

Conventional Arms Control on the Korean Peninsula

A Working Group Report
of the CSIS International Security Program



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adviser to the secretary of state on nonproliferation matters, oversaw U.S. participation in the multilateral nonproliferation export control regimes, and represented the United States in nonproliferation discussions and negotiations with a wide variety of countries in East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Before becoming assistant secretary, Einhorn was deputy assistant secretary for nonproliferation in the State Department's Political-Military Bureau from 1992 to 1999 and a senior adviser in the department's Policy Planning Staff from 1986 to 1992. He served at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) from 1972 to 1984, where he dealt with strategic arms issues, nuclear testing limits, chemical and biological weapons constraints, nonproliferation, and other security issues. From 1982 to 1986 he represented ACDA in the START talks. He was presented the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Award by Secretary Colin L. Powell in August 2001. Einhorn has authored several publications on strategic nuclear issues, arms control, and nonproliferation. He received a B.A., magna cum laude, in government from Cornell University in 1969 and an M.P.A. in international relations from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, in 1971. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute of Strategic Studies.

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I. Summary and Introduction

The vast, forward-deployed conventional force posture of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a source of instability on the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region. Although the North has no real prospect of prevailing in an armed conflict with the South, it nonetheless maintains the offensive capability to hold the Republic of Korea (ROK), and especially Seoul, hostage to the threat of a massive, short-warning attack that could inflict an unacceptable level of damage. This conventional arms threat, which provides Pyongyang with leverage in any crisis or confrontation with the United States or South Korea, should be addressed in upcoming talks among the United States, the ROK, and the DPRK.

However, it would not be desirable to pursue from the outset of negotiations ambitious proposals aimed at reducing and relocating North Korean forward-deployed conventional forces. At present, the necessary political climate does not exist for achieving such major changes in North Korean capabilities, which Pyongyang considers essential both as a deterrent and as a guarantor of regime survival. Hostility and distrust characterize relations across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), ensuring at this stage of U.S. and ROK engagement with the North that such far-reaching proposals are all but certain to fail.

U.S. advocacy of an ambitious arms control approach and linkage of progress on the conventional arms issue to progress on other elements of the U.S. negotiating agenda with Pyongyang would virtually guarantee a stalemate in U.S.-DPRK talks. Such a stalemate could, in turn, undermine what should be higher priority U.S. and ROK objectives on the Korean Peninsula: (1) maintaining the strength of the U.S.-ROK alliance, including reversing the growing gap that has emerged between Seoul and Washington over the past year; (2) eliminating the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and long-range missile programs; (3) promoting progress toward inter-Korean reconciliation; and (4) reducing the likelihood of incidents, intentional or otherwise, that could escalate to large-scale armed conflict.

To be sure, conventional arms should be an integral part of the Bush administration's "comprehensive" agenda with the DPRK. But given the strong deterrent maintained by the combined U.S. and ROK forces, redeploying and reducing North Korean forward-deployed forces need not be the highest priority in the conventional arms control talks. Initially, a more modest agenda of confidence-building measures (CBMs) should be pursued by the United States and the ROK, starting with CBMs already agreed to but not implemented and then proceeding to new measures. This was the sequence adopted successfully in Europe, where CBMs in the early stage of East-West engagement helped pave the way for dramatic force reductions and other constraints after the demise of the Soviet bloc and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Starting with CBMs in the Korean

context may similarly lay the groundwork for more ambitious arms control efforts in the event of dramatic political change on the peninsula.

Section II examines why studying the question of conventional arms control is particularly timely now. Section III provides an overview of conventional arms control efforts in Korea over the past 50 years. The frustrating record demonstrates why seeking the implementation of already-negotiated CBMs before pursuing more ambitious measures makes sense as a means of building trust, gaining political support in both Washington and Seoul, and establishing a track record for the future.

Section IV examines the experience of conventional arms control in Europe in an effort to provide useful lessons for potential initiatives with the DPRK, and to suggest pitfalls that should be avoided.

Section V looks at the military balance on the Korean Peninsula and the outdated, but still threatening, North Korean armed forces. This section demonstrates that, despite being an economic basket case with no realistic prospect of winning a war against the South, North Korea can use its forward-deployed forces to inflict unacceptable damage on the Seoul metropolitan area, home to 13 million Koreans and tens of thousands of American military and civilian personnel.

Section VI outlines U.S., ROK, and DPRK goals in any conventional arms control process, examining how each side evaluates its fundamental interests and priorities.

Finally, section VII recommends a U.S. approach to conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula. It calls for a three-party (United States, ROK, and DPRK) negotiating forum, with a North-South subgroup, to address issues affecting primarily the two Koreas. This section seeks to explain why, at this stage of U.S.-ROK, U.S.-DPRK, and North-South relations, U.S. and South Korean interests are best served by adopting a phased approach, starting with relatively modest CBMs while establishing a foundation for future negotiations on more ambitious measures.

II. Why Study Conventional Arms Control Now?

The term “arms control” refers to a wide range of formal or informal restraint arrangements designed to promote stability, reduce the likelihood of armed conflict, minimize the economic burden of maintaining military capabilities, and diminish the destructiveness and costs of war should it occur. Historically, conventional arms control has taken two, somewhat different, forms: the first consisted of measures limiting the quantity, quality, or geographic deployment of conventional military forces (equipment and/or manpower), and the second consisted of more modest confidence-building measures (CBMs), such as

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prenotification and observation of military exercises, data exchanges, and military-to-military contacts, which were designed to enhance transparency and predictability, build mutual trust, ease tensions, and reduce the risks of war by accident or miscalculation.

Conventional arms control has been an important topic of discussion on the Korean Peninsula for decades. The reasons are obvious. The border between North and South Korea is the most heavily fortified in the world, with nearly two million troops along both sides of the 255-kilometer Demilitarized Line (DML) separating the two sides of the DMZ. The DPRK's forward-deployed offensive forces, including missiles, artillery, and mechanized forces, are in close proximity to major metropolitan areas in the South, most notably the Seoul metropolitan area, located just 25 miles from the DMZ.

Hundreds of proposals have been put forward in the area of conventional arms control and some progress has been made, especially on CBMs. However, even where agreements have been reached in principle, they have generally not been implemented, in part because of DPRK resistance and a lack of trust on all sides. For example, in 1971–72 and again in 1991–92, the DPRK and the ROK agreed to establish high-level committees to discuss and implement CBMs, including transparency measures and installation of a hotline between the two sides. Although a hotline was installed briefly, the North Koreans cut it off shortly thereafter. Other initiatives have led nowhere. Due to divergent priorities among the three sides, and lack of trust between the DPRK and the U.S.-ROK alliance, conventional arms control is likely to remain a challenging issue for the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, it is timely to study the question of conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula. Why now?

North Korean Economic Crisis

First, North Korea's massive economic and humanitarian problems¹ present an opportunity for potential trade-offs on security. For the DPRK, it will be increasingly challenging to sustain its large conventional force, including more than 1.1 million troops, over the long-term. The continued emphasis on military development,² in terms of human and financial resources, appears in conflict with DPRK appeals for external economic and humanitarian aid. Under such circumstances, the United States and the ROK may have useful leverage to gain DPRK agreement to reduce the threat posed by its forward-deployed conventional forces.

¹ While there is debate over the magnitude of North Korea's economic crisis, large-scale grain and energy shortages are undeniable. Estimates of starvation deaths range from the tens of thousands to 2 million.

² Approximately 25 percent of GDP still goes to pay for the DPRK's defense, according to Jonathan D. Pollack and Chung Min Lee ("Preparing for Unification: Scenarios and Implications," Rand Corporation, 1999.)

A Bush Administration Priority

Second, the Bush administration has made conventional arms control an integral and important part of its policy approach to North Korea. In a statement on June 6, 2001, President Bush announced that the United States was prepared to enter into “serious discussions” with North Korea and that his administration would seek to achieve “a less threatening [DPRK] conventional military posture” on the peninsula. In a February 19, 2002 speech to the Japanese Diet in Tokyo, President Bush called for progress toward “a region in which demilitarized zones and missile batteries no longer separate people with a common heritage, and a common future.”

The Bush team’s emphasis on conventional arms control is a significant departure from the approach of its predecessor. For the Clinton administration, North Korea’s conventional force posture was a threat, but one that could be adequately handled by the combined forces of the United States and the ROK, which continued to be modernized and strengthened. President Clinton’s advisors believed that North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs constituted a qualitatively new and much more dangerous threat and therefore deserved top priority in any U.S. engagement with Pyongyang.³ During the Clinton years, conventional force issues, primarily CBMs, were dealt with not in U.S.-DPRK bilateral negotiations, but rather in the Four-Party Talks involving the ROK, the DPRK, China and the United States. However, little progress was made in that four-party forum.

Bush administration officials view North Korean conventional capabilities in more threatening terms. They believe DPRK forces deployed near the DMZ not only have the potential to cause massive destruction in the event of war, but also give Pyongyang inordinate bargaining leverage in any crisis or negotiation. In addition, they are concerned about the threat of an accident or small incident turning into a full-blown conflict. They also see North Korea’s high level of military spending as perpetuating a misallocation of resources that blocks meaningful economic reform and prevents the regime from meeting the needs of the North Korean people. Rather than treat conventional arms as a second-tier issue, the Bush team has included it as a central item in their proposed “comprehensive agenda” for talks with the DPRK (along with nuclear, missile, and humanitarian/human rights issues), and has maintained that progress on any of the items depends on the ability to make progress across the board on the entire agenda.

³ According to then-Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, who in 1999 conducted a major review of U.S. policy toward North Korea for President Clinton, “the military correlation of forces on the Korean peninsula strongly favors the allied forces, even more than during the 1994 crisis, and I believe that this is understood by the DPRK. Therefore, deterrence is strong, unless it is upset by the introduction of nuclear weapons, especially nuclear weapons on ballistic missiles.” (Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs, October 12, 1999.)

A New Phase of Engagement

Third, study of conventional arms control issues is timely because, after a lengthy hiatus in U.S.-DPRK engagement, we now appear to be entering a new period of bilateral talks. Although North Korea had long rebuffed the United States' offer to meeting "anytime, anywhere, and without preconditions," Kim Jong-il told South Korea's then-Special Envoy Lim Dong Won in April 2002 that the DPRK was interested in reopening a dialogue with the United States. It is unclear at this stage whether this new round of engagement will make concrete progress on the issues that divide the two countries. But whatever the prospects for success, the conventional arms issue is likely to play an important role.

Need for Early U.S.-ROK Coordination

Fourth, to ensure that conventional arms control does not become a divisive issue in the U.S.-ROK relationship, it is important that the two allies begin to coordinate their approaches. Given the overriding priority that any ROK government is likely to give to inter-Korean relations and the central role that it will want to play on peninsula security matters, there is a potential for divergence between the U.S. and ROK on conventional arms control, in terms of both substance and process. Moreover, over the last year or so, serious concerns have arisen in Seoul about whether the Bush administration's approach to North Korea is sufficiently sensitive to ROK interests, especially to its goal of North-South reconciliation.

