shared security concerns toward North Korea and overall regional security.

Although the argument that increased North Korean provocations increase the need for trilateral cooperation is fairly convincing, North Korean belligerence is not the determinant variable for trilateral coordination among the U.S., ROK, and Japan. The

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<sup>42</sup> Dalton and Snyder, “Ties that Bind?” in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. For an in-depth analysis of the 1993-1994 North Korean nuclear crisis and the important roles Japan and South Korea played in the maintenance of the Agreed Framework and KEDO, see Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*.

<sup>44</sup> McDevitt, “The Current State and Future Prospects for Trilateral Security Cooperation,” in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 8.

North Korean regime's threatening behavior can create conflicts in trilateral and bilateral relations as governments can choose to respond to the North Korean threat through different – sometimes contradicting – policy approaches.<sup>46</sup> In certain instances, domestic political interests hinder trilateral or bilateral cooperation on the North Korean issue even with a heightened North Korean physical threat and increased provocations.<sup>47</sup> Explanations that look to an external factor – such as North Korean provocations – to predict trilateral coordination overlook the domestic factors that significantly impact the ways in which the United States, Japan, and South Korea perceive and define the North Korean threat and shape their subsequent policy preferences in response to DPRK provocations.

### *Leadership Changes and Shared Policy Approaches*

Another conventional argument used to explain the dissolution of the TCOG is domestic leadership change and the conflicts that arise from different political ideologies associated with hardliner (or 'conservative') and moderate (or 'progressive') factions in relation to policy toward North Korea. In particular, many scholars argue that

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<sup>46</sup> The 2002-2003 North Korean nuclear crisis witnessed the dissolution of the TCOG and trilateral coordinative process despite serious DPRK provocations and a rising nuclear threat.

<sup>47</sup> A recent example of contentious ROK-Japan relations affecting their security cooperation in the face of a North Korean provocation was the failure of the two countries to sign both the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in June 2012. Although North Korea had conducted a missile test just months before in April, South Korea and Japan were not able to overcome political and historical differences to sign military agreements essential for their security (GSOMIA would allow the two countries to share important military information on North Korea's nuclear program). See Jeffrey W. Hornung, "Lost chance for Tokyo-Seoul security relations," *Special to The Japan Times*, June 18, 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ea20120618a2.html>. Accessed July 13, 2012; Young Jun Moon, "History Intrudes On Korea-Japan Security Cooperation," *Spotlight* at Stimson Center, July 13, 2012, <http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/history-intrudes-on-korea-japan-security-cooperation/>. Accessed August 8, 2012.

the 2001 U.S. leadership transition and the subsequent changes in U.S. policies toward North Korea with the entry of the Bush administration acted as the main impediments to trilateral coordination. In the establishment stages of the TCOG, the Kim and Clinton administrations “shared an approach to the DPRK that coincided with Japan’s interests in constraining the North and developing a cooperative strategic relationship with the ROK”, which resulted in strong trilateral policy coordination.<sup>48</sup> Moderates in the U.S. and ROK governments were able to persuade the conservative Japanese government to adopt an engagement policy toward the North. Yet the Bush administration entered office and “made clear that it favor[ed] a more hard-line approach than did the Clinton team...[with] Bush’s support for the 1994 Agreed Framework...lukewarm at best.”<sup>49</sup> The Bush administration’s policy approach to North Korea was considered to be extremely unyielding and founded on a rationale of ‘American internationalism’, which adopted a realistic view of the international system based on military power and securing American national interests.<sup>50</sup> Due to the hard-line nature of the Bush administration, coordination with a progressive Kim Dae-jung administration that advocated engagement proved to be difficult and detrimental to overall trilateral policy coordination.

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<sup>48</sup> Derek J. Mitchell, “Status Quo: Putting It All Together,” in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations*, p. 29.

<sup>49</sup> James T. Laney and Jason T. Shaplen, “How to Deal With North Korea,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (March/April 2003), p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> Hajime, “ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Cooperation towards North Korean Policy: Present Situation and Problems – Centering On the TCOG,” p. 64; 백광일, 김의곤, 이동형, “한반도 평화구축을 위한 한미일 공조방향과 과제,” 『한국동북아논총』 제 19 집 (2001), pp. 29-33 [Gwang-il Paik, Eui-Gon Kim, and Dong-hyung Lee, “Towards Establishing Peace on the Korean Peninsula: The Direction of Korea-US-Japan Cooperation and Future Tasks,” *Korea and East Asian Studies*, Vol. 19 (2001)].

Explanations that view leadership change and the Bush administration as major impediments to trilateral coordination imply that U.S. leadership in the TCOG process is a key component to maintaining overall trilateral cooperation.<sup>51</sup> Arguments can be made that the Bush administration's desire to pursue unilateral approaches in its foreign policy acted as an obstacle to U.S. commitments to the TCOG in dealing with the North. As a result, Washington was not hard-pressed to actively lead the TCOG process as it had under the Clinton administration. One author notes, "If U.S. leadership (as distinct from U.S. power) falters, if the United States is viewed as as much a part of the problem as the solution...the prospect for productive trilateral consultation and coordination will likewise suffer."<sup>52</sup>

While U.S. leadership in driving trilateral cooperation is important, the level of U.S. commitment to the TCOG was not a determinant factor in its dissolution. Rather, the success or failure of the TCOG as a functioning coordination mechanism among the three countries acted as the push-factor for U.S. leadership in trilateral coordination. Diverging strategic approaches toward North Korea among the three countries raised doubts in Washington over the necessity of the TCOG and such doubts led the Bush administration to desire a change in the format and title of the TCOG in 2003 – from formal senior-level trilateral meetings to an informal meeting process among working-level officials.<sup>53</sup> Eventually, as Schoff notes, "the informal TCOG consultations were

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<sup>51</sup> Jeon, "Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Beyond KEDO and TCOG," p. 59; Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>52</sup> Mitchell, "Status Quo: Putting It All Together," in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations*, p. 30.

<sup>53</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, pp. 27-28; Jeon, "Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Beyond KEDO and TCOG," p. 59. The major change that occurred in the TCOG was in its format. The

transform[ed] into a de facto allied caucus within the multilateral dialogue framework” of the Six Party Talks.<sup>54</sup>

Leadership changes and ideological differences between moderates and hardliners in South Korea and Japan also affect the prospects for trilateral coordination. Arguably, a conservative Japanese government, coupled with a conservative U.S. administration, created significant rifts between the U.S.-Japan on one side and a progressive South Korean government on the other. But hardliner-moderate dichotomies in Japan and South Korea did not have as adverse impacts on the TCOG and overall trilateral cooperation as most scholars would have predicted. Although the Koizumi government led by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was more prone to adopt a confrontational approach to North Korea, the early years of the Koizumi government reveal that Tokyo was actually in support of engaging the North and key supporters of the ROK engagement policy within the Japanese government helped push forward a policy focused on dialogue.

Changes in leadership and shifts in basic political ideologies can affect overall trilateral coordination due to emphasis on certain aspects of the North Korean threat (in line with hardline-moderate ways of thinking) and increased tensions in bilateral

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TCOG meeting in June 2003 would be the last and the TCOG “never met again under that name, and it was essentially replaced by [a] new, unnamed process.” The “non-TCOG TCOG meeting” was based on informal consultations between allies who frequently consulted with one another. The requirement to produce a joint statement was seen as a distraction and reducing media coverage of the trilateral meetings helped lower risks and pressures that the U.S. government faced in coordinating policies with its allies. See Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, pp. 26-27. For further references, see also Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 428; Richard Boucher, Office of the Spokesman, daily press briefing, Washington, D.C., July 2, 2003; Christopher Griffin and Michael Auslin, “Time for Trilateralism?” *AEI Asian Outlook*, No. 2 (March 2008).

<sup>54</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 29.

relations, but policymakers in the three governments are not completely bound by their political backgrounds when formulating policy approaches to North Korea. Simply pointing to changes in leadership do not account for cooperation between different political parties and conflict between similar political groupings.

### *Diverging Threat Perceptions of North Korea*

Perhaps the most commonly argued, yet understudied, explanation for trilateral policy coordination is the argument that diverging threat perceptions of North Korea created gaps among the three countries and thus produced different policy approaches to the North. Funabashi notes “that the demise of the TCOG and the Japan-U.S.-South Korea working-level informal consultations was due to differences among the three countries in their perception of the threat posed by North Korea and in their approaches to North Korea as well as to the tensions between and among the three themselves.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Chinworth, Michishita, and Yoon state that, “One fundamental challenge facing the three countries is unity in threat perceptions. U.S.-Japanese threat perceptions over time, while differing to degree, nevertheless have been more similar than those of South Korea. In recent years, these differences have been illustrated in perceptions toward North Korea.”<sup>56</sup> Kim, Tadokoro, and Bridges evaluate the three countries’

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<sup>55</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 429. A similar argument on the convergence and divergence of threat perceptions in relation to ROK-Japan bilateral security cooperation is made in Cheol Hee Park, “Cooperation Coupled with Conflicts: Korea-Japan Relations in the Post-Cold War Era,” *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 13-35.

<sup>56</sup> Michael W. Chinworth, Narushige Michishita, and Taeyoung Yoon, “Future Challenges and Opportunities for Trilateral Security Cooperation,” in Robert A. Wampler ed., *Trilateralism and Beyond: Great Power Politics and the Korean Security Dilemma During and After the Cold War* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2012), p. 148.

different perceptions of North Korea, the determinants and constraints to their domestic policies, and subsequent policy preferences.<sup>57</sup>

Although these authors identify a divergence in threat perceptions as the determining variable behind the collapse of the TCOG, they do not analytically examine how different threat perceptions of North Korea drove a wedge in trilateral coordination. Current studies lack competing explanations and in-depth analyses of the domestic factors that shaped each government's perception of North Korea. Many scholars have written on the different strategic approaches to North Korea adopted by South Korea, Japan and the United States, but the connections made between threat perceptions of the DPRK and the subsequent policy outcomes shaped by such perceptions are not clearly explained. In addition, studies on the TCOG do not fully analyze the changes that occurred within the TCOG process as a result of changes in each country's individual threat perceptions of North Korea.

Current explanations offer a valuable starting point for examination of the TCOG, but they are inadequate in providing a theoretical analysis of trilateral coordination. Most of the literature on U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral coordination efforts tends to give detailed historical accounts of the TCOG without theoretical assessments as to which factor was the most important in determining levels of trilateral coordination. Furthermore, studies on the TCOG are limited and are presented as supplementary comments to an analysis of overall U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral security cooperation. As a result, the TCOG has come to be a subject for policy recommendations to improve

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<sup>57</sup> Hosup Kim, Masayuki Tadokoro, and Brian Bridges, "Managing Another North Korean Crisis: South Korea, Japanese, and U.S. Approaches," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (2003), pp. 53-83.

trilateral relations, rather than the central object of theoretical and analytical study. Because current studies on the TCOG are descriptive rather than analytic, framed debates and competing explanations are needed to understand why the TCOG was established in the first place and why it eventually collapsed.

The formation of a theoretical framework to analyze the TCOG may provide greater insight into U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation toward the North Korea issue and other security issues in the region that require trilateral cooperation. By assessing the domestic and international factors that determined the potential for trilateral coordination within the TCOG, policymakers can assess how to capitalize on such factors in order to improve trilateral consultation and coordination on key security issues. Although history reveals a panoramic view of the TCOG process, a lack of theoretical analysis and evaluation presents an incomplete picture of the underlying variables that determine whether South Korea, Japan and the United States can overcome obstacles to trilaterally cooperate to appropriately address the North Korean security threat.

## **2. Theoretical Analysis of the TCOG: Competing Explanations and Hypotheses**

To answer the proposed questions, the development of a theoretical framework for analysis is necessary. Although the TCOG's failure to coordinate an integrated trilateral approach during an escalating North Korean nuclear crisis in 2002-2003 presents an enigma for U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation, current studies on the TCOG do not fully account for the underlying factors behind its demise. Current

literature does not fully examine why the three governments pursued different policy options toward the North despite the utility and effectiveness of trilateral cooperation in deterring the first nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula in 1993-1994. In order to fill in the gaps present in current studies on trilateral coordination and the TCOG, a theoretical analysis of the TCOG from its establishment to its demise will determine what factors drive trilateral coordination and which factors were most decisive in determining the ultimate abrogation of the TCOG.

#### *Competing Explanation 1: North Korean Provocations*

Scholars suggest that North Korean provocations produce high levels of trilateral coordination due to shared security interests toward North Korea. When the DPRK behaves erratically or engages in threatening behavior, such moments produce heightened risks for regional and peninsular stability, in turn, creating shared security interests among the U.S., ROK, and Japan to contain the North Korean threat and restore security. Essentially, heightened external security threats from third parties (outside of the U.S.-ROK-Japan relationship) create increased incentives for trilateral coordination to effectively address the threat.

#### *Competing Explanation 2: Leadership Change*

Another explanation for trilateral coordination found in current literature is domestic leadership change. Changes in national leadership can produce increased trilateral cooperation toward North Korea among policymakers with shared political

ideologies and similar views of the North Korean regime based on underlying political assumptions about international security and threats. On the flipside, leadership changes that introduce a new administration with a different fundamental political ideology and association can create conflicts between the three governments. Although terms such as “moderates”, “progressives”, “conservatives”, and “hardliners” may hold different meanings in each country, a general assumption among scholars behind their basic political ideologies has been made. Moderates, most often associated with progressives or liberals, are generally supportive of engagement and dialogue with North Korea. Hardliners, most often associated with conservatives, are generally skeptical of the North Korean regime and open to military and confrontational measures, such as economic sanctions and military pressure.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the rift between the conservative Bush-Koizumi governments and the progressive Kim and Roh governments is often cited as the major obstacle to the TCOG at the time.

#### *Main Argument: Convergent Perceptions of the North Korean Threat*

The thesis argues that converging or diverging threat perceptions of North Korea among South Korea, Japan, and the United States determine the prospects and levels of trilateral policy coordination. When threat perceptions within the three governments converge, policy approaches to North Korea coalesce into a trilateral

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<sup>58</sup> For a detailed review of the debates between the moderates and hardliners, see Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 90-92, 139-144; 박철희, “한-미-일의 대북 정책과 일-북관계의 진전 전망,” 「외교통상부 정책연구시리즈」 (2003-7), pp. 15-20 [Cheol Hee Park, “Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Policy Research Studies* (July 2003)]; Ihn-hwi Park, “Toward an Alliance of Moderates: The Nuclear Crisis and Trilateral Policy Coordination,” *East Asian Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 23-42.

consensus and produce high levels of trilateral coordination. Conversely, divergent threat perceptions produce conflicting policy approaches to the North and different policies impede the effectiveness and necessity of trilateral policy coordination. The competing factors – North Korean provocations and leadership change – act as intervening variables in each government’s assessment and perception of the North Korean threat. Yet the determinant variable is whether threat perceptions are convergent or divergent. Based on such perceptions, the three states devise different policy options and preferences to deal with the North Korean issue, which may coalesce or conflict depending on whether threat perceptions are shared or disputed.

**Figure 1. Competing Hypotheses for Trilateral Policy Coordination toward North Korea**

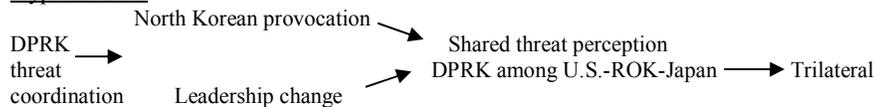
Hypothesis 1.

North Korean provocation → Shared security interests among U.S.-ROK-Japan → Trilateral coordination

Hypothesis 2.

Leadership change → Shared political ideology among U.S.-ROK-Japan → Trilateral coordination

Hypothesis 3.



**3. Research Methodology**

This study divides the functioning period of the TCOG from its establishment in April 1999 to its dissolution in June 2003 into three distinct time periods for in-depth analyses of key events related to North Korea that produced significant changes in the

TCOG.<sup>59</sup> The first period of analysis – from August 1998 to February 2001 – focuses on the establishment and formative years of the TCOG when convergence of the three countries’ threat perceptions and policies toward North Korea were the highest. The second period of analysis – from March 2001 to August 2002 – examines the three states’ efforts to continue to trilaterally coordinate their policy approaches amidst emerging signs of divergence within threat perceptions and policies toward North Korea. The third and final period of analysis – from September 2002 to June 2003 – assesses how divergences in threat perceptions produced policy options in each country that could not be consolidated within a comprehensive and integrated approach toward the North, which was important for the overall effectiveness of trilateral coordination. Each section or time period first identifies key international and domestic events that created significant changes in U.S.-ROK-Japan domestic policies toward North Korea and within the overall trilateral relationship. Because this thesis argues that diverging threat perceptions caused the demise of the TCOG, the individual threat perceptions of the United States, South Korea, and Japan are then analyzed alongside competing explanations to examine how such perceptions of North Korea shaped domestic policy preferences and outcomes in each of the three countries.

To assess how policymakers view the North Korean threat, this study will define new criteria for evaluating the three countries’ perceptions of the North Korean threat and how such perceptions impact their individual policy approaches to the North.

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<sup>59</sup> The analysis of this thesis actually begins from August 1998 to examine the events and factors leading up to the establishment of the TCOG. Additionally, although there may be some debate on the ultimate demise of the TCOG, for the purpose of this study, I have chosen the last official TCOG meeting held under that name and in its original format in June 2003 (immediately prior to the beginning of the Six-Party Talks). Refer to Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, pp. 27-29.

<sup>60</sup> First, perceptions of North Korea can be defined by the three countries' prioritization of threats in relation to their foreign policy objectives. Although the three countries share common threats related to the DPRK – including nuclear weapons/proliferation, missiles, and humanitarian-related issues – each country may interpret certain threats to be more dangerous and imminent than others. Threat perceptions of North Korea differ when prioritization of common threats diverge. Second, the ways in which the North Korean regime is viewed by the three countries also have significant impacts on the respective countries' threat perceptions. Views on the possibility of change in North Korea are determined by the level of trust placed in the North Korean regime – particularly its leader, Kim Jong-il – as a reliable negotiating partner, whether the North Korean regime is capable of internal reform, and the prospect for North Korea to open up to the international community and give up its nuclear program.

Each country's viable policy options and preferences are examined individually based on their defined threat perceptions of North Korea. The levels of consolidation or conflict among domestic policy outcomes in South Korea, Japan, and the United States determine the resultant level of trilateral policy coordination. An analysis of domestic factors and their relations to threat perceptions of the North reveals that divergent threat perceptions, rather than North Korean provocations and leadership changes, had the

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<sup>60</sup> In his theory of balance of threat, Walt identifies four main sources of threat: aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions. See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 21-25. Although these criteria for assessing threat are significant, the perception of threat is more important than the actual physical threat when examining South Korea, Japan and the United States' policy responses to their individual views on North Korea. In fact, levels of threat are not as significant as the direction of the threat (converging/diverging) and the issue areas in which the three countries define as threatening to their security. Also refer to Park, "Cooperation Coupled with Conflict," pp. 18-20.

greatest impact on creating conflicting domestic policies toward the DPRK, which adversely affected the TCOG coordinative process. Rather than test the individual hypotheses, the hypotheses and variables are included as competing explanations to strengthen the central argument that diverging threat perceptions among the three countries drove their domestic policies toward North Korea apart and led to the eventual demise of the TCOG.

### *Sources*

In order to provide an accurate assessment of each country's threat perceptions of North Korea, the examination of primary sources is necessary. The present study primarily uses online government documents and statements released by the U.S. Department of State, ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT), and the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Resources released by each country's foreign affairs departments provide the accurate sources for analyzing foreign policy initiatives and their underlying premises. To assess each government's perceptions of North Korea, the study utilizes statements and testimonies given by government officials. For the United States, testimonies before Congress or the Senate and special reports prepared for the government provide real assessments on how policymakers defined the DPRK threat at the time. For South Korea, speeches made by the President and officials in the MOFAT show how the ROK government viewed the North. For Japan, press conferences prepared by the MOFA press secretary are good indicators of how Japanese officials defined threats. The Defense White Papers/Diplomatic Bluebooks of Japan and

South Korea are also useful indicators of how each country views its external security environment and the role North Korean threats played in their respective foreign policies.

Another important source is the joint statements that were released by the three countries after their TCOG meetings. Although joint statements may not fully reveal the cleavages and debates that occurred within trilateral consultations, they still show the common ground that the three countries emphasize and reveal the issue areas that they are willing to compromise on. The TCOG joint statements are also useful guides to assess the purpose and goal behind each trilateral meeting and whether such objectives were met under a trilateral coordinative framework. Secondary sources based on interviews with government officials directly involved in the TCOG process are also essential for obtaining an inside look at how the trilateral coordination process functions. Scholarly analyses of domestic policies toward North Korea in each of the three countries and bilateral/alliance relations are also important for evaluating various explanations behind the TCOG's establishment and demise.

### **III. August 1998 – May 2000: From Crisis to Cooperation and Trilateral Consensus**

#### **1. Faltering Trilateral Cooperation and Establishment of the TCOG**

The 1993-1994 North Korean nuclear crisis highlighted the role of trilateral cooperation as the “cornerstone of American strategy for dealing with North Korea.”<sup>61</sup> The crisis reached its peak when North Korea began unloading fuel rods with weapons-grade plutonium from its 5-megawatt nuclear reactor – in clear violation of IAEA defueling requirements.<sup>62</sup> The United States needed the support of its closest Asian allies – South Korea and Japan – to initially form “a multilateral coalition supporting sanctions” and hopefully persuade the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to join.<sup>63</sup> Despite mounting tensions and a near outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula, at the peak of the crisis, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter was able to negotiate a deal with North Korean leader Kim Il-sung, which laid the foundation for a mutually agreed-upon settlement between the United States and North Korea.<sup>64</sup>

In October 1994, the United States and North Korea signed the Agreed Framework, which aimed to freeze – and ultimately dismantle – North Korea’s nuclear program. In exchange, the United States agreed to annually ship 500,000 tons of heavy

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<sup>61</sup> Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 194.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xviii, pp. 169-175; see also Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 113-123.

<sup>63</sup> Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 194.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 242-246. See also Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, chapter 6, pp. 131-167.

fuel oil to North Korea and build two light-water reactors (LWRs) through KEDO.<sup>65</sup>

Despite being a U.S. initiative under the Agreed Framework, the LWR project was to be mostly funded by the ROK and Japan. Trilateral cooperation was necessary to manage the funding of the LWR project as well as carry out the provisions of the Agreed Framework. Yet as one scholar notes, “here trilateral policy coordination was put to the real test.”<sup>66</sup>

Amidst reports in the U.S. of an underground nuclear program in North Korea (Kumchang-ri), the DPRK shocked the international community by launching a two-stage ballistic missile over Japanese territory in August 1998.<sup>67</sup> The Taepodong-1 missile test elicited a strong negative reaction from the Japanese public and Tokyo took unilateral actions to suspend aid to North Korea despite protests from Seoul and Washington.<sup>68</sup> Although the Japanese government eventually succumbed to U.S. and South Korean pressures to sign the KEDO cost-sharing agreement, Japan specialist

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<sup>65</sup> The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, *Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, New York, October 21, 1994, <http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/AgreedFramework.pdf>. Accessed October 28, 2012. For other detailed accounts of the Agreed Framework and negotiating process, see Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, pp. 331-334; Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, pp. 184-191; Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>66</sup> Yasuyo Sakata, “The Evolution of U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Security Cooperation: Dealing with North Korea and Diplomatic Policy Coordination – The View from Tokyo,” in *Trilateralism and Beyond*, p. 98. For problems surrounding funding and domestic support for the KEDO, see Joel Wit, “Viewpoint: The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization: Achievements and Challenges,” *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter 1999), pp. 59-69; see also Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 360.

<sup>67</sup> Sheryl WuDunn, “North Korea Fires Missile Over Japanese Territory,” *New York Times*, September 1, 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/01/world/north-korea-fires-missile-over-japanese-territory.html>. Accessed October 29, 2012; for more on the U.S.’ suspicions of an underground nuclear facility in Kumchangri, see Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, p. 36 (reference 9) and Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 374.

<sup>68</sup> Michael J. Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), p. 124; Hidekazu Sakai, “Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea: Freezing the Korean Energy Development Organization,” in Akitoshi Miyashita and Yoichiro Sato eds., *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 67.

Michael J. Green states that, through the Taepodong crisis, “[t]he shallow state of U.S.-ROK-Japan coordination on North Korea policy was now revealed.”<sup>69</sup>

Despite serious cleavages in trilateral cooperation among the United States, South Korea, and Japan, the TCOG was established in 1999 with broad support from the three countries. The TCOG was initially launched on April 25, 1999 in Honolulu as a “means of institutionalizing the process of consultation and policy coordination on North Korean affairs that had begun several years before.”<sup>70</sup> In his policy review, North Korea policy coordinator William Perry suggested that the TCOG “should meet regularly to coordinate negotiating strategy and overall policy toward the DPRK.”<sup>71</sup> Although Japan and South Korea were hesitant to join at first, they acknowledged the potential utility of such a consultative forum and agreed to meet trilaterally.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the TCOG “served as a tool to develop, coordinate, and implement this comprehensive approach toward North Korea.”<sup>73</sup>

The Taepodong-1 missile launch is an important starting point for analysis because the 1998 crisis situation “resulted in getting the United States, South Korea and Japan to share a common threat perception in a more serious way than ever before” despite their initially divergent responses.<sup>74</sup> Schoff argues that “the Taepo-dong missile

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<sup>69</sup> Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>70</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> Perry Report.

<sup>72</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism* p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Sakata, “The Evolution of U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Security Cooperation,” in *Trilateralism and Beyond*, p. 111.

<sup>74</sup> Akihisa Nagashima, “Searching for a Korea-Japan Strategic Partnership: Key Steps towards an Asia-Pacific Security Community,” in *Korea-Japan Security Relations*, p. 170. He states that the threat of North Korean ballistic missiles “brought not only all of Korea and Japan but also all the U.S. forward bases in Asia within the striking range.” Ibid.

launch subsequently helped launch the so-called Perry Process, which in turn led to the establishment of the TCOG.<sup>75</sup> According to a report issued by the Independent Task Force on Korea, the three governments responded differently to the Taepodong-1 missile test – Seoul downplayed the threat, Japan responded with unilateral hostility, and Washington tried to hold onto a weakening Agreed Framework.<sup>76</sup> Although gaps in U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation toward North Korea became evident after the DPRK missile launch in 1998, the three countries were able to merge their interests to establish the Perry Process and launch the TCOG. How, then, did the three countries come to a trilateral consensus to formulate a comprehensive approach to North Korea amidst challenges to trilateral cooperation?

## **2. U.S. Perceptions of North Korea**

### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

In the summer of 1998, U.S. suspicions of an underground nuclear facility in Kumchang-ri heightened U.S. perceptions of the North Korean threat due to the potential that North Korea could resume reprocessing plutonium into nuclear weapons.<sup>77</sup>

In talks with Seoul and Tokyo, Washington “put the North’s missile program and

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<sup>75</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 8. He states that “it is questionable that such a formal and prominent review [of U.S. policy toward North Korea] would have taken place without the missile test.” Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Morton I. Abramowitz, Michael J. Green, and James T. Laney, “U.S. Policy Toward North Korea: Next Steps,” *Council on Foreign Relations Press*, Task Force Report No. 24 (July 1999), p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> David E. Sanger, “North Korea Site an A-Bomb Plant, U.S. Agencies Say,” *New York Times*, August 17, 1998. The United States held multiple bilateral talks with North Korea to address its major security concerns related to the suspected nuclear facility at Kumchang-ri, North Korea and its desire to conduct inspections. See also James P. Rubin, Office of the Spokesman, “Talks with DPRK on Suspect Underground Construction,” press statement, Washington, D.C., November 18, 1998, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/1998/ps981118.html>. Accessed January 9, 2013.

alleged nuclear activities front and center”<sup>78</sup> and recognized that “North Korea remains a potential threat to peace and stability in northeast Asia... [as its] proliferation activities contribute to instability in other areas.”<sup>79</sup> The U.S. defined the North Korean nuclear threat as a major risk for security on the Korean peninsula and regional stability.

Although U.S. media reports largely censured the Taepodong-1 missile test, the threat of long-range North Korean ballistic missiles was also a major security concern for the U.S. government.<sup>80</sup> The U.S. intelligence community, in particular, pointedly addressed the North Korean missile threat and warned against the possible development of a North Korean intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) program capable of delivering a weapon to U.S. territory.<sup>81</sup> In a press statement on U.S.-DPRK bilateral missile talks, it was “stressed that [the U.S. government] regarded as highly destabilizing the DPRK’s attempt on August 31 to use a Taepo Dong 1 missile to orbit a small satellite” and that the “United States also voiced its strong opposition to the DPRK’s missile exports to other countries... [which] have heightened tensions in

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<sup>78</sup> Charles Kartman, Deputy Assistant Secretary, East Asian and Pacific Affairs, “Recent Developments in North Korea,” testimony by Special Envoy for the Korean Peace Process before the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., September 10, 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/1998/980910\\_kartman\\_dprk.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1998/980910_kartman_dprk.html). Accessed January 9, 2013.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Kartman, Special Envoy for the Korean Peace Process and U.S. Representative to KEDO, testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., September 24, 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/1998/980924\\_kartman\\_nkorea.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1998/980924_kartman_nkorea.html). Accessed January 8, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Sakai, “Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea,” in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 68.

<sup>81</sup> Robert D. Walpole, National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Programs, “North Korea’s Taepo Dong Launch and Some Implications on the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States,” speech given at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., December 8, 1998, [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/1998/walpole\\_speech\\_120898.html](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/1998/walpole_speech_120898.html). Accessed October 29, 2012. In reference to the threat of North Korea’s third stage capability: “The existence of the third stage concerns us. First, we had not included it in our earlier projections; neither had outside experts looking at our intelligence. Second, it and potentially larger third stages have significant implications for the Taepo Dong-2. Third, it raises many proliferation concerns.” Ibid.

already-unstable regions of the world.”<sup>82</sup> The threats of North Korea’s nuclear activities and missile program led Congress to consequently suspend funds to the KEDO and made them conditional upon a premise that the president could certify that North Korea was not involved in nuclear activities and that the United States was committed to prevent North Korea’s development and export of ballistic missiles.<sup>83</sup>

### *View of the North Korean Regime*

Following the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis and the negotiation of the Agreed Framework, the United States government held onto several key assumptions about the framework and the North Korean regime that guided the Clinton administration’s policies toward North Korea. A report prepared for Congress titled “A Comprehensive Approach to North Korea” (hereby known as the Armitage Report), compiled by former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage and his team, outlined the “critical assumptions on which public and Congressional support for U.S. policy [toward North Korea] has been based” and the inherent flaws in such assumptions.<sup>84</sup> In the Armitage Report, the foundational beliefs that guided U.S. policy

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<sup>82</sup> James P. Rubin, Office of the Spokesman, “U.S.-DPRK Missile Talks,” press statement, Washington, D.C., October 2, 1998, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/1998/ps981002.html>. Accessed January 9, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Congress, Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, *Public Law 105-277*, 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, October 21, 1998), section 582 (b)(1)(4) and (c)(1)(4), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ277/pdf/PLAW-105publ277.pdf>. Accessed November 5, 2012. See also Sakata, “The Evolution of U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Security Cooperation,” in *Trilateralism and Beyond*, p. 106; Sakai, “Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea,” in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 68.

<sup>84</sup> Richard L. Armitage, Ambassador and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. *A Comprehensive Approach to North Korea*, National Defense University Strategic Forum, No. 159, March 4, 1999, <http://www.tongilnews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=4041>. Accessed December 12, 2012.

toward North Korea at the time were that the Agreed Framework ended the DPRK nuclear program, North Korean collapse was inevitable and a “hard landing” should be avoided, and that inducing North Korea to open up and start a gradual process of inter-Korean reconciliation would produce reform and a “soft landing.”<sup>85</sup> Yet the report went on to challenge these key assumptions. It states that the Agreed Framework had simply contained North Korea’s nuclear program rather than dismantling it completely, in turn, “buying time” for progress to occur within U.S.-DPRK relations. Additionally, Armitage argued that “the core assumption of imminent collapse is seriously flawed” and that there are “no signs that the regime is contemplating any radical market-oriented reforms” that would completely open up the isolated regime to the international community.<sup>86</sup>

Despite criticism of the Agreed Framework and skepticism toward serious changes within the North Korean regime, the fact that the Clinton administration held numerous bilateral talks and meetings with North Korea in an attempt to improve U.S.-DPRK relations and reduce threats showed that President Clinton was willing to directly negotiate with the DPRK and placed a certain level of trust in Kim Jong-il to carry out commitments. The United States would not have been able to achieve key agreements with North Korea – such as nuclear inspections at Kumchang-ri (May 1999, June 2000), a moratorium on North Korea’s long-range missile tests in exchange for a lift on economic sanctions (September 1999), and high-level meetings between the two

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

countries – if the Clinton administration had not viewed Kim as negotiable.<sup>87</sup> In a testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on developments in North Korea, Charles Kartman stated:

Our policy toward North Korea... is a policy that is not based on trust or confidence in the North Korean regime. On the contrary, it reflects a sober judgment of how best to contain the threat of North Korea's nuclear program and other destabilizing activities such as missile development. Although it is a difficult task, we are convinced that we can achieve our objectives best by carefully engaging the North Korean regime, not by isolating it.<sup>88</sup>

From President Clinton's view, consistent U.S.-DPRK bilateral dialogue, coupled with trilateral and multilateral consultations, was essential for addressing the North Korean threat effectively. Although Washington was highly skeptical of North Korea's actions due to a lack of transparency and continued military provocations, the Clinton administration still viewed the North Korean regime as capable of change and it made efforts to open up the closed-off DPRK society. The Clinton administration's views were solidified by substantial improvements in U.S.-DPRK and inter-Korean relations following the historic North-South summit meeting in June 2000. In her comments on the inter-Korean meeting, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright recognized "the positive steps Kim Jong-il is taking to move North Korea out of the

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<sup>87</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>88</sup> Kartman, "Recent Developments in North Korea," September 10, 1998. Italics added by the author for emphasis. In a press briefing, Perry stated, "The next conclusion we came to in the study was that we should not assume that the regime in North Korea would collapse, even if the United States were to put pressure on them. We must deal with the North Korean government as it is, not as we wish it would be. Therefore... if North Korea were willing to forego the long-range missile program, in addition to the nuclear program, that the United States should move to normalizing relations with North Korea." Madeleine Albright and Dr. William Perry, Office of the Spokesman, "Press Briefing on U.S. Relations with North Korea," Washington, D.C., September 17, 1999, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1999/990917a.html>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

isolation of the past toward an era of reconciliation with the South.”<sup>89</sup> As a result, despite significant security threats arising from DPRK actions, the Clinton administration’s forward-looking attitude towards the North helped to sustain openness to exploring an array of policy options – using both carrots and sticks – that was not limited to political, economic, and military pressure from the United States.

### **3. South Korean Perceptions of North Korea**

#### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

Although President Kim Dae-jung entered office in February 1998 with a new strategy toward North Korea – the ‘Sunshine Policy’ – that emphasized engagement over confrontation, the North’s continuous provocations proved that even supporters of engagement could not simply ignore the North Korean threat. The risk of escalation to a second Korean War during the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis had been averted through U.S.-DPRK negotiations and the consequent Agreed Framework, but the threat of war and instability on the peninsula constantly loomed (and still does) in the minds of Korean policymakers.<sup>90</sup> The resumption of North Korea’s plutonium production would be both an attack on South Korea’s central policy toward North Korea and a threat to the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula.

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<sup>89</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, Secretary of State, “Statement on the Conclusion of the Inter-Korean Summit,” Washington, D.C., June 15, 2000, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/2000/000615.html>. Accessed January 5, 2013.

<sup>90</sup> Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea, *Defense White Paper 1998* (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, October 1, 1998).

In addition to the nuclear threat, the DPRK missile threat was also a serious security concern for South Korea despite its relatively muted response to the Taepodong-1 missile test. Though President Kim's support of an engagement approach to North Korea largely masked threat perceptions that were more pronounced in other countries (namely Japan and the United States), the Sunshine Policy could not mask the inherent threat that South Korea felt towards its militant neighbor. Although Kim Dae-jung "publicly urged Obuchi and the Japanese public not to harden their position" in response to the 1998 missile test, he also stated that the North Korean missile problem "poses a bigger threat to South Korea than to Japan."<sup>91</sup> During Prime Minister Obuchi's visit to South Korea in March 1999, President Kim claimed that "North Korean missiles are a threat, not only to Japan, but also to the Republic of Korea, and North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles should not be produced or used."<sup>92</sup> The Kim administration also perceived a high level of threat from North Korea's military capabilities – both from its nuclear and ballistic missile programs – which pushed it toward pursuing trilateral coordination with the United States and Japan who shared similar views.

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<sup>91</sup> Shi-yong Chon, "Kim, Obuchi Reaffirm N.K. Engagement Stance," *Korea Herald*, March 22, 1999, 1 as quoted in Koh, *Between Discord and Cooperation*, p. 405, reference 134.

<sup>92</sup> Sadaaki Numata, "Policy of Japan and the Republic of Korea toward North Korea," press conference by the press secretary, Tokyo, March 23, 1999, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1999/3/323.html#2>. Accessed October 25, 2012.

### *View of the North Korean Regime*

The Kim administration held onto two major assumptions about the North Korean regime that influenced its policy preferences and desire to pursue an engagement policy with the North. The first assumption was that the North Korean regime was capable of positive change and that Kim Jong-il was a reliable partner for negotiation. The second assumption was that North and South Korea could co-exist peacefully, in spite of the North's nuclear program and security threats, towards a peaceful reunification.

Based on the first assumption of the North Korean regime, President Kim Dae-jung desired to induce internal changes within North Korea by “increasing frequency in exchanges and cooperation [which] can spontaneously foster North Korean reforms, and ultimately, peaceful co-existence.”<sup>93</sup> Rather than forcing or anticipating the collapse of the Kim Jong-il regime, the Kim Dae-jung administration “set up a goal to change North Korea incrementally.”<sup>94</sup> The Kim government believed that economic cooperation and dialogue were the best ways to bring North Korea out of isolation.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, in line with this perception was the view that “the Kim Jong Il regime... [was] a reliable partner for negotiation.”<sup>96</sup> This view of Kim Jong-il was largely shaped by the North-South summit meeting on June 15, 2000 where “[President Kim Dae-jung] evaluated his North Korean counterpart... as a partner who would respect what was agreed in the

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<sup>93</sup> Chung-in Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” *East Asian Review* Vol. 12, No. 4 (Winter 2000), p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>95</sup> Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seung-Ho Joo, “The Four-Party Peace Talks: Inter-Korean Bilateral Agenda,” *Pacific Focus*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring 1997), p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Kim, Tadokoro, and Bridges, “Managing Another North Korean Crisis,” p. 58.

negotiations...[and] would be willing to reform his regime and open North Korea to the outside world.”<sup>97</sup> This view was supported by Kim Dae-jung’s belief that the North Korean nuclear program was a tool for regime survival and that “if outside powers, especially the United States, guaranteed the security of Kim’s regime, he would give up the nuclear option.”<sup>98</sup>

Second, the South Korean government made efforts to establish direct dialogue with the North to pursue President Kim Dae-jung’s three principles of peace – “peaceful co-existence”, “peaceful exchange”, and “peaceful unification.”<sup>99</sup> After the June 2000 inter-Korean summit, unparalleled and rapid improvements in North-South relations solidified the Kim administration’s belief that dialogue and reconciliation could establish a lasting peace on the peninsula.<sup>100</sup> In the North-South Joint Declaration, both Koreas “agreed to resolve the question of reunification independently and through the joint efforts of the Korean people” and “to promote reunification in [a] direction” based on a “common element” and shared understanding of how reunification could be

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid. Moon also argues that the June 2000 North-South summit meeting showed “that North Korea is not an eccentric rogue state to be constrained, but [proved itself to be]... a normal, calculating state that deserves political space for dialogue and negotiation. Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” p. 35.

<sup>98</sup> Kim, Tadokoro, and Bridges, “Managing Another North Korean Crisis,” p. 59.

<sup>99</sup> Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” p. 13. See also 외교통상부, 박정수, 외교통상부 장관, “신정부의 외교정책,” 한국지역정책연구원 정책토론회 하얏트호텔, 1999년 6월 26일 [Jung-soo Park, Foreign Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Republic of Korea, “Diplomatic Policy of the New Administration,” Korean Institute of Policy Area Studies Policy Debate at the Hyatt Hotel, Seoul, June, 26, 1998].

<sup>100</sup> 안정식, 『한국의 자주적 대북정책은 가능한가』 (서울: 한울아카데미, 2007), p. 193 [Jung-shik Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible: Conflict and Cooperation in U.S.-ROK Policies toward North Korea in the Post-Cold War Era* (Seoul: Hanul Academy, 2007)]. Such improvements in North-South relations (in 2000) include: the 4<sup>th</sup> North-South ministerial meeting, the first North-South meeting between ministers of defense, Red Cross meetings and exchange visits of separated families, establishment of the North-South Economic Cooperation Commission, South Korea press/media entry into North Korea, and DPRK envoy Kim Yong-soon’s visit to Seoul. See also Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” p. 19.

achieved.<sup>101</sup> To pursue peaceful reconciliation and reunification without the cost of war, the South Korean government desired to establish a peace regime to replace the 1953 armistice treaty and effectively end the Korean War.<sup>102</sup> Although the threat from the North was clearly acknowledged by the South, as seen by the North Korean submarine incursion on June 22, 1998 and the Taepodong-1 missile, the Kim administration was able to place aside North Korean military provocations as separate issues from its long-term engagement strategy toward reunification.<sup>103</sup>

#### **4. Japanese Perceptions of North Korea**

##### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

For Japan, the Taepodong-1 missile launch in August 1998 was “the first physical military threat toward Japan since the end of World War II.”<sup>104</sup> The development of North Korean ballistic materials posed an immediate threat to Japanese territory. In an announcement by the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary, he stated that the North Korean missile test was “deeply regrettable” and that “missile development by

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<sup>101</sup> United States Institute of Peace, *South-North Joint Declaration*, Peace Agreements Digital Collection, June 15, 2000,

[http://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/peace\\_agreements/n\\_skorea06152000.pdf](http://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/n_skorea06152000.pdf). Accessed December 17, 2012. For a detailed review of Kim Dae-jung’s three-stage approach to peaceful unification, see Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” pp. 14-15.

<sup>102</sup> Kwak and Joo, “The Four-Party Peace Talks: Inter-Korean Bilateral Agenda,” pp. 6-7. On April 16, 1996, Presidents Clinton and Kim Young-sam proposed the creation of the four-party talks with China and North Korea, which aimed to diplomatically involve major parties and to facilitate negotiations between the North and South over a peace regime to replace the 1953 armistice treaty.

<sup>103</sup> Park, “Diplomatic Policy of the New Administration,” June, 26, 1998. See also Don Kirk, “9 North Koreans Dead in Submarine,” *New York Times*, June 27, 1998.

<sup>104</sup> Park, “Cooperation Coupled with Conflicts,” p. 24.

North Korea is a matter that affects [Japanese] security directly.”<sup>105</sup> MOFA press secretary Numata added, “basically we share the same [threat] perception with the United States in the sense that North Korea does continue to pose very serious problems.”<sup>106</sup> The North Korean nuclear program coupled with a long-range missile program posed a serious security threat to the Japanese mainland. North Korea’s potential development of nuclear weapons and its ballistic missile program raised Japanese concerns for regional stability and non-proliferation.<sup>107</sup>

Although the Japanese government was also deeply concerned with the *rachi jiken* (Japanese abductees) issue, the evidence surrounding the case was circumstantial and the North Korean regime refused to discuss its involvement.<sup>108</sup> The Taepodong missile launch also proved to be a more imminent threat at the time as the Japanese mainland became a direct target of North Korea’s ballistic missile program. Thus, Tokyo shared threat perceptions with Washington and Seoul that DPRK missiles and nuclear program were significant security concerns for the region.

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<sup>105</sup> Hiromu Nonaka, Chief Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Announcement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary on Japan’s Immediate Response to North Korea’s Missile Launch,” Tokyo, September 1, 1998, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/1998/9/901-2.html>. Accessed October 25, 2012. See also Byung Chul Koh, *Between Discord and Cooperation: Japan and the Two Koreas* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2007), pp. 153-158.

<sup>106</sup> Sadaaki Numata, Press Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Discussion concerning North Korea,” press conference by the press secretary, Tokyo, November 20, 1998, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1998/11/1120-2.html#6>. Accessed October 23, 2012.

<sup>107</sup> Nonaka, “Announcement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary on Japan’s Immediate Response to North Korea’s Missile Launch,” September 1, 1998.

<sup>108</sup> Christopher W. Hughes, “Japan’s ‘Strategy-Less North Korea Strategy’: Shifting Policies of Dialogue and Deterrence and Implications for Japan-US-South Korea Security Cooperation,” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2000), pp. 163-164, reference 11.

### *View of the North Korean Regime*

Similar to Japan's equidistance policies in the early 1970s, the Japanese government was convinced that "Japanese security was best served by an engaged rather than isolated, North Korea."<sup>109</sup> However, frictions with the ROK over policies toward the North, continued North Korean provocations, and "changes in domestic Japanese politics further undermined the prospects of normalization."<sup>110</sup> Tokyo made a second attempt to normalize relations with Pyongyang after the establishment of the KEDO and the Four Party Talks "gave new impetus to Japan's own dialogue with North Korea."<sup>111</sup> Yet efforts to improve relations with North Korea were quelled as the Japanese public became more adamant in criticizing the North's belligerent actions – including the kidnapping of Japanese citizens and missile programs – and eventually "opposition to normalization with the DPRK hardened in the LDP."<sup>112</sup> The 1998 Taepodong launch only contributed to solidifying the notion that normalization with North Korea would be both difficult and unachievable.

Although skepticism towards North Korean actions and the absence of direct channels of communication hindered Japan-DPRK negotiations, the Japanese

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<sup>109</sup> Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, p. 192. Cha argues that Tokyo's "relaxed concerns about U.S. disengagement and resulting perceptions of security abundance fostered a more open policy toward Pyongyang." Ibid. See also Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 145-146; Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, p. 117.

<sup>110</sup> For a chronological assessment of Japan-DPRK normalization talks from 1991 to 1992, refer to Koh, *Between Discord and Cooperation*, pp. 77-113. See also Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, pp. 118-120. Green argues that intense domestic pressure on the Japanese government in response to the North's kidnapping of Japanese citizens pushed the MOFA to walk out of normalization talks in 1992. Also, Kanemaru lost political power from corruption scandals and the economic linkages (remittances) between the Chosen Soren, Korean residents in Japan, and the DPRK began to shrink as the Chosen Soren faced financial difficulties and lost the passion to help North Korea.

<sup>111</sup> Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, p. 123.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-124.

government displayed willingness to engage with the North. The Obuchi government accepted a position that “if there are positive or constructive movements on the North Korean side with respect to this suspicion on the part of the international community, regarding the underground nuclear facilities and so forth, and if there are constructive responses from North Korea on the pending issues between Japan and North ... [Japan] will be ready to try to improve [its] relations with North Korea.”<sup>113</sup> The June 2000 North-South summit meeting also received positive responses within the Japanese government as the Minister for Foreign Affairs Yohei Kono stated, "I strongly hope that based upon the result of the talks, dialogue between the Republic of Korea and North Korea continues and develops, and that the tension in the Korean Peninsula will ease. I hope that this trend also has a positive influence on the normalization talks between Japan and North Korea.”<sup>114</sup>

## **5. U.S. Policy Options and Preferences**

President Clinton found it hard-pressed to gain support for the Agreed Framework after suspicions surrounding DPRK nuclear activity at Kumchang-ri and the test of the Taepodong-1 missile threatened progress made with the North.<sup>115</sup> Skeptics in

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<sup>113</sup> Sadaaki Numata, Press Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Current state of North Korea’s bilateral relations with the United States of America and Japan,” press conference by the press secretary, Tokyo, March 2, 1999, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1999/3/302.html#6>. Accessed January 4, 2013.

<sup>114</sup> Yohei Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Announcement on the North-South Joint Declaration,” press conference, Tokyo, June 16, 2000, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/2000/6/616.html#1>. Accessed January 4, 2013.

<sup>115</sup> Stanley O. Roth, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “The United States’ Asia Policy: A National Agenda,” presentation to the Council of American Ambassadors, Los Angeles, CA, April 4, 2000, [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/2000/000404\\_roth\\_easia.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/2000/000404_roth_easia.html).

Congress and the media were quick to voice their criticism of Clinton's policy toward North Korea.<sup>116</sup> In particular, after a landslide victory in the mid-term elections, a Republican-controlled House and Senate added to creating a domestic political stalemate between President Clinton and Congress in relation to his policies toward North Korea.<sup>117</sup> Facing budget constraints in Congress and Japan's suspension of funding to the KEDO, the Clinton administration felt "vulnerable in its North Korea policy, and thus it was imperative for the United States to consolidate support from its allies" to "maximize its chances to sustain the KEDO."<sup>118</sup> The Clinton administration "was convinced that the KEDO remained the most effective strategic tool to keep North Korea out of nuclear arms development."<sup>119</sup> As the largest donors of aid to North Korea under the KEDO, coordinating policies and support from South Korea and Japan became essential. Thus, in response to rising threats from North Korea and faults within the Agreed Framework in addressing the North Korean security issue, the Clinton

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Accessed January 8, 2013. Roth stated, "The August 1998 Taepodong missile test over Japan threatened to derail support for the Agreed Framework both in Japan and the United States. Shortly thereafter, intelligence indicated that North Korea might be developing an underground nuclear site in violation of its Agreed Framework obligations. In the wake of these events and with support diminishing in Congress for the nuclear agreement, the Administration agreed to undertake a fundamental review of its policy towards the DPRK."

<sup>116</sup> Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, pp. 333-341. Hardliners in the United States criticized the Clinton administration's policy of having the DPRK give up its nuclear activities and open up to the international community as being a failure. Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, pp. 167-168, 175-176.

<sup>117</sup> Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, pp. 337-341. The authors state that, while the Republicans were not able to directly oppose the Agreed Framework, there was a sense of "grudging neutrality at best." Yet such "[g]rudging acquiescence... was not enough to put the Geneva accord on firm political footing" for the long-term. *Ibid.*, p. 339. See also Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> Sakai, "Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea," in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 68. The Republican-led Congress made budget cuts to the KEDO for fiscal year 1999. See U.S. Congress, Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act; Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, p. 168; Ralph A. Cossa, "Peace on the Peninsula: How to Get There from Here," in *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a "Virtual Alliance"* pp. 176-178.

<sup>119</sup> Sakai, "Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea," in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 67.

administration conducted a major review of its North Korea policy in November 1998 as requested by Congress. The policy review was led by the newly appointed North Korea policy coordinator William J. Perry and his team.<sup>120</sup>

### *A Renewed Emphasis of the Agreed Framework*

Despite the strong domestic criticism that the Agreed Framework faced amidst the potential crisis at Kumchang-ri and the launch of the Taepodong-1 missile, the Clinton administration continued to stress its centrality in U.S. policy toward North Korea. In his testimony before the Senate, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Rust Deming stated, “The Agreed Framework is more than simply a nuclear accord, however. It is the cornerstone of our efforts to reduce the potential for conflict on the Korean Peninsula.”<sup>121</sup> Similarly, Perry argued that despite some limitations, “The 1994 Agreed Framework provided for a freeze of nuclear facilities at and near Yongbyon... Today those nuclear facilities remain frozen. That result is critical for security on the Peninsula, since... those facilities could have produced enough plutonium to make a substantial number of nuclear weapons.”<sup>122</sup> With the Agreed Framework as the central tool for containing the North Korean nuclear threat, the

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<sup>120</sup> Former secretary of defense William Perry was appointed to the position of North Korean policy coordinator and special advisor to the president and the secretary of state by President Clinton in 1998. Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 8.

<sup>121</sup> Rust Deming, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, “U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework and KEDO,” testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C., July 14, 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/1998/980714\\_deming\\_north\\_korea.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1998/980714_deming_north_korea.html). Accessed January 8, 2013.

<sup>122</sup> William J. Perry, North Korea Policy Coordinator and Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C., October 12, 1999, [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/1999/991012\\_perry\\_nkorea.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1999/991012_perry_nkorea.html). Accessed January 8, 2013.

Clinton administration concluded that a ‘comprehensive and integrated approach’ in coordination with U.S. allies was the most viable policy option.

### *A Comprehensive and Integrated Approach*

The Armitage Report first called the Clinton administration to formulate a comprehensive and integrated approach to North Korea that “must address the totality of the security threat.”<sup>123</sup> In addition to the traditional maintenance of deterrence on the peninsula with U.S. forces, the United States also sought to reduce the DPRK military threat through “peaceful means” as a part of its comprehensive approach.<sup>124</sup> The Clinton administration realized that U.S.-DPRK relations and normalization talks were important tools for reducing military threats and bringing the North Korean regime out of political and economic isolation.<sup>125</sup> Yet as one scholar notes, even though the United States and North Korea held the key to resolving the nuclear issue, a multilateral approach was also necessary.<sup>126</sup>

The review process led by Perry actively involved South Korean and Japanese officials in formulating a comprehensive approach to North Korea.<sup>127</sup> The resultant

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<sup>123</sup> The Armitage Report.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. The Armitage Report states that U.S. objectives should be “maintaining and... strengthening deterrence, and eliminating through peaceful means the military threat posed by North Korean nuclear, chemical, biological, and conventional weapons and missiles... to reduce the risks to the United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan.”

<sup>125</sup> For more on policies aimed at U.S.-DPRK normalization, see U.S. Congressional Research Service, “Korea: Procedural and Jurisdictional Questions Regarding Possible Normalization of Relations with North Korea,” *CRS Report for Congress 94-933-S*, Zachary S. Davis, Larry A. Nicksch, Larry Q. Lowels, Vladimir N. Pregelj, Rinn-Sup Shin, and Robert G. Sutter, Congressional Research Digital Collection (November 29, 1994).

<sup>126</sup> Park, “Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations,” p. 19.

<sup>127</sup> See Perry Report.

review – hereby referred to as the Perry Report – emphasized the need for close consultation between the United States and its allies, Japan and South Korea. The Perry Report states that:

No U.S. policy toward the DPRK will succeed if the ROK and Japan do not actively support it and cooperate in its implementation. Securing such trilateral coordination should be possible, since the interests of the three parties, while not identical, overlap in significant and definable ways.<sup>128</sup>

Based on U.S. threat perceptions of North Korea, the Perry Report outlined a “two-path strategy” as part of its comprehensive approach, the first being a ‘mutual threat reduction path’ based on engagement with the North and the second being a ‘threat containment and coercive deterrence path’ focused on pressure.<sup>129</sup> The implementation and establishment of an integrated policy approach to North Korea among the three states required close coordination with each other. As a result, the Perry process also stressed the need for a formalized forum for trilateral consultation and coordination by promoting active participation in the TCOG.<sup>130</sup> Trilateral policy coordination became an essential component of U.S. policy toward North Korea as implementation of both the Agreed Framework and two-path strategy required close cooperation among the U.S., ROK, and Japan.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. See also Hajime, “ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Cooperation towards North Korean Policy,” pp. 62-63.

<sup>130</sup> Perry Report. The Armitage Report made similar suggestions for institutionalized trilateral consultations by arguing for “a trilateral... defense ministers consultative meeting to address a range of peninsula contingencies” and a trilateral ... foreign minister-level consultative meeting... [with] goals... to name high-level point persons, establish coordinating mechanisms, and raise the issue to the level of a presidential national security priority.”

<sup>131</sup> Wendy Sherman, Counselor, Department of State, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C., March 21, 2000, [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/2000/000321\\_sherman\\_nkorea.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/2000/000321_sherman_nkorea.html). Accessed January 8, 2013;

## 6. South Korean Policy Options and Preferences

### *The Sunshine Policy*

The Kim Dae-jung administration viewed engagement as the most effective and realistic approach to reconcile relations with North Korea and promote the goal of peaceful reunification. For the ROK government and South Koreans in general, “unification is the sacred goal of Korean nationalism.”<sup>132</sup> South Korean threat perceptions of the North were viewed within an extended and longer time frame in comparison with the United States and Japan, and the ROK engagement policy toward the North was introduced as a new strategic approach to reach the ultimate goal of reunification through diplomatic and peaceful means.<sup>133</sup> President Kim formed the Sunshine Policy based on three core principles of 1) no toleration for North Korean military provocations, 2) no efforts by the ROK to pursue unification by absorption or undermining the DPRK, and 3) promotion of North-South reconciliation and cooperation through the 1991 Basic Agreement.<sup>134</sup> Other key principles included the separation of politics and economics, flexible dualism/reciprocity, a comprehensive approach, and opposition to military actions against the North.<sup>135</sup>

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Perry, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, October 12, 1999; Roth, “The United States’ Asia Policy: A National Agenda,” April 4, 2000.

<sup>132</sup> Kim, Tadokoro, and Bridges, “Managing Another North Korean Crisis,” p. 58.

<sup>133</sup> Park, “Diplomatic Policy of the New Administration,” June, 26, 1998.

<sup>134</sup> Dae-jung Kim, “Let Us Open a New Era: Overcoming National Crisis and Taking a New Leap Forward,” Inaugural Address, Seoul, February 25, 1998.

<sup>135</sup> For a deeper analysis of the Kim administration’s core principles outlined in the Sunshine Policy, see Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, pp. 24-31; Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” pp. 6-11; In-taek Hyun, “South Korea’s Changing Strategic Thinking and the Future of Korea-U.S.-Japan Relations,” in *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a “Virtual Alliance”* pp. 26-29.

Prior to the historic June 15 inter-Korean summit meeting, the Kim Dae-jung government faced major challenges in its attempts to establish the Sunshine Policy as the primary approach toward North Korea. From the onset of President Kim's entry into office, North Korea launched a series of provocative actions that heightened the threat perceptions of North Korea amongst the conservative opposition party and South Korean citizens.<sup>136</sup> The Kim administration's engagement policy toward the North faced major internal debates and did not enjoy a wide domestic consensus.<sup>137</sup>

In order to preserve the still fragile engagement strategy laid out in Kim's Sunshine Policy, "South Korea viewed the KEDO as an important device for keeping North Korea in a dialogue" which was an important factor for improving North-South relations and building trust.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, the administration viewed the KEDO as an opportunity for South Korea to play a more central role in dealing with North Korea.<sup>139</sup> The maintenance of the Agreed Framework to contain the North Korean nuclear threat through dialogue and economic cooperation, rather than pressure and confrontation, was paramount for the Kim government and its pursuit of peaceful co-existence. Through engagement of the North, Kim Dae-jung believed that improved relations between the

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<sup>136</sup> In 1998, suspicions of an underground nuclear facility at Kumchang-ri and the Taepodong-1 missile launch threatened the Agreed Framework and stability on the Korean peninsula. On June 7, 1999, a North Korean patrol boat crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL) and North-South skirmishes ensued. On June 20, 1999, a South Korean tourist at the DPRK Keumkang site was arrested and detained. Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>137</sup> For further analysis of the domestic criticisms and debates surrounding the Kim Dae-jung government's Sunshine Policy, see Moon, "The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects," pp. 20-21; Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, pp. 95-107.

<sup>138</sup> Sakai, "Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea," in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 69.

<sup>139</sup> Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 348. See also Moon, "The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects," pp. 20-21. Moon states, "Whereas North Korea and the United States were shaping the geopolitical destiny of the Korean peninsula, South Korea was playing a rather passive role in the Korean drama."

DPRK and outside powers (namely the U.S. and Japan) would contribute to peace on the peninsula and an increase in South Korea's role in inter-Korean relations – the 2000 inter-Korean summit meeting confirmed this belief.<sup>140</sup>

## 7. Japanese Policy Options and Preferences

### *From Confrontation to Engagement with North Korea*

In response to North Korean military provocations, Tokyo initially adopted a hard-line approach to Pyongyang which included participation in missile defense programs, the launch of a military satellite, and the suspension of economic aid and funding to the KEDO LWR project.<sup>141</sup> The DPRK missile test initially evoked strong criticism from both the Diet and major Japanese media outlets.<sup>142</sup> To appease public outcries against the North, the MOFA adopted punitive measures against North Korea, but it still viewed the Agreed Framework and the KEDO as serving useful purposes in containing North Korea's nuclear activities.<sup>143</sup> The MOFA had planned for only a temporary freeze on funding and “the central issue of the KEDO for MOFA...was not whether the KEDO *should* be abandoned or sustained, but rather *how long* it should be

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<sup>140</sup> Moon, “The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Summit: Assessments and Prospects,” p. 17.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. See also Hughes, “Japan's ‘Strategy-Less North Korea Strategy’: Shifting Policies of Dialogue and Deterrence and Implications for Japan-US-South Korea Security Cooperation,” pp. 157-161, 169-175; Yvonne Chang, “Angry Japan Sets Measures Against North Korea,” *Reuters*, Tokyo, September 1, 1998; Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: The Century Foundation, 2007), p. 296; Sakai, “Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea,” in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 67; Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism*, p. 124.

<sup>142</sup> Sakai, “Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea,” in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>143</sup> Numata, “Discussion concerning North Korea,” November 20, 1998. Numata announced that, “Prime Minister Obuchi referred to the sentiment on the part of the Japanese people with regard to the missile launch, but he said that Japan decided to resume its contribution to KEDO because we do feel that the Agreed Framework and the KEDO have indeed served, and do indeed serve a useful purpose in preventing North Korea's nuclear weapons development.”

frozen.”<sup>144</sup> Ultimately, the MOFA recognized the need for coordination with the United States and South Korea to address Japan’s greatest security concerns toward North Korea – the containment of North Korea’s nuclear program and prevention of a possible second missile launch – and it became “clear that abandoning KEDO or attacking the Four Party Talks would only undermine relations with the United States and the ROK.”<sup>145</sup>

Tokyo quickly scaled back its confrontational approach and “the Obuchi government eventually signed the KEDO cost-sharing agreement... pledging to contribute U.S. \$1 billion to the LWR project.”<sup>146</sup> In an announcement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiromu Nonaka, he argued that “[f]rom Japan’s viewpoint, there are no realistic alternatives apart from KEDO and the Agreed Framework which can prevent North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons.”<sup>147</sup> In December 1999, preliminary talks for Japan-DPRK normalization were held between former Prime Minister

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<sup>144</sup> Sakai, “Continuity and Discontinuity of Japanese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea,” in *Japanese Foreign Policy in Asia and the Pacific*, p.71.

<sup>145</sup> Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism*, p. 126. In regards to preventing a potential second missile test, the Japanese government emphasized consolidated trilateral cooperation and that “in the event of a second launch by North Korea...What is very important to us is to send an unequivocal message to North Korea that a repetition of such an act will not be tolerated.” Sadaaki Numata, Press Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Possible coordination between Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States in response to the launching of the missile by North Korea,” press conference by the press secretary, Tokyo, September 8, 1998, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1998/9/908.html#2>. Accessed December 13, 2012. Additionally, it is arguable that Japan’s exclusion from the Four-Party Talks led Tokyo to be cautious about further politically isolating itself from its strategic partners. With limited policy options available to Japan and an increasing North Korean threat, Tokyo decided that cooperation on the policy approach suggested by the U.S. and ROK was most desirable for addressing the North Korean issue.

<sup>146</sup> Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism*, p. 125. See also “KEDO Executive Board Agrees on Cost-Sharing for Light Water Reactor Project,” KEDO press release, November 10, 1998.

<sup>147</sup> Hiromu Nonaka, “Announcement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiromu Nonaka concerning the Resumption of Japan’s Cooperation with KEDO,” Tokyo, October 21, 1998.

Murayama Tomiichi and Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang.<sup>148</sup> Even though Japan faced “engagement dilemmas” with North Korea, the Japanese government’s limited policy options toward the North presented it with incentives to coordinate closely with South Korea and the United States under a trilateral framework.<sup>149</sup> In a press conference, the Japanese press secretary claimed that “basically we share the same [threat] perception with the United States in the sense that North Korea does continue to pose very serious problems” and that cooperation with the United States and South Korea were essential.<sup>150</sup> In the September 2000 summit meeting between President Kim Dae-jung and Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, the two leaders expressed the importance of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral coordination efforts for the success of the inter-Korean summit and President Kim encouraged improved ties between Japan and the DPRK.<sup>151</sup> As a result, the Japanese government expressed its support for the comprehensive and integrated

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<sup>148</sup> Chikahito Harada, Deputy Press Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan, “Questions relating to the visit of former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama to North Korea and the possibility of the normalization of relations,” press conference by the press secretary, December 3, 1999, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1999/12/1203.html#3>. Accessed January 3, 2013.

<sup>149</sup> For Japan’s “engagement dilemmas” with North Korea, see Victor D. Cha, “Japan’s Engagement Dilemmas with North Korea,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (2001), pp. 549-563. For Japanese incentives for trilateral coordination, see Tsuneo Watanabe, “Japan’s Policy toward the Korean Peninsula from 1999 to 2002: Conflicts over DPRK Policy Require Trilateral Cooperation,” in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>150</sup> Numata, “Discussion concerning North Korea,” November 20, 1998. See also Nonaka “Announcement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary on Japan’s Immediate Response to North Korea’s Missile Launch,” September 1, 1998.

<sup>151</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Policy toward North Korea,” visit to Japan of President Kim Dae Jung of the Republic of Korea, Atami, Japan, September 24, 2000, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/pv0009/overview.html>. Accessed January 3, 2013. Prime Minister Mori “emphasized that Japan would work hard to enhance Japan-North Korea relations, despite tough issues between the two sides such as the abduction of Japanese citizens, within the framework of coordination and partnership among Japan, ROK, and the US.”

approach outlined in the Perry Report and took substantive steps to increase economic cooperation and maintain normalization talks with the DPRK.<sup>152</sup>

## **8. Converging Threat Perceptions and a Common Comprehensive Approach**

During the summer of 1998, North Korean military provocations consolidated the security interests of the United States, Japan, and South Korea. The three countries shared views that the greatest threat to peninsular stability and regional security were the North Korean nuclear and missile threats. Facing a direct threat from North Korea led the three governments to realize that trilateral coordination was essential to maintain the Agreed Framework and the KEDO – the two main components in policy toward North Korea that contained the North Korean nuclear threat. Engagement with the North Korean regime brought temporary resolution to the North Korean missile issue as U.S.-DPRK bilateral talks in Berlin garnered an agreement for a moratorium on North Korea’s missile programs.

Converging threat perceptions on the North Korean nuclear and missile programs also contributed to the establishment of a U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral coordination mechanism (TCOG) to mediate minor differences in a common policy approach, based on the comprehensive strategy toward North Korea outlined in Perry’s policy review. By defining common threats and shared perceptions of the North Korean

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<sup>152</sup> Park, “Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations,” pp. 12-14. The Japanese government stated that “the perceived agreements and convergence of views far outweighs the perceived areas of difference” and that it was important for “the Republic of Korea, Japan and the United States to work hand in hand towards the same objectives.” Numata, “Policy of Japan and the Republic of Korea toward North Korea,” March 23, 1999.

regime, the three governments shared the view that the Agreed Framework and KEDO were the most viable and effective options for dealing with the North Korean security threat.<sup>153</sup> Although each country had different domestic constraints on its individual policy toward North Korea, the necessity of trilateral cooperation for addressing North Korean threats led to the adoption of a common strategy among the three countries.

Throughout the TCOG meetings from 1999 to 2000, joint press statements stressed the importance of close coordination between allies on DPRK issues and reaffirmation of the three countries' commitments to upholding the Agreed Framework.<sup>154</sup> Close trilateral consultation increased mutual understanding and support for each other's positions and interests. At the time, Wendy Sherman, U.S. delegate to the TCOG, stated that "coordination among the three allies is stronger than at any time in the past, and...has been one of the most important achievements of the [Clinton] Administration's policy toward North Korea. This accomplishment is largely the result of the newly instituted...TCOG, created...to ensure more frequent, close consultation

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<sup>153</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, U.S. Secretary of State, Masahiko Koumura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Hong Soon-young, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, *Joint Statement on North Korean Issues*, New York, September 24, 1998, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1998/980924b.html>. Accessed January 8, 2013. The joint statement claimed: "The three Ministers confirmed the importance of maintaining the Agreed Framework... and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) as the most realistic and effective mechanisms for preventing North Korea from advancing its nuclear program... The three Ministers agreed to continue to consult and coordinate fully... They agreed that North Korea's missile development, if unchecked, would adversely affect the peace and security of Japan, the Republic of Korea and the entire Northeast Asia region, and that it raised serious concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems."

<sup>154</sup> See James P. Rubin, Office of the Spokesman, "U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Meetings," Washington, D.C., November 9, 1999, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/1999/ps991109.html>. Accessed January 8, 2013; Richard Boucher, Office of the Spokesman, "Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group Meeting," Washington, D.C., June 30, 2000, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/2000/ps000630b.html>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

among the United States, South Korea and Japan at the sub-cabinet level.”<sup>155</sup> One author notes that the “year 2000 was when the engagement policies of the trilateral partners began to converge, though only for a brief moment.”<sup>156</sup>

Although strong U.S. leadership, improved ROK-Japan relations, and North Korean provocations did contribute to higher levels of trilateral cooperation, such factors acted more as intervening factors that made the pathway to trilateral consensus and coordination less rocky. The main variable that shaped the policy preferences of each country was a convergence of threat perceptions of the DPRK, which determined the preferred domestic policy options and the emphasized utility of trilateral coordination. The common understanding of the possibility for change in North Korea coupled with shared prioritization of threats led the three governments to adopt an integrated engagement policy.

Due to convergent threat perceptions of the North and agreement on a comprehensive approach, trilateral policy coordination under the TCOG was highly effective. Prior to and during his visits to North Korea to inspect the suspected nuclear facility at Kumchang-ri in May 1999, Perry consulted with Japanese and South Korean officials – both bilaterally and through TCOG meetings. In a joint press statement following the May 29 TCOG meeting in Seoul, the three delegations “reviewed the discussions between the U.S. and the DPRK on the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs” and “agreed that their integrated approach should continue to be closely

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<sup>155</sup> Sherman, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, March 21, 2000.

<sup>156</sup> Sakata, “The Evolution of U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Security Cooperation,” in *Trilateralism and Beyond*, p. 111.

coordinated, which affirms once again the close and cooperative relations the three countries enjoy.”<sup>157</sup> Additionally, the shared DPRK missile threat led the three governments to hold a TCOG meeting in Washington on November 8-9 in preparation for U.S.-DPRK talks in Berlin over the North’s missile program.<sup>158</sup>

In light of improvements made in dealing with the DPRK, the comprehensive approach’s first path – which focused on engagement and dialogue – was maintained and contributed to multiple discussions among the three partners and effective trilateral policy coordination within the TCOG. In effect, the three governments were moving in the same direction in relation to North Korea. Following the historic North-South summit in June 2000, the TCOG meetings on June 29-30 and on October 7 and 25 discussed that “dialogue remains central to peace and stability on the Peninsula” and that “continued progress in their bilateral relations with the DPRK ha[d] been fostered by the inter-Korean Summit.”<sup>159</sup> Thus, converging threat perceptions among Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo during this period produced a comprehensive engagement approach to North Korea that required consistent trilateral policy

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<sup>157</sup> William J. Perry, U.S. North Korean policy coordinator, Lim Dong-won, ROK Senior Presidential Secretary, and Kato Ryojo, Japanese MOFA Director-General, *TCOG Joint Press Statement*, Seoul, May 29, 1999.

<sup>158</sup> Rubin, “U.S.-R.O.K.-Japan Trilateral Meetings,” Washington, D.C., November 9, 1999. In a trilateral press conference held between U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Hong Soon-young, and Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Masahiko Koumura, the three governments presented a united front against a possible second DPRK launch by stating that any similar test “would be highly destabilizing and would have very serious consequences.” U.S. Department of State, *Transcript: U.S., Japan, Korea Press Conference on North Korea*, press conference held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Singapore, July 27, 1999, <http://www.fas.org/news/dprk/1999/990727-dprk--usia1.htm>. Accessed October 31, 2012.

<sup>159</sup> Richard Boucher, Office of the Spokesman, “Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group Meeting,” press statement, June 30, 2000, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/2000/ps000630b.html>. Accessed January 8, 2013; U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, *Joint Statement Following the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group*, Washington, D.C., October 7, 2000, [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/001007\\_usrokjapan\\_stmt.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/001007_usrokjapan_stmt.html). Accessed January 8, 2013.

coordination to uphold the Agreed Framework and consolidate the separate bilateral channels of dialogue with the DPRK.

## **IV. March 2001-August 2002: Fragile Consensus and Signs of Divergence**

### **1. Cracks in the Trilateral Consensus: Kim-Bush Summit Meeting and HEU**

Although the United States, South Korea, and Japan were able to maintain a fragile trilateral consensus in relation to their policies toward North Korea,<sup>160</sup> cracks in trilateral coordination began to emerge and threatened the function of the TCOG as a policy coordination mechanism for the three governments. Many scholars cite the September 11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent launch of the Global War on Terror and Bush Doctrine as the most significant changes to the Bush administration's policy approach to North Korea and overall international security.<sup>161</sup> Yet U.S. perceptions of North Korea were already changing from the onset of the Bush administration, prior to the major changes that occurred in American security policies post-September 11.

Thus scholars argue that the change in U.S. leadership from the Clinton administration's emphasis on engagement to the Bush administration's confrontational policy approach toward North Korea was a major impediment to trilateral cooperation

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<sup>160</sup> Pritchard notes, "By the end of the Clinton administration, U.S. policy toward North Korea was marked by close coordination with Seoul and Tokyo, a continued freeze on Pyongyang's nuclear program accompanied by IAEA monitoring, and direct dialogue with Pyongyang that allowed the United States to pursue its missile concerns as well as potential violations of the Agreed Framework." Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, p. 4.

<sup>161</sup> Chung-in Moon and Jong-Yun Bae, "The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (2003), pp. 9-45. See also Robert Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 118, No. 3 (2003), pp. 365-388; Gilbert Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis: Four Parties Caught between North Korea and the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 13-14; Satu P. Limaye, "Recalibration Not Transformation: U.S. Security Policies in the Asia-Pacific," in See Seng Tan and Acharya eds., *Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation: National Interests and Regional Order* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 210-214.

under the TCOG.<sup>162</sup> On March 7, 2001, the U.S.-ROK summit meeting in Washington, D.C. between Presidents Bush and Kim Dae-jung ended sourly and revealed the emerging cracks in U.S. and ROK perceptions of North Korea. Pritchard notes, “Kim...had expected to have a meaningful dialogue with Bush to convince him of the wisdom of continuing the engagement effort. However, he had been publicly rebuffed by Bush...Rather than cement the bilateral relationship, as Kim sought to do, Bush had questioned the value of South Korea’s approach to North Korea.”<sup>163</sup> The day before the summit meeting, Powell had stated that the U.S. “plan[ned] to engage with North Korea to pick up where President Clinton and his administration left off.”<sup>164</sup> Yet President Bush’s skepticism about the North Korean regime and the continuation of dialogue raised concerns for the Kim administration on the direction of policy toward North Korea.

The Kim-Bush summit meeting in March 2001 is another important starting point for analysis because it revealed clear divergence between U.S.-ROK perceptions of North Korea and foreshadowed U.S.-ROK bilateral conflicts that would persist throughout the Kim administration and into the Roh administration. Tensions between Washington and Seoul and changes in U.S. policy toward North Korea proved to have a significant impact on the TCOG and impeded opportunities for increased trilateral policy coordination on North Korean issues – particularly in times when trilateral

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<sup>162</sup> Jeon, “Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Beyond KEDO and TCOG,” p. 59; Paik, Kim, and Lee, “Towards Establishing Peace on the Korean Peninsula,” pp. 29-33.

<sup>163</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, p. 4.

<sup>164</sup> Colin Powell, Secretary of State, press availability with her excellency Anna Lindh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Washington, D.C., March 6, 2001, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/1116.htm>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

cooperation was most needed. A divergence in perceptions would continue throughout 2001 and 2002 to ultimately affect the three governments' views on North Korea's suspected highly-enriched uranium (HEU) program in August 2002. Although leadership change in the United States from a moderate Clinton administration to a hawkish Bush administration had adverse effects on trilateral coordination toward North Korea, explanations also need to account for the domestic political changes that occurred in both South Korea and Japan, which had equally significant impacts – both positive and negative – on individual policies toward North Korea and overall U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral policy coordination.

## **2. U.S. Perceptions of North Korea**

### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

The George W. Bush administration entered office in January 2001 with many of the same threat perceptions and security concerns toward North Korea that the previous Clinton administration had. Yet the Bush administration “did not pick up where the Clinton administration had left off” and conducted a major review of President Clinton’s policy toward North Korea.<sup>165</sup> At the end of the review in June 2001, U.S. Representative to KEDO Charles Pritchard gave a testimony of the review’s findings and stated that the administration was “seeking serious discussions with North Korea on a broad agenda that includes missile, nuclear, and conventional force issues

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<sup>165</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 109.

and humanitarian concerns.”<sup>166</sup> Essentially, the Bush administration “decided to aim at comprehensively eliminating all North Korean threats, both nuclear and conventional.”<sup>167</sup>

After the events of September 11, the North Korean threat became overblown and the scope of potential international threats to American national security was greatly expanded. The Bush administration defined “the crossroads of radicalism and technology” as the gravest dangers to American security.<sup>168</sup> The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) outlined nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and rogue states as the primary threats to U.S. security – in which the North Korean nuclear and missile threat was included.<sup>169</sup> The 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) also “drove home how seriously the Pentagon viewed such [rogue] states” and “described a range of contingencies for which...[new types of weapons]...might be used, all of which explicitly applied to North Korea.”<sup>170</sup> Even though the Bush administration’s first review of the previous administration’s policy toward North Korea had salvaged the Agreed Framework, the 9/11 terrorist attacks led Washington to reevaluate its DPRK

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<sup>166</sup> Charles L. Pritchard, Special Envoy for Negotiations With the D.P.R.K. and U.S. Representative to KEDO, “U.S. Policy Toward the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” testimony before the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, House Committee on International Relations, Washington, D.C., July 26, 2001, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2001/4304.htm>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

<sup>167</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 109.

<sup>168</sup> The White House. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 17, 2002), p. 13.

<sup>169</sup> In particular, the NSS stated that “in the past decade North Korea has become the world’s principal purveyor of ballistic missiles, and has tested increasingly capable missiles while developing its own WMD arsenal... We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends.” *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>170</sup> Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, p. 119. See also U.S. Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, January 8, 2002).

policy again.<sup>171</sup> As a result, President Bush delivered his second State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, in which he identified North Korea as part of an “axis of evil” with Iran and Iraq.<sup>172</sup> In the summer of 2002, U.S. intelligence reports of a suspected HEU program in North Korea and U.S. considerations to invade Iraq over Saddam Hussein’s suspected nuclear program heightened the North Korean nuclear threat ostensibly.<sup>173</sup>

### *View of the North Korean Regime*

Even prior to the events of 9/11, from the onset of his inauguration, President Bush was quick to express his skepticism and mistrust towards a North Korean regime that lacked transparency. President Bush held personal views of Kim Jong-il and the North Korean regime that were significantly more negative and skeptical than his predecessor.<sup>174</sup> In his meeting with President Kim Dae-jung in March 2001, President Bush showed his skepticism about North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, but stated that it would “not preclude [the U.S.] from trying to achieve the common objectives” it shared with South Korea.<sup>175</sup> Although President Bush voiced his mistrust of the North Korean regime and demanded verifiable actions, in his statement following the policy review in June 2001, he stated that the U.S. would “offer North Korea the opportunity to

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<sup>171</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 110.

<sup>172</sup> George W. Bush, “State of the Union Address,” Washington, D.C., January 29, 2002. See also Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>173</sup> Funabashi, *Peninsula Question*, p. 155-156.

<sup>174</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 12-13, 53; 안정식, 『한국의 자주적 대북정책은 가능한가』 p. 209.

<sup>175</sup> The White House, remarks by President Bush and President Kim Dae-Jung of South Korea, Washington, D.C., March 7, 2001, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/03/20010307-6.html>. Accessed January 8, 2013. See also The White House, press briefing by Ari Fleischer, Washington, D.C., March 7, 2001, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=47491>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

demonstrate the seriousness of its desire for improved relations” and that “[i]f North Korea responds affirmatively and takes appropriate action, [the U.S.] will expand...efforts to help the North Korean people, ease sanctions, and take other political steps.”<sup>176</sup> Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated the President’s claims by emphasizing Washington’s willingness to resume dialogue with North Korea without preconditions and maintain the provisions of the Agreed Framework.<sup>177</sup>

Yet U.S. claims that it would hold bilateral talks with the DPRK without any preconditions were not completely genuine. A group of policymakers in Washington, known as neoconservatives or “neocons”, expressed their deep skepticism of the effectiveness of engagement with North Korea and “believe[d] in the containment and conversion of what they regard[ed] as evil states.”<sup>178</sup> Several influential U.S. policymakers – including Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and senior director for counterproliferation in the National Security Council (NSC) Robert Joseph – shared such views of the North Korean regime and were open to adopting hard-line policies based on pressure and confrontation.<sup>179</sup> Despite strong mistrust in Kim Jong-il and his regime, the Bush administration continued to offer its

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<sup>176</sup> The White House, statement by the President, Washington, D.C., June 13, 2001, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/06/20010611-4.html>. Accessed January 8, 2013. This statement is in line with the administration’s preparation of a new policy known as the “bold approach.” For further reference on the bold approach, see Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>177</sup> Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, p. 112.

<sup>178</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 141.

<sup>179</sup> Funabashi notes that there is not one singular definition or set of criteria that determines who is and is not a neocon. *Ibid.*, p.141 and chapter 4, reference 22. For further reference on key hard-liners in the Bush administration, see Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 49-52. Pritchard states, “These individuals...were now being promoted to key roles in which they could influence North Korea policy in their own right. Compounding this structural imbalance, which favored hard-liners who inserted themselves in the development of North Korea policy over those who job it was to develop North Korea policy, was a general lack of knowledge about Korea or Asia within the administration.” *Ibid.*, p. 51.

hand to bilateral talks with the DPRK throughout this period until suspicions of a HEU program in North Korea raised serious doubts over the effectiveness of the Agreed Framework and the comprehensive engagement approach established by U.S.-ROK-Japan coordination.

### **3. South Korean Perceptions of North Korea**

#### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

Instability and the risk of war on the Korean peninsula continued to be the main threats defined by the Kim Dae-jung administration.<sup>180</sup> The North Korean nuclear program and missile threats were clearly linked with South Korea's main security concerns and its policies to the North, which were aimed at achieving peaceful reunification. President Bush's harsh rhetoric toward North Korea raised deep concerns in the Kim administration as discussions of preemption and military action against the DPRK threat in Washington threatened peace on the peninsula and President Kim's own fundamental policy approach to the North.<sup>181</sup> Although the June 2000 inter-Korean summit was a breakthrough in North-South relations and made historic improvements in economic and social exchange, there was "no progress ... in the area of tension reduction, confidence building measures, arms control and an inter-Korean peace treaty."<sup>182</sup> As a result, the two Koreas "still consider[ed] each other principal enemies, retaining their

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<sup>180</sup> Chung-in Moon, "The Kim Dae Jung Government's Peace Policy toward North Korea," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2001), p. 182. See also Kim, Tadokoro, and Bridges, "Managing Another North Korean Crisis," p. 58.

<sup>181</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 17-18. Pyongyang interpreted President Bush's State of the Union Address as a declaration of war.

<sup>182</sup> Moon, "The Kim Dae Jung Government's Peace Policy toward North Korea," p. 181.

old strategic and tactical doctrines” and the North Korean military threat was largely left unresolved.<sup>183</sup> Yet President Kim Dae-jung’s ultimate goal of achieving peaceful Korean reunification allowed him to largely overlook North Korea’s uncooperative behavior and moments of belligerence to maintain peace and avoid war on the peninsula at all costs.

### *View of the North Korean Regime*

One author notes that the year 2001 was “marked by stalemate on Korean unification initiatives” and the “DPRK cooled its interests in North-South reconciliation,”<sup>184</sup> but the Kim administration still held onto its views of the North Korean regime from the 2000 North-South summit meeting. The inter-Korean meeting and signing of the Joint Declaration were “instrumental in forging new trust between President Kim and Chairman Kim through lengthy negotiations” and showed “signs of genuine change for opening and reform in North Korea.”<sup>185</sup> In fact, South Koreans began to see U.S. forces and the Bush administration as obstacles to inter-Korean relations, positive changes in North Korea, and progress toward peaceful reunification.<sup>186</sup> Progressive supporters of the Sunshine Policy began “shifting blame for the stalemate in inter-Korean relations...to the United States” and argued that the

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Watanabe, “Japan’s Policy toward the Korean Peninsula from 1999 to 2002: Conflicts over DPRK Policy Require Trilateral Cooperation,” in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations*, p. 13. Also refer to Moon, “The Kim Dae Jung Government’s Peace Policy toward North Korea,” p. 195; Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>185</sup> Moon, “The Kim Dae Jung Government’s Peace Policy toward North Korea,” p. 180.

<sup>186</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 218.

U.S. was “exaggerating the threat from North Korea.”<sup>187</sup> Yet Ambassador Lim Dong-won’s visit to Pyongyang on April 3-5, 2002 helped to address security concerns over the DPRK WMD issue and restored U.S.-ROK relations.<sup>188</sup>

On June 29, 2002, North Korea’s unprovoked firing on an ROK patrol ship resulted in strong criticism of the North within the South Korean public.<sup>189</sup> But a month later, the North Korean regime expressed ‘regret’ for the incident and showed its desire to resume inter-Korean dialogue.<sup>190</sup> President Kim Dae-jung accepted North Korea’s ‘apology’ and its proposed resumption of talks. As a result, major improvements in inter-Korean relations sprang forth in “a flurry of activity unrivaled since the months immediately following the June 2000 North-South summit.”<sup>191</sup>

#### **4. Japanese Perceptions of North Korea**

##### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

The Japanese government continued to define North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs as serious threats to Japanese national security. The 2001 Diplomatic Bluebook states that “the proliferation of missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons poses a serious threat to not only the stability of the Asia-Pacific region but also international peace and

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<sup>187</sup> Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, p. 113. See also Young-Ho Park, U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations: A Korean Perspective,” in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>188</sup> Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>190</sup> Christopher Torchia, “N. Korea Says It Regrets Clash with South, Proposes Talks,” *Washington Post*, July 26, 2002.

<sup>191</sup> Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, p. 126. Some of these improvements include: the seventh round of inter-ministerial talks, second North-South economic talks, North Korean participation in the Asian Games, and minor military agreements.

security as a whole.<sup>192</sup> The MOFA was particularly concerned with North Korea's ballistic missile program "whose range covers Japanese territory [and] impl[ies] an immense threat to Japan's security."<sup>193</sup> The Japanese Defense White Paper had already identified North Korea's nuclear and missile programs as serious threats to Japanese security from 1999, and started to mention North Korea's capacity to produce chemical and biological weapons by 2000.<sup>194</sup> From 2001, the Japanese government began to express its concerns related to the high possibility of North Korea being able to deliver Nodong missiles.<sup>195</sup> Discussions with the United States on starting joint research on ballistic missile defense (BMD) also showed Japan's deep concern for North Korea missiles that could strike Japanese territory.<sup>196</sup> The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and President Bush's War on Terror also increased awareness of the threats of terrorism and proliferation in Japan,<sup>197</sup> which were closely linked to the North Korean problem. Yet the moratorium on DPRK missiles agreed upon in 1999 between the U.S.-DPRK and another affirmation of the moratorium in Kim Jong-il's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in June 2002 provided a security assurance for Japan to an extent.

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<sup>192</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation," *Diplomatic Bluebook 2001* (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001), available at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2001/chap2-1-b.html#3>.

<sup>193</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation," *Diplomatic Bluebook 2002* (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002), p. 109.

<sup>194</sup> 남창희와 이종성, "북한의 핵과 미사일 위협에 대한 일본의 대응: 패턴과 전망," 「국가전략」 제 16 권 2 호 (2012), p. 69 [Chang-hi Nam and Jong-sung Lee, "Japan's Response to the North Korean Nuclear and Missile Threat," *National Strategy*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (2012)].

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Norio Hattori, Press Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Follow-up questions on BMD," press conference by the press secretary, Tokyo, May 8, 2001, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/2001/5/508.html#6>. Accessed January 4, 2013.

<sup>197</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Terrorist Attacks in the United States and the Fight Against Terrorism," *Diplomatic Bluebook 2002*, pp. 11-26. Koizumi's assistance to President Bush's war efforts in Afghanistan are also evidence of Japan's concern for the terrorism and proliferation threat.

The Japanese abduction issue also continued to be a major item in Japanese policy toward North Korea. The 2002 Diplomatic Bluebook states that because “the suspected abductions are an important issue involving the lives of the Japanese people, the government of Japan intends to persistently request North Korea to earnestly address the issue.”<sup>198</sup> Although Japanese focus on the abduction issue can hinder overall trilateral coordination, during this period, Prime Minister Koizumi maintained close cooperation with the U.S. and South Korea and sought improved Japan-DPRK relations.<sup>199</sup>

#### *View of the North Korean Regime*

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi entered office in April 2001 with high hopes for restoring Japan’s power in the region and “[n]ormalization of relations with North Korea proved to be a target ripe for diplomatic breakthrough...for Japan to put its colonial legacy to rest.”<sup>200</sup> Key politicians in Japan saw normalization with the North as an opportunity to “boost Tokyo’s leverage with Seoul and Beijing and lead to a leadership role...[that] would be critical for Japan’s geopolitical revival.”<sup>201</sup> Improving Japan-DPRK relations in 2002 helped to create a conciliatory attitude in the Japanese government toward establishing normalization with North Korea. On April 29, 2002 the Japanese and DPRK Red Cross held a meeting in Beijing to discuss sincere efforts to

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<sup>198</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Korean Peninsula Situation,” *Diplomatic Bluebook 2002*, p. 35.

<sup>199</sup> Watanabe, “Japan’s Policy toward the Korean Peninsula from 1999 to 2002: Conflicts over DPRK Policy Require Trilateral Cooperation,” in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations*, p. 19.

<sup>200</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 7. For more on Prime Minister Koizumi’s goal of using normalization with the DPRK for political leverage, see Gilbert Rozman, “Japan’s North Korea Initiative and U.S.-Japanese Relations,” *Orbis* 47, No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 527-539.

<sup>201</sup> Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 149-150.

investigate the abduction issue.<sup>202</sup> In July, a Japan-DPRK foreign ministers meeting in Brunei agreed upon a basic outline for normalization, and multiple bilateral meetings in August 2002 took place to prepare for Prime Minister Koizumi's planned visit to Pyongyang in September.<sup>203</sup> Essentially, Japan wanted to make North Korea a 'normal' member of the international community.<sup>204</sup> Improved relations and effective talks on normalization gave the Koizumi cabinet a forward outlook on DPRK-Japan relations and the utility of dialogue and engagement with the North.

## **5. U.S. Policy Options and Preferences**

Although the Bush Doctrine and launch of the War on Terror threatened the U.S. engagement policy toward North Korea that the comprehensive approach outlined in the Perry Report had been premised upon, the Bush administration did not immediately abandon its engagement approach.<sup>205</sup> The policy review concluded that "improved implementation of the Agreed Framework provisions relating to North Korea's nuclear activities is one of our top priorities" and that the Bush administration was open to bilateral talks with the North.<sup>206</sup> Secretary of State Powell reiterated the Bush administration's willingness to hold talks without preconditions.<sup>207</sup> Yet the policy review still revealed U.S. skepticism about the North and solidified three basic

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<sup>202</sup> Park, "Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations," p. 13.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>205</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 111.

<sup>206</sup> Pritchard, "U.S. Policy Toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," July 26, 2001.

<sup>207</sup> Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State, "Statement on President Bush's Budget Request for FY 2003," statement before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs, February 13, 2002, as quoted in Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, p. 121, reference 55.

principles that would continue to guide U.S. policy toward North Korea: the ABC (Anything But Clinton) policy, North Korean bad behavior should not be rewarded, and that the Agreed Framework was deeply flawed.”<sup>208</sup> U.S. threat perceptions of North Korea, greatly heightened by the War on Terror, adversely influenced the Bush administration’s willingness to trust the North but persuasion from allies contributed to the maintenance of a fragile consensus on upholding engagement.

Many critics of the Bush administration point to its use of American power and unilateralism to pursue U.S. foreign policy objectives as detrimental, but in relation to North Korea, the Bush government actually adopted multilateral approaches. The Bush administration used the TCOG as “a convenient way for Washington to solicit input from its allies and discuss new approaches under consideration.”<sup>209</sup> Funabashi notes that the Bush administration desired close consultation with South Korea and Japan “to avoid giving them any reason for discontent, which would give North Korea an incentive to play a divide-and-conquer game with the three allies.”<sup>210</sup> Yet conflicts over suspicions surrounding the HEU program in August 2002 and a dysfunctional TCOG in late 2002 and early 2003 led Washington to turn to alternative multilateral arrangements outside of the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral coordinative framework.

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<sup>208</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, p. 53.

<sup>209</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 18.

<sup>210</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 159.

## 6. South Korea Policy Options and Preferences

The disastrous Kim-Bush summit meeting in March 2001 raised deep concerns in the Kim Dae-jung administration over whether or not the Sunshine Policy would continue with the advent of the Bush administration and U.S. skepticism toward North Korea. At the TCOG meeting held on March 26, 2001 in Seoul, South Korean delegates urged the Bush administration to resume dialogue with North Korea and refrain from using “tough talk” against the North.<sup>211</sup> After the Bush administration announced it would resume dialogue with the DPRK and continue the Agreed Framework in conclusion of its policy review, the Kim administration saw an opportunity to persuade the United States once again to adopt South Korea’s position of engaging North Korea.<sup>212</sup> The Kim Dae-jung government used the summit meeting with Bush on February 20, 2002 in Seoul to persuade Bush to ease policy toward North Korea because a military strike on the DPRK would escalate into war and bring about major casualties and instability.<sup>213</sup> The South Korean government’s persuasion and efforts were relatively successful as President Bush “expressed strong support for President Kim’s engagement policy and publicly ruled out any U.S. military attack on North Korea.”<sup>214</sup>

President Kim realized that U.S. support for the continuation of his engagement policy toward North Korea was necessary. The key aspect of Kim Dae-jung’s

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<sup>211</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, Appendix B, p. A:9.

<sup>212</sup> President Kim had been encouraged by Armitage’s visit to Seoul on May 9, 2001, where Armitage delivered Bush’s personal letter and stated that the Bush administration would reflect upon South Korea’s position while conducting its policy review. Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, p. 212.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>214</sup> Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, p. 121; U.S. Department of State, remarks by President Bush and President Kim Dae-Jung in press availability, Seoul, Republic of Korea, February 20, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2002/8606.htm>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

engagement policy was to maintain peace and stability on the peninsula to achieve inter-Korean reconciliation and peaceful reunification. In order to do so, two crucial components had to be maintained: South Korea's own military capabilities and a credible deterrence based on the U.S.-ROK alliance.<sup>215</sup> Thus, it was important for the ROK government to reign in U.S. confrontational approaches, while maintaining a strong U.S.-ROK bilateral alliance, to sustain South Korea's own policy approach to North Korea. Improvements in North-South relations in early 2002 emphasized the importance of dialogue and engagement, while North Korean threats were placed aside to resume progress toward reconciliation.

## **7. Japanese Policy Options and Preferences**

Japan maintained a balanced policy approach toward North Korea that borrowed elements of the ROK engagement strategy to pursue normalization with the DPRK on one hand, while remaining cautious (like the U.S.) of North Korea's missile and nuclear capabilities and Japan's own domestic concerns about its abducted citizens on the other. Because the U.S.-Japan alliance continued to be the core of Japan's security policy,<sup>216</sup> and consequently for its policy toward the North, close bilateral relations were maintained between the conservative Koizumi and Bush governments. Some authors predicted that Tokyo's dependence on U.S. policy toward North Korea would determine

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<sup>215</sup> Moon, "The Kim Dae Jung Government's Peace Policy toward North Korea," p. 185.

<sup>216</sup> Yasuhiro Takeda, "Japan's Compound Approach to Security Cooperation," in *Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, p. 101.

Japan's own policy approach to the DPRK,<sup>217</sup> but Prime Minister Koizumi and his cabinet sought to expand its regional influence and pursue more of Japan's domestic interests.

Koizumi believed that “[b]ecoming an actor in the North Korean endgame promises to boost Tokyo's standing” in the region, as well as his own popularity and legacy within the Japanese public and the LDP.<sup>218</sup> Despite concerns about North Korean threats related to its nuclear and missile activities and the abduction issue, Koizumi viewed engagement with the DPRK as an effective tool for achieving domestic political interests as well as securing Japan's involvement in the diplomatic process with the United States and South Korea – especially when it had not been a part of the Four-Party Talks. Thus, Tokyo expressed its continued support for the Agreed Framework, pursued normalization talks with the North in conjunction with economic aid, and reiterated the importance of trilateral coordination.

## **8. Signs of Divergence in the Trilateral Approach to North Korea**

During this period, the TCOG meetings continued and the comprehensive approach based on implementation of the Agreed Framework and engagement with North Korea was maintained, but the TCOG began to stray from its original function as a coordinative mechanism for consolidating minor differences within a trilateral

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<sup>217</sup> Paik, Kim, and Lee, “Towards Establishing Peace on the Korean Peninsula,” p. 11. The authors argue: if the U.S. adopted an uncompromising approach to North Korea, Japan would also pursue a policy with a hard-line base. If the U.S. chose to pursue dialogue and normalization, Japan would resume its own diplomatic talks with North Korea.

<sup>218</sup> Rozman, “Japan's North Korea Initiative and U.S.-Japan Relations,” p. 537. See also Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 7.

comprehensive approach to North Korea.<sup>219</sup> The leadership change explanation – particularly in regards to the transition from a moderate Clinton to a hard-line Bush administration – does help to explain the emerging signs of divergence in policy approaches and rifts within the trilateral coordinative framework. Despite joint statements by the TCOG delegates that reaffirmed their commitment to close trilateral coordination and their support of engaging the DPRK, the Bush administration’s words often did not match up with its actions. This discrepancy between U.S. statements and actual behavior created rifts within the trilateral consultative framework – especially between the U.S. and South Korea. At the May 2001 TCOG meeting in Hawaii, the TCOG delegates reconfirmed their commitment to the Agreed Framework, expressed continued support for close coordination and inter-Korean reconciliation, and the “U.S. invited the ROK and Japan to provide comments and suggestions” for its policy review.<sup>220</sup> Yet the Bush administration’s preference for hard-line approaches and pressure on the North revealed that – despite overall support for engagement with the North – the Bush administration desired to “change the basis on which [it] interact[s] with North Korea” in a manner that “will not be driven into dialogue...through threats and provocations.”<sup>221</sup>

Aside from leadership change, after the terrorist attacks on September 11, threat perceptions on proliferation and terrorism briefly converged for the three partners and a

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<sup>219</sup> Hajime, “ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Cooperation towards North Korean Policy: Present Situation and Problems – Centering On the TCOG,” p.65.

<sup>220</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Joint Statement by the U.S., the Republic of Korea, and Japan*, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 26, 2001, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2001/3115.htm>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

<sup>221</sup> National Security Council, “Press Backgrounder Points,” June, 6, 2001 as referenced in Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, p. 6.

TCOG meeting in November 2001 ended with the U.S. stating that it would hold talks with North Korea “any time, any place.”<sup>222</sup> Yet while South Korea was actively pursuing North-South dialogue and engagement with the North, the U.S. was heavily involved in its War on Terror and held little interest in actually holding talks with North Korea.<sup>223</sup> This pattern continued into 2002 and, amidst conflicts in the Middle East and fears of proliferation and nuclear weapons, the HEU issue propelled U.S. threat perceptions of North Korea to new heights. Even though TCOG meetings were maintained throughout this period, by August 2002, differing perceptions of North Korea shaped divergent policy preferences toward dealing with the DPRK. The TCOG largely lost its function of coordinating policy and, instead, acted as a symbol for U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation to display to North Korea that trilateral unity still persisted.<sup>224</sup>

#### *Different Interpretations of HEU and Koizumi’s Planned Trip to Pyongyang*

Fragmentation in the trilateral consensus toward North Korea was largely revealed in August 2002 when Washington informed its allies of a suspected DPRK HEU program and Prime Minister Koizumi announced his plan to visit Pyongyang. Although the Kim and Koizumi governments were actively engaging North Korea, the Bush administration raised the HEU issue which led the ROK and Japan to question U.S.

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<sup>222</sup> Hajime, “ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Cooperation towards North Korean Policy: Present Situation and Problems – Centering On the TCOG,” pp. 59-60.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

intentions.<sup>225</sup> During the Kim-Clinton period, President Clinton's trust in President Kim's policy toward North Korea fostered deep understanding and mutual trust between the two administrations to the point that the South Korean government shared all information related to the DPRK with the United States.<sup>226</sup> Yet from the Kim-Bush summit meeting in March 2001, trust between the two governments became shaky and the Kim administration was hesitant to immediately accept U.S. intelligence.<sup>227</sup> While the U.S. was certain that North Korea possessed the HEU program, South Korea claimed there was not enough evidence to invoke confrontation.<sup>228</sup>

Prime Minister Koizumi's announcement that he would be meeting Kim Jong-il in September 2002 also showed signs of divergence within U.S.-Japan approaches to North Korea. On August 27, 2002, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Armitage and Prime Minister Koizumi met in Tokyo and exchanged information on Koizumi's planned visit and the HEU issue. The result was a cleavage in policies. For Japan, it was "hard to grasp that North Korea was so duplicitous; that the United States was so determined to pressure North Korea...and that Japan, as a U.S. ally, had so little leverage to conduct an independent foreign policy."<sup>229</sup> Raising the HEU issue threatened Koizumi's trip to the DPRK and created conflict for his plans to resolve the abduction issue in his meeting

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<sup>225</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 130.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131. Funabashi states that South Korea officials had become distrustful of U.S. intelligence since it had been wrong in assessing Kumchang-ri. Other countries, including Japan, shared these suspicions in regards to U.S. explanations about the HEU program.

<sup>228</sup> Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, p. 237. Ahn argues that different interpretations of the same intelligence pointed to fundamental problems within the U.S.-ROK relationship, where South Korea was becoming less dependent on U.S. information for its policy to the North and more critical of American judgments. *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>229</sup> Rozman, "Japan's North Korea Initiative and U.S.-Japan Relations," p. 527.

with Kim Jong-il.<sup>230</sup> For the U.S., Koizumi's diplomatic efforts and large-scale economic aid to North Korea conflicted with its campaign for "arms inspections in Iraq and, should they fail, a war to topple Saddam Hussein."<sup>231</sup> In the Bush administration's preparations for war in Iraq, Japanese support was important.<sup>232</sup> Diverging perceptions of North Korea were producing different policy options for the three states.

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<sup>230</sup> For analysis of the link between the HEU program and abduction issue, see Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 39.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, p. 229.

## **V. September 2002 – June 2003: Divergent Perceptions, Different Approaches, and Dissolution of the TCOG**

### **1. Prime Minister Koizumi's Visit to Pyongyang and Nuclear Crisis**

Most scholars cite Kelly's visit to Pyongyang and confrontation over the HEU program in October 2002 as the decisive point for the eventual dissolution of the TCOG.<sup>233</sup> This thesis argues that, even prior to the U.S. confrontation, the sharp change in Japanese perceptions of the North Korean threat following Prime Minister Koizumi's meeting with Kim Jong-il effectively carved the path for the demise of the TCOG and trilateral coordination process. Although many people view the Koizumi-Kim summit meeting and the resultant Pyongyang Declaration as breakthroughs in Japan-DPRK relations, Kim Jong-il's confession to the deaths of abducted Japanese citizens turned Koizumi's diplomatic dream into a domestic political nightmare.<sup>234</sup> A brief period of thawed Japan-DPRK relations and Japanese support for engagement following the summit was quickly replaced by rising conservative voices within the Japanese government and strong negative reactions within the Japanese public. As a result, Japan – the U.S.' key ally in the region – fell in line with the U.S. policy of confrontation and support waned for an already weakened trilateral coordination mechanism and the ROK

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<sup>233</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>234</sup> See Victor D. Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations: Mr. Koizumi Goes to Pyongyang," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (October 2002). Accessed January 10, 2013; Keiji Nakatsuji, "Prime Minister in Command: Koizumi and the Abduction Question," *Korea Review of International Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2004), pp. 35-46; Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 36-42; Yumiko Nakagawa, "Koizumi Visits Pyongyang: Beginner's Luck?" *PacNet* No. 38 (September 2002).

engagement policy toward North Korea.<sup>235</sup> The collapse of the Agreed Framework after North Korea's admission to having a nuclear program and the subsequent nuclear crisis from the end of 2002 to 2003 solidified the differences in policy approaches among the United States, South Korea and Japan.

### *Collapse of the Agreed Framework and Second North Korean Nuclear Crisis*

After U.S. suspicions of a DPRK HEU program were affirmed in October 2002, the situation on the Korean peninsula was one of crisis and conflict. The United States failed to utilize its "bold approach", instead choosing to confront the North Korean regime over its nuclear program.<sup>236</sup> The U.S. trip to Pyongyang ended in disaster with early signs of the Agreed Framework's imminent collapse appearing.<sup>237</sup> The Agreed Framework met its end when North Korea resumed its nuclear activities on December 12, 2002. The North Korean nuclear crisis reached its peak when the DPRK removed surveillance cameras and expelled IAEA inspectors from December 21-31, and announced its withdrawal from the NPT on January 10, 2003. The common threat perceptions that had established the TCOG and held the trilateral consensus together

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<sup>235</sup> Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations: Mr. Koizumi Goes to Pyongyang." Cha states, "In some ways, Japan offers a more credible voice on the Korean Peninsula than South Korea these days... when the Japanese... take such a dramatic step and personally communicate to the U.S. that engagement is worthwhile, then it registers." Thus, when Japanese support for engagement decreased, the U.S. was not inclined to pursue an engagement policy toward the DPRK and pushed forward its own policy of confrontation.

<sup>236</sup> For more on the U.S.' "bold approach", see Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 25-27; Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 98.

<sup>237</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 37-39. The North Korean government was in the position that the Agreed Framework had already been violated by the United States, when it failed to meet its heavy fuel oil shipment deadlines under the KEDO. In addition, DPRK First Vice Minister Kang Sok-ju further justified his claim by stating that the "axis of evil" label and U.S. preemptive strike policy pushed North Korea "to reinforce its "Military First" policy by modernizing the military to the maximum extent possible." *Ibid.*, p. 37.

began to fall apart as different national priorities toward North Korea and conflicting policy preferences moved the three countries away from a formalized trilateral coordinative process to an informal multilateral consultative process under the Six Party Talks.

## **2. U.S. Perceptions of North Korea**

### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

Despite having information on North Korea's HEU program before its admission, the Bush administration did not take immediate action against the DPRK. At the time, Washington's foreign policy objectives were focused on a potential war with Iraq and "no one wanted the U.S. relations with North Korea to deteriorate, creating a crisis."<sup>238</sup> Essentially, the United States was trying to "buy time" in order to offset a North Korean crisis that could hurt U.S. plans for its invasion of Iraq.<sup>239</sup> Unlike the Clinton administration, which had set a clear red line at the reprocessing of plutonium fuel rods, the Bush administration did not establish thresholds for North Korean nuclear and missile activities.<sup>240</sup> Nevertheless, North Korea's resumption of its nuclear program at Yongbyon in December 2002 constituted a major threat to U.S. principles of disarmament and nonproliferation.

In a testimony before the Senate, Armitage stated that "North Korea's...programs to develop weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery

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<sup>238</sup> Funabashi, *Peninsula Question*, p. 155.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., pp. 155-157. Some American politicians criticized the Bush administration for "downplaying the North Korean nuclear crisis in order to start a war with Iraq."

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., pp. 154-155.

are a fundamental obstacle...[to Korean peace and stability]. They are also a threat to the international community, regional security, US interests, and US forces, which remain an integral part of stability in the region.”<sup>241</sup> Kelly reemphasized the North Korean nuclear threat – in regards to both plutonium and HEU – and the concern that the North could sell missiles, conventional weapons, and fissile material to rogue and terrorist states.<sup>242</sup> In light of the U.S. war against terrorism and nuclear proliferation, the Bush administration focused on the ways in which it could contain the North Korea nuclear threat without further destabilizing the region.

#### *View of the North Korean Regime*

The Bush administration continued to be highly suspicious of the North Korean regime and the North’s admission of having a HEU program only helped to solidify this view. Armitage stated, “We cannot change our relationship with the DPRK until the DPRK changes its behavior. North Korea must abandon its nuclear weapons programs in a verifiable and irreversible manner.”<sup>243</sup> Although there was a solid consensus in Washington that North Korea’s nuclear program was unacceptable, intense debates between the “engagement school” and the “confrontation school” over the most

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<sup>241</sup> Richard L. Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Developments on the Korean Peninsula,” testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., February 4, 2003, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/armitage/remarks/17170.htm>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

<sup>242</sup> James A. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, “A Peaceful Resolution of the North Korean Nuclear Issue,” remarks to House International Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., February 13, 2003, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2003/17754.htm>. Accessed January 8, 2013.

<sup>243</sup> Armitage, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Developments on the Korean Peninsula,” February 4, 2003.

effective policy option to North Korea occurred.<sup>244</sup> Eventually, an increasingly powerful Pentagon and the influence of hard-liners in the Bush administration convinced President Bush that direct U.S.-DPRK dialogue and engagement with North Korea were ineffective in dealing with the nuclear issue.<sup>245</sup> This was a significant departure from the Clinton administration's view that U.S.-DPRK negotiations were key to addressing the North Korean security issue and even a contrast from the Bush administration's earlier views that dialogue was to be maintained. The Bush administration essentially adopted a policy approach toward North Korea based on the following convictions: North Korea is an 'evil' regime, North Korea is fully responsible for the crisis, the North Korean nuclear program is a major threat to the nonproliferation regime and the NPT, and that North Korea does not deserve any rewards for its bad behavior.<sup>246</sup> Bilateral talks with North Korea were ultimately viewed as 'rewarding' the North, thus, the Bush administration chose to pursue a multilateral policy approach to North Korea that focused on building an international coalition and avoiding U.S.-DPRK bilateral negotiations.<sup>247</sup>

### **3. South Korean Perceptions of North Korea**

#### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

Although the threat of the North Korean nuclear and missile programs presented a serious threat to South Korea – in terms of potential physical damage and geographical

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<sup>244</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 90-92, 139-144. See also Park, "Toward an Alliance of Moderates," pp. 30-31.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>246</sup> Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*, p. 30.

<sup>247</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 52-56.

proximity – the South Korean government was adamant on continued engagement of the North and inter-Korean conciliation for its goal of peaceful reunification. The 2003 ROK Defense White Paper identified North Korean armed forces, WMD development, biological weapons, and missile programs as the main security threats.<sup>248</sup> Yet President Roh Moo-hyun’s inaugural address on February 2003, entitled “An Age of Northeast Asia Begins: A New Takeoff Toward an Age of Peace and Prosperity”, outlined a policy approach that aimed to “build peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia on the basis of a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and the establishment of an inter-Korean economic community.”<sup>249</sup> President Roh stressed that, while North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons could never be condoned, resolution should come from peaceful dialogue as opposed to military tensions, and that South Korea should be actively involved in resolving the crisis.<sup>250</sup> In this respect, Roh “stressed again that South Korea regarded North Korea as a dialogue partner, not as a threat.”<sup>251</sup> The Roh administration also decided to drop the reference to North Korea as its “main enemy” in a government publication and advocated South Korea’s self-reliant defense.<sup>252</sup> The dualistic characterization of North Korea as both an ‘enemy’ and a ‘partner’ created dilemmas for ROK policymakers and contributed to gaps in perceptions among the ROK, Japan, and the United States.<sup>253</sup> On March 2, 2003, an aerial standoff between

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<sup>248</sup> Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea, “North Korean Military Threat,” *Participatory Government Defense Policy 2003* (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, July 2003), pp. 26-28.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.* See also Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>251</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 216.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243. The Ministry of Defense was against the removal of the term ‘enemy.’

<sup>253</sup> Choong Nam Kim, “The Roh Moo Hyun Government’s Policy Toward North Korea,” *East-West Center Working Papers: Politics, Governance, and Security Series*, No. 11 (August 2005), p. 9.

DPRK fighter jets and an American reconnaissance plane further revealed the divergent U.S.-ROK threat perceptions of North Korea as Washington condemned the North's actions, while Seoul requested that "the United States should not go too far."<sup>254</sup> Although the North Korean nuclear and military threats were evident for the South Korean government, the long-term foreign – and even domestic – policy goal of peaceful reunification prevented the ROK from seeking strong punishment and military/economic pressure against the DPRK that would threaten efforts at inter-Korean reconciliation.

#### *View of the North Korean Regime*

Improvements in North-South relations in mid-2002 followed by the historic Japan-DPRK summit meeting in September 2002 convinced the Kim administration and supporters of engagement that the North Korean regime was still steadily opening up to the international community. Although Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang sparked another South Korean national debate over its policy toward North Korea, "[m]any South Koreans compared the results of his visit to that of President Kim in 2000 and found the latter lacking."<sup>255</sup> In October 2002, with the revelation of North Korea's HEU program, progress in inter-Korean relations made earlier in the year once again stalled. Additionally, North Korea's resumption of nuclear activities and withdrawal from the NPT threatened stability on the Korean peninsula. Yet President

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<sup>254</sup> Kim, "Limits and Possibilities of ROK-U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation," in *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations*, p. 15, reference 10.

<sup>255</sup> Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, pp. 127-128.

Kim still sought to improve deteriorating U.S.-DPRK relations and engage the North in dialogue before the end of his term – thus he sent Ambassador Lim Dong-won to Pyongyang on January 27, 2003.<sup>256</sup>

Although hard-liners in South Korea viewed the North Korean regime as acting out of regime survival and that North Korea would be unwilling to give up its nuclear weapons, the Roh administration and moderates believed economic assistance and dialogue would make the North cooperative to international standards if it could gain assurances against U.S. attack.<sup>257</sup> The Roh government identified North Korean provocative behavior as “brinkmanship tactics” and that “North Korea has also been focusing on negotiations with the United States, demanding a non-aggression pact as a means to ensure regime survival.”<sup>258</sup> The Roh administration’s view of the North Korean regime and its capacity to change was in stark contrast with the Bush administration which viewed North Korea as “a problem to be solved rather than one to be managed” and even considered policy approaches that advocated regime change.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 197-205.

<sup>257</sup> Park, “Toward an Alliance of Moderates,” pp. 32-34. North Korea felt very threatened by the U.S. war in Iraq and wanted assurances that the U.S. would not subsequently take military action against North Korea.

<sup>258</sup> Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea, *Participatory Government Defense Policy 2003*, p. 26.

<sup>259</sup> Mitchell, “Status Quo: Putting It All Together,” in *Strengthening U.S.-ROK-Japan Trilateral Relations*, p. 28. Refer also to Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 138-139, 144-145. Secretary of Defense was a supporter of the regime change approach, but some policymakers saw it as a “straw man” to make the tailored-containment approach more moderate and persuasive.

#### **4. Japanese Perceptions of North Korea**

##### *Main Security Threats and Foreign Policy Objectives*

On September 17, 2002, Prime Minister Koizumi visited Pyongyang in hopes of making progress toward Japan-DPRK normalization and ultimately resolving the abduction issue that had haunted the Japanese public for years. Through his meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, Koizumi negotiated the return of several abducted Japanese nationals back to Japan and signed the joint Pyongyang Declaration, but the Japanese public's outcry against Kim Jong-il's confession and the deaths of several abductees would change Koizumi's initial plans to increase engagement and normalization talks with North Korea. Initially, Prime Minister had to consider whether or not he would still pursue normalization with North Korea despite receiving information from the U.S. of a suspected underground DPRK HEU program. Yet the Japanese government realized the nuclear issue could not be resolved bilaterally between Japan and North Korea alone and "hoped that the Pyongyang Declaration would be the starting point of a deterrent process that imposed some kind of constraints on the behavior of North Korea and Japan toward each other."<sup>260</sup>

Unfortunately, it quickly became apparent to the Japanese government that North Korea's HEU program was closely linked to the abduction issue.<sup>261</sup> But what the Japanese government did not fully expect was the surge and extremity of Japanese public outcries against North Korea, which effectively propelled the abduction issue into

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<sup>260</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 32-33. The Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration reaffirmed the moratorium on North Korea's missile program – one of the biggest security threats to Japan.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

the spotlight of Japan's foreign policy and perception of the North Korean threat.<sup>262</sup> After Kelly confirmed suspicions of North Korea's HEU program in October 2002, Tokyo became concerned that strained relations between the U.S.-DPRK and Japan-DPRK would adversely affect the resolution of the abduction issue.<sup>263</sup> Amidst strong public criticism, the Japanese government stated its intent to not return the abductees and North Korea protested Japan's "broken promise."<sup>264</sup> As a result, Japan-DPRK relations deteriorated and Prime Minister Koizumi's hopes for normalization were dashed. One author notes, "Anyone searching for thoughtful discussions as to whether or not the Koizumi/Kim summit might lead to reconciliation on historical issues between Japan and the Korean peninsula, or, more urgently, what actions Japan might take to engage North Korea diplomatically over the nuclear weapons issue, found themselves disappointed."<sup>265</sup>

Although the Koizumi cabinet continued to advocate engagement with the DPRK and steps toward progress in Japan-DPRK relations were made in the months following the summit meeting,<sup>266</sup> the domestic political situation in Japan had already started to change as the conservative, right-wing voices in the Diet began to gain influence in Japan's policy toward North Korea.<sup>267</sup> In addition to tensions arising over

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<sup>262</sup> Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations: Mr. Koizumi Goes to Pyongyang"; Eric Johnston, "The North Korea Abduction Issue and Its Effect on Japanese Domestic Politics," *JPRI Working Paper* No. 101 (June 2004), available at <http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp101.html>. Accessed January 10, 2013.

<sup>263</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 39.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. For more on criticisms of the government by the Japanese public over the abduction issue, see "Relatives of Japanese Abductees Criticize Government's Response," *New York Times*, September 19, 2002.

<sup>265</sup> Johnston, "The North Korea Abduction Issue and Its Effect on Japanese Domestic Politics."

<sup>266</sup> See Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations: Mr. Koizumi Goes to Pyongyang."

<sup>267</sup> Park, "Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations," pp. 21-22.

the abduction issue and HEU program, “the North’s belligerent rhetoric and nuclear brinksmanship boosted alarmist thinking” in Japan which led to a heightened threat perception of North Korea.<sup>268</sup> The utilization of the unresolved abduction issue combined with the perceptions of an escalating North Korean nuclear crisis at the end of 2002 to 2003 threatened the foundations of an independent Japanese engagement approach toward the DPRK and subsequently created serious cleavages in policy approaches among Japan, the United States, and South Korea.

#### *View of the North Korean Regime*

The Japanese public perception had a significant impact on the Japanese government’s policy options for dealing with the North Korean problem. In response to the unaccounted deaths of several Japanese abductees at the hands of the North Korean regime – coupled with doubtful explanations and lack of investigative efforts – the Japanese public’s perception of North Korea significantly worsened and the image of North Korea as a criminal state undercut the persuasiveness of engagement and normalization with the DPRK.<sup>269</sup> Although public views of the North Korean regime had been negative for years due to the abduction issue,<sup>270</sup> and pronounced in 1998 with the missile threat, limited policy options for Japan (outside of U.S. and ROK-guided approaches) and North Korea’s refusal to openly discuss the matter arguably prevented significant public backlash that could influence Japan’s policy toward North Korea. Yet

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<sup>268</sup> Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis*, p. 152.

<sup>269</sup> Park, “Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations,” p. 21.

<sup>270</sup> Johnston, “The North Korea Abduction Issue and Its Effect on Japanese Domestic Politics.”

Kim Jong-il's confession of the DPRK's direct involvement in the abduction issue solidified the view in the Japanese public that the North Korean regime was not to be trusted.<sup>271</sup>

Although the abduction of citizens was not limited to Japan and issue existed in South Korea as well, the ROK government and supporters of the Sunshine Policy were hesitant to raise its own abduction issues related to the DPRK in fear that it would undercut its policy of engagement and reconciliation with North Korea.<sup>272</sup> This divergence in perception between the ROK and Japan, and a rising negative view of the North Korea regime gave opportunities for right-wing hawks in the Japanese government and organizations in support of abductees to push a hard-line Japanese approach to North Korea in conflict with South Korea's policy of economic assistance and reconciliation.

## **5. U.S. Policy Options and Preferences**

### *A Multilateral Approach*

The confirmation of North Korea's HEU program, resumption of nuclear activities in Yongbyon, and withdrawal from the NPT from October 2002 to January 2003 gave hard-liners in Washington the impetus they needed to abandon the Clinton

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<sup>271</sup> Park, "Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations," p. 21. Park states that Japanese citizens held onto the perception that North Korea was a "strange country" (이상한 나라), a "country that could not be understood" (이해할 수 없는 나라), and a "country that could not be trusted" (믿을 수 없는 나라).

<sup>272</sup> Refer to Brad Williams and Erik Moberg, "Explaining Divergent Responses to the North Korea Abductions Issue in Japan and South Korea," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 69, Issue 2 (May 2010), pp. 507-536.

administration's previous policy of engagement and dialogue. The Agreed Framework and Perry Process had upheld the justification for Washington to maintain improved U.S.-DPRK bilateral relations and close policy coordination with South Korea and Japan on economic aid to North Korea through the provisions of the Geneva Accords and KEDO projects. Yet with the collapse of the Agreed Framework after North Korea's admission to having a HEU program in violation of the agreement, a series of North Korean provocations threatened the strings holding the fabric of a trilateral coordinative framework together.

Although the Bush administration was unilateralist in its foreign policy approaches, President Bush chose to pursue a multilateral approach to North Korea through diplomatic and peaceful means.<sup>273</sup> In December 2002, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice directed the NSC to compose several policy options toward North Korea in response to the developing crisis situation. Among several policy options suggested – including “tailored-containment” and “regime change” approaches – the Bush administration chose to pursue the “international approach”, which focused on increasing cooperation with U.S. allies and other regional actors like China and Russia on North Korean issues.<sup>274</sup> The war in Iraq also arguably contributed to the persuasiveness of a multilateral approach that decreased burdens on the U.S., associated

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<sup>273</sup> Armitage, “Weapons of Mass Destruction Developments on the Korean Peninsula,” February 4, 2003. Armitage stated, “We intend to resolve the threats posed by North Korea’s programs by working with the international community to find a peaceful, diplomatic situation...the United States has no intention of invading North Korea.”

<sup>274</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 138-139.

with “the risks and costs of negotiation with North Korea”,<sup>275</sup> and strong criticism of U.S. unilateralism and imperialism in the international community.

Yet two major flaws in the Bush administration’s multilateral approach to North Korea were its views that U.S.-DPRK bilateral negotiations were “useless” in resolving security issues and that the TCOG “had become too formal.”<sup>276</sup> Based on these assumptions, the Bush administration sought an expanded international coalition for dealing with the North Korean security issue, where China’s role in reigning in DPRK belligerence was important. In April 2003, the Bush administration made efforts to establish trilateral talks among the United States, North Korea, and China.<sup>277</sup> From April 23-25, the three countries met in Beijing but the U.S. delegates were instructed by Washington not to engage in formal bilateral negotiations with the DPRK delegation.<sup>278</sup> The South Korean government responded to the U.S.-DPRK-China trilateral meeting with criticism as it saw its own role in the resolution of the North Korean security issue being denied.<sup>279</sup> Eventually, the Bush administration prepared to expand the three-way talks into a six-party consultative format and the formal TCOG coordinative process was dissolved into a multilateral approach that gave the U.S. a broader range of policy options toward North Korea.

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p. 161. See also Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, p. 57; Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, p. 247. The Bush administration neglected North Korea’s request for a nonaggression pact between the two countries and President Bush fundamentally believed that the North Korean nuclear issue could not be resolved within a U.S.-DPRK bilateral framework.

<sup>277</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 62-65; Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 329-336.

<sup>278</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 331.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

## 6. South Korean Policy Options and Preferences

### *From the Sunshine Policy to a Policy of Peace and Prosperity*

Despite the looming peninsular crisis by the end of 2002 and mixed signals from Washington on its direction of policy toward North Korea, President Roh Moo-hyun entered office in February 2003 with an engagement strategy still in place. The Roh administration's policy continued an approach that sought peaceful reunification, but without the political contestation and criticism associated with the previous administration's Sunshine Policy.<sup>280</sup> In his augural address, President Roh pushed ahead his 'policy for peace and prosperity' based on four main tenets:

First... to resolve all pending issues through dialogue.

Second... give priority to building mutual trust and upholding reciprocity.

Third... seek active international co-operation on the premise that South and North Korea are the two main actors in inter-Korean relations.

And fourth... enhance transparency, expand citizen participation, and secure bipartisan support.<sup>281</sup>

The peace and prosperity policy set broader goals than the Sunshine Policy by focusing on inter-Korean relations in the larger context of the Northeast Asian region.<sup>282</sup> The Roh administration's policy aimed to "reinforce peace on the Korean peninsula and seek the co-prosperity of both South and North Korea to build a foundation for a peaceful

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<sup>280</sup> Kim, Tadokoro, and Bridges, "Managing another North Korean Crisis," pp. 61-62. The authors point to the failure of the Kim administration's Sunshine Policy as a domestic constraint on President Roh's policy toward North Korea.

<sup>281</sup> Moo-hyun Roh, "Address by President Roh Moo-hyun at the Sixteenth Inaugural Ceremony," Office of the President, February 25, 2003.

<sup>282</sup> Kim, "The Roh Moo Hyun Government's Policy Toward North Korea," p. 13.

unification and a base for South Korea to become the economic hub of Northeast Asia.”<sup>283</sup> This stressed the importance of the South Korean role in resolving problems on the Korean peninsula and acting as a “balancer” in the region.<sup>284</sup>

The desire for an expanded South Korean role in regional security and economic affairs was supported by the concept of ‘self-reliant defense’ and a general South Korean cynicism toward the U.S.-ROK alliance relationship. The 2003 Defense White Paper states:

The concept of self-reliant defense aims to achieve a self-reliant deterrence capability against North Korea while complementing this capability by strengthening the ROK-US alliance and security cooperation with neighboring states... Self-reliance in defense should be sought in a way that satisfies the following three points. First, it should lead to the establishment of a force that can deter North Korean aggression. Second, military reforms are needed to improve the organization and management system of the armed forces. Third, on the basis of the first two points, the combined command system must be further developed.<sup>285</sup>

Although the Roh administration supported the U.S. war in Iraq by sending ROK troops to appease Washington, anti-American sentiments in the ROK combined with South Korea’s own rising status in the international community created fractures in the U.S.-ROK bilateral relationship.<sup>286</sup> The Roh administration’s policy toward North Korea –

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<sup>283</sup> Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea, *The Participatory Government’s Policy of Peace and Prosperity* (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, March 2003), p. 2 as quoted in *ibid.* See also 고유환, “Two Years of the Roh Moo-hyun Administration’s North Korea Policy,” 『세종정책연구』 제 1 권 2 호 (2005), pp. 201-219 [Yu-hwan Koh, “Two Years of the Roh Moo-Hyun Administration’s North Korea Policy,” *Sejong Policy Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2005)].

<sup>284</sup> For more on the “Roh Moo-hyun Doctrine”, see Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 252-257; Kim, “The Roh Moo Hyun Government’s Policy Toward North Korea,” pp. 22-25.

<sup>285</sup> Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea, *Participatory Government Defense Policy 2003*, p. 33.

<sup>286</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 218-220; Rozman and Lee, “Unraveling the Japan-South Korea “Virtual Alliance”” p. 783; Kim, “The Roh Moo Hyun Government’s Policy Toward North Korea,” pp. 16-18. For an in-depth analysis of the changing U.S.-ROK relationship, see David I. Steinberg ed., *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2005).

characterized as “appeasement” or “a bold effort to build inter-Korean trust” – created a greater rift between the U.S. and ROK, as the Roh administration’s efforts to downplay the North Korean threat hurt U.S. trust and confidence in the ROK.<sup>287</sup> This led Seoul to seek cooperation on the North Korean issue with other powerful regional actors who expressed similar views on and policy approaches to North Korea.

The ROK government found its answer in China. Within the Roh administration, two lines of thinking emerged within a special subcommittee that formulated ROK unification, foreign, and security policies. One group advocated close policy coordination with the United States on a realistic approach to North Korea, stressed the importance of the TCOG and U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation, and remained skeptical of China’s role. The other group advocated a more autonomous foreign policy by departing from dependence on the U.S.-ROK alliance and U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral framework, and argued that the key to addressing the North Korean issue was China.<sup>288</sup> Ultimately, the Roh administration adopted a nationalist, independent policy toward North Korea that shifted focus from U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral coordination to cooperation with China and other multilateral arrangements. Seoul found it hard-pressed to coordinate its policies toward the North with Washington’s confrontational approach and Tokyo’s inclination towards pressure. With China’s economic growth, rising influence in the region, and similar engagement strategy to North Korea, the ROK

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<sup>287</sup> Leif-Eric Easley, “Building trust or giving it away?” The Roh administration’s engagement of the North,” *PacNet* No. 32A (July 2006).

<sup>288</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 205-214, 220-224. The two different approaches and lines of thinking were led by Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan and Deputy Secretary of the Korean NSC Lee Jong-seok.

government viewed China as “a potential alternative to the U.S. as a strategic partner” in dealing with the DPRK.

## **7. Japanese Policy Options and Preferences**

### *Dialogue and Pressure*

The Koizumi-Kim summit meeting in September 2002 marked a major turning point in Japan’s policy toward North Korea and solidified divergent perceptions and policy approaches among Japan, South Korea, and the United States. As the Japanese public perception of North Korea turned extremely sour and the abduction issue became the biggest threat and impediment to Japan-DPRK relations, the hard-liners in the Diet began to raise their voices.<sup>289</sup> In particular, powerful right-wing LDP politicians, such as Abe Shinzo, argued against normalization until the abduction issue was resolved and held onto the perception that the DPRK was not a country that could be dealt with through only economic cooperation and engagement.<sup>290</sup> In addition to the rising power of hard-liners in the Diet, the expansion of the abduction issue challenged the power of North Korean supporters in the Japanese government, who advocated a softer approach

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<sup>289</sup> Park, “Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations,” p. 21; Johnston, “The North Korea Abduction Issue and Its Effect on Japanese Domestic Politics.” Johnston argues that the abduction issue, as a result of Koizumi’s visit to Pyongyang (in 2002 and 2004), had five major impacts on Japanese domestic politics: 1) increased the credibility of right-wing hawks who favor tough measures against North Korea and pro-Pyongyang organizations in Japan; 2) dealt a serious blow to supporters of North Korea; 3) split the LDP into two factions with different approaches to North Korea; 4) created opportunities for a tougher policy toward the DPRK and reform in the Foreign Ministry; and 5) increased the political influence of Japanese civil groups in support of abductees.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

to the North through dialogue and normalization.<sup>291</sup> The abduction issue coupled with an escalating nuclear crisis on the peninsula led the Japanese government to adopt a policy of “pressure with dialogue” based on realist notions that pointed to the DPRK as a significant security threat.<sup>292</sup> Despite Prime Minister Koizumi’s attempts at normalization and creating a breakthrough in Japan-DPRK relations following the September summit, he was hard-pressed to give more power to the hawks in the Diet as power shifts occurred and he needed to consolidate his leadership.<sup>293</sup>

Although the Koizumi government did not completely dismiss dialogue with the DPRK like the Bush administration and opted for a “pressure with dialogue” strategy, significant shifts in Japanese security policies showed its realist response to its perception of the rising DPRK threat. After the invasion of Iraq, the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces (SDF) kept a strict watch over North Korean nuclear and missile activities by expanding information gathering and analyzing capabilities.<sup>294</sup> In 2003, the BMD system in Japan was approved and patriot missiles were deployed. The Japanese government also took measures to introduce legislation that would allow Japan to independently enforce economic sanctions against North Korea. On June 6, 2003, the Diet passed key laws to increase the legal role and capabilities of the SDF to respond to

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<sup>291</sup> Johnston, “The North Korea Abduction Issue and Its Effect on Japanese Domestic Politics.” Most notably, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), a long time supporter of North Korea, lost significant power and LDP Hiromu Nonaka and others like him who supported normalization and a soft approach to North Korea were marginalized or purged.

<sup>292</sup> Park, “Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations,” p. 22.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. See also Johnston, “The North Korea Abduction Issue and Its Effect on Japanese Domestic Politics”; Rozman, “Japan’s North Korea Initiative and U.S.-Japan Relations,” p. 526.

<sup>294</sup> Park, “Korea-U.S.-Japan Policies toward North Korea and Prospects for Progress in Japan-DPRK Relations,” p. 23.

potential North Korean attacks.<sup>295</sup> The realist shift in Japanese security policies toward North Korea showed that Tokyo, while not abandoning engagement and dialogue, was moving towards policies of pressure.

Although Japan and the U.S. shared close relations and consistently reaffirmed the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance for regional security, the Koizumi government faced some dilemmas in dealing with Pyongyang and siding with Washington. Amidst rising threat perceptions of the DPRK after the abduction issue blew up, Prime Minister Koizumi was hesitant to support a U.S. hard-line policy after the revelation of North Korea's HEU program, in fear that confrontation would provoke the North.<sup>296</sup> The Bush administration's increasing reliance on China to deal with North Korea also left Japan with the feeling of being "sidelined."<sup>297</sup> Yet Koizumi reaffirmed his strong support for U.S. policy toward North Korea in his meeting with Bush in May 2003 by "sticking closely to Bush and welcoming his tough negotiating strategy."<sup>298</sup> The two governments called for "dialogue and pressure" to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue.<sup>299</sup> At times, Tokyo saw Seoul's policy of engagement as an obstacle to creating meaningful progress and "anti-Japanese and anti-American sentiments as well as pro-North policies [in the new ROK government] obliged Japan to view its neighborhood with a new sense of danger."<sup>300</sup> A string of North Korean provocations involving missile launches over

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>296</sup> Rozman, "Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis," p. 154.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Natalie Obiko Pearson, "U.S. and Japan agree on "dialogue and pressure" to resolve North Korean crisis," *The Associated Press*, November 18, 2003. Accessed November 7, 2012.

<sup>300</sup> Rozman, "Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis," p. 153. South Korean economic aid to North Korea arguably was seen as an obstacle to getting meaningful concessions from the DPRK regime.

Japanese territory led Japan to lean towards a policy of pressure.<sup>301</sup> Japan's high threat perception of North Korea, added with a rising skepticism of the South Korean engagement approach, drove a wedge into trilateral coordination.

## **8. Divergent Policy Approaches and Dissolution of the TCOG**

Although the confrontation over the HEU issue in October 2002 and the resultant North Korean nuclear crisis highlighted the differing policy approaches to North Korea among the three countries, the TCOG's weakened coordinative function and Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang were already decisive points for the fate of the TCOG. Because the TCOG had already started to function as a symbol of trilateral unity rather than an institutionalized policy coordination mechanism – as it was made to be – the June 2002 TCOG meeting in San Francisco “underscored how the TCOG was not a forum for discussing such sensitive information” as Japanese delegates did not explicitly share information on Koizumi's planned visit.<sup>302</sup> Nevertheless, the three countries' delegations discussed the upcoming Koizumi-Kim summit in their next TCOG meeting on September 9, 2002.

The results of the summit meeting between Prime Minister Koizumi and Kim Jong-il were welcomed by the ROK and U.S., but in the months following the historic

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<sup>301</sup> For more on the North Korean military provocations in 2003, see Howard W. French, “Threats and Responses: Nuclear Standoff; North Korea Tests a Missile as South Korea Prepares for a New President,” *New York Times*, February 25, 2003; “Threats and Responses; North Korea Fires Antiship Missile in Test Launch,” *New York Times*, March 10, 2003; Junichiro Koizumi, comment concerning North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Tokyo, January 10, 2003, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/n\\_korea/comment0301.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/n_korea/comment0301.html). Accessed December 5, 2012.

<sup>302</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, pp. 24-25. The Japanese delegation dropped vague hints but they were not enough as Prime Minister Koizumi's announcement to visit Pyongyang in September came as a surprise to the U.S. and South Korea.

visit, a significant shift had already taken place within Japan which impacted the direction of Japanese policy toward North Korea. With a weakened Japanese support for engagement and normalization, South Korea found it hard to persuade its partners of its position. The collapse of the Agreed Framework with North Korea's admission of a HEU program only added to the detrimental effects on the ROK engagement policy and the comprehensive approach that had guided U.S.-ROK-Japan coordination began to crumble. This was most evident in the November 2002 TCOG meeting.

On the November 8-9, 2002, American, South Korean, and Japanese delegates met to discuss the possible suspension of heavy fuel oil (HFO) shipments and funding of the LWR project under the KEDO. Washington was adamant in its decision to suspend funding under the KEDO in response to North Korea's HEU program and the "first step was to convince Japanese and South Korean government representatives."<sup>303</sup> The South Korean and Japanese delegates were against the suspension of HFO, but "the influence from Washington was obvious" and the allies reluctantly agreed to suspend funding.<sup>304</sup> The South Korean government tried to persuade the United States that the keeping the Agreed Framework was essential for containing North Korea's nuclear activities, but it was to no avail.<sup>305</sup> The divergence in policy approaches to North Korea and shifts within

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<sup>303</sup> Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, pp. 41-42. Assistant secretary of state, James Kelly claimed that it was "the U.S. view that North Korea should never and will never receive a light-water reactor." Interview with senior U.S. administration official, Washington, March 13, 2006 as quoted in Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 130.

<sup>304</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, pp. 136-137. Robert Carlin, a senior policy adviser at the KEDO, stated, "It was entirely a U.S. decision, and it was really forced on the [KEDO executive] board." Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ahn, *Is an Autonomous South Korean Policy toward North Korea Possible*, pp. 248-249.

the three countries towards an expanded multilateral consultative framework were already evident.<sup>306</sup>

The January 2003 TCOG meeting in Washington revealed more differences in policies among the three governments as the U.S. delegation pushed for suspension of the LWR project, while the South Korean delegation asked for the United States to consider a nonaggression pact with North Korea.<sup>307</sup> Although President Roh and Prime Minister Koizumi had expressed their support for the Bush administration's policies in their respective summit meetings with President Bush in May 2003, divergent policies belied the public displays of cooperation.<sup>308</sup> Eventually, the June 2003 TCOG meeting in Hawaii raised discussions of new formats for consultation – outside of the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral framework – and the U.S. reiterated its plan to scrap the LWR project in exchange for a containment strategy to limit North Korea's sources of hard currency.<sup>309</sup> This was in stark contrast with South Korea's continued engagement policy. Schoff notes, "the TCOG agenda was getting longer, and the reports of divergence were becoming more public."<sup>310</sup>

As a result, the TCOG no longer fulfilled any of its functions as either a symbol of trilateral unity or as a policy coordinative mechanism, and the utility of trilateral coordination was limited at best. In 1999, the Perry Process had intended for the TCOG to become an institutionalized forum for the U.S.-ROK-Japan to coordinate and "help

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<sup>306</sup> At a trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the APEC in Los Cabos, Mexico, the three countries expressed support for a multilateral approach to deal with the North Korean issue.

<sup>307</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 26.

<sup>308</sup> Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, p. 228.

<sup>309</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 27.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

*manage the gaps*” within a common and comprehensive approach to North Korea. By 2001, the TCOG had started to function as “a way to coordinate strategies *within the context of different policy approaches*” and primarily served as a symbol of trilateral cooperation and unity despite signs of divergence emerging.<sup>311</sup> Yet by 2002, different strategic policies to deal with the North Korean security issue surpassed the original function of the TCOG as a mechanism to mediate gaps in a common approach, and divergence within the U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral relationship was evident to the public and even North Korea. The Bush administration pushed forward a multilateral approach that also called on applying pressure to the North Korean regime. The Koizumi government adopted a strategy of dialogue and pressure and showed strong support for the U.S. The Kim and Roh administrations continued to seek engagement with the North and turned to China. Thus, a new multilateral consultative process under the Six Party Talks was born to address the North Korean threat and the TCOG dissolved into an informal working-level process that could neither coordinate nor mediate diverging policies.

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid., p. 25. Italics are part of the original text.

## **VI. Conclusion: The Incomplete Journey and Future Prospects**

Although the dissolution of the TCOG process reveals the inherent challenges present in trilaterally coordinating policies toward North Korea, it does not signify the end of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation. In fact, the three strategic partners continue to trilaterally coordinate on the DPRK issue and increasingly acknowledge that common interests among the three countries tie them together. In a trilateral meeting held in Seoul on May 21, 2012, U.S. Ambassador Glyn Davies affirmed that trilateral cooperation on North Korea was “a reflection, not just of [an] alliance relationship which is very important, but also [of] common interests and values across the Asia Pacific and the world.”<sup>312</sup> What policy implications and lessons can be drawn from the TCOG experience? What is the future of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation on the North Korean issue in light of significant changes in the region?

### **1. Limitations of Competing Explanations**

Competing hypotheses as to why the TCOG dissolved are limited in their explanations. First, North Korean provocations in the summer of 1998 do explain why the three countries came together to formulate a common approach to deal with their shared security interests related to the North Korean threat. The TCOG was established as a way to manage the minor policy gaps and differences within this comprehensive and integrated approach. Yet North Korean provocations from the end of 2002, when

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<sup>312</sup> Glyn Davies, U.S. special representative for North Korean policy, remarks to press at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Seoul, May 21, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2012/05/190450.htm>. Accessed June 10, 2012.

the North Korean nuclear crisis reached its peak in December, did not exhibit higher levels of trilateral coordination. In contrast, the November 2002 TCOG meeting revealed the significant rifts among the three countries' policies toward North Korea. Thus, North Korean provocations are not accurate determinants to predict when the U.S., ROK, and Japan will or will not coordinate their individual policies toward North Korea.

The second competing hypothesis states that leadership changes, particularly in the United States, produce high levels of trilateral policy coordination when political ideologies and parties are in alignment. Inversely, as was the case in 2001 with the entry of a conservative Bush administration, different political views held by different political parties – namely moderates/progressives and hard-liners/conservatives – produce conflicts within trilateral coordination. The leadership change explanation does account for the differences in policies between the Bush and Kim Dae-jung administrations in 2001. Yet this explanation does not account for the close relations that the Obama and Lee Myung-bak administrations enjoy despite having different political ideologies.<sup>313</sup> The leadership transition argument also does not consider instances when conservative governments pursue arguably moderate approaches, as the Koizumi cabinet did in its attempts to normalize relations with the DPRK.

The most compelling explanation behind the demise of the TCOG lies in the three countries' diverging threat perceptions of North Korea. When perceptions of the DPRK threat converge, as they did in 1998 over nuclear suspicions and North Korea's

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<sup>313</sup> Richard Weitz, "Global Insights: Obama, Lee Partnership Solidifies U.S.-South Korea Ties," *World Politics Review*, October 30, 2012, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12459/global-insights-obama-lee-partnership-solidifies-u-s-south-korea-ties>. Accessed January 14, 2013.

missile program, similar policy options and domestic preferences are formulated in each of the three governments, in turn, producing a trilateral consensus and common approach to deal with the North Korean threat. Signs of diverging threat perceptions with the entry of the Bush administration and September 11 terrorist attacks created cracks in the TCOG process, especially between the United States and South Korea. Ultimately, the significant impact of the abduction issue in Japan in 2002 propelled a realist response to the North Korean threat, which was in line with the United States' own confrontational approach. The South Korean policy of dialogue and engagement could not be reconciled with policies of pressure toward the DPRK in both Japan and the United States. Thus, the TCOG reached its demise as diverging threat perceptions of North Korea produced conflicting strategic approaches to address the North Korean threat that could not be consolidated in an already weakened trilateral coordination framework.

## **2. Considerations for Policymakers in the United States, South Korea and Japan**

Through a close analysis of the TCOG – from its establishment to its eventual dissolution – policymakers in the United States, Japan and South Korea can devise new strategies to improve trilateral coordination toward North Korea in the future. Each country plays an important role in the trilateral coordinative process and understanding the factors conducive to trilateral coordination will help policymakers adjust their

policies toward North Korea, especially since differences among the three countries will naturally arise.

While a common threat perception of North Korea is ideal for converging individual policies, policymakers must accept that diverging threat perceptions are inevitable. Because unifying views on the North Korean threat is a daunting task, creating a comprehensive approach to North Korea that encompasses multiple threat perceptions is an effective means to maintain trilateral coordination. Rather than emphasizing the inherent gaps and differences that exist among the three countries, trilateral coordination should build upon the undeniable common interests that the three partners share. Despite minor differences among the U.S., ROK and Japan's policies, the Perry Process was able to formulate a comprehensive approach toward North Korea that integrated different strategies and established a consultative framework for the three governments to coordinate their individual policies. Common threat perceptions produce convergent policies, but even divergent threat perceptions can be integrated into an overarching policy approach as long as the three countries are willing to coordinate their strategies toward North Korea. Establishing common ground for policies toward North Korea and maintaining shared perceptions is especially important amidst the changes in leadership within all three countries.

### **3. Areas for Further Research**

This thesis argues that converging or diverging perceptions of the North Korean threat are the driving factors of trilateral coordination, yet it is necessary to acknowledge

the limitations of the present research and areas that can be further expanded upon. One limitation of this study is its concentrated focus on policies toward dealing with the North Korean issue. The TCOG was chosen as the main focal point of analysis in order to provide an in-depth examination of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral coordination in an institutionalized format, but cooperation among the three nations has significant implications for other regional security concerns beyond the North Korean problem. Further research on trilateral cooperation in contingency planning, humanitarian missions, and other non-traditional security issues in the region is also essential.

Another potential area for future research is the role that other triangular relationships – in particular the China-ROK-Japan arrangement – have on U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral relations. Alternative arrangements – based on their political viability and capability to address regional issues – can have important impacts on the way policymakers in Washington, Seoul and Japan view the utility and effectiveness of their current three-way relationship. In particular, South Korea has already shown signs that it is willing to consider alternative means to solve crises on the Korean peninsula outside of a U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral framework. Interaction between alternative and overlapping trilateral relations will provide new insight on the dynamics of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation.

### *External Changes, Internal Responses*

The interaction between external and internal factors is also a significant part in understanding trilateral relations. Why do policymakers in the United States, South

Korea and Japan, at times, pursue conflicting policies toward the DPRK even if it is not in their interests to do so? According to structural realist arguments, external events should invoke similar internal responses. Yet trilateral cooperation on the North Korean issue has proven that this is not always the case. Depending on how policymakers in the three countries perceive the same external events in the region – namely North Korean military provocations – converging or diverging strategies within each country can develop. The interplay between external and internal factors has significant consequences for the foreign policy initiatives and approaches taken toward North Korea. Thus, trilateral coordination acts to bridge gaps between the different ways in which this interplay occurs in each country and any analysis of trilateral cooperation must address the driving domestic factors of the three countries.

The way policymakers in the three countries view two major changes in East Asia will have significant impacts on the prospects for current and future trilateral cooperation toward the North Korean security issue. The first major regional change is the continual rise of China. With an unprecedented rapid growth in economic and military power, Beijing is starting to actively assert its political and diplomatic influence in the region. Japanese and South Korean policymakers may view the China-ROK-Japan trilateral arrangement as an attractive alternative to U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation on North Korea. China's close relations with and influence on the DPRK supports such views. Yet China's "reluctance to criticize the North" and harder stances

against Pyongyang in both Seoul and Tokyo<sup>314</sup> will make U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation more desirable at present.

The other major change that will affect the future of trilateral cooperation is the current breakdown of the Six Party Talks. Schoff argues that, “As long as the six-party process continues and shows more signs of promise, it is impractical to expect the TCOG to resume its previous pattern of strong, centralized U.S. leadership, public press statements, and regular meetings of the foreign ministers and the secretary of state. The fact is that the TCOG now plays a supporting role to the six-party process, and this situation will continue as long as the multilateral negotiations remain viable.”<sup>315</sup> How will the current impasse affect the utility and desirability for institutionalized trilateral consultations among the United States, South Korea and Japan? The failure of multilateral efforts to resolve North Korean security issues may increase awareness in Washington, Tokyo and Seoul that an institutionalized U.S.-ROK-Japan consultative framework is once again needed to facilitate trilateral cooperation.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> International Crisis Group, “North Korea: The Risks of War in the Yellow Sea,” *Asia Report*, No. 198 (December 2010), pp. 35-36. See also Toru Higashioka and Akihiko Kaise, “Japan, U.S., South Korea will ask China to rein in N. Korea,” *Asahi Shimbun*, May 22, 2010, [http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/politics/AJ201205220074](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201205220074). Accessed December 3, 2012; Toru Higashioka and Kim Soonhi, “Trilateral joint declaration omits all references to North Korea,” *Asahi Shimbun*, May 15, 2012, [http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/politics/AJ201205150040](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201205150040). Accessed December 3, 2012.

<sup>315</sup> Schoff, *Tools for Trilateralism*, p. 33.

<sup>316</sup> Refer to the three countries’ suggestion of a working-level Steering Group to facilitate trilateral cooperation. See U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, *Trilateral Joint Statement*, July 12, 2012.

#### **4. The Incomplete Journey**

Although trilateral policy coordination among the United States, South Korea and Japan has fluctuated over time, a triangular relationship based on bilateral security alliances with the United States and a long strategic partnership reveal signs that the future of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation is an optimistic one. Common values, interests, and threats will continue to tie the three countries together in a complex web of cooperation and conflict. Despite being established as an ad-hoc solution to address the North Korean security issue, the TCOG's function as a policy coordination mechanism among the three countries created an important foundation for future trilateral cooperation toward North Korea and other regional security issues. The TCOG was an incomplete journey for U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation, yet new challenges and new opportunities for increased trilateral cooperation present a new journey to be taken.

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## Appendix

### Domestic Threat Perceptions of North Korea and Changes in Trilateral Coordination (TCOG)

Generated by using official government websites of the U.S., South Korean and Japanese foreign affairs ministries.

<b>Date (mm/dd/yy)</b>	<b>North Korean Threat and Developments</b>	<b>Date (mm/dd/yy)</b>	<b>Domestic Responses in US, ROK, and Japan</b>	<b>Date (mm/dd/yy)</b>	<b>Changes in the TCOG/trilateral coordination</b>
8/31/98	North Korea tests the Taepodong-1 missile, which flies over Japanese territory.  Suspicious of an underground nuclear site.	9/1/98	Japan unilaterally suspends negotiations with North Korea and freezes funding for food aid and the KEDO; U.S. and South Korea downplay threat and begin pressure on Japan to resume funding for the KEDO.		
		9/22/98	President Clinton and Prime Minister Obuchi summit meeting - reaffirmation of Agreed Framework for containing North Korean nuclear threat.	9/24/98	US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Masahiko Koumura, and ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Hong Soon-young meet in New York to discuss policies toward North Korea.
		10/8/98	President Kim Dae-jung and Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo issue ROK-Japan joint statement.		
		11/12/98	President Clinton appoints William Perry, as coordinator for North Korea policy, and conducts policy review.		
12/4-11/98	U.S.-DPRK talks on suspected nuclear site in Kumchangri. The DPRK agrees to allow for inspections.	12/7/98  12/10/98	Perry and Lim Dong-won discuss inspections and policy toward the DPRK in Seoul.  Perry visits Japan for consultation.		
1/16-17/99	U.S.-DPRK bilateral discussions on suspected nuclear site at Kumchang-ri in Geneva.	1/27/99	Perry and Lim meet in Washington and hold debate on each country's respective positions toward North Korea.	2/6/1999	Trilateral meeting in Seoul led by Charles Kartman, Terada Terusuke, and Kwon Jon-rak. The three countries focus on the North Korean nuclear problem and the suspected underground nuclear facility.
		2/26/99	Armitage Report	2/26/99	Trilateral security meeting in Seoul. Defense officials from the three countries discuss mutual security concerns and ways to improve security cooperation.
		3/4-3/10/99  3/9/99	Perry travels to Seoul, Tokyo, and Beijing as part of his review of U.S. policy toward North Korea.  President Kim Dae-jung and Perry agree to pursue economic and		

			diplomatic engagement.		
3/16/99	DPRK grants access to U.S. to inspect Kumchangri for suspected nuclear site.	3/20/99	President Kim and Prime Minister Obuchi meet in Seoul and agree to continue pursuing engagement policy.		
3/24/99	North Korean vessels enter Japanese waters and Japanese intercept by firing warning shots.	April to May 1999	Japanese Diet approves final passage of New Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation.		
4/24-27/99	Four Party Talks (US-China-ROK-DPRK) in Geneva.			4/24-25/99	Trilateral meeting in Honolulu. The three countries agree to establish the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG). Agree to meet at least quarterly at senior-levels (Perry, Kato, Lim).
5/18-24/99	U.S. State Department visits Kumchangri in DPRK.	5/20-27/99	U.S. State Department confirms there is no nuclear facility in Kumchangri.	5/24/99	TCOG meeting in Tokyo reaffirms necessity of trilateral coordination to address North Korean issue.
5/25-27/99	Perry visits Pyongyang and makes bilateral negotiations with North Korean officials.			5/29/1999	TCOG meeting in Seoul. U.S. State Department confirms there is no nuclear facility in Kumchangri following Perry's visit to North Korea.
6/15/99	North Korean ships cross NLL and North-South skirmish ensues.			6/25-26/99	TCOG meeting in Washington. Wendy Sherman, Jang Jai-ryong, and Kato Ryoza discuss U.S.-DPRK and ROK-DPRK bilateral meetings and reaffirm commitments to the Agreed Framework.
		6/16-21/99	Japanese, U.S., and South Korean media and intelligence sources predict a second DPRK missile test (Taepodong-2) and improving missile capabilities.	7/27/99	Foreign ministers hold a trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Singapore (Albright, Hong, Koumura). Announce that punitive measures will be taken by the three countries in response to a second DPRK missile launch.
8/5-9/99	Last Four-Party meeting in Geneva. U.S.-China-ROK-DPRK fail to set agenda.	8/5/99	First joint search and rescue exercise between ROK Navy and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF).		
9/7-12/99	U.S.-DPRK talks in Berlin. North Korea agrees on moratorium on testing long-range missiles and U.S. agrees to partially lift sanctions. Both agree to more bilateral talks.			9/9/99  9/12/99	Foreign ministers (Albright, Hong, Koumura) hold a trilateral meeting on the sidelines of an APEC meeting in Auckland.  Heads of state (Clinton, Kim, Obuchi) hold trilateral meeting on the sidelines of an APEC meeting in Auckland.

		9/15/99  9/22/99	Perry submits report on North Korean policy to President Clinton.  Perry and Lim meet in Seoul to discuss Perry report and its practical application.	11/8-9/99	TCOG meeting in Washington. Discuss strategy for upcoming U.S.-DPRK conference in Berlin. Reaffirm importance of trilateral coordination and the Agreed Framework (Sherman, Jang Jai-ryong, Takeuchi Yukio).
11/19/99	U.S.-DPRK talks in Berlin. Prepare for North Korean high-level visit to Washington.	12/15/99  3/7/00	KEDO signs contract with Korea Electric Power Corporation to start building LWR in North Korea.  Japan agrees to provide 100,000 tons of rice to North Korea through UN agencies.	2/1/00	TCOG meeting in Seoul. Emphasize economic and cultural exchange between North and South. Review U.S.-DPRK talks in Berlin and reaffirm the Agreed Framework (Sherman, Takeuchi, Jang).
3/9/00	Kim Dae-jung speech in Berlin ("Berlin Declaration") to substantially increase South Korean aid to North Korea.			3/30/00	TCOG meeting in Tokyo. Consult and discuss bilateral relations with North Korea (Sherman, Takeuchi, Jang).
4/4-7/00  4/8/00	Japan-DPRK normalization talks in Pyongyang.  North and South Korea agree on dates for inter-Korean summit meeting.			5/12/00	TCOG meeting in Tokyo. Discuss bilateral relations with North Korea and upcoming inter-Korea summit (Sherman, Takeuchi, Jang).
5/25-27/00	U.S. makes second inspection of Kumchangri site. No suspicious nuclear activity is found.				
6/15/00	Inter-Korean summit between Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il. The ROK and DPRK release a joint statement to increase economic and cultural exchange and reunite separated families. No commitments made toward nuclear issue.	6/19/00  Aug. 2000  Sept. 2000	U.S. eases sanctions on North Korea.  First round of family reunions between North and South.  ROK government releases former North Korean spies.	6/29-30/00	TCOG meeting in Hawaii. Discuss inter-Korean summit meeting and emphasize continued dialogue between the two Koreas (Sherman, Takeuchi, Jang).
8/21-25/00	Japan-DPRK normalization talks in Tokyo.	Sept. 2000	President Kim visits Japan and urges Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro to improve Japan-DPRK relations and gives support for normalization. Also establish Japan-Korea FTA Business Forum.		
10/9-12/00	DPRK Vice Marshall Jo Myong-rok visits Washington.	early Oct.	Japan decides to give 500,000 tons of rice to North Korea.	10/7/00	TCOG meeting in Washington. Confer on separate bilateral relations with North Korea.
10/23/00	Secretary of State Albright visits Pyongyang and meets Kim Jong-il.			10/25/00	TCOG meeting in Seoul among foreign ministers. Discuss Albright's visit to Pyongyang.
10/30/00	Japan-DPRK normalization talks in Beijing.				
		1/20/01	President Bush enters office.		
		2/28/01	ROK government takes tough stance against Japan for history textbooks.		

		3/7/01	Presidents Kim Dae-jung and Bush meet in Washington to discuss policy approach toward North Korea. Bush places preconditions on bilateral talks with the DPRK.		
3/13/01	North Korea cancels ministerial-level talks with South Korea.			3/26/01	TCOG meeting in Seoul. Talks held among Thomas Hubbard, Lim Sung-joon, and Makita Kunihiko. South Korea urges U.S. to resume bilateral talks with North Korea and avoid threatening rhetoric. Decide to keep the TCOG label/name.
3/15/01	Strong criticism of U.S. policy from North Korea following Bush-Kim Dae-jung meeting.				
		4/26/01	Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro enters office.		
		6/1/01	Bush speech at West Point condemnation of WMD and rogue states	5/26/01	TCOG meeting in Hawaii (James Kelly, Lim, Makita). Discuss preliminary review of U.S. policy toward North Korea. Possible revision of Agreed Framework and replacement of LWRs with thermal power plants.
		6/6/01	Bush administration completes review of U.S. policy toward North Korea.		
6/13/01	Charles Pritchard meets North Korean representative to the UN, Yi Hyong-chol. Make plans for bilateral talks.				
		7/29/01	Koizumi and LDP win Upper House election.		
8/4/01	Kim Jong-il meets with President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Kim pledges to maintain moratorium on missile tests.			9/6/01	TCOG meeting in Tokyo. Discuss DPRK-Russia meeting and North Korea proposal to resume talks with the ROK (Kelly, Lim, Makita).
9/11/01	Terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.	9/17/01	Japan and South Korea announce support for U.S. campaign against terrorism.		
		9/20/01	Bush administration launches the War on Terror.		
10/7/01	U.S. and UN coalition forces invade Afghanistan.	10/29/01	Japanese Diet passes the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Bill. The law allows Japan to actively contribute to international efforts to prevent international terrorism.		
		11/17/01	Director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of Japan's MOFA, Tanaka Hitoshi, secretly meets with North Korean official, "Mr. X".	11/26-27/01	TCOG meeting in San Francisco. Discuss suspended ROK-DPRK and Japan-DPRK relations and implications of Bush's War on Terror (Kelly, Lim, Tanaka Hitoshi).
				1/25-26/02	TCOG meeting in Seoul. U.S. expresses desire to resume talks with North Korea (Kelly, Lim, Tanaka).
		1/29/02	Bush State of the Union address and inclusion of North Korea in the		

		Jan. 2002	"axis of evil." Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) submitted to Congress – suggests use of tactical weapons		
Feb-Mar2002	North Korea releases abducted Japanese citizens (reporter and students).	2/18-19/02	President Bush visits Japan and meets Prime Minister Koizumi. Both leaders reaffirm commitment to trilateral cooperation on DPRK issue.		
		2/20/02	President Bush visits South Korea and meets President Kim Dae-jung. Bush says U.S. has no intention of invading the DPRK.		
		3/21-23/02	Prime Minister Koizumi visits Seoul and holds summit meeting with President Kim Dae-jung. The two leaders reaffirm strong bilateral ties.		
4/3-4/02	Lim Dong-won visits Pyongyang to stress importance of North Korea's relations with other countries and inter-Korean relations.	4/1/02	President Bush refuses to acknowledge North Korean compliance with the Agreed Framework. Waives law that would prevent U.S. funding of the KEDO.	4/9/02	TCOG meeting in Tokyo. Discuss U.S. planned visit to North Korea (delegation originally to be led by Pritchard but switched to Kelly). Review results of ROK visit to Pyongyang (Kelly, Lee Tae-sik, Tanaka).
4/29/02	Japan and DPRK discuss plans to hold talks on the abduction issue in a Red Cross meeting in Beijing.				
		6/13/02	U.S. armored vehicle in South Korea kills two Korean girls and starts mass anti-American protests in South Korea.	6/18/02	TCOG meeting in San Francisco. Discuss planned U.S. trip to North Korea (Kelly, Lee Tae-sik, Tanaka) South Korea recommends sending Richard Armitage or James Kelly, instead of Pritchard (wanted a more senior-level official).
6/29/02	Naval clash between North and South Korea.	7/1/02	President Kim and Prime Minister Koizumi meet in Tokyo and reaffirm ROK-Japan cooperation.		
		7/2/02	U.S. cancels planned trip to Pyongyang.		
7/25/02	North Korea expresses regret over naval incident.	Aug 2002	President Kim accepts as apology. 7 <sup>th</sup> inter-Korean ministerial talks and 2 <sup>nd</sup> North-South economic talks held.		
8/18/02	Japan-DPRK Red Cross meeting in Pyongyang.	8/27/02	U.S.-Japan bilateral meeting in Tokyo. Koizumi announces planned visit to Pyongyang. Armitage informs of HEU suspicions.	9/9/02	TCOG meeting in San Francisco. Discuss Koizumi planned visit to North Korea (Kelly, Lee Tae-sik, Tanaka).
8/25-26/02	Japan and DPRK hold foreign affairs director-level talks in Pyongyang. The two countries reach a detailed agreement.	8/28/02	John Bolton visits Seoul to discuss U.S. suspicions of HEU.		

		8/30/02	Japan announces plan to have Prime Minister Koizumi visit North Korea.		
9/17/02	Koizumi visits Pyongyang and meets Kim Jong-il. The two leaders sign the Pyongyang Declaration.	9/17/02	Japanese public displays outrage over abductees' deaths.  The White House reveals its National Security Strategy 2002 and defines rogue states, proliferation, and terrorism as main threats to U.S. security.		
10/3-5/02	Kelly visits Pyongyang and confronts the DPRK on its secret HEU program.	10/16/02  10/17/02  10/20/02	President Bush signs Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iraq Resolution of 2002. Focus shifts to Iraq and Bush attempts to avoid escalation of crisis in North Korea.  U.S. and ROK announce DPRK's admission to HEU program.  Secretary of State Colin Powell states the North Korean nuclear program violates, and ultimately nullifies, the Agreed Framework.	10/26/02	Heads of state (Bush, Kim, Koizumi) meet on the sidelines of APEC meeting in Mexico. The three leaders emphasized the importance of a multilateral approach to deal with North Korean issue.
11/5/02	North Korea threatens to end moratorium on missile testing if Japan-DPRK normalization talks do not progress.			11/8-9/02	TCOG meeting in Tokyo. Condemnation of North Korea's nuclear program and discuss HFO shipments. The three countries decide to suspend the December and January shipments despite the reluctance of the ROK and Japan.
		11/14/02	KEDO executive board announces suspension of heavy-fuel oil shipments to North Korea.		
12/12/02  12/21-31/02	North Korea resumes its nuclear program.  North Korea removes and surveillance cameras and expels IAEA inspectors.	1/6/03	IAEA adopts resolution that condemns North Korean resumption of its nuclear program.	1/6-7/03	TCOG meeting in Washington. Discuss DPRK nuclear activities and whether LWR project should be continued (Kelly, Lee Tae-sik, Yabunaka Mitoji).
1/10/03	North Korea announces its withdrawal from the NPT.	1/24/03	ROK announces planned visit to Pyongyang.		
1/27/03	Lim Dong-won leads ROK delegation to North Korea. Kim Jong-il refuses to meet.				
2/24/03	North Korea tests a land-to-ship missile.	2/24/03	ROK Ministry of Defense announces that it is trying to determine if the launch was a training exercise or missile test. Japan states that North Korea's actions do not violate the Pyongyang Declaration.		

		2/25/03	President Roh Moo-hyun enters office. Introduces policy of peace and prosperity, and continues engaging the North.		
		3/7/03	Japan prepares for potential North Korea missile launch with ground-radar and Aegis Combat System.		
3/19/03	U.S. invasion of Iraq.				
3/31/03	North Korea announces it has started reprocessing fuel rods.	4/1/03	U.S., ROK, and Japan have conflicting intelligence reports on DPRK missile firing.		
		4/2/03	Koizumi supports Bush administration's policy toward North Korea (Washington Post interview).		
4/12/03	North Korea agrees to hold trilateral talks with the U.S. and China.	4/16/03	Prime Minister Koizumi expresses support for U.S.-China-DPRK trilateral talks.		
		4/17/03	Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe Shinzo states Japan-DPRK normalization talks cannot continue without resolution of abduction issue.		
4/23-25/03	Trilateral meeting held among the U.S., DPRK, and China in Beijing.		South Korea criticism of trilateral talks among U.S.-China-DPRK that do not include South Korea.		
		5/14/03	Presidents Bush and Roh Moo-hyun hold summit meeting in Washington. Two leaders release joint statement that excludes a military option against North Korea.		
		5/23/03	President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi summit meeting in Texas. Agree on policy of reciprocity toward the DPRK (CVID, nuclear weapons intolerable, will not give into DPRK blackmail).		
		6/6/03	Japanese Diet passes the Three Laws Regarding Response to Armed Attacks.		
6/7/03	President Roh Moo-hyun and Prime Minister Koizumi hold summit meeting in Tokyo. Both leaders express agreement on policy toward North Korea.	6/9/03	President Roh calls for greater sensitivity to history in a speech made before the Japanese Diet.	6/12-13/03	Final TCOG meeting in Hawaii. Discuss other meeting formats, including trilateral and multilateral talks. U.S. suggests abrogation of LWR project and presents containment strategy (Kelly, Lee Soo-hyuk, Yabunaka).
		6/17/03	Abe states pressure is needed against North Korea (no economic aid without normalization).		
8/27-29/03	First round of Six-Party Talks among the U.S., ROK, Japan, China, Russia, and DPRK in Beijing.				

## 국문초록

### 한·미·일 삼각협력 과정의 불안정한 여정: 대북정책조정그룹회의(TCOG)의 설립과 붕괴

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2002-2003 년 점차 고조되는 북핵 위기의 와중에도 대북정책조정그룹회의 (Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group; TCOG) -한국, 미국, 일본 간에 설립된 삼자 안보협력 메커니즘 -은 3 국 정부의 상이한 대북정책을 조율하고 통합하는데 실패하였다. 점증하는 북핵 위협에도 불구하고, 왜 대북정책조정그룹회의 정책 조정 기제는 와해되었는가? 공통된 가치, 이익 및 지역적 안보 문제에도 불구하고, 한국과 미국, 그리고 일본은 한반도의 긴장이 점차 고조되는 국면에서 북한에 대한 통합된 정책적 접근을 이루어 내지 못하였다. 당시 지역적 안보 상황에 비추어 볼 때, 어떠한 내외적 요인과 계산들이 한·미·일 3 국이 대북정책조정그룹회의라는 대북정책 조율 수단을 형성하도록 하였는가? 또한 내외적 요인 상 어떠한 변화들이 대북정책조정그룹회의를 와해시켰는가? 본 연구는 3 국이 북한에 대해 형성한 상이한 위협 인식 (threat perception)이 3 자 조율 기구를 통해 통합 불가능한, 상충되는 대북정책으로 이어졌음을 보여줄 것이다. 대북정책조정그룹회의는 3 국 정부간 대북 정책 조정 메커니즘으로써의 기능을 상실하였다. 그 결과, 삼각 정책 조정 기제는 6 자 회담 내의 다자 협의 구도로 대체되었다.

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주제어: 동아시아 안보, TCOG, 한·미·일 삼각협력, 북한, 위협인식, 6 자 회담  
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