

# **Building Peace on the Korean Peninsula: In Search of a Multi-Dimensional Approach**

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**D**ebate on settling peace on the Korean peninsula has a relatively long history, but until recently there has been no serious discussion supported by a feasibility study. A resurgence of ideas about some framework or institution to build peace and stability in Northeast Asia has been made possible by an emerging consensus among major powers in the region that they are entering a historical moment to form the foundation for peace and security based on tension reduction efforts in the area. Such consensus has been forming in the midst of the breakdown of the Cold War power structure that has defined the security environment in this region over the past four decades. The passively defined concept of peace in power politics dominating international relations has shifted into one with rather positive implications in the era of geoeconomics, made possible with the flow of trade, finance and technology and growing interdependence among regional economies.

With the frequent use of the concept of "global partnership," the old "enemy" is being replaced by the new term "adversary." In the formation of a new world order we can observe that there is still a complicated development process to this newly emerging order in the international arena. Especially on the Korean

peninsula, where the two Koreas militarily confront each other and antagonism remains high, the complexity of this new order is vividly exposed.

Since the late 1980s the Korean government has conducted a so-called Northern Policy or "Omni-directional Diplomacy" to normalize official relations with previous socialist regimes. This policy started with a strong political motivation to exert diplomatic pressure on the North Korean regime, and it was a full-fledged initiative for easing tensions on the peninsula by exploiting the changing international environment in the post-Cold War era.

Korea's remarkable Northern Policy is a milestone, but there has been little serious debate over any concrete or concerted approaches to building an actual peace mechanism in the region. Of course, at the United Nations General Assembly address in October 1988 we heard President Roh Tae Woo's proposal for a consultative conference for peace between the United States, the PRC, the Soviet Union, and Japan as well as South and North Korea in order to lay a solid foundation for lasting peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia.<sup>1</sup>

The ROK government, however, has not since then shown any positive reaction to several other proposals of a kind by the Soviet Union, Canada, and Australia for a multilateral security forum. Neither former Soviet President Gorbachev's All-Asian Security and Cooperation Conference proposal and All-Asian Process concept in September 1988 and May 1989 respectively, nor Foreign Minister Shevardnaze's All-Asian Forum proposal in September 1990, nor Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans' proposal for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia (CSCA) in July 1990, nor Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark's idea of a new security dialogue among North Pacific

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1 Roh Tae Woo, *Korea: A Nation Transformed, Selected Speeches* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1990), p. 9.

Countries in July 1990 — the Korean government took a positive stance to none of these proposals for regional security.

Such passive response from Korea might be coming from a lack of clear understanding or in-depth analysis of positions and strategies of the several nations concerned in the regional security forum idea; Korea itself, however, proposed its own idea of multilateral arrangements. It can be understood that the Korean government has been indecisive in placing priority between the two tasks of establishing peace in Northeast Asia (and on the Korean peninsula in particular) on the one hand, and of attaining national unification on the other. Neither has it had a clear vision or strategy in linking these two significant issues.

Policymakers, in fact, seemed very much concerned that their efforts to create a peace mechanism on the peninsula by inviting the participation of major countries in the region and seeking their security guarantee would perpetuate the division of the peninsula. (In some sense it is true that the argument in favor of the status quo of a divided Korea might coincide with the interests of each of the countries surrounding the peninsula.) Within the extension of this line of argument, creating a peace mechanism in the region can be understood as an obstacle to the unification of Korea. Such anxiety can be justified considering historical experience in the late 19th century when the Korean peninsula was victimized in the midst of a struggle among major powers. The Korean government's apprehension towards a possible resurgence of a similar situation has led it to sustain the position that progress in inter-Korean relations should precede any serious debate on a multilateral approach to security arrangements.

This paper is an effort to examine the state of debate on a multilateral security forum in the region by exploring the positions of the countries involved. The paper also points out some considerations that should be taken into account in initiating a Korean version of a multilateral forum within the context of

executing a so-called "multi-dimensional" foreign policy by the Korean government.

### **Multilateralism in Regional Security Arrangements**

Last December U.S. Secretary of State James Baker mentioned the idea of a regional security forum consisting of four major countries, the U.S., PRC, Russia, Japan and South and North Korea, the so-called "two-plus-four formula."<sup>2</sup> It seems the proposal was initiated by focusing on tension reduction on the Korean peninsula through suggesting options for a breakthrough in resolving the issue of DPRK nuclear weapons development, which is a major obstacle in the inter-Korean dialogue. In a press interview in July 1992 Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa also expressed his interest in some format of multilateral dialogue for regional security. He also mentioned that he would create a consulting body under his leadership to deal with the issue. This is the first statement ever made by an incumbent Japanese prime minister concerning a regional mechanism.

A Korean newspaper picked up the news with reference to the discussion currently undertaken within the Korean government policy circle, which is seriously considering a multilateral security forum similar to that of the U.S. proposal, as well as to a resurgence of President Roh's 1988 proposal.

Why is the Korean government reexamining the idea? Several considerations inducing such government action can be mentioned. First of all, recent developments on the Korean peninsula may exert a significant impact. Among these developments are the "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation" on 13 December 1991; a South Korean Presidential statement on 18 December 1991, that no nuclear weapons exist "anywhere in the Republic of Korea"; and

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2 James A. Baker, III, "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1991/1992), p. 13.

the six-point denuclearization agreement initialled by the Koreans on December 31, 1991, as well as the coming into force of the above two agreements on February 19, 1992. These occasions symbolically reflect the ongoing interplay among global and regional trends, inter-Korean relations, and North and South Korean domestic politics, which define a new positive setting of the power game on the peninsula.

Secondly, the admission to the United Nations by the two Koreas had significant impact in launching serious discussion of the multilateral forum. For South Korea, entering the United Nations means that the international community has given it official recognition and approval for its due place in world politics and economy. It means a successful fruition of what has been pursued in the name of "Northern Policy," an energetic effort to win diplomatic recognition by the former socialist countries who previously refused to deal with Seoul for fear of offending Pyongyang. By entering the United Nations together, North and South Korea have in effect gained a ready and useful channel of dialogue and consultations. Contrary to the apprehension some hold that North Korea might bring the inter-Korea quarrel into the world forum, it will be to Pyongyang's own interest to maintain a relationship of coexistence with South Korea. The United Nations offers Pyongyang a much needed opportunity to contact on a regular basis all other countries of the world including the western powers, and relieves the North from prolonged international isolation.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, in addition to the confidence built from the success of Northern Policy, leadership at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and diplomatic skill in inducing the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong to gain membership simultaneously could pro-

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3 Sung-Joo Han, "Korea and the Changing International Relations in East Asia," paper presented at the second roundtable conference of the Korean Institute of International Studies and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 9-16 October 1991, Seoul, Korea, pp. 11-16.

vide the Korean government with pride and privilege in actively playing in the world scene.

Fourthly, recent success with the expanding role of the CSCE, a security consultative body in the European theater, demonstrated positive aspects of a multilateral arrangement in dealing with regional security and other issues, even though reservation remains in applying the exact idea to the Asian region.

In addition to these positive considerations, some other elements might have been taken into account rather passively. First of all, the United States government is rethinking the idea of multilateralism in securing peace in the region, as explored in Secretary Baker's article. The idea assumes the gradual withdrawal of the U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region and increasing burden-sharing with its host nations such as Japan and South Korea. This proposal when it is materialized as planned will be calling upon a South Korean decision sooner or later.

Secondly, the Korean government has taken seriously the increasing role of Japan in the region, which was symbolically manifested by the passage of the Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) bill at the Japanese Diet and the decision to send troops to Cambodia under the UN flag. This Japanese posture readily signals to Koreans that Japan is beginning an effort to boost its prestige and increase influence commensurate with its economic power in the international community. Among Japan's neighboring countries, South Korea is airing its sensitivity to Japan's recent path, and there is an increasing call for some measures to counter-balance Japan's expanding role. A multilateral mechanism is being discussed within the Korean government policy circle as one option to fit this purpose.

Thirdly, considering that the North's nuclear weapons program is a serious obstacle to hinder the progress of inter-Korean relations, a multilateral effort could be one possible breakthrough. The North's nuclear program and its missile shipment to the Middle East are drawing international attention and rais-

ing concerns among neighboring countries including Pyongyang's traditional allies, Russia and the PRC. A concerted pressure through a multilateral arrangement could also be an appropriate way to accomplish shared objectives.

Fourthly, the PRC's recent efforts to strengthen its defense capability are stirring the anxiety of regional states, who are demanding some sort of regime that can put China's expansionist intent within its control. The PRC is seeking to exploit the potential power vacuum created by the demise of the former Soviet military power in Northeast Asia and by the U.S. withdrawal of its forces from the Subic Bay naval and Clark airforce bases in the Philippines.

Finally, in regard to the ASEAN countries' recent gesture in formulating a security forum that could extend from their current major interest in economic issues, the Korean government would not want to be ruled out as a legitimate party in such a gathering. Moreover, there is every reason for Korea to try to preempt the ASEAN proposal by exploring its own idea of a multilateral security arrangement assuming within the scheme a major U.S. role.

The ROK government, willingly or unwillingly, is entering the moment to promote the idea of settling peace on the peninsula.

When South Korea considers a multilateral forum for discussing means to ease tensions, it would quite naturally project the North as a potential threat or adversary. But logically the North should not in the settlement of the peace mechanism be ruled out as a potential party with whom to cooperate. Therefore, the most significant factors to be considered in the process of materializing a regional security arrangement are the current state of inter-Korean relations and their prospects.

### **Current State of the Inter-Korean Relations**

Since the first prime ministerial dialogue held in September 1990, seven rounds of meetings were held, and at the sixth

high-level talks in February 1992 a historic document was put into force on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation with Joint Declaration of Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

It should be clear that the North signed this agreement to guard against the sea-changes sweeping in the world and to survive in its own way without breaking from its old line of argument on unification.<sup>4</sup> This is why the South is committed to pursuing a consistent policy of achieving genuine denuclearization, bilateral deterrence and confidence-building measures with the North while maintaining some U.S. troops as well as the mutual defense treaty with the U.S. for security on the peninsula. This includes emphasizing economic interdependence with Japan and other major powers in the region until it accomplishes a peaceful unification.<sup>5</sup> Under the current circumstances, the North seems to be more interested in using the basic agreement with the South as a shield against external challenges and as a means of securing international recognition and economic cooperation from the South. The South on the other hand is more interested in creating political and military confidence and in realizing with the North mutual communications and visits between separated families.

As they witness the signing of the agreement, some protagonists argue that an era of reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas has already opened, so long as significant steps follow the agreements. However, there still remains skepticism that such agreement in formalities can be meaningful only when followed by substantive achievement in a more serious area of

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4 Jeong Woo Kil, "Inter-Korean Relations in Changing Northeast Asian Context," paper presented at the international conference on "Korea and the Newly Emerging Global Order," sponsored by the Korean Institute of International Studies, 18-20 June 1992, Seoul, pp. 17-18.

5 Byung-joon Ahn, "Korea's Security Interests and Role in the Pacific Rim," *Pacific Rim Security Cooperation* (Seoul: Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, 1992), pp. 53-66.



security including the nuclear issue that is currently drawing urgent attention from the international community.

The North's attitude and actions on the nuclear issue can be regarded as a litmus test for determining whether or not it is serious about implementing the agreements and undertaking serious tension reduction talks with the South. Considering the failure of the Joint Nuclear Control Commission meetings to draw up details of regulations for bilateral inspections, the South Korean authorities reaffirmed their strong position: that there would be no substantial progress in inter-Korean relations especially in the area of economic cooperation until the proper settlement of the nuclear issue. The policy linkage of the South between economic cooperation and the nuclear issue is still valid.

After the visit to Korea in July by North Korean Deputy Prime Minister for International Trade, Kim Dal-Hyun, debate on the validity and effectiveness of such linkage strategy came to surface. The business community, eager to do business with the North, together with a group of liberals in the government are arguing that this policy can be implemented with a flexibility that could provide, even at limited scale, some leverage for North Korean reform-minded techno-bureaucrats supporting economic exchanges and cooperation with the South in their policy struggle against the hardliners in the Politburo and the military. On the other hand conservatives in the South, when pointing out the dual-track policy of the North, are emphasizing that a strict application of the linkage policy will be the most effective pressure to prod the North into following the path South Korea and other western countries are assuming to ease tensions on the peninsula. They are underscoring the implementation of mutual inspection of nuclear facilities, and unless it happens no substantial progress in inter-Korean relations can be expected. This voice is supported by the United States, which has continuously expressed concern over the North's ongoing nuclear weapons development and developing missile technology and their sale to the outside world. Secretary Baker's

proposal last December seems to be formulated within this line of serious apprehensions over Pyongyang's intention.

Considering North Korea's motive to develop nuclear weapons and based as well upon the report of the IAEA inspection of the North's nuclear site, neighboring countries in Northeast Asia have begun to share an urgent need to build a mechanism in which appropriate ways to solve this matter can be discussed.<sup>6</sup> There has come a consensus that without successful resolution of the nuclear issue, no meaningful discussion on arms control or disarmament in the region can be possible. What are the positions of the four major countries, the U.S., Japan, the PRC and Russia to see multilateral security arrangements in Northeast Asia focus upon the Korean peninsula?

### Major Powers' Assessment of a Multilateral Forum

Multilateralism has no roots in the Asia-Pacific region. There are few positive historical precedents for regional security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. Unlike the Atlantic world, the Pacific area has never been neatly tied in alliance knots. Rather than replicating the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, for instance, the post-World War II Asia-Pacific region has been left largely to looser bilateral ties, often dominated by a single major ally. The cultural, linguistic, ethnic diversities, and certain long-standing animosities in Asia were too great to allow for any Pacific analogue to NATO.<sup>7</sup>

The underlying premise of the U.S. assessment of any kind of security arrangement is that the United States's has vital economic and security interests in the Asia-Pacific theater. The question is how best to protect these interests. On this basis, the U.S.

6 For an analysis of the DPRK's motive to go nuclear, to see Andrew Mack, "North Korea and the Bomb," *Foreign Policy* (June 1991), pp. 93-102.

7 For a detailed discussion of the pitfalls of multilateralism in the region, see Patrick M. Cronin, "Multilateral Security Approaches Toward Asia," *Strategic Review* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Strategic Institute, Spring 1992), pp. 66-68.

properly assesses the utility of existing security relationships, or force deployment patterns.

Currently five security alliances provide the framework for the American military interaction with its Asia-Pacific neighbors. Although these alliances were initially targeted, and justified in terms of containing Soviet or communist expansion, the actual threat environment defies simple description. In reality, few outside Japan and China ever saw the former Soviet Union as the primary threat. Many see threats emanating from non-communist sources, with a resurgent Japan being primary among potential alternate threats. In addition to a bilateral security alliance, the United States helped to bolster existing multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations peacekeeping operations and the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime on an international level, and such as APEC and ASEAN on a regional level.

Considering any regional coalition for security cooperation, the U.S. cannot guarantee that the American leadership of Desert Storm-type collective efforts will be automatic. If fewer and fewer Asians come to share America's vision of a new world order, the Americans could be increasingly excluded from the region. Thus, the United States may find sooner or later that a new multilateral forum for dialogue in Northeast Asia together with a limited regime for confidence- and security-building measures might be one of the best ways to cement the United States firmly in the region. Not only would the U.S. incur no rigid alliance commitments, but it would also reassure Asian countries that the United States is in the Pacific to stay. And although the U.S. may not fully share the fears of Japan's neighbors, the American commitment to a multilateral mechanism in the region can play a role to assuage the fears of the countries in Northeast Asia rather than exacerbate a resurgent, remilitarized Japan.

As China is currently and will be in the years or decades to come concentrating its efforts on national reconstruction, it needs an external environment of lasting peace, and in particular such an environment on its periphery. Security and stability on

the Korean peninsula naturally has a close bearing on China's security and security environment. Consequently the Chinese government has on several occasions expressed its appreciation of and has highly appraised the positive developments on the Korean peninsula—particularly the significant progress in South-North relations over the past years.

China's interest in, or concern for, security on the peninsula lies, for the short and near term, in further relaxation of tension and improvement of relations between the four major countries and the two parts of Korea. However, China's role in the Asia-Pacific balance-of-power equation needs to be more clearly defined. It should come as no surprise that China looks out for China first. It distrusts both the Russians and the Japanese but desires normalized, if not cordial, relations with both nations. It seeks closer cooperation with the United States, but on its own terms and not as a "card" to be played against Moscow or any other power.

China's effort to exert influence in the international community and its emphasis on a multilateral approach toward conflict resolution and tension reduction are usually discussed within the context that the United Nations forum be defined as the most likely vehicle. China's veto power as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council enhances its international power and prestige. The PRC may turn out to be the country in the region who shows the most serious interest in a new formula of multilateral security arrangement. The Chinese government has not explicitly stated an objection to the dispatch of Japanese troops to the U.N. peacekeeping operations based on the passage of the PKO bill; only the government news agency expressed any concern over the issue. And the normalization of relations between the Soviet Union and China in May 1989 ended a thirty-year conflict and struggle.

There seems to be no concrete incentive for the PRC to propose voluntarily a multilateral forum in Northeast Asia in general. If other countries were to offer any type of mechanism to talk about

regional issues, however, especially the Korean question, the PRC will not be able to ignore its proper role. In its course of national reconstruction and facing inevitable leadership change, China does not want its neighboring ally North Korea to take any action to destabilize the security environment. Chinese leaders have stated in clear-cut terms that China does not want to see development of nuclear weapons by either side in Korea. This approach is in keeping with the Chinese government's recent entry into the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Therefore, a multilateral forum to be initiated to solve the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula and to discuss conventional disarmament would be acceptable to the PRC, unless DPRK participation were ruled out.

The former Soviet Union had been relatively active in initiating some type of multilateral scheme for discussing regional security issues, but without any substantive followups. Such ideas were based on Soviet recognition of the contribution of the CSCE in securing peace and stability in Europe and its effort to implement a similar idea in the Asia-Pacific region. Since former President Gorbachev's All-Asian Security and Cooperation Conference proposal in September 1988 in his Krasnoyarsk address, through his speech before the Japanese Diet in April 1991, the Russian proposal evolved to reflect more and more a sense of reality and feasibility. In one set of proposals Moscow has been focusing on arms control and disarmament in the Asia-Pacific region without directly mentioning the Korean question as major agenda.

Russia, as a successor to the Soviet Union, technically has remained a military ally of the DPRK. Any open military conflict between Pyongyang and Western countries including the United States would have put Moscow in a rather awkward position, not dissimilar to what the Soviet Union found itself during the Gulf crisis. It has become quite expedient to review the existing pattern of military commitments made earlier to the ROK and the DPRK by the United States and the Soviet Union (now Russia)

respectively. While the U.S. government announced its plans, then, to withdraw some of its troops from the territory of South Korea and to shift the role of American troops on the Korean peninsula from a leading to a supporting role, Russia decided to disengage itself from any active military support of Pyongyang and to refrain from entering into any new arms sales contracts with the DPRK.<sup>8</sup>

But since it would be highly detrimental to the peace and security in the region if Pyongyang were to feel itself abandoned in the face of a real or perceived military threat from the South, Russia assumes its treaty with the DPRK might serve as a counterbalancing role that would reassure Pyongyang. The new Russian government seems to have decided that its basic treaty with the ROK will provide a good opportunity for Russia to be actively involved in the process of ensuring regional security on the Korean peninsula. This line of logic makes sense in that Russia may enhance an advantageous position inherited from the Soviet Union on the peninsula. In other words, the strategy of Russia in its relations with the two Koreas on the issue of regional security should be placed on a solid basis of upholding normal political relations with each of them. Such a constructive approach to regional matters will serve Russia's best interests to pursue the all-important goal reflected in its foreign policy in this part of Asia Pacific: to avoid any military conflict here and to preserve a maximum possible stability on the Korean peninsula.

Japan argues that the U.S.-Japan security arrangement contributes greatly to the peace and stability throughout the region. It is important that the U.S.-Japan security arrangements add credibility, particularly in the eyes of Asian countries, to Japan's policy that it not become a big military power. Japan's policy of maintaining an exclusively defensive force posture in terms of

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8 Gennady Chufrin, "Russian Interests in Korean Security in the Post-Cold War World," paper presented at the Workshop on Security and the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s, 25-27 March 1992, Canberra, Australia, p. 12.

weapon systems and scope of operations is in fact reassuring to countries in this region. The key requisite for permitting Japan to pursue this policy is its alliance with the United States.

Japan, even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, perceives a potential threat from Russia based on its uncertainty of the future and the continuing modernization of the weapon systems in the Far East Russian forces. In regard to a multilateral security arrangement, Japan has been keeping a passive posture by pointing out the differences in the geopolitical conditions and strategic environment between the European theater and the Asia-Pacific region. Japan has also argued that it is more important to ensure regional stability by utilizing the existing cooperation mechanisms, centering on economic cooperation. However, some scholars argue the exception to this line of thinking is the Korean peninsula, where a large number of ground forces confront each other and arms control concepts including the CSBM can be applied.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the current concern of many Asian countries on Japan's expanding role, including military activities and supported by its economic capability, can be an inducing factor for the Japanese government to consider seriously initiating some format of multilateral security arrangement. Foreign Minister Nakayama proposed at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference in July 1991 that the conference be used as a forum for political dialogue in order to attain mutual reassurance among the friendly countries in the region. And a recent statement of Prime Minister Miyazawa on the multilateral mechanism for discussion of regional issues can be understood as a big shift in Japanese strategic thinking in this regard.

The four major powers each have their own assessment of a potential multilateral security forum, and they seem to be more

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9 Satoshi Morimoto, "Japan's Interests in Security on the Korean Peninsula in a Post-Cold War World," paper presented at the Workshop on Security and the Korean Peninsula in the 1990s, 25-27 March 1992, Canberra, Australia, p. 4.

prepared than ever before to engage in the initial stage of discussion. Considering this changing environment that calls upon serious attention to such a forum of multilateral arrangement, the Korean government should reexamine its foreign policy objectives as a whole, including a peace settlement and national unification.

### **Conclusion: Some Considerations for Korea's Multilateral Initiative**

Korea is entering the moment to rearrange its foreign policy goals in a new international environment. In this process of adjustment the Korean government, among other things, should reposition its stance concerning the idea of a multilateral security arrangement for establishing peace on the peninsula.

The Korean government has promoted peaceful settlement of current inter-Korean relations on its way toward national unification. In the official unification formula, the government also set the stage for peaceful coexistence with the North, that is, that peace and unification are not matters of choice, and that these two concepts are neither contradictory nor consequential. When Seoul seriously assesses costs and benefits connected with initiating or participating in a multilateral security arrangement, it should reaffirm its position by accepting that the government of North Korea is a valid interlocutor in the pursuit of security on the peninsula.

The development of this viewpoint with South Korea's achievement in Northern Policy, which had the consequence of isolating North Korea, has in light of the events in Europe since 1989 been complicated. The costly and still problematic example of German unification, and the disorder in such former socialist systems as Romania, have had a sobering effect in Seoul. If Pyongyang is not really to be treated as an equal partner in the process of security construction, it follows that the alternative for Seoul would be to seek the collapse of a regime regarded as



illegitimate. This, in turn, if and when successful, would make Seoul suddenly and irrevocably responsible for the welfare and order of an additional 21 million subjects, and for the development of the Northern half of the peninsula which at present is far behind the standard of the South in every respect. In agreeing to negotiate with North Korea, it would seem that South Korea has not chosen this road. Accordingly, it can be understood that the South's objective is now to find a mutually acceptable resolution of the problem of security.<sup>10</sup>

Following this line of argument, approaches to building peace and stability either by way of creating a multilateral mechanism to discuss security issues on the peninsula or by inter-Korean dialogue seem to be in conflict. However, the time will come when Seoul should reexamine its policy in the pursuit of peace, stability and unification. Without clear manifestation of its official position in this regard, Korea will face difficulties in leading or actively participating in any format of multilateral forum to be under serious discussion by neighboring countries.

In conclusion, some suggestions or caveats can be raised in the course of South Korea's endeavor in search of a peace mechanism. First of all, in setting foreign policy goals concerning multilateral mechanism, traditional security relations with the United States should be well cared for, and even further strengthened. Any format of regional security arrangement will not be meaningful in reality if the American active and positive role were to be ruled out.

Secondly, linkage between economic and security issues should be taken seriously and multifaceted approaches should be launched. Trade and arms control issues, of course, cannot be effectively or properly discussed at the same forum, but strategic thinking is required regarding the spillover effect from one area

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10 James Cotton, "A Regional Response to the Korean Problems: Limitations of the Confidence-Building Model," paper presented at the international conference on "The New Asian-Pacific Era and Korea," hosted by the Korean Association of International Studies, 20-21 August 1992, Seoul, Korea, p. 4.

to the other. For instance, trade and economic matters could be dealt with at the current forum of the APEC and non-conventional threats like drugs, the environment, and refugee problems can be discussed through existing international organizations under the United Nations, and regional security and stability can be promoted by a newly initiated multilateral mechanism based on the current bilateral U.S.-ROK and the U.S.-Japan security ties and gradually extended to neighboring countries.

With regard to a new multilateral security arrangement in the region, the Korean government can justifiably play an active role by emphasizing the urgency of a solution to the Korean question and the potent factor of instability in the regional peace exposed by the North's nuclear program. The combination of South-North bilateral dialogue, a subregional forum such as a trilateral dialogue for policy consultation, and a regional multilateral arrangement in the economic and security arena could be an optimal mechanism to ease tensions and build a cooperative forum in Northeast Asia and on the Korean peninsula in particular.