By beginning to study and coordinate their positions now, the United States and South Korea can prevent significant differences from arising between them, differences that the North Koreans would try to exploit by driving wedges between the allies. Fortunately, efforts are already under way to avoid such differences. A recent joint study conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Command (UNC), the Combined Forces Command (CFC), and the ROK Ministry of National Defense outlines key elements of a conventional arms control approach toward the North. The report is notable not only because of its substance, but also because it represents the first time the United States and the ROK have developed a joint approach to the conventional arms issue.

Ongoing U.S. Defense Review

The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which analyzes the size, composition and role of U.S. forces around the world, raises the question of whether the war on terrorism will require changes in the disposition of U.S. forces worldwide. While the QDR emphasizes the importance of strengthening existing alliances and maintaining support for U.S. bases in Northeast Asia, it also states that the new defense approach will "shift the focus of U.S. force planning from optimizing for conflicts in two particular regions—Northeast and Southwest Asia—to building a portfolio of capabilities that is robust across the spectrum of

possible force requirements, both functional and geographical.”⁴ In addition to the QDR, efforts are under way to review the basing structure for American forces located in South Korea. Starting now to consider the feasibility and likelihood of mutual cuts in conventional forces on the Korean Peninsula could give U.S. planners a better basis for assessing the conditions under which future adjustments might be made in the size, composition, and mission of U.S. forces in Korea without compromising U.S. and ROK security interests.

III. Korean Conventional Arms Control History

Conventional arms control is not a new issue on the Korean Peninsula, although there is little to show for it after almost 50 years of consideration. A brief history of conventional arms control in Korea is helpful in informing the current debate.

The end of the Korean War in 1953 prompted initial attempts at confidence building. An Armistice Agreement signed by representatives of the UN forces (an American), the DPRK People’s Army, and the Chinese People’s Volunteers established the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) to supervise the implementation of the Armistice and settle any compliance problems through negotiations. This commission served as the only official channel of communication between the opposing military forces for over four decades. It played an indispensable role by defusing incidents, preventing misunderstandings, and avoiding the resumption of hostilities.

From 1955 to 1970, North and South Korean proposals on conventional arms control remained largely rhetorical gestures. Further progress was hampered by hard-line policies in each state: the ROK established a strong anticommunist government, and the DPRK modernized and expanded its armed forces while conducting periodic military provocations against the South. During this period, the two Koreas held diametrically opposed negotiating positions. North Korea insisted on immediate and total withdrawal of all foreign forces, and pressed for a mutual Korean force ceiling of 100,000 men. South Korea, highly dependent on U.S. Forces in Korea (USFK) for protection from the North, opposed the cuts and instead focused on promoting CBMs.

Subsequent international developments in the 1970s left both Koreas feeling increasingly vulnerable. Sino-American rapprochement and U.S.-Soviet détente were perceived in Pyongyang as a betrayal by the PRC and the USSR. The North, with no confidence that its two main sponsors would support it against the imperialist United States, felt suddenly insecure. South Korea, already feeling betrayed by the 1971 U.S. withdrawal of 20,000 troops from the peninsula (almost a third of the forces stationed there), was shaken by the U.S. overture to China. The two Koreas began quietly to reach out to each other.

⁴ QDR 2001, page 17.

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Still, their efforts were hampered by ongoing differences in priorities. North Korea maintained its demands for U.S. force withdrawal, while the South continued to push for CBMs to test North Korean intentions before any discussion of reductions. In addition, the DPRK demanded exclusive DPRK-U.S. negotiations, while South Korea sought ROK-DPRK discussions.

Nonetheless, on July 4, 1972, the ROK and DPRK issued a joint communiqué⁵ affirming principles for eventual reunification by peaceful means, without outside imposition or interference, and through promotion of national unity. The agreement stipulated basic CBMs including suspension of slander and defamation, no armed provocations, and prevention of “military incidents.” It also promoted greater communication between the two sides, such as personnel exchanges, installation of a direct hotline between senior officials, and the establishment of a North-South Coordinating Committee to settle points of contention and deal with unification. Only one of these measures, the hotline, was ever implemented, although the North later unilaterally severed it shortly after the August 1976 ax-murder incident in the DMZ.

Unproductive discussions, characterized by back and forth proposals and counterproposals, continued until the mid-1980s when the North suddenly seemed to become more flexible on its position regarding U.S. forces. In 1984, the DPRK’s rhetoric began to soften⁶ and Pyongyang signaled its willingness to look at alternative solutions, such as phased, rather than immediate, withdrawal of U.S. troops over a few years. In addition, North Korea proposed three-way talks among the United States, North Korea and South Korea. In a 1986 proposal, the DPRK offered high-level political and military talks exclusively between the North and South and used the phrase “confidence building” for the first time. The ROK responded positively with a unilateral “no-first-use” of force declaration. Subsequently, a new pattern in North-South negotiations emerged, with South Korea taking the initiative and hoping for a positive DPRK response. This new dynamic laid the foundation for the groundbreaking 1991–1992 Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation (known as the Basic Agreement).⁷

In the Basic Agreement, the two Koreas reiterated the key provisions of the 1972 agreement, and bridged differences in priorities by agreeing that subsequent negotiations would discuss CBMs and arms reductions simultaneously. It contained additional measures for family reunions, general economic and cultural exchanges, postal and telecommunication links, and reconnection of railways and roads. In the military sphere, the Basic Agreement committed the two sides to reinstalling a military hotline. The agreement also called for the establishment of three high-level joint committees and five commissions to discuss arms control and CBMs, including constraints on major military movements and exercises, peaceful use of the DMZ, exchanges of military personnel and information, and

⁵ See Appendix B.

⁶ Again, this characterization is based on KCNA commentary at the time.

⁷ See Appendix C.

even phased reductions in armaments, including the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and attack capabilities. The DPRK and ROK also agreed in principle to verification measures for force reductions. Although the Basic Agreement was impressive on paper, it has gone largely unimplemented.

Some experts have argued that the North never intended to implement the Basic Agreement and that it was little more than an empty political gesture during a period of warming North-South relations.⁸ That said, the 1991–1992 Agreement remains the most serious, albeit unfulfilled, commitment to confidence building and conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula.

As talks continued in the 1990s, mistrust impeded progress between the two sides. In 1994, North Korea broke off MAC meetings to protest the appointment of a South Korean to replace an American as the commission's head. The DPRK argued that, because South Korea was not a signatory to the Armistice Agreement, an ROK officer could not lead the delegation. Without DPRK participation, the MAC ceased to function. In addition, the discovery of evidence of North Korea's clandestine efforts to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons led to a crisis in 1993–1994 that heightened risks of war on the peninsula and eventually led to the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. The 1996 submarine incursion, in which a covert reconnaissance mission became a major incident after a DPRK Shark-class submarine ran aground, led to plans to mobilize 40,000 South Korean troops. The incident, for which the North later expressed regret, further antagonized the United States and South Korea.

In 1997, the United States and the ROK attempted to pursue new negotiations through the Four-Party Talks, the primary goal of which was to reduce tensions and build confidence on the peninsula and to replace the armistice with formal peace arrangements. These talks were notable in that they represented the first time that China was actively involved in working toward a peaceful resolution to tensions on the peninsula since the signing of the armistice and establishment of the MAC.⁹ Yet the scope of the Four-Party talks was limited by North Korea's reluctance to include security items on the agenda on the grounds that the United States and South Korea were not prepared to deal with the question of U.S. forces in Korea. While the four parties held six sessions between December 1997 and August 1999, the talks made little headway and were eventually sidelined by other priorities, including DPRK-U.S. negotiations on missile issues and forward movement in North-South relations.

More recently, the DPRK signaled interest in reconciliation and confidence building during the June 2000 North-South summit meeting in Pyongyang, which resulted in a Seoul-Pyongyang Joint Declaration.¹⁰ The Joint Declaration, signed

⁸ Don Oberdorfer in particular has laid out this argument in his 1997 book *The Two Koreas*.

⁹ China was brought into the Four-Party talks reluctantly in part to encourage greater cooperation from the North. Such cooperation generally did not occur and, given increased economic and other ties between China and South Korea, it is unclear to what degree China can influence the DPRK on conventional arms control.

¹⁰ See Appendix D.

on June 15, 2000, by Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il, stated that the two Koreas would continue a dialogue, working together to peacefully resolve the issue of reunification; would promote humanitarian issues, including family reunions; and enhance economic cooperation and civic exchanges. The Summit and the Declaration together represented for many Koreans a breakthrough in the reconciliation process and laid the foundation for a series of North-South meetings in the following months. However, follow up, as usual, was uneven and disappointing.

After an April 2002 trip to Pyongyang by South Korean Special Envoy Lim Dong Won, the two Koreas reaffirmed the spirit of the 2000 Joint Declaration and agreed to take several steps to advance North-South engagement.¹¹ Specifically, the two Koreas agreed to restart North-South talks, reasserted support for economic cooperation, particularly rail and highway links, tourism, and flood prevention efforts, and indicated support for continued military contacts.¹² During Lim's visit, the North Korean leadership also expressed interest in restarting U.S.-DPRK talks.

Still, the Bush administration's expressed intention to make conventional arms an integral part of its comprehensive agenda has met with opposition from the DPRK, which apparently views the new U.S. emphasis on conventional arms as reflecting a broader U.S. effort to weaken DPRK military capabilities and undermine the regime. President Bush's "axis of evil" comments in January 2002 and his June 2002 speech at West Point discussing the role of preemptive military strikes against countries that are seeking weapons of mass destruction (WMD) both served to reinforce Pyongyang's wariness of U.S. intentions.

The June 29 naval incident in the West Sea was a further setback to North-South and U.S.-DPRK dialogue. The ROK demanded an apology for the North Korean attack, called for an assurance that there would be no recurrence of such incidents, and suspended food aid to the North. The United States called the attack a North Korean "armed provocation" and withdrew its offer to send an envoy to Pyongyang. Unexpectedly, however, the DPRK sent South Korea a message on July 25 expressing regret for the incident that "took place accidentally," calling for "joint efforts to prevent the recurrence of such an incident in the future," and proposing the resumption of working-level and ministerial-level talks. While continuing to call for a more clear-cut apology, Seoul accepted the offer to resume inter-Korean talks. Moreover, after the DPRK reiterated its interest in a visit to Pyongyang by a U.S. envoy, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell held an informal conversation on July 31 with North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun on the margins of an ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in Brunei.

The tense, and at times hostile, situation on the Korean Peninsula is not unlike that in Europe prior to the early 1970s. The steps taken during this period in

¹¹ See Appendix E.

¹² Three rounds of family reunions took place in 2000 and 2001, and a fourth round took place in late April on Mount Kumgang after Lim's visit.

Europe led to modest conventional arms control efforts, comprised primarily of CBMs, which, in turn, laid the groundwork for an eventual breakthrough in conventional arms control after fundamental political change took place on the continent. Although not a perfect analogy, the European experience provides a useful reference point for considering potential initiatives in Korea.

IV. Lessons from Europe

Over the past 30 years, arms control efforts have played an important role in enhancing stability on the European continent. This was true during both the Cold War and the political upheaval of the early post-Cold War years. Arms control regimes in Europe increased the transparency and predictability of conventional military activities and forces, reduced the level of conventional arms both overall and in sensitive regions, such as the inter-German border, and established intrusive on-site inspection regimes. These measures were extensive and complex, consisting of treaties on force reductions and CBMs, including expanded transparency. They are embodied in various agreements, such as the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, the 1992 Treaty on Open Skies, the 1996 CFE Flank Agreement, the 1999 adapted CFE Treaty, and the 1999 Vienna Document.

Although it would be a mistake to overstate the similarities between Cold War Europe and the current situation on the Korean Peninsula, there are certainly enough parallels to make the European experience worth examining. As in Europe during the Cold War, large conventional forces configured for short-warning attack are concentrated toe-to-toe on each side of a tense dividing line. Very little communication exists between the two sides about the structure, size and disposition of their respective forces. And like Europe in the earliest days of conventional arms control discussions in the 1970s, there is no institutionalized forum for exchanging military information. Thus, the process that led to European arms control regimes provides potentially useful lessons for developing an approach to arms control on the Korean Peninsula.

Political Context

European conventional arms control efforts may be broken into three distinct phases that reflect the political changes on the continent. These phases were preceded by the decades of the 1950s and 1960s in which conventional arms control and East-West relations ran hot and cold.

The first phase of European conventional arms control, between 1972 and the late 1980s, consisted of the initiation of the pan-European Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), as well as separate NATO-Warsaw Pact Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks, which, after stalling in 1979, officially ended in 1989. Although CSCE and MBFR efforts produced only

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modest measures, they helped lay the groundwork for the next phase of cooperation by initiating a process for exchanging military data and creating some basic “rules of the road” for subsequent transparency measures.

The CSCE talks were divided into various discussion “baskets,” such as security, economics, and human rights, providing a means for participants simultaneously to pursue their respective political agendas. The Soviet Union sought a European-wide conference as a means to enhance its influence in Western Europe, legitimize existing borders in Central and East Europe, create a framework for controlling contacts between East and West, and gain greater access to Western technology and economic exchange. The East Europeans sought more flexibility in their external relations and an enhancement of their political, cultural and economic dialogue with the West. The Western European states, especially the Federal Republic of Germany, were also looking for ways to remove the barriers that divided Europe and “unify” the continent. Through these talks, the United States also pressed the East on issues of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

The second phase of European arms control, in 1988–1992, coincided with the political transformation in Europe, which included the fall of the Berlin Wall, the unification of Germany and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. This phase began with mandate negotiations for the complex and politically difficult CFE Treaty and it included the Treaty’s signature and entry-into-force, requiring the Soviet Union to make extensive asymmetrical cuts in major military equipment. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which had replaced CSCE, also promulgated a new generation of military CBMs during that phase.

Finally, from 1992 until the present, European negotiations have adapted the CFE Treaty to reflect the end of the Cold War, and, through the OSCE, produced new sets of regionally focused measures to deal with the new tensions that emerged with the end of bloc-to-bloc confrontation. This third phase reflects a Europe that still values arms limitations and the assurance provided by its associated verification measures, but is also marked by a dramatically transformed set of political relationships and continued instability in some regions such as the Balkans and North Caucasus.

Below are several lessons that can be drawn from the European experience that are potentially applicable to Korea.

Usefulness of “Mandate” Agreements

European arms control commonly utilized agreed-upon “mandates” to set boundary conditions for negotiations. These mandates covered issues such as which states were permitted full participation and which were offered observer status, the types of forces subject to negotiation, and the geographic area of application. Sometimes painful to negotiate, they proved essential for managing subsequent negotiations and for preventing irrelevant or otherwise distracting proposals.

The 1983 Madrid mandate, for example, specified that CBMs would be militarily significant, politically binding, verifiable, and applicable to the whole of Europe. The 1983 mandate also provided the basis for negotiations that produced new measures in 1986, and continued to serve as a basic framework for follow-on CBMs through the 1990s. In addition, the 1989 CFE mandate specified objectives (elimination of the possibility of surprise or short warning attack), as well as specific geographic boundaries and types of forces that were to be included (land-based, but not sea-based). The establishment of an agreed mandate at the outset served as an important means of protecting the interests of all parties and keeping the negotiations on track.

An agreed mandate might prove to be a useful device on the Korean Peninsula at an appropriate stage of the conventional arms control process. Such a mandate would probably be more useful to prepare the way for negotiations on arms reductions than for the development of CBMs.

Seats at the Negotiating Table

In European multilateral negotiations, the United States played a leading role throughout the history of the talks. This role reflected not only substantial U.S. political interests in Europe, but also the size of forward-deployed U.S. forces present on the European continent. For similar reasons in Korea, the United States must have a seat at the negotiating table.

In Europe, arms control proposals from both sides were evaluated by the U.S. Military and the NATO Military Commands for their impact on operational plans for defense in Europe, and for their effect on the net balance of East-West forces. In some cases, the U.S. Joint Staff or NATO international military staff authored proposals. In other cases, the Joint Staff provided military assessments of the operational impact of proposed measures. Maintaining military support through a collaborative, open process in Washington and among NATO allies was essential for sustaining political support in both Europe and Washington, including in the U.S. Congress where agreements required advice and consent of the Senate for ratification. Similarly, the participation of U.S. and ROK military staffs in the formulation and assessment of arms control measures on the Korean Peninsula will be essential to success.

In addition, the issue of participation by other nations should be weighed carefully. Although several CSCE states, notably Sweden, lobbied hard to participate in the CFE process, it was ultimately decided that limiting participation to those nations with forces on the ground was appropriate. Applying that model to the Korean Peninsula would mean trilateral negotiations involving only the DPRK, ROK, and United States.

A Common Allied Position

Experience in Europe suggests that the United States conducted some of its most difficult negotiations in Brussels with its own allies prior to presenting or

responding to proposals at the formal negotiations in Vienna. These differences arose across a range of issues, from the intrusiveness of inspections and data requirements, to appropriate force levels. They reflected the allies' respective political goals, which often overlapped but did not necessarily coincide. In the Korean context, it is essential that the United States reach a common position with the ROK before negotiating with the DPRK, and continue to work for common positions as negotiations proceed.

Establishing a Track Record

The European experience shows that implementation of even modest measures can establish a track record on which future initiatives can be built. In the case of Korea, implementation of the CBMs agreed to in the 1991–1992 Basic Agreement would be critical to establishing such a track record.

On-Site Observation and Inspection

On-site observation and inspection of relevant arms control sites can be as important to enhancing military stability as the actual force reductions, and both were at the center of successful European arms control. One of the important early breakthroughs in European CBM negotiations was the provision for on-site inspection (1986) as a means of verifying that both sides were fully complying with the agreements. This established a principle that negotiators used as a model for additional CBMs and for the subsequent CFE negotiations themselves. CFE provided valuable transparency of Soviet and Russian forces as they redeployed eastward at the end of the Cold War. In Korea, as in the European context, on-site inspection should be pursued as much as possible as a cooperative exercise rather than as an adversarial process in order to increase prospects for securing North Korean acceptance.

High-Level Political Support

In the case of both CBMs and negotiations on the CFE Treaty, meetings at the senior political level proved crucial at various points in the process. The CSCE process was initiated in 1972 with an agreement between President Nixon and Chairman Brezhnev that paved the way for negotiation of the 1973 Helsinki Final Act. In the case of the CFE Treaty negotiations, there were frequent communications and meetings at senior levels to deal with particularly tough issues. High-level meetings were also occasionally used as leverage. For example, the United States refused to commit President Bush's attendance at the 1990 Paris summit (where the CFE Treaty and the CSCE 'Charter of Paris' were to be signed) until it was clear that the final CFE negotiating hurdles could be satisfactorily overcome. On the Korean Peninsula, senior political contacts would presumably also be valuable—in initiating the negotiating process, breaking logjams along the way, and bringing about closure. A potential problem in the Korean context, however, may be the reluctance of the Bush administration to

engage with North Korea's leaders and the difficulty, even between North and South Korea, in arranging for meetings at the necessary senior levels.

V. Military Trends and Current Arms Balance¹³

Without U.S. help, South Korea is capable today of defending itself against an invasion from the North. Nonetheless, despite its severe economic problems and the heavy toll they have taken on its military capabilities, North Korea can threaten massive casualties in Seoul in the first few hours of a war. As a result, North Korea has the ability to effectively hold Seoul hostage, which is both a real physical threat to the South and a major political asset for the North. The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) may also have the option of conducting a limited southward assault with the goal of taking a small tract of territory and using it for bargaining purposes. However, Pyongyang can no longer have any hope of achieving what it long regarded as its principal military goal—reunifying the peninsula by force of North Korean arms.

Moreover, North Korea's leaders must be aware that a conventional conflict would entail not merely military defeat but the end of the current DPRK regime. If there is a war on the peninsula, the successful execution by combined U.S. and ROK forces of Oplan 5027 will presumably involve not only halting any North Korean advance into the South but also a counterattack across the DMZ with the objective of seizing Pyongyang and reunifying Korea under the Seoul government.

North Korean People's Army

North Korea is both the most militarized country in the world, with 1.08 million soldiers (44 percent of the population), and among the poorest. The North has difficulty in meeting both the food and energy needs of its people, however, Pyongyang has adopted a "military first" policy, which diverts the majority of resources to the military at the expense of the general populace. Although estimates vary, DPRK military spending equals at least 25 percent of GDP,¹⁴ more than any other country in the world. In contrast, the DPRK spends approximately three percent of GDP on health services. However, despite receiving a disproportionate share of funding, technology, food, and other imports, the NKPA has not escaped the misery of North Korea's severe economic crisis. Military modernization has slowed significantly in recent years and much of the NKPA equipment, particularly on the offensive side, is outdated. On the defensive side, however, North Korea maintains a warren of caves and fighting

¹³ See Appendix A for a graphic comparison of U.S., ROK, and DPRK forces on the Korean Peninsula.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, October 2000 (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2792.htm>).

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positions, and its defensive preparations are even more impressive than those of South Korea.

Beginning in the 1970s, the North pushed to modernize its offensive forces, seeking to capitalize on what it saw as a window of opportunity after the drawdown of some U.S. troops in the South. Between 1984 and 1992, the NKPA added about 1,000 tanks, over 2,500 armored-personnel carriers (APC) and infantry fighting vehicles (IFV), and approximately 6,000 artillery tubes or rocket launchers. As a result, North Korea had a twofold numerical advantage in tanks and artillery, and a 1.5-to-1 advantage in personnel over the U.S./ROK forces in the South.

These new forces were then concentrated into corps-level formations in an effort to ensure that they could sustain a deep, albeit narrow, attack.¹⁵ The NKPA had packed the area from which it might realistically initiate a no-notice offensive strike. Moreover, deployment of the newly formed mechanized, armored, and artillery corps directly behind the first echelon conventional forces provided a potent exploitation force that had not existed prior to 1980. Although the North was still not strong enough to prevail, the trend toward a more offensive doctrine, backed by increasing capability, was a cause of considerable concern for U.S./ROK forces.

Still, the North's effort to exploit the "window of opportunity" ultimately failed. First, North Korea simply lacked the logistical know-how and the financial resources to sustain this mechanized force across any significant distance, for any period of time. Also, NKPA procurement and restructuring did not occur as rapidly as South Korea's explosive economic growth, which produced quantitative and qualitative improvements in the ROK army as well as a sudden spurt of urbanization in South Korea. Urban terrain impedes armor and requires vast amounts of infantry to attack successfully. Mere shelling with artillery or rockets creates rubble, making the urban terrain even easier to defend. Seoul alone is immense. Moreover, to attack the South, the DPRK would have to fight through not just one but several South Korean cities. Clearly a strategy of conventional invasion was no longer a realistic possibility.

By the mid-1990s, it was clear that North Korea had fallen far behind. Its tanks were all hopelessly outdated and outclassed, including some 2,750 T-54/55/59s, 800 T-62 PT-76 variants, and 250 of the venerable T-34s.¹⁶ By comparison, Iraq during Desert Storm had equipment that was a generation newer than the most modern of these tanks. Another key weakness is North Korea's static air defense system. There is no indication that North Korea has augmented its static air defense umbrella with mobile surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems other than man-portable systems such as the SA-7, SA-14, or SA-16. A lack of

¹⁵ For a simple explanation of these doctrinal evolutions see *Warfare in the Western World, Military Operations Since 1871*, Robert Doughty and Ira Gruber, eds. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co, 1996), pp. 642-644.

¹⁶ Soviet designed tanks are designated in the West by the year in which they are first observed; hence, the "T-34" means that it was a tank first seen [usually in a May Day parade] in 1934.

modern, mobile SAM systems could be a major deficiency in the army's tactical air defense capability during mobile offensive operations. Given the NKPA's apparent fear of U.S. and ROK airpower, it seems unlikely that they would leave their forces open to air attack if they planned deep offensive maneuvers. This supports the belief that the NKPA no longer holds any hope of launching a successful deep attack.

North Korea nonetheless remains a threat. As of 2002, the NKPA had 20 corps, including 41 infantry divisions/brigades, 15 armored brigades, 21 artillery brigades, 9 multiple rocket launcher brigades, and 48 Special Purpose Forces brigades/battalions.¹⁷ The relatively large number of Special Operations forces strongly suggests that the NKPA still believes in the destabilizing capability of guerilla and commando forces. Moreover, North Korea has deployed ten corps (roughly sixty divisions and brigades) in the forward area south of the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. Many of these forward forces, including almost all the forward-deployed artillery, are stored in well-protected underground locations that are difficult to detect.

Most feared are the NKPA's artillery forces: a combined total of over 10,400 guns and howitzers ranging in caliber from 122 mm to 170 mm. The NKPA also has over 2,500 multiple rocket launchers between 107 mm and 240 mm, which are capable of hurling (at low estimates) 500,000 shells in one hour for several hours. With ranges up to 53 kilometers, the artillery can effectively destroy large parts of the Seoul metropolitan area from their present locations. The launchers and howitzers are well dug in and protected, do not require long lead times to fire, and are almost impossible to preempt. The North has increased its artillery force while improving force mobility and maintaining relative quantitative and range superiorities over the ROK/U.S. forces. A notable exception is the U.S. MLRS system, which is superior to all similar NKPA systems of the same type.

U.S. Forces Korea (USFK)

USFK consists of 37,000 troops, the overwhelming majority in American Army units. Nonetheless, the U.S. Air Force remains the lynchpin to South Korean defense. The Seventh Air Force, possibly the most feared aspect of American power on the peninsula, includes the 51st Fighter Wing, the 554th RED HORSE Squadron, the 607th Air Support Operations group, and the Air Intelligence and Air Operations groups. The location of these air assets is flexible given the USAF's evolving "expeditionary force" doctrine.

Compared with ROK forces, the U.S. ground force (Army) is small, but nonetheless is both a deterrent force as well as a symbol of political commitment to the U.S.-ROK alliance. The Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA), the largest American element in Korea, forms the core of U.S. forces and has been in Korea since 1950. The major combat element of EUSA, the 2nd Infantry Division, is a hybrid unit composed of one mechanized brigade and one "light" infantry brigade. Although

¹⁷ Information from IISS and FAS.

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very effective, doctrinally the 2nd ID can “cover” an area only about 10 kilometers wide across the Korean Peninsula. More potent is the 6th Cavalry Brigade, whose 1st and 3rd Squadrons consist of AH-64 Attack Helicopters and the new OH-58D (Kiowa Warrior) armed reconnaissance helicopters, the most technologically advanced attack aircraft in the world. The 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery is attached to the brigade and defends the skies from battle positions across the peninsula.

Under the existing war plan, Oplan 5027, American forces would presumably be rapidly built up in the event that U.S. intelligence believed that the North Koreans were preparing to attack. The plan envisions five phases. Initially, American and South Korean forces would try to slow Pyongyang’s ground assault north of Seoul, buy time while reinforcements pour into the country and then repulse the invaders. According to some press reports, those reinforcements could total over 500,00 American troops needed to win a conflict that could last up to four months. That would mean the United States would have to send to Korea roughly half its major combat forces, including 34 fighter squadrons, four bomber squadrons, and six aircraft carrier battle groups. Ground forces and equipment would be deployed through airlift and sealift. After beating back the invasion, American and South Korean troops would cross into North Korea and occupy Pyongyang.

Republic of Korea Armed Forces

The modern ROK Army consists of 11 corps and has 2,330 tanks, 6,474 pieces of artillery, and 2,520 armored vehicles. In almost all technical areas, the South Koreans far outstrip the North Koreans with one exception, artillery, where the ROK has qualitative parity but the NKPA has the quantitative advantage.

Three ROK armies make up the bulk of South Korea’s ground forces. These are deployed in a conventional “two up, one back” configuration but with the caveat that the “one back” has a significant rear-area combat role not analogous to any other organization among Western armies. This is a direct response to the NKPA’s Special Operations Forces threat. The First Army and the Third Army occupy well-fortified positions stretching southward from the DMZ about fifty kilometers and have the task of defending from the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) to the Seoul metropolitan area. The Second ROK Army (SROKA) is responsible for defending the rear area and has operational command over all army reserve units, the Homeland Reserve Force, and relevant logistics.

ROK army equipment is, generically speaking, one generation behind modern U.S. military equipment. A division of Hyundai produced the Type 88 Tank (formerly called the K-1 tank) at Ch’angwon. The product of a joint U.S.-South Korean design, the Type 88 is a smaller version of an American M1 Abrams with a slightly less sophisticated fire control system. Although the majority of ROK tanks (estimated at 1,000 +) are of this design, the ROK continues to place some reliance on approximately 850 upgraded, American-made M-48 tanks. The M-48’s basic design dates back to 1948, so these are decidedly second-echelon

forces. Overall, Army modernization programs emphasize maneuver warfare, the activation of two additional attack helicopter battalions and enhancement of special operations forces.

The ROK Air Force has approximately 63,000 personnel and about 740 aircraft including F-16s produced under contract. The Air Force Operations Command, formerly the Combat Air Command, includes 22 squadrons of ground attack fighters/interceptors, one squadron of counterinsurgency aircraft, one squadron of reconnaissance aircraft, and one group of search-and-rescue helicopters. The Air Force is designed almost exclusively as a supporting arm to ground operations. To compensate for the limitations of the U.S. Air Force in the area of ground attack aircraft, the ROK Air Force has built itself with that mission in mind, leaving the missions of high-altitude air superiority and deep interdiction to the U.S. Air Force. All the aircraft are American-made or co-produced. Currently the ROK Air Force is beginning another phase of modernization with its recent decision to purchase the American F-15.

Though some ships now have blue water capability, the ROK Navy is a small force whose primary mission remains one of coastal defense. In early 1999 the Defense Ministry announced that the ROK Navy would have three Aegis-class destroyers within ten years under a medium-term defense procurement project. Design of the warship was slated to start in the year 2001 and the first will be launched in 2009 or 2010, according to Ministry officials.

VI. Interests and Goals

The approach that the United States, South Korea, and North Korea will take toward conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula will be based on their own assessments of their national interests and the goals they adopt to promote those interests. Following is a broad picture of the interests and goals of the three parties.

The United States and South Korea

Given the strong convergence between U.S. and ROK interests and goals—as reflected in the integrated military structure of the Combined Forces Command (CFC) and their overall bilateral political and security relationship—the two allies are treated together in the discussion below, although differences of emphasis are noted.

Deterring and defeating any North Korean attack

The United States and South Korea have a critical strategic interest in deterring and defeating any aggression from the North and in minimizing the destructive potential of North Korean forces. U.S. and ROK military commanders recognize that North Korea today has little capability or intention to launch and sustain an

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invasion of the South and that any war would be won decisively by alliance forces. In approaching any conventional arms control negotiations, therefore, an important allied objective would be to “do no harm”—that is, to ensure that the negotiations did not result in outcomes that would in any way undermine the current, relatively favorable military balance on the peninsula or weaken the allies’ ability to deter attack.

In particular, the United States and the ROK would not want to accept any arrangements that could interfere with the ability to maintain a significant U.S. military presence in Korea, both as a powerful military deterrent and as a vital political symbol of solidarity and mutual commitment. In addition, they would want to avoid:

- ◆ Qualitative constraints that could undermine crucial capabilities that U.S. and ROK forces need to offset DPRK numerical advantages;
- ◆ Restrictions that could undercut the deterrent and warfighting value of allied air assets (including fixed-wing aircraft and attack helicopters); and
- ◆ *Any* limitations on U.S. naval capabilities, which have regional security roles beyond the Korean Peninsula.

Beyond protecting allied capabilities needed for deterrence and defense, the United States and the ROK would want to use conventional arms control negotiations to address their principal military concern on the peninsula—North Korea’s capability to launch a devastating bombardment of Seoul and allied military forces with very little warning time. To diminish the ability to execute such an attack, to limit its destructiveness in the event of war, and to minimize DPRK bargaining leverage in any future confrontation short of armed conflict, an allied goal in the negotiations would be to blunt this capability, which includes thousands of long-range artillery tubes located in well-fortified firing positions close to the DMZ. The United States and South Korea could seek to reduce the threat posed by North Korea’s forward-deployed conventional forces by calling for reductions and/or pullbacks to rear areas of certain threatening categories of arms, especially long-range artillery and perhaps also tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other mechanized forces.

Reducing the risk of conflict through accident or miscalculation

Armed conflict could break out on the Korean Peninsula not just by aggressive design but also by relatively small incidents escalating as a result of misperceptions and overreactions. Recently, a North Korean naval vessel opened fire on and sank a South Korean patrol boat in the Yellow Sea. In 1999, a similar episode involving North Korean gunboats and fishing boats crossing the “northern limit line”—the disputed maritime boundary between the two Koreas—resulted in a naval skirmish and the sinking of a DPRK naval vessel. In 1996, there was a series of infiltrations into South Korea by the DPRK, including the case in which a North Korean submarine landed in the South and the ROK launched a massive

manhunt for the escaped North Korean spies. In 1994, two U.S. Army aviators flying a routine training mission along the DMZ strayed into North Korean territory and were shot down. One pilot was killed and the other taken hostage. The DPRK charged that the unarmed aircraft was a spy plane.

Such clashes have been going on for decades. In July 1977, a U.S. Army CH-47 helicopter was shot down and three people killed when it flew into North Korea. In 1969, a U.S. Navy RC-121 reconnaissance plane was shot down off North Korea's east coast, killing 31 crewmembers. In August 1976, North Korean soldiers axed to death two U.S. officers pruning an overgrown tree in Panmunjom.

The United States and ROK have a strong interest in avoiding such occurrences in the future and in ensuring that any incidents that do occur do not escalate into large-scale hostilities. Besides the risks of escalation, such episodes can be major setbacks to inter-Korean relations, reinforcing mutual mistrust and reversing any momentum that had developed. An important goal for the allies in approaching negotiations on conventional arms control should therefore be to minimize opportunities for accidents and miscalculations that could lead to armed conflict or the deterioration of North-South relations. They could promote that goal through a wide range of measures designed to:

- ◆ Increase the transparency of activities that may be subject to misinterpretation (e.g., pre-notification and observation of military exercises);
- ◆ Establish “rules of the road” to minimize the likelihood of frictions and accidents that may occur when military or other assets are operating in close proximity (e.g., maritime “incidents at sea” arrangements);
- ◆ Limit the nature and scale of certain potentially destabilizing activities (e.g., restrictions on the size and character of military exercises near the DMZ); and
- ◆ Provide a channel for communications during a crisis or on a routine basis (e.g., hotlines, consultative mechanisms).

Promoting North-South reconciliation

While serious differences exist within South Korea on *how to* pursue inter-Korean relations—for example, on the degree of reciprocity, on the nature or magnitude of inducements, and on the mixture of private-sector and government-to-government contacts—there is a broad consensus across the ROK political spectrum on the importance of pursuing a policy of engagement with North Korea that would result eventually, albeit in the distant future, in the reunification of Korea. South Koreans believe the process of North-South reconciliation should involve a balance of political, economic, humanitarian, and security measures, and are frustrated by Pyongyang's insistence on proceeding with economic and

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humanitarian steps beneficial to the North while dragging its feet on security measures sought by the ROK.

Nonetheless, many South Koreans share the view that the goal of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula can be served not just by measures of a strictly military nature but also by steps toward North-South reconciliation in nonmilitary spheres such as restoration of rail and road links, economic interactions, cultural exchanges, and family reunions. And within the military sphere, they believe that even relatively modest confidence-building measures can play an important role, not only as stepping stones to more ambitious restrictions on the size and disposition of conventional forces but also in reducing tensions, breaking down barriers, enhancing contacts, and generally advancing the strategy of engagement.

The Clinton administration was a strong supporter of ROK President Kim Dae-jung's "sunshine policy" toward North Korea. The Bush administration has preferred a tougher brand of engagement, one based on greater reciprocity and verification, which has also been favored by President Kim's domestic opponents. Still, in the interest of maintaining solidarity with their ally, President Bush and senior members of his administration have repeatedly voiced their support for the ROK government's engagement policy and for further progress in inter-Korean relations.

An important criterion for evaluating various approaches to conventional arms control, especially for the ROK, will be how they affect inter-Korean relations and the process of engagement. Approaches and measures that are seen as complementing and advancing the reconciliation process are likely to gain the support of the allies, while those seen as jeopardizing or impeding that process, even if warranted on strictly security grounds, are unlikely to be pursued.

Ensuring a strong U.S.-ROK relationship

Maintaining a strong bilateral relationship is a fundamental interest of the United States and ROK and a prerequisite to achieving other allied objectives. Such a solid relationship has not only helped deter aggression for close to 50 years and created the stable framework for the emergence of a democratic and prosperous South Korea; it has also provided an essential foundation for North-South reconciliation by convincing Pyongyang that its goal of reunifying the peninsula by force is a nonstarter and by giving South Koreans the self-confidence to pursue their inter-Korean goals.

Despite the continued recognition in both Seoul and Washington of the central importance of bilateral ties, strains have sometimes developed in the relationship. As the ROK has matured politically and grown economically, it has increasingly come to resent what is often perceived as excessive dependence on the United States and has begun to insist on playing a central role in matters affecting the future of the Korean Peninsula. South Koreans have especially been sensitive to repeated efforts by North Korea to marginalize them by going over their heads and dealing directly with the United States on matters of vital importance. When they felt that the United States was going along with this DPRK tactic—as they

did during negotiations of the 1994 Agreed Framework—their resentment turned toward Washington.

The period since the Bush administration took office has been an uneasy one in U.S.-ROK relations. Many South Koreans have felt that the Bush team's harsh rhetoric and tough policy line toward North Korea have increased tensions on the peninsula and were adopted by Washington without due consideration for the security interests of its alliance partner. Notwithstanding Pyongyang's failure to follow through on many of its own commitments to the ROK, a large number of South Koreans have tended to blame the recent problems in North-South relations on Washington's approach toward the North.

The United States and ROK have an important stake in pursuing conventional arms control issues in a way that reinforces their bilateral relationship and dispels the concerns that have arisen over the last year or so. This will not be easy. The substantive issues that could arise in conventional arms talks with the DPRK—including such potentially sensitive matters as the composition and disposition of U.S. forces in Korea and the character of U.S.-ROK military command arrangements—could become a source of frictions if not handled carefully.

Procedural issues could be especially difficult, with both Seoul and Washington insisting on arrangements for the negotiations that protect their respective interests. In this connection, the South Koreans have long favored a division of labor in which the United States would deal with the DPRK on WMD and missile issues while they would deal with Pyongyang on peninsula-wide security matters, including conventional arms. They have accordingly not been happy with the Bush administration's intention to take up conventional arms issues in the bilateral U.S.-DPRK talks. For its part, the United States has been reluctant to give the ROK its proxy in a conventional arms negotiation that could have important implications for U.S. forces on the peninsula and indeed in East Asia. The two allies recognize, moreover, that the goal of preserving U.S.-ROK solidarity will be complicated by North Korean attempts to drive wedges between them and play one off against the other.

Promoting regional and global nonproliferation goals

The principal military threats posed by North Korea—its nuclear weapons program, its chemical weapons and biological weapons programs, its short- and longer-range missile capabilities, and its forward-deployed conventional forces—are interrelated. For example, *any* DPRK nuclear weapons and CBW capabilities targeted on bases and staging facilities in Korea and Japan could disrupt the allied strategy of bringing U.S. reinforcements to Korea in the event of conventional conflict. CBW and short-range missiles are integral to North Korean conventional forces. And the DPRK's massive, forward-deployed artillery (and the inability to neutralize and limit the damage from that capability at the outset of hostilities) gives North Korea substantial leverage in any negotiation or military confrontation over its nuclear and other WMD capabilities.

Given these linkages, it would clearly be optimal to address these various threats comprehensively and concurrently. But negotiating a solution to these threats all at once would be a complicated and lengthy process and, if achievable at all, could require the United States and ROK to pay an extremely high price in terms of their own concessions. It is therefore essential, in advance of talks with the DPRK, to have a clear sense of U.S.-ROK negotiating priorities.

For the United States in particular, the nuclear and long-range missile issues deserve the highest priority. Acquisition by the DPRK of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles would not only pose a grave threat to South Korea and American military forces and civilians (both directly and by impeding the reinforcement of Korea in a conventional conflict); it would also threaten the territory of the United States and other U.S. allies and create pressure for proliferation elsewhere in East Asia and other parts of the world. Moreover, a continuation of North Korean exports of increasingly long-range missile technology to the Middle East and other regions could have extremely destabilizing consequences. For the ROK, the largely peninsula-specific threats posed by North Korean conventional forces, CBW, and short-range missiles may be a higher priority relative to the nuclear and long-range missile threats than they are for the United States. However, the ROK still shares the strong U.S. and international desire to address DPRK nuclear and missile capabilities.

In preparing for negotiations with North Korea, an important consideration for the United States and the ROK will be how their approach to the conventional arms issue will affect prospects for achieving timely, effective measures to address the nuclear and missile threats.

U.S. and ROK priorities

Although there is a close coincidence between U.S. and ROK interests and goals in approaching negotiations on conventional arms, there are some significant differences of emphasis.

While the ROK sees the talks as an opportunity to address the North Korean military threat (especially the threat posed by conventional forces), it will tend to give greater emphasis to the political dimension of the process, especially to its impact on inter-Korean relations and on the South Korean government's role and status vis-à-vis North Korea and the United States. Specifically, it will be important for Seoul that the talks promote and not impede North-South reconciliation, and that they give due weight to South Korea's central role in peacemaking and security building on the peninsula.

The South Koreans clearly are not indifferent to the strictly military dimension of the process. But given the formidable defense capabilities of the U.S.-ROK alliance, they regard the North's forward-deployed conventional force as a threat they can live with a while longer and, in any event, an asset they don't believe Pyongyang is likely to give up quickly or easily. They believe that military confidence-building measures can reduce tensions and improve stability in the near term and that, over time, balanced progress in all aspects of inter-

Korean relations will lead to a fundamentally less threatening situation on the peninsula.

The United States, in contrast, is likely to give greater relative weight to the military dimension, although it will recognize the importance of the political side. In particular, it will support efforts to advance North-South reconciliation, and indeed may even be more inclined than the ROK government to try to use both military and nonmilitary confidence-building steps to try to open up and encourage change in the North Korean system. But its primary focus will be on reducing the military threats from the North, especially the nuclear and missile programs (and their implications for broader U.S. nonproliferation interests) and also, although to a lesser extent, the forward-deployed artillery. The United States will also give special emphasis to the impact of any negotiations on the U.S. military presence on the peninsula and on the wider U.S. role in East Asia.

Both the ROK and the United States are likely to place great importance on maintaining a strong bilateral alliance relationship.

North Korea

Any discussion of DPRK interests and goals must be highly speculative, both because of the scarcity of information about the thinking of the North Korean leadership and because DPRK public statements and rhetoric may not reflect the regime's actual motives. In this connection, North Korean positions in the conventional arms control area have traditionally called both for reductions in ROK and DPRK forces and for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the peninsula. But it is difficult to know whether Pyongyang was actually prepared to accept cuts in its military forces or whether it offered its proposals (including the element of U.S. troop withdrawals, which it knew would be unacceptable) in order to counter and deflect ROK proposals for military confidence-building measures.

Moreover, it is unclear where North Korea genuinely stands on the question of U.S. military presence in Korea. On the one hand, Pyongyang continues to call publicly and often stridently for the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces. On the other hand, Kim Jong-il has indicated in a number of private conversations, including during President Kim Dae-jung's visit to North Korea in June 2000, that U.S. troops might play a future stabilizing role on the peninsula, even after unification. It may well be that North Korea would be willing to accept the presence of U.S. forces in Korea, but only if there were a fundamental improvement in U.S.-DPRK relations and if basic changes were made in the size, composition, and role of those forces.

Recognizing that North Korean motives are hard to fathom, we can still speculate about the DPRK's interests and goals in approaching talks on conventional arms control.

Deterring attack and discouraging pressure by the United States and ROK

For decades the North Koreans have accused the United States and ROK allies of planning to attack them. These public denunciations of the allies' aggressive intent served a variety of propaganda and internal control purposes: mobilizing the North Korean armed forces, justifying the regime's repressive rule, justifying the extraordinary share of resources allocated to the military, and providing an explanation for the harsh conditions of life in the North. But as hard as it may be for Americans and South Koreans to understand, these accusations probably also reflected a genuine North Korean fear of attack. With the coming to office of the Bush administration—and the inclusion of the DPRK in the “axis of evil,” the reference to Korean contingencies in the Nuclear Posture Review, the increased emphasis on preemptive strike options, and the tough and skeptical overall approach taken by senior administration officials toward North Korea—this fear of coercive pressure and even attack by U.S. and ROK forces has presumably increased.

Given these concerns, the North Koreans will see themselves as having a vital interest in maintaining and even strengthening their ability to deter an attack from the allies. In the context of negotiations on conventional arms control, we would expect them to seek to protect what they see as their own deterrent capabilities and to reduce what they see as especially threatening components of the allies' forces. In the former category, they are likely to resist proposals aimed at reducing the size and altering the geographic disposition of their long-range artillery and short-range missile forces. In the latter category, they may well put special emphasis on reducing or otherwise constraining U.S. (and ROK) air and naval assets. They may also call for various kinds of security assurances, including commitments that the United States will not attack the DPRK or use nuclear weapons against it.

Promoting regime survival

North Korea's leaders presumably believe they have an overriding interest in ensuring the survival of their regime. One of the ways they will try to reinforce the survivability of the regime is to use the negotiations on conventional arms as a means of acquiring external assistance, especially food and fuel oil. They may seek to ensure that any agreements reached in the conventional arms area would be accompanied by additional pledges of humanitarian and other support. Indeed, they may also calculate that simply engaging on the conventional arms issue, without necessarily reaching agreement, would facilitate continued aid shipments.

Pyongyang may also try to use the negotiations to bolster the legitimacy and standing of the regime, especially vis-à-vis the ROK government. This goal could be pursued by seeking certain procedural arrangements (e.g., insisting on bilateral U.S.-DPRK talks) as well as substantive outcomes (e.g., a U.S.-DPRK peace treaty, termination of U.S.-ROK mechanisms such as the United Nations Command).

The DPRK can also be expected to promote regime survival by resisting outcomes that, in its view, could lead to undue pressures for opening up and reforming the regime. This would affect North Korean reactions to proposals for extensive data exchanges, intrusive verification techniques, and other efforts to increase transparency in the North.

Strengthening the North Korean economy

Given the staggering drain of military spending on North Korea's economy, the DPRK would seem to have a strong incentive to use conventional arms control to reduce that burden and improve living conditions in the country. It might be in North Korea's interest, for example, to promote substantial cuts in armed forces both north and south of the DMZ and to seek external assistance in demobilizing its forces and converting part of its military production capability to more productive uses.

However, there is little evidence that Pyongyang will decide to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by conventional arms control talks to make the fundamental resource allocation decisions need to strengthen its economy. The chief obstacle is the dominant position occupied by the military in North Korean policymaking. Notwithstanding Kim Jong-il's leading role as chairman of the military commission, he apparently must still answer to senior military figures, including "old guard" supporters of his father Kim Il-sung, who have insisted on a "military first" policy giving the armed forces first claim on North Korea's scarce resources.

The DPRK military is likely to remain an impediment to negotiating outcomes that are seen as reducing its assets and weakening its grip on the country. In economic terms, conventional arms control will likely be approached not as an opportunity to make fundamental changes in North Korea's failed economic system but as a vehicle for obtaining the external assistance needed to keep the system afloat.

Improving U.S.-DPRK relations

In the last several years, North Korean leaders appear to have placed considerable importance on improving relations with the United States. They have seen engagement and eventual normalization with Washington as the key to ensuring a less threatening security environment and facilitating the acquisition of external assistance. Toward the end of the Clinton administration, they seemed to believe that they were on the verge of a fundamentally improved relationship with the United States. The Bush administration's tough approach, however, has caught them off guard and they are wary of Washington's current intentions.

Despite its misgivings, Pyongyang appears ready to engage with the Bush administration. Moreover, even though it had earlier rejected the administration's expressed intention to address conventional arms issues—branding this new emphasis on conventional arms an attempt by the United States to disarm North Korea—it will probably be willing to discuss those issues and even put forward

conventional arms proposals of its own. One of its chief motives for engaging would be to keep alive the possibility of a future improvement in U.S.-DPRK relations and, in the meantime, to use the talks as a device to try to weaken support in the United States for a hard line toward North Korea.

But a readiness to engage does not necessarily mean a willingness to negotiate seriously. As long as the North Koreans believe the United States is intent on an adversarial relationship with them, they can be expected to maintain a firmly negative attitude toward any U.S.-ROK proposals aimed at the reduction or re-deployment of the forces they consider essential as a deterrent. It is possible, in these circumstances, that reaching agreement on modest confidence-building measures might be seen as a way of reconciling two sets of goals—on the one hand, resisting outcomes that could undercut the DPRK's deterrence assets, threaten the military's institutional interests, and create pressures for opening up the regime and, on the other hand, facilitating continued external aid, bolstering the regime's legitimacy, and reversing the recent deterioration of U.S.-North Korean relations.

VII. The U.S. Approach

During the past decade of intermittent engagement with the DPRK, the conventional arms issue usually took a back seat to other issues. In the case of U.S. negotiations with North Korea, attention was focused largely on the nuclear and missile issues. In inter-Korean discussions, despite ROK efforts to make progress in the security area, the North Koreans resisted military tension-reduction steps and instead pursued their preferred agenda in the political, economic, and humanitarian assistance areas.

In any future engagement with North Korea, the United States and the ROK should give prominence to conventional arms issues. Although DPRK conventional forces no longer pose a credible threat of invasion, their continuing ability to cause massive destruction in the South with little warning time—together with the political leverage that such a capability provides—means that the allies cannot afford to allow North Korea's forward-deployed conventional threat to remain off the agenda indefinitely. Moreover, the current absence of measures to avoid and contain potential crises should be remedied in the interest of minimizing the likelihood of future provocations and preventing other incidents from escalating to large-scale conflict. If North-South engagement continues to deal almost exclusively with political, economic, and humanitarian matters and to neglect the military dimension, a critical opportunity to improve security on the peninsula will be missed and the policy of engagement will not be politically sustainable in the South.

For these reasons, conventional arms control issues should be an integral part of a comprehensive U.S.-ROK strategy for dealing with the DPRK and should be

addressed concurrently with other items on the agenda. At the same time, the approach to conventional arms should be pursued in a way that advances high-priority allied objectives—especially ensuring a strong U.S.-ROK relationship, promoting North-South reconciliation, and minimizing prospects for incidents and miscalculations that could escalate to wider hostilities—while averting the pitfalls that could result from adopting an overly ambitious approach from the outset.

Any effective strategy for strengthening security and stability on the peninsula must, sooner or later, address the threat of massive, short-warning attack by North Korea's forward-deployed conventional capabilities. But U.S. and ROK deterrence of such an attack remains strong today: Pyongyang is under no illusions about the consequences of unleashing a deadly artillery and missile barrage against Seoul. From a security standpoint, therefore, the United States and South Korea need not insist on an immediate solution to this problem.

In any event, an immediate solution—in the form of deep reductions or a pullback of DPRK forces stationed near the DMZ—would be very difficult to negotiate, especially in the prevailing climate of hostility and mutual mistrust. In current circumstances, North Korea's leaders clearly regard those forces as an essential component of their deterrent and therefore an indispensable pillar of the regime. In the unlikely event that they would be prepared to put their forward-deployed forces on the negotiating table at all, they would surely insist that the allies make concessions of comparable magnitude in return, including, for example, the reduction or withdrawal of U.S. forces, particularly air assets. The allies would most likely calculate that the price they would have to pay, in terms of reducing their own deterrent capabilities, to gain reductions of the most threatening DPRK forces would simply be too high.

Moreover, a U.S. proposal for ambitious force reduction or re-deployment measures at the outset of negotiations—especially in the context of an approach that made progress on other agenda items conditional on North Korean acceptance of such measures—could have the effect of undercutting other key U.S.-ROK objectives. Combining such linkage with highly ambitious conventional arms control proposals could well lead to a U.S.-DPRK stalemate across the board, which would have a negative impact (or, at a minimum, would be perceived in South Korea as having a negative impact) on prospects for inter-Korean reconciliation. This, in turn, could be expected to produce further strains in U.S.-ROK relations. In addition, an across-the-board stalemate would block progress on the separate, high-priority goals of promoting DPRK compliance with the Agreed Framework and achieving verifiable limitations on North Korea's missile programs.

The United States and the ROK could maximize opportunities and minimize risks by pursuing a phased approach to conventional arms control with North Korea, one that focused initially on relatively modest confidence-building measures and then proceeded to more ambitious steps, including limitations on the numbers and geographical deployment of forces. The initial CBMs would be designed not only to reduce tensions, increase trust, create patterns of constructive

North-South interaction, and avoid armed conflict through accident or miscalculation; they would also help lay the groundwork for pursuing more ambitious arms control measures as the overall political climate for the negotiations improved. Such an approach could include the following elements.

Format and negotiating parties

The question of who would participate in conventional arms discussions is a potentially divisive one for the U.S. and ROK alliance. South Korea has long favored a division of labor with regard to the DPRK, in which the ROK would handle CBMs and other conventional arms issues and the United States would deal with nuclear and missile issues. Given the implications of possible conventional arms control measures for U.S. forces in South Korea and for U.S. security responsibilities throughout the Asia-Pacific region, the United States has wanted to have a voice on conventional arms issues, and indeed the Bush administration, to the discomfort of Seoul, has called for placing conventional arms on the agenda of any bilateral talks between the United States and the DPRK. Aware of this potential point of contention between the allies, the North Koreans are unlikely to resist the temptation to make mischief—for example, by dealing bilaterally with the United States in a way that plays on ROK fears of being marginalized.

The allies can thwart such divisive North Korean tactics and satisfy their own requirements for involvement by calling for a trilateral forum for dealing with conventional arms issues. A trilateral forum is justified by the fact that the ROK, the United States, and the DPRK have military forces on the peninsula and would therefore be most directly affected by any negotiating outcomes. However, not all conventional arms issues impact the three participants equally. Some (e.g., land mine clearing operations in North-South transportation corridors) are much more relevant to the two Koreas than to the United States. The conventional arms forum should therefore adopt a flexible approach toward participation. For example, on issues that principally affect the two Koreas (e.g., many CBMs), a North-South subgroup would be constituted to carry out the work. However, on issues that also significantly engage U.S. interests (e.g., most “operational” and “structural” arms control measures, some CBMs), all three parties would meet. The U.S. and ROK allies would have the exclusive right to decide between themselves whether a particular subject would be handled “at two” or “at three.”

U.S.-ROK coordination

As discussed previously, just as solidarity by the NATO allies at the negotiating table was essential to achieving a positive outcome in the CFE negotiations, so too will solidarity between the United States and the ROK be critical to success in conventional arms talks on the peninsula. Indeed, Washington and Seoul have an overriding interest in ensuring—not just for the sake of success on conventional arms, but more fundamentally for the health of their alliance relationship—that they approach conventional arms talks in a way that does not allow the issue to become a source of friction or disharmony between them.

To promote solidarity at the negotiating table, the U.S. and ROK allies should coordinate their positions in advance of sitting down trilaterally with the DPRK. That doesn't mean U.S. and ROK approaches to the trilateral talks must be carbon copies of one another. On some matters, differences of emphasis or even differences of view may not be harmful. But even on those, the allies should script in advance how they will be handled with North Korea. On issues of consequence, the North Koreans should not be able to see any daylight between the allies.

Such close coordination will require special bilateral consultative mechanisms or channels, both at the senior and expert levels and between the two capitals as well as between the delegations at the site of negotiations. The two allies have made a promising start at coordination. As mentioned earlier, under the auspices of the CFC, the UNC, and the South Korean MND, experts from the United States and the ROK launched a joint study in June 2001 of military CBMs and other conventional arms control issues and produced a preliminary report in December 2001.

Starting with previously agreed measures

As discussed above, an initial phase of conventional arms control should focus primarily on confidence-building measures. In looking at the wide range of CBMs potentially worth pursuing, it makes sense to begin with measures that North and South Korea have previously agreed upon (even if they have not been implemented), both because it should be easier to gain DPRK acceptance, and implementation, of measures that had earlier been approved at the highest levels in Pyongyang and because it will be difficult to have much confidence in the DPRK's compliance with new measures if it is not prepared to implement previously-agreed ones in a conscientious manner.

The initial measures to be pursued could be drawn largely from those mentioned in the 1991–1992 “Basic Agreement” between the ROK and DPRK. Among those might be the mutual notification and monitoring of large-scale military exercises, exchanges of military personal and information, and the operation of a military hotline. The Basic Agreement also called for the establishment of a North-South Joint Military Commission that would be responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of such measures. Perhaps the Commission could be established and function initially as a kind of subgroup of the trilateral conventional arms talks that would be responsible for measures affecting mainly North and South Korea. It would later become a permanent, separate institution responsible not just for developing new CBMs but also for considering any questions that arise about the implementation of existing measures.

Avoiding incidents that could escalate

Beyond resurrecting previously agreed CBMs, the parties should seek additional arrangements that prohibit certain kinds of provocative behavior and minimize the likelihood of armed hostilities breaking out through accidents, misunderstandings,

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or miscalculations. Such arrangements are particularly important in the maritime area, given the recent naval skirmish in the West Sea and an earlier incident in 1999. One of the sources of those incidents was the DPRK's unwillingness to recognize the "Northern Limit Line" as the maritime boundary between North and South Korea. If near-term agreement on a maritime boundary is not feasible (and it probably is not), then Seoul and Pyongyang might agree to set aside the legal dispute for the time being and seek to work out some "rules of the road" that would govern both fishing rights in an agreed joint fishing zone and the operation of naval vessels in the zone. The U.S.-Soviet "Incidents at Sea" agreement and similar maritime arrangements adopted by other countries could provide ideas on which the two Koreas might draw.

Similar agreed "rules of the road" arrangements could be adopted for air operations, providing restrictions on operations in the vicinity of the DMZ and over disputed maritime areas, and specifying procedures to be followed in the event that aircraft stray into prohibited areas. In the case of ground forces, the parties might look for useful ideas in the 1990 Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities, which was adopted in the U.S.-Soviet context and prescribed rules of conduct for military forces operating in close proximity.

The purpose of such measures should not only be to avoid accidents and prevent innocent actions from being misinterpreted and leading to conflict; they should also seek to preclude intentional provocative acts. The parties should, therefore, seek explicit agreement to ban certain types of provocative behavior, both in the military and nonmilitary fields. For example, under the Agreement on Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities, the United States and the USSR agreed to refrain from shining laser devices at the other side after an American pilot was temporarily blinded by a Soviet laser in 1987 as his plane flew in the vicinity of a Soviet missile test. The agreement also stipulated that both sides would not use force in the case of an accidental incursion by the other's military, that the two adversaries would enhance communications so that they could more quickly determine if a confrontation was accidental or not, and that neither side would seek to interfere with the communications systems of the other during peacetime.

Transparency and exchanges of personnel

CBMs that increase transparency and promote exchanges of information and personnel can serve multiple objectives: avoiding miscalculations of another country's military capabilities; preventing misinterpretations of specific military operations; promoting confidence in compliance with arms control measures and other CBMs; reducing overall levels of suspicion; and developing normal habits of interaction and constructive working relationships between long-standing adversaries.

While the stabilizing value of openness is part of the conventional wisdom of transatlantic strategic thinkers steeped in the Cold War arms control experience, transparency is still not a benign concept for North Korea, one of the most secretive and isolated countries in the world. For North Korea, secrecy can be a

strategic asset, concealing both its strengths and its weaknesses. Personnel exchanges could raise concerns about the potentially subversive impact of exposing North Korean officials, military officers, and normal citizens to foreign influences.

Given expected North Korean resistance to transparency measures and personnel exchanges, it will be necessary to proceed incrementally. Building on the reference in the Basic Agreement to mutual notification and monitoring of large-scale military exercises, the allies should seek agreement with the North on the details of such an arrangement, perhaps starting off with ground force exercises of substantial scale. Over time, the size of the exercises to be notified should be reduced, the amount of data provided should be increased, and the presence of foreign observers at the exercises should be strengthened. As the comfort level with mutual observation increases, the allies might consider more intrusive forms of monitoring, such as cooperative aerial surveillance (along the lines of the multilateral “Open Skies” agreement developed in Europe) as well as jointly manned ground monitoring stations along key invasion corridors to provide confidence that no attack was under way.

The parties should also provide one another information about their military forces on a periodic basis. They should first reach agreement on the kinds and categories of data to be exchanged. Over time, the information would become increasingly detailed.

Especially given the dominant role of the military in the DPRK, military-to-military contacts would be a particularly important form of CBM. Previous contacts have been held between ROK and DPRK defense ministers and between more junior military officers, but those interactions were episodic and often were cancelled by North Korea for reasons unrelated to the meetings themselves. Such military contacts should be institutionalized and regularized, and other opportunities for military interactions (e.g., reciprocal port visits by naval vessels) should be explored. In addition to any “hotline” arrangements established between the capitals of North and South Korea, rapid and reliable communications links should be set up between key ROK and DPRK military commanders.

Reinforcing North-South reconciliation

Consistent with the common ROK-U.S. desire to promote progress in inter-Korean relations, the allies should look for opportunities to pursue CBMs involving military personnel that can complement and reinforce nonmilitary cooperation in the North-South area. North Korea’s economic stake in North-South cooperation, as well as its own heavy reliance on military personnel to carry out nonmilitary projects, could contribute to Pyongyang’s receptivity to such cooperation. Examples in this area could include cooperation on security measures associated with the restoration of railway and roadway connections (e.g., land mine clearing), contingency planning for and joint responses to civil

and natural disasters, cooperation on infrastructure projects (e.g., flood prevention for the Imjin River), and preparations for establishing direct air routes over the DMZ.

Preparing for more ambitious measures

Although it is highly probable that relatively modest CBMs will be the only measures that will prove feasible in the early stage of conventional arms negotiations, the U.S. and ROK allies should begin now to give serious thought to the kinds of ambitious measures they would find acceptable—both in the area of “operational” arms control (restrictions on the location, readiness, or activities of military forces) as well as “structural” arms control (limitations on the quantity or quality of forces).

At a minimum, such planning would be helpful to the allies in reacting to proposals advanced by the North Korean side. In the past, Pyongyang has proposed deep cuts in manpower and equipment levels as well as withdrawal of U.S. forces from the peninsula. Early substantive consideration by the allies of possible operational or structural arms control measures would put them in a stronger position to counter DPRK proposals inconsistent with their interests. It would also put them in a position, if they saw tactical merit in doing so, to put down markers with the North Koreans about the requirements that any such measures would have to meet to be acceptable. Included among those requirements might be the following:

- ◆ Limitations should be focused mainly on forces most suitable for surprise attack;
- ◆ Geographic keep-out or thin-out zones should be used to prohibit or restrict certain activities or forces in the vicinity of the DMZ, thus reducing the threat of massive, surprise attack;
- ◆ Any arrangements should provide some form of compensation (perhaps asymmetrical geographic zones) to compensate for geographical asymmetries favorable to the North;
- ◆ Any arrangements should provide for effective verification measures;
- ◆ Any measures should not cover naval forces where missions extend well beyond the Korean Peninsula; and
- ◆ U.S. forces are eligible to be included in the limitations, but no provisions should require full withdrawal or impose limitations that would compromise USFK’s deterrent role (e.g., concentration on air assets).

Although prospects are remote for early progress on operational or structural arms control measures, the allies should not resist discussion of such measures if, for example, the North Koreans insist that consideration of CBMs be balanced by consideration of more far-reaching arms control measures. Indeed, there may be some value in setting up parallel working groups in the negotiations, one to work

on CBMs and the other to consider operational and structural measures—provided that there is explicit agreement that substantive progress in one group will not be linked to progress in the other. Such parallel discussions would give the allies the opportunity to learn whether, despite their expectations, there was a promising possibility of advancing allied security interests through arms control arrangements more ambitious than CBMs.

In the more likely event that such discussions on operational or structural arrangements did not yield near-term results, they could at least enable the participants to move up the arms control learning curve together, developing a common vocabulary and a better mutual understanding of key concepts and perhaps preparing the ground for more productive negotiations at a later stage of the process. Indeed, in the absence of agreement on operational or structural arms control measures, the participants might seek to develop an agreed list of principles that would guide further negotiations on such measures. Such agreed principles would complement any concrete CBMs developed by the participants in the parallel working group.

Handling short-range missiles and chemical and biological weapons

North Korea's programs to acquire nuclear weapons and long-range missiles have been the primary focus of international attention over the last decade, but Pyongyang's chemical weapons and biological weapons programs, as well as the short-range missiles that can deliver them, must also be addressed in any effort to strengthen security on the peninsula. The U.S. Intelligence Community believes that North Korea has large stockpiles of chemical warfare agents, the infrastructure to produce biological weapons agents (and perhaps biological weapons ready for use), and hundreds of SCUD missiles capable of carrying chemical and biological weapons that can strike most targets in South Korea. Since aircraft are the most likely weapons for the delivery of chemical and biological weapons, any reductions in these platforms or expanded transparency will reduce the threat posed by those weapons.

In discussing their preferred division of labor for handling negotiations on North Korean military programs, South Korean officials have sometimes spoken of allocating WMDs and missiles to the United States and conventional arms and CBMs to the ROK. But given the integration of chemical and biological weapons and short-range missiles (i.e., SCUDs) into North Korea's peninsula-wide warfighting capabilities, it probably makes more sense to address those programs in the trilateral, conventional arms control process, leaving the nuclear program and longer-range missiles to the bilateral U.S.-DPRK talks.

Relationship to new peace arrangements

The current peace arrangement on the peninsula, dating back to the end of the Korean War, consists of the 1953 Armistice Agreement and accompanying commissions, which monitor the armistice. The arrangement was signed by North Korea, China and the United States representing the United Nations, not by South

Korea. For a number of years, North Korea has been trying to undermine these arrangements, in part by seeking a bilateral peace agreement directly with the United States. In the Four-Party Talks, held during the Clinton administration's second term, Washington and Seoul resisted any arrangement that appeared to put the South Koreans on the sidelines. Trying to break the deadlock, China—the fourth participant in the talks—tabled a proposal that did not even specify the parties.

The symbolism of replacing an arrangement that dates back to the Korean War could become irresistible in the context of inter-Korean rapprochement. Indeed, after the June 2000 summit, President Kim Dae-jung proposed that the Four-Party talks be resuscitated with the two Koreas signing a treaty and the United States and China acting as guarantors. Pressures generated by better North-South relations could be further fueled by progress in tension-reduction talks. Any future peace talks would probably be best conducted outside the context of trilateral conventional arms control discussions, perhaps in a parallel forum that would also somehow include China.

Global and regional multilateral mechanisms

Although the principal burden of pursuing constraints on North Korea's conventional and unconventional military programs will fall on the ROK and the United States, multilateral bodies and multilateral agreements can also play an important role.

In recent years, North Korea has reached out to a large number of countries to end its diplomatic isolation and to seek the external assistance that it desperately needs. In return, the international community should urge Pyongyang to join and comply with international arrangements in the arms control area. North Korea should be pressed to comply with the Biological Weapons Convention, to which it is a party, and to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. While the United States and the ROK will be pursuing their own transparency measures with North Korea, UN members should also call on Pyongyang to join the UN Register of Conventional Arms, which requires its parties to provide information on exports and imports of seven categories of offensive weapons.

Regional bodies can also play a helpful role. North Korea has been a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since July 2000, and should be encouraged to become an active participant in its confidence-building activities. As an ARF member, North Korea is expected to present a defense white paper, but has not yet done so. On a nongovernmental level, the DPRK participates in the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), which consists of governmental and nongovernmental participants from all the major countries in the Asia Pacific.¹⁸ The Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD),

¹⁸ CSCAP was founded in 1993 by Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the United States. Since then, New Zealand, Russia, North Korea, Mongolia, the PRC, Vietnam, the European Union, India, Cambodia and Papua New Guinea have also joined.

sponsored by the University of California at San Diego, is a similar forum that includes participants from China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Russia, and the United States. These unofficial settings provide an opportunity to expose a wider range of North Korean officials to key arms control and regional security concepts and to impress on them that more normal and beneficial relations with countries in their region will depend on restrained and responsible behavior on their part.

In the long run, stability on the Korean Peninsula will depend not only on reconciliation between the ROK and DPRK but also on the relationships between the two Koreas (and eventually a reunified Korea) and powerful neighbors—China, Japan, and Russia. Assuming that Korean conventional arms control talks will be handled trilaterally (and that the unsuccessful experiment in Four-Party Talks will be abandoned), there would be considerable value in establishing a Northeast Asia security consultative mechanism involving government officials from the ROK, DPRK, United States, China, Russia, and Japan. Such a body could meet periodically to discuss issues relevant to the security of the Korean Peninsula and to Northeast Asia more generally.

Relationship to the U.S. comprehensive agenda with the DPRK

The Bush administration has stated that, in its bilateral talks with the DPRK, it will pursue a “comprehensive agenda” that covers nuclear, missile, and conventional arms issues as well as humanitarian and human rights questions. Administration officials maintain that, while they appreciate that progress on the various agenda items will not be made at the same speed, they nonetheless insist on making headway on all of the issues “across the board.” They are not prepared to conclude separate agreements on some issues (e.g., missiles) if deliberations on others (e.g., conventional arms) are not getting anywhere.

This comprehensive approach to U.S.-DPRK talks raises two key questions for the conventional arms issue. The first relates to the forum for dealing with North Korea on the issue. As discussed above, the most appropriate body for addressing conventional arms control would be trilateral (ROK, DPRK, United States), with North and South Korea meeting separately to work on questions that primarily concern the two of them. The U.S.-DPRK bilateral talks should not seek to tackle conventional arms matters in detail or to develop specific agreements. Instead, the United States should use that forum simply to underline the importance it attaches to the conventional arms issue and to stress the integral relationship it sees between that issue and the other items on the comprehensive agenda in promoting security and reconciliation on the peninsula.

The second question relates to the degree of linkage between conventional arms and the other items on the comprehensive agenda, including conventional arms. The U.S. administration is fully justified in pressing for movement on each item on its comprehensive agenda. But insisting on significant progress on *all* issues as a condition for reaching agreement on *any* of them could lead to a prolonged stalemate across the board, and could preclude near-term agreements

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on items of considerable urgency (e.g., stopping North Korean missile exports). Such tight linkage would be especially problematic if, in the conventional arms area, the minimum progress required was, say, the pullback of North Korean artillery from the DMZ or some other measure with little chance of success in the near term. Even if the minimum requirement were more realistic—for example, agreement to implement previously agreed CBMs—the complications inherent in trying to assemble simultaneously all the diverse elements of a comprehensive package could impede tangible outcomes in areas important to U.S. and ROK security. Therefore, the linkage between conventional arms and the other items on the comprehensive agenda should be a “soft” linkage. All items should be pursued vigorously, the substantive connections among them should be emphasized, and the North Koreans should be told that foot dragging in one area would make it more difficult to come to agreement on matters of special importance to them. However, if agreements can be reached on individual items that serve allied interests, they should not be held hostage to further progress on other matters.

Appendix A. The Military Balance

TOTAL ARMED FORCES*	UNITED STATES (USFK)	ROK (SOUTH)	DPRK (NORTH)
Active	35,654	686,000	1,082,000
Reserves	~	4,500,000	4,700,000
Army	27,200	560,000	950,000
Main Battle Tank	116	1,000 Type 88, 80 T80U, 400 M-47, 850 M-48	3,500 (T-34, T-54/- 55, T-62, Type-59)
Light Tank	~	~	560 (PT-76, M-1985)
Armored Personnel Carrier	111	2,480	2,500
Total Artillery	45 (including mortar)	6,474 (excluding mortar)	10,400 (excluding mortar)
Mortar	~	6,000	7,500
Surface-to-Surface Missile	~	12 NHK-I/-II	24 Frog-3/-5/-7; some 30 Scud -C; 10 No-dong
Surface-to-Air Missile	1 Patriot Battalion	1,090	10,000+
Helicopter	263	117 Attack, 24 Transport, 266 Utility	~
Navy	300	63,000	46,000
Submarines	~	20	26
Principal Surface Combatants	~	39	3
Patrol and Coastal Combatants	~	84	310
Mine Warfare	~	15	23
Amphibious	~	12	10

(Continued next page)

(Appendix A, continued)

Air Force	8300	63,000	86,000
	4 fighter squadrons, 1 rescue squadron, 1 squadron of special operations, 1 recon squadron	7 tactical fighter wings, 1 combat capable trainer wing, 1 forward air control wing, 1 recon group, training: 25 F-5B, 50 T-37, 30 T-38, 25 T-41B, 18 Hawk Mk-67	3 bomber and fighter divisions, 2 support aircraft divisions, 1 training division

* All information drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance, 2002–2003* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002) .

Appendix B. 1972 South-North Joint Communiqué

Recently there were talks held both in Pyongyang and Seoul to discuss problems of improving south-north relations and unifying the divided fatherland.

Director Hu Rak Lee of the Central Intelligence Agency of Seoul visited Pyongyang from 2 to 5 May 1972 to hold talks with Director Young Joo Kim of the Organization and Guidance Department of Pyongyang. Second Vice Premier Sung Chul Park, acting on behalf of Director Young Joo Kim, also visited Seoul from 29 May to 1 June 1972 to hold further talks with Director Hu Rak Lee.

With the common desire to achieve peaceful unification of the fatherland as early as possible, the two sides in these talks had frank and openhearted exchanges of views, and made great progress in promoting mutual understanding. In the course of the talks, the two sides, in an effort to remove the misunderstandings and mistrust and mitigate increased tensions that have arisen between the south and the north as a result of long separation, and further to expedite unification of the fatherland, have reached full agreement on the following points:

1. The two sides have agreed to the following principles for unification of the fatherland:
First, unification shall be achieved through independent Korean efforts without being subject to external imposition or interference.
Second, unification shall be achieved through peaceful means, and not through the use of force against each other.
Third, as a homogeneous people, a great national unity shall be sought above all, transcending differences in ideas, ideologies, and systems.
2. In order to ease tensions and foster an atmosphere of mutual trust between the south and the north, the two sides have agreed not to slander or defame each other, not to undertake armed provocations

whether on a large or small scale, and to take positive measures to prevent inadvertent military incidents.

3. The two sides, in order to restore severed national ties, promote mutual understanding and to expedite independent peaceful unification, have agreed to carry out various exchanges in many fields.
4. The two sides have agreed to cooperate positively with each other to seek early success of the south-north Red Cross talks, which are under way with the fervent expectations of the entire people.
5. The two sides, in order to prevent the out-break of unexpected military incidents and to deal directly, promptly and accurately with problems arising between the south and the north, have agreed to install a direct telephone line between Seoul and Pyongyang.
6. The two sides, in order to implement the aforementioned agreed items, solve various problems existing between the south and the north, and to settle the unification problem on the basis of the agreed principles for unification of the fatherland, have agreed to establish and operate a south-north coordinating committee co-chaired by Director Hu Rak Lee and Director Young Joo Kim.
7. The two sides, firmly convinced that the aforementioned agreed items correspond with the common aspirations of the entire people, who are anxious to see an early unification of the fatherland, hereby solemnly pledge before the entire Korean people that they will faithfully carry out these agreed items. Upholding the desires of their respective superiors.

Hu Rak Lae

Young Joo Kim

July 4, 1972

Appendix C. 1991–1992 Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Cooperation and Exchange between the North and the South

“Basic Agreement”

Pursuant to the will of all the fellow countrymen desirous of the peaceful reunification of the divided country, reaffirming the three principles of national reunification laid down in the July 4th North-South Joint Statement;

Pledging themselves to remove the political and military confrontation for the achievement of national reconciliation, for the prevention of invasion and conflicts by the armed forces, for the realization of detