

\*This paper was written in English for Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, but will be presented in Korean for the Korean participants and audiences. (본 발제는 Dr. Lewis 를 위해서 영어로 쓰여졌지만, 발표는 한국어로 진행하겠습니다.)

## **Korea-Japan Relations and the Contradictory U.S. Influences<sup>1</sup>**

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### I. Introduction

This paper will examine Korea-Japan-U.S. triangular relationship while focusing on the contradictory U.S. roles in facilitating Korea-Japan cooperation. The multiple and contradictory effects of the United States on Korea-Japan relations suggest that, in the short run, the goal of U.S. policy towards East Asia should be cautiously set and finely tuned to the regional politics in order to expand the cooperative scope by promoting reconciliation between Korea and Japan—that is, to strengthen the weakest leg of the triangular relationship. In the long run, however, the U.S. should also carefully adjust its East Asia policy in a way to stabilize the regional politics by seeking inclusive cooperation (“cooperation with all against nobody”) rather than exclusive cooperation (“cooperation with some against others”) which reproduces tension between the two adversary groups of states .

### II. Two Alternative Approaches to the Analysis of Korea-Japan Relations

Japan-Korea relations showed enigmatic fluctuations during the Cold War. The persistent historical animosity has influenced their relations even after their diplomatic normalization in 1965. Accordingly, many analysts focus on the colonial legacies negatively affecting their relationship, stressing the abnormal, idiosyncratic, or non-Realist nature of the relationship, which without ‘burden of history’ would have been much more cooperative. Nevertheless, the strategic environment compelled Korea and

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Japan to cooperate against the communist threats. As Realists would expect, Korea and Japan also developed the alignment relationship in a bipolar world.<sup>2</sup>

Many experts employ the historical animosity or ‘psycho-historical’ approach—which is engaged in *dispositional* explanation of state behaviors—focuses on the emotional or psychological conflicts that have developed throughout the long history of the two states’ unfortunate encounters. Indeed, ‘history perception gap’ did and do exist as we have witnessed their effects in the bilateral relationship since 1945.

In the meantime, the strategic settings—*situational* (environmental or systemic) factors—led Korea and Japan to align against the threats from Soviet Union, China and North Korea during the Cold War. As Realists would expect, Korea and Japan also developed their cooperative relationship under the compelling situation in a bipolar international system. One recent version<sup>3</sup> of this Realist approach, Victor Cha’s “quasi-alliance”<sup>4</sup> model, by employing Glenn H. Snyder’s theory of alliance politics and the concept of “alliance security dilemma”<sup>5</sup>—that is, the inverse structure of abandonment/entrapment fears—explains Korea-Japan cooperation/frictions as a function of the U.S. engagement in or disengagement from the East Asian region: When the U.S. disengages from East Asia, there is Korea-Japan cooperation because of their multilateral symmetric abandonment fears regarding the U.S.; when the U.S. engages in the region, there is Korea-Japan friction because of their bilateral asymmetric abandonment/entrapment fears. The argument implies the final U.S. disengagement from the region will promote Korea-Japan cooperation (against China or North Korea threats). This version of Realist approach pays an exclusive attention to the indirect or unintended consequences of the U.S. engagement/disengagement policy on Korea-Japan relations, while ignoring other multiple or contradictory aspects of U.S. policy.

These two alternative approaches have different implications for the U.S. policies towards East Asia and opposite predictions for the prospect of the future Korea-Japan relations. The psycho-historical approach regards the reduction or elimination of

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<sup>2</sup> For balance-of-threat theory, see Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987); idem, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” *International Security*, Vol.9, No.4 (Spring 1985).

<sup>3</sup> Victor Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Cha defines quasi-alliance as “the relationship between two states that remain unallied despite sharing a common ally.” *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>5</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997); idem, “Alliances, Balance, and Stability,” *International Organization*, Vol.45, No.1 (Winter 1991); idem, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.44, No.1 (Spring 1990); and idem, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” *World Politics*, Vol.36, No.4 (July 1984).

perception gap between Korea and Japan as the most important factor in improving the bilateral relations. This approach is usually pessimistic about the prospect of the relationship as long as the perception gap between the two peoples remains unchanged, regardless of the U.S. engagement or disengagement. Thus, its main concern is to find out the ways to bridge the bilateral perception gap on history.

Meanwhile, Cha's quasi-alliance model regards the U.S. engagement as a negative force that decreases Korea-Japan cooperative incentives. This approach is optimistic about the prospect of the relationship even without the U.S. military presence in East Asia. In this corollary Cha succinctly argues for "gradual finality," saying, "Explicit but gradual disengagement fosters greater cooperation."<sup>6</sup>

Each of the two alternative approaches calls our attention to only a partial aspect of Korea-Japan relations. While historical animosity approach focuses on conflictful aspects alone with cooperative aspects unexplained, Cha's quasi-alliance model focuses on the unintended consequences of the U.S. policies of engagement or disengagement with the intended consequences of the three states' willful policy coordination ignored. Cha criticizes that "scholars and practitioners have grown accustomed to throwing up their hands in frustration and blaming historical animosity," and he argues that "[t]his has become a stale and over-utilized argument."<sup>7</sup> However, in analyzing Korea-Japan relations Cha, not unlike those who employ historical animosity alone, makes the same mistake of running the risk of "putting all his eggs in one basket" in the sense that he is trying to explain too much with a single variable: the policies of the United States.

However, we need to recognize various aspects of the U.S. policies and their different or contradictory effects on Korea-Japan relations. Over-reliance on a simplistic analysis might lead the United States to employ a wrong and dangerous policy towards East Asia. Thus the sound analysis of Korea-Japan relationship is in order because it has both theoretical and practical implications significant for the attainment of stability in the East Asian region and for a desirable direction of the U.S. security policies towards this region.

### III. The U.S. Role in the Process of the 1965 Korea-Japan Diplomatic Normalization<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Victor Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, 213.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> This section is a summary of the author's previous analysis. See Tae-Ryong Yoon, "Learning to Cooperate Not to Cooperate: Bargaining for the 1965 Korea-Japan Normalization," *Asian Perspective*, Vol.32, No.2 (Summer 2008).

Why was the 1965 Korea-Japan Normalization achieved at this particular juncture? No existing single factor, such as the U.S. pressure,<sup>9</sup> is sufficient for explaining the outcome. Rather, we need to refocus on what is hitherto ignored: 1) The existing literature focuses on favorable domestic/international conditions only after General Park's military coup in 1961. But this exclusive attention to the 1961-65 period of 'success' blinds us to the long-term learning process of the two states; 2) We need to ask a non-question: why was the Normalization so delayed even under favorable conditions at the time: U.S. pressure, economic needs and President Park's strong leadership? Based on counterfactual analysis, I argue that without the coup the Normalization would have been achieved much faster in a way more conducive for the genuine Korea-Japan reconciliation. The complicated political situation caused by Park's military coup delayed, rather than accelerated, the Normalization. The refocused analysis suggests that America-centered approach groundlessly relegates a non-great powers' Realism to irrational emotionalism, and that the U.S. role in Korea-Japan relations is significant but not determining.

The intensified U.S. pressure on Korea and Japan to accelerate the Normalization process, was one of the facilitating factors. However, the importance of U.S. pressure should not be exaggerated. It was basically a *constant* factor throughout the period of 1950-1965.<sup>10</sup>

The main reason for Korea-Japan cooperation regarding Normalization is that the two states had strong cooperative incentives for their own interests: (1) Japan had fears of deterrence failure regarding North Korea because Korea was undergoing political instability and economic difficulties; (2) Korea had abandonment fears regarding the U.S. and Japan as well especially in economic sense.

We also need to refocus on the Normalization process in two different ways.

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<sup>9</sup> For Cha's analysis that emphasize the decisive role of the U.S. pressure in the process of Korea-Japan Normalization, see Victor D. Cha, "Bridging the Gap: The Strategic Context of the 1965 Korea-Japan Normalization Treaty," *Korean Studies*, Vol.20 (University of Hawaii Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> This point is against conventional wisdom and can be controversial. However, I do not intend to imply the U.S. policy line was flatly constant over time. Rather, I argue, the U.S. efforts to pressure for Korea and Japan to strengthen the weakest leg of the triangular alignment had been constantly exerted. Even the U.S. disengagement from the region can be understood as a method of indirect U.S. pressure.

For an analysis of disengagement hypothesis and the U.S. pressure hypothesis, see Seongji Woo (U Sŭngji), "Naengjŏn sigi han'guk-ilbon hyŏpnyŏk ūi pŏjŭl: pulgaeip gasŏl tae gaeip-yŏnhap chŏngch'i gasŏl (Explaining South Korea-Japanese Cooperation during the Cold War Era: Disengagement Hypothesis vs. Engagement-Coalition Politics Hypothesis)," *Han'guk chŏngch'i hakhoebo* (Korean Political Science Review), Vol.37, No.3 (September 2003).

First, we need to refocus on the long-term process through which the two states learned by failures how to “cooperate not to cooperate” or how to “solve the unsolvable.” The repeated failures in the previous period was not because there were no cooperative incentives between the two states, but because they had various conflicting interests, which kept the flame of historical animosity burning but which itself also amplified the disputes related to conflicting interests in turn. Especially, the territorial dispute on Dokdo, Japan’s North Korea policy, and history perception gaps of the two states were the major sources of frictions. However, although they could not solve these issues, they learned that it is better to avoid solving the problems on their own terms so as to make progress in other arenas.

Second, we need to refocus on the meaning of anti-Normalization movements from a different perspective. Many experts attributed anti-Normalization movements to the deep-seated historical animosity between the two states. Although historical animosity is one aspect that intensified the anti-Normalization movements, the more fundamental cause of the movements is that political opponents in both Korea and Japan tried to seize the opportunity of advancing their political cause by using the anti-Normalization movements as a rallying point for mobilizing domestic dissident forces. Therefore, anti-Normalization movements were not just eruption of anti-Japanese or anti-Korean emotionalism but a wherewithal by which the opponents, for their own political causes and interests, wielded against the incumbent governments.

One more interesting aspect of the anti-Normalization movements is that Korea government tried to utilize them to put itself in a better bargaining position in tough negotiations with Japan. Although we cannot find such similar evidences in Japan’s case, it is a possibility to be discovered. However, Japan, knowing Korea’s weak bargaining position, sometimes seems to have delayed the Normalization process purposely to strike a better deal. Once the new Korean government seemed to grip the power firmly after Park was elected as civilian president, the Japanese government seemed to believe that time is on Japan’s side.

In short, the final conclusion of the Normalization talks was delayed not because the two governments had no outward and inward cooperative incentives (or no recognition of the absolute gains to be gained by Normalization), but because they tried to increase their relative gains as much as possible. However, despite the delayed settlement, the very fact that the Normalization of Korea-Japan relations was finally accomplished at all, is a powerful indication of the big march towards cooperative bilateral relations. Through this accomplishment, the two states agreed to go beyond one important threshold in Korea-Japan relations.

This analysis reveals that America-centered approach, which over-relies on the determining power of U.S. factor—whether it is U.S. pressure or U.S. (dis)engagement—in explaining Korea-Japan relations, groundlessly relegates a non-great powers’ Realism to irrational emotionalism. The U.S. role in Korea-Japan relations is significant but not determining.

#### IV. Contradictory U.S. Roles in Facilitating Korea-Japan Cooperation

As shown in 1965 Korea-Japan normalization process, the intensifying U.S. pressure or urge for Korea and Japan to improve the bilateral relations, share burdens, and strengthen solidarity among the three against the communist threats was not necessarily accompanied by the weakening U.S. commitment. Rather, such a pressure means that the United States was seeking willful (intended) policy coordination to strengthen the weakest leg of the triangular security tripod. In this case the concern for the United States is not *whether to engage*, but *how to engage*. This sort of U.S. pressure, which doesn’t necessarily heighten Korea-Japan’s abandonment fears acutely, was a critical facilitator in achieving the most difficult task of opening the diplomatic door. Thus the normalization case suggests that the United States should engage wisely if it does engage at all, and not that it should disengage from East Asia.

However, the U.S. policies could have more complicated and contradictory effects on Korea-Japan relations than we usually imagine. Logically speaking, in the context of Korea-Japan relations, both the common threats and U.S. engagement could have contradictory effects.

First, the common threats may cause two contradictory outcomes. If external common threats increase, Korea-Japan’s cooperative incentives might increase (**External common threat** → **Korea-Japan cooperation**). This causal relationship is consistent with the Realist logic of balancing. However, although Japan had agreed to form a security pact with the United States, it tried to avoid being deeply involved in the Cold War politics as much as possible. Despite U.S. opposition, Japan maintained a certain level of economic or private contacts with all its communist neighbors—the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea—by adopting so-called the policy of *seikei bunri* (政經分離/“separation of politics and economics”). This policy led South Korea—which was engaged in fierce competition with North Korea—to see Japan as immorally opportunistic, which often resulted in diplomatic rows in Korea-Japan relations. This kind of Korea-Japan friction should not be attributed to historical animosity; rather, it is an outcome of ‘conflict of interests.’ Different grand strategies of the two states,

accompanied by the usual gaps of threat perceptions, could not but create a certain degrees of frictions.

Second, while the increase of external threats has the effect of keeping or increasing the level of U.S. engagement, Korea-Japan cooperative incentives might decrease by increasing Korea-Japan's free-riding tendency (**External threat**→ **U.S. engagement**→ **Korea-Japan's free-riding**→ **Korea-Japan frictions**). This causal relationship is not consistent with the conventional Realist logic of balancing. Here public goods logic works. Cha's quasi-alliance model focuses on this causality of unintended consequences of the U.S. policies. However, instead of utilizing the concept of "free-riding," Cha uses the concept of asymmetric bilateral abandonment/entrapment structure. It is at least theoretically possible, though not so probable due to historical animosity, that Korea and Japan might have developed much stronger security ties if each hadn't concluded a security treaty with the United States. Korea and Japan could afford to "fight" because of the security guarantee from the United States.

Third, however, U.S. engagement could have a positive effect on Korea-Japan cooperation too. The increased U.S. engagement or higher level of U.S. commitment to the defense of Korea might motivate the United States to play a more positive leadership role as a mediator pressuring Korea and Japan to cooperate (**External threat**→ **U.S. engagement**→ **U.S. pressure**→ **Korea-Japan cooperation**). This causal relationship is consistent with the conventional Realist logic of balancing. Here the focus is on the intended consequence of the U.S. policies. Meanwhile, the collective-goods-theory version of Realist approach like Cha's quasi-alliance model regards the U.S. engagement as a negative force that decreases Korea-Japan cooperative incentives. Cha argues the quasi-alliance model specifies the conditions under which American overtures have been most effective, denying his model's evident implication for threat of disengagement being the only positive influence on Korea-Japan relations.<sup>11</sup> However, his model is based on public goods logic while the role of U.S. pressure, on balancing logic. Therefore, his statement that he specifies the conditions by the model is not accurate. Actually, he simply employs a different logic from balancing logic working behind the roles of U.S. pressure.

Fourth, as Cha points out, Korea and Japan have symmetric abandonment fears regarding U.S. disengagement from the East Asian region, which encourages Korea-Japan cooperation (**U.S. disengagement**→ **Korea-Japan's symmetric abandonment fears regarding the United States**→ **Korea-Japan cooperation**). This causal relationship is consistent with public goods logic, which is adopted by Cha's quasi-

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<sup>11</sup> Victor Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, 3.

alliance model. However, the causal mechanism of Korea-Japan's symmetric abandonment fears regarding the United States might be actually redundant in explaining Korea-Japan cooperation if we infer that Korea-Japan's free-riding tendency will go away when the United States disengage from the region. There seems to be scholarly confusions or ambiguity regarding the relationship of such concepts as abandonment fears, entrapment fears, balancing logic, public goods logic, etc. For instance, is abandonment fear consistent with public goods logic or balancing logic? If the U.S. disengagement causes Korea-Japan abandonment fears, then does the resultant increase of Korea-Japan cooperation demonstrate the two states' balancing behaviors? Then, is it the case that when the United States engages in the region, Korea-Japan relations are dominated by public goods logic; while the United States disengages from the region, balancing logic? We don't seem to have irrefutable answers to these questions at the present time.

Fifth, in case of the U.S disengagement from the region, besides Korea-Japan symmetric abandonment fears regarding the United States, there could be another fear. The persistent historical animosity could lead Korea, facing U.S. disengagement, to have another kind of asymmetric fears of the resultant collapse of the "double containment"<sup>12</sup> mechanism not only against common external threats but also against Japan itself. This latter kind of Korean fears, by deepening Korea's "adversary security dilemma" (Herz<sup>13</sup> and Jervis's and not Glenn Snyder's) toward Japan, might increase

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<sup>12</sup> A state may ally with another not primarily to aggregate power capabilities against a common threat but to gain influence over the ally and perhaps restrain it from taking certain actions that might be contrary to the first state's interests. See Jack S. Levy and Michael Barnett, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignment: the Case of Egypt, 1962-73," *International Organization*, Vol.45, No.3 (Summer 1991), 371 (footnote 7).

For the role of the U.S.-Japanese security treaty as a mechanism for "containing" Japan, see Mike M. Mochizuki, "To Change or to Contain: Dilemmas of American Policy Toward Japan," Oye, Lieber and Rothchild, ed., *Eagle in a New World* (HarperCollins Publisher, 1992); Hans Maull, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1990/91), p.93: He sees that one of the purposes of the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty was to "keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Japanese down."

Betts also recognizes that "the security guarantee ... allowed Japan to remain militarily limited," arguing that "as long as possible" the U.S. should not demand genuine military reciprocity from Japan." Richard Betts, "Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol.18, No.3 (Winter 1993/94), 55-56.

<sup>13</sup> Herz describes about "security dilemma" as follows: "Whenever ... anarchic society has existed ..., there has arisen ... "security dilemma" of men, or groups, or their leaders. ... Striving to attain security from ... attack, they are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. ... Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world or competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on." See John H. Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol.2, No.2 (January 1950), 157.

Korea-Japan frictions. (**U.S. disengagement→ Collapse of containment mechanism against Japan→ Korea’s intensifying adversary “security dilemma” towards Japan→ Korea-Japan frictions**).

Sixth, and finally, the causal roles of common threats and the U.S. engagement suggest that Realist theory focusing on “materialistic” power can be useful. In the meantime, the causal roles of perceived common threats and historical animosity indicate that “intersubjective meanings” of the relationship, which influence the process of identity/interest formation, are also important.<sup>14</sup> However, in reality materialistic factors and intersubjectives factors may not be inseparable.

Regarding Korea-Japan historical animosity, we can figure out a possible role the United States played right after the war. Some people might wonder why Japan, unlike Germany, has been so reluctant or slow to admit its war crimes in the past. More accurately speaking, it is the Japanese conservatives that have been reluctant to take responsibility for the wrongdoings afflicted towards the neighboring states during World War II, which still makes it difficult for Japan to get respect for the neighboring states due to perception gap on history.

The persistent conservative rule in the Japanese domestic politics was in turn helped by the U.S. occupation authority’s “reversal” of the policy direction from demilitarization and democratization of Japan towards strengthening of Japan as a Cold War bulwark against the communist states. Accordingly, the United States helped the conservative political forces—Liberal Democratic Party—to rule Japan for a long time. Shortly, the U.S. intervention in the East Asian regional politics, though originally intended to promote security cooperation among the anti-communist states, probably have had a long-term negative effect on the process of reconciliation between Japan and other states including Korea. (**External threat→ U.S. engagement→ U.S. intervention in Japanese politics→ Japan under the rule of conservative political forces→ Perception gap on history + historical animosity→ No reconciliation between Japan and neighboring states→ Korea-Japan frictions**).

As we examined, the U.S. roles in Korea-Japan relations are undeniably important but not determinant because the effects of U.S. engagement/disengagement on Korea-Japan relations are various and contradictory each other. The U.S. roles seen from the trilateral alignment relationship is much more complex than a simple bilateral relationship.

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the International State,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol.88, No.2 (June 1994); See also Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It,” *International Organization*, Vol.46, No.2 (Spring 1992).

In a nutshell, without considering these multiple effects, the desirable direction of the U.S. policies cannot be determined. Even the same policy line can be either stabilizing or destabilizing depending on concrete situations. In this context, whether or not trust prevails in East Asian states could determine the sort of effect of the U.S. policies on Korea-Japan relations and other bilateral relations. However, how to build trust between and among states in the region is another big and serious topic that I cannot deal with in this paper.

#### V. Drawing a Bigger Picture where Peace Breaks Out in East Asia

We should be cautiously reminded of the limitation of a threat-driven cooperation theory or a theory based on balancing logic, such as Waltz's balance-of-power theory and Walt's balance-of-threat theory. It leads the analysts to focus on explaining Korea-Japan cooperation as an effect or result of threat, which is ultimately caused by enemies. Such "exclusive" cooperation is undeniably an important part of the state relationship. However, we cannot deny that the existence of the more broadly based goodness-driven "inclusive" cooperation, which is more desirable than "exclusive" cooperation, however difficult it may be to achieve the inclusive one. When extracting policy implications from the above analysis we should be aware that our intention for peace might destroy the peace unexpectedly. If we lost sight of the bigger picture, only a part of which a threat-driven cooperation theory explains, our policy recommendations might result in instability in the region unlike our wishes. So I want to avoid deriving mechanical implications from a narrowly focused analysis, no matter how logical the analysis itself may be.

The most important two states to be taken into account first in the analysis of Korea-Japan relations are Korea and Japan themselves, not the United States. The key states that are most responsible for improving their relationship are Korea and Japan too, not the United States. This is not to deny that the United States has played "significant"—both positive and negative—roles in molding the strategic environment by which the strategic choices Korea and Japan can make are significantly limited. Nevertheless, the decisions related to the bilateral relations have been ultimately made by Korea and Japan themselves, and the direct U.S. influence in the process of the bilateral reconciliation was "marginal."<sup>15</sup> This phenomenon is not against our commonsense: we cannot force other people to love or reconcile with each other.

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<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the U.S. influence on the Korean domestic politics was marginal as a former Ambassador to Seoul describes. See William H. Gleysteen, Jr., *Massive Entanglement, Marginal*

In the process of improving the bilateral relations and removing conflicting interests between the two states the key state is Japan, not Korea. I am saying this in the sense of a Korean/Chinese idiomatic expression, *kyôljahaeji* (결자해지/結者解之), meaning, “He who entangled the problem should disentangle it.” Of course, this doesn’t indicate in any way that Japan alone is always responsible for the worsened relationship. Nor does it imply Korea and China have always lived up to the standard of “justice.”<sup>16</sup> I do not deny that as a Korean I might have a bias. I do admit such a possibility although I conscientiously tried my best not to be prejudiced. Nevertheless, I believe, if Japan remains to be the same kind of “reactive state”<sup>17</sup> that has been reluctantly and passively submitting to the demands of the victimized neighbors little by little, not so much change would be brought about in its relations with the neighbors. Japan, like Germany, should be a “proactive state” at least in disentangling the history-related issues or World War II-related issues. Only after that, the neighboring states would neither oppose Japan’s change into a “normal state” nor fear it.

As I examined, if we have in mind those contradictory effects of the U.S. policies with multiple aspects, we cannot but doubt about the validity of any policy recommendations based on the analysis focusing on the one aspect of the U.S. policies alone.

Victor Cha’s optimistic view on Korea-Japan relations in the post-Cold War era on the assumption of (and on the basis of the policy recommendation for) the “gradual finality”—phased U.S. disengagement from East Asian region—should be weighed against other possibilities.

First of all, Cha’s optimistic prediction is not well grounded on theoretical and empirical findings. His optimistic view is based on the analysis of Korea-Japan relations with the help of quasi-alliance model. However, as I already discussed, the quasi-alliance model is so narrowly focused on the only one aspect of the U.S. policy that it cannot provide sound policy recommendations. He believes Korea-Japan relations are good at the time of U.S. disengagement from the region because the symmetric Korea-Japan abandonment fears regarding the United States will lead the two states to

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*Influence: Carter and Korea in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> For instance, personally I believe that the Chinese government’s brutal invasion of Tibet and the repression of Tibetan independence movements thereafter are wrong. I also believe that Korea’s participation in the Vietnam War was wrong. However, Japan’s wrongdoings done to China and Korea cannot be justified by the wrongdoings China and Korea committed towards other states.

<sup>17</sup> Kent E. Calder, “Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation: Explaining the Reactive State,” *World Politics*, Vol.40, No.4 (July 1988).

cooperate against the common threat—China or North Korea. However, the validity of his explanation itself is debatable.

Although whether U.S. commitment is credible or not partially determines the level of perceived threat, the U.S. factor alone is not sufficient, though necessary, for explaining the variations in Korea-Japan relations. My analysis suggests that what is important regarding the U.S. policies towards East Asia is not *whether to engage or disengage*, but either *how to engage or how to disengage*. I do not necessarily support either U.S. disengagement or U.S. engagement. Either policy can be stabilizing or destabilizing depending on how to conduct it in what situation. Therefore, I rather support either U.S. disengagement with some stabilizing measures or U.S. engagement with some measures promoting inclusive cooperation, not exclusive cooperation.

My analysis also leads me to conclude that we can neither be necessarily optimistic nor pessimistic about Korea-Japan relations in the post-Cold War era. Although we witnessed “progress” in the bilateral relations, there have been “ups-and-downs.” Until now, we haven’t seen extreme downs, such as, the severance of diplomatic relations or war. But we cannot guarantee such extreme outcomes will not be brought about if the territorial dispute on Dokdo/Takeshima islets is boundlessly escalated to the extreme extent that a war breaks out between the two states. Actually, there was a Korean novel based on such a scenario.<sup>18</sup> I am optimistic in the sense that I regard such a scenario is not probable, but I am pessimistic in the sense that I cannot rule out such a possibility: I believe Korea and Japan have not formed a “security community” yet.

All things considered, the debate on the U.S. policy towards East Asia should not be focused only on whether to engage or disengage from the region. But its focus should be redirected into consideration of how to stabilize, how to relieve security dilemmas among the regional states, and how to help the regional states—former enemies—to reconcile with each other, regardless of the U.S. decision to engage in or disengage from the region.

Second, Cha’s analysis and conclusion give me the impression that he seems to argue or assume that for Korea-Japan cooperation—exclusive cooperation—everything else should be geared up for it: there is/will be/should be a new threat, and the United States should disengage from the region. However, promoting Korea-Japan cooperation

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<sup>18</sup> Kim Chin-Myông, *Mugunghwa Kk’och’i P’iôssûmnida* (The Rose of Sharon Has Blossomed) (Seoul, Haenaem Publishing Company, 1994). In this novel North and Korea cooperated to defeat Japan’s attack.

itself should not be and is not the only concern for the United States. There is something else more important than Korea-Japan cooperation itself in East Asia.

The more stabilized cooperation in Korea-Japan relations founded not only upon truly mind-to-mind reconciliation but also upon materialistic mutual interests is one of the key factors in achieving stability in East Asian international politics. However, this cannot be achieved without appropriate understanding of the nature of the present antagonisms between Japan and its neighboring states, including South Korea.

In the postwar era the U.S. policy towards East Asia was focused on containing communism by establishing several pairs of bilateral security alliance networks. In this process of establishing a containment mechanism the U.S. government didn't do exert any serious efforts to promote true reconciliation between Japan and other neighboring states because the United States was compelled by the Cold War confrontation to put its priority of Asia policy on strengthening Japan as the bulwark against the communist threats. This not only helped the Japanese conservatives to rule Japan with the support of the United States since then, but also allowed the Japanese conservative politicians to afford to ignore the neighboring states' resentments towards Japan's unrepentant attitudes regarding the past wrongdoings. This "favorable" Cold War situation might have helped Japan to survive, accelerate its economic development, and attain a great power status.

However, the hitherto favorable situation seems to start backfiring and shackling the feet of Japan, which aspires to be a new permanent member of the UN Security Council. At the present time, China, South Korea and North Korea are officially opposing Japan's bid to take the UN council seat because they think Japan is not qualified for such a status as its postures on several history-related issues shows. Most of the neighboring states and people believe that the Japanese government is not sincerely reflecting or repenting on the past atrocities but is helping whitewash those wrongdoings by making the right-wing textbooks justifying Japan's invasion of the neighboring states available to be adopted by schools; and they also believe the Japanese prime ministers' repeated visit to Yasukuni Shrine is another confirming evidence.

In the past the U.S. pressure on Korea and Japan for promoting Korea-Japan cooperation was mainly for enhancing the deterrent power against the communist states, not for reconciliation between the two states. What seems to be obvious is that the United States allowed "particular things" to happen in Japan while not allowing those particular things to happen in Germany whatever the reason. This is a topic worthy of another serious study. If the United States continued to allow those particular things to

happen in Japan, the stability and peace in East Asia in the post-Cold War era would not be guaranteed because of the persistent antagonism between Japan and its neighbors. Figuring out “those particular things” and starting the process of correcting them would be more important than anything else if the United States were really concerned about promoting inclusive cooperation among all the states in the region and keeping the long-term stability there even to the extent that the U.S. doesn’t need to station American troops there.

During the Cold War the United States seemed to be obsessed with only one goal of containing the communist states, and since the end of the Cold War, especially after 9/11 Incident, it seems that the United States has acted as if to search for another threat or to make “devils” of some states against which the United States leads a coalition of exclusive cooperation, while neglecting to start a process of reconciliation among former enemies. Unfortunately, the tendency of U.S. policy in this direction seems to make destabilizing effects on East Asian politics as well as in world politics in general. This should be corrected.

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21)  
This might be a good direction or recommendation the U.S. policy makers should pursue.

Third, in solving the bilateral disputes between Japan and Korea the commonsense shouldn’t be lost either. That all humans are rational, emotional, and spiritual beings at the same time should be taken into account to maintain a good relationship not only between individuals but also between states. Nevertheless, not a few Japanese and Westerners think the Koreans or Chinese have purposefully utilized anti-Japanese sentiments to boost their governments’ legitimacy or to get some monetary compensations despite the repeated apologies about the past atrocities on the Japanese side. I do not mean to unconditionally rationalize some Chinese and Koreans’ thoughtless and irrational resentments and violent actions towards the Japanese. I do not support any type of stereotyping of Japan’s national character. However, unless the concerned states start the “healing” process based on commonsense in human relationship, the relations between Japan and its neighbors could be even more worsened in the post-Cold War era. Japan’s colonial rule over Korea or invasion of China proper left deep traumas to the victims at the individual level and at the government level as well. If we regard Japan’s past invasion of the neighboring states is similar to the case of raping or killing, the direction to the solution is in fact very simple: an honestly repentant attitude and sincere apologies on the Japanese side, and forgiveness on the Korean or Chinese side. An

astronomical amount of money cannot make them reconciled. Such a healing process hasn't even started yet because the Japanese government's repeated apologies were not perceived by the neighboring states to be sincere.

As long as powerful Japanese politicians' or cabinet members' provocative remarks continue to erupt, the Japanese government's repeated efforts at the official level will be nullified again and again. Some proud Japanese sincere and understandable motivations and efforts to raise Japan's national prestige by rationalizing or denying past atrocities usually end up with producing opposite outcomes. If their goal is to enhance Japan's prestige and international status as a respected great power, at least their strategy should be changed with the "paradoxical logic of strategy" in mind,<sup>19</sup> which is similar to the logic revealed in a verse from the Bible: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:11)

We cannot even imagine that a German cabinet member's rationalizing remark on the Hitler's holocaust is tolerated by the German people and by other states. Unless Japan sincerely learns some lessons from German-French relations or German-other neighboring state relations, security dilemma will continue to haunt East Asian states because of the prevalent mistrust among them.

In this context we need to assess what the United States has done to help the healing process get started. Nearly nothing strikes me (except for the passing of resolution on September 13, 2006 by the House Committee on Foreign Relations, calling on the Japanese to acknowledge its history of wartime sex slavery and apologize for it).

In South Korea, at the early stage of the military occupation in 1945, the United States even tried to keep the Japanese colonial ruling apparatus intact to use it for governing the Koreans. This is never to argue that the United States itself was inherently an evil force, but to say that it was ill-prepared and ignorant about the local politics. The same mistakes should not be repeated. Even today, unless the U.S. policy makers seriously addressed this issue in the process of their decision-making on East Asia policy, anything else they do would be like "building a house on sand" basically because "man or the state"<sup>20</sup> is not only a physical/rational being but also a

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<sup>19</sup> Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> I do recognize and admit the power of the international systemic effects Waltz addresses. However, that's just a part of complicated reality. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979); idem, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

spiritual/emotional being. In a sense, the Cold War exempted Japan from reasonable punishments for the time being not only because China or Korea couldn't afford to pursue them at the expense of their physical survival in the Cold War confrontation, but also because the United States also unduly allowed the Japanese misbehaviors to go unpunished. The following newspaper article epitomizes the nature of U.S.-Japan "cooperation" right after the war achieved at the expense of "justice." And it evidences how devastatingly distorting effects the compelling Cold War situation made on the East Asian international politics.

The United States paid money and gave other benefits to former members of a Japanese germ warfare unit two years after the end of World War II to obtain data on human experiments conducted in China, according to two declassified U.S. government documents.

It has been known that the Allies offered to waive war crime charges at the tribunal for officers of the Imperial Japanese Army's Unit 731 in exchange for experiment data.

But the latest findings reveal Washington's eagerness to obtain such data even by providing monetary rewards, despite the horrific nature of the unit's activities, in an attempt to beat the Soviet Union in the arms development race.

Historians believe that some 3,000 people died in the experiments conducted in China<sup>21</sup> by the unit led by military doctor Shiro Ishii before and during the war.

I don't believe the Chinese and the Koreans are determined to impose some punishments to Japan belatedly. Rather, I believe, if Japan "somehow" had been successful in assuaging the victimized neighbors' sorrows and pains emotionally and spiritually first, Japan's soured relationship with them would have been much more improved. The victims' tears would dry only after they were mixed with the offender's tears. The first responsibility for "healing" rests on Japan as the expression of *kyôljahaeji* indicates.

Here I made three points: The focus of the debates on U.S. East Asia policy should not be on whether to engage or disengage, but on how to engage or disengage so that the United States may help the process of reconciliation and "healing" among the regional states to get started; The United States should promote "inclusive" cooperation, and not "exclusive" cooperation; The U.S. policy should be based on the commonsense that humans/states are rational (or seeking self-interests), emotional, and spiritual beings

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<sup>21</sup> "U.S. paid Unit 731 members for data," *The Japan Times*, August 15, 2005. (<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?nn20050815a1.htm>)

at the same time. These three points are actually not separate ones but they are all related.

#### VI. Conclusion: What should be the U.S. Policy Goal towards East Asia?

In a nutshell, without considering the multiple effects of the U.S. policies towards East Asia, the desirable short-term or long-term direction cannot be determined. Even the same policy line can be either stabilizing or destabilizing depending on the concrete situations. For instance, whether or not the mutual trust prevails among states in East Asian region will determine the sort of effect of the U.S. policies on Korea-Japan relations and on other bilateral relations. The U.S. policy should be geared to build trust among states in the region and to help the “healing” process between Japan and its neighbors to get started, which has been delayed by devastatingly distorting and negative effects of the Cold War, for which America is also responsible.

Fears create fears. Hatred creates hatred; love creates love. They are all contagious. Considering this, the ultimate goal of the United States should be to change several pairs of networks of “exclusive” bilateral or trilateral cooperation “against” some enemy states—whether it is Russia, China, or North Korea—into the networks of “inclusive” multilateral cooperation “with” all other states. A group of states’ exclusive cooperation against another group of states reproduces fears and insecurity endlessly, which promotes only a short-term narrow scope of cooperation seen by others as hostile to them while undermining a long-term broad scope of cooperation seen by all as desirable, stabilizing, and friendly.

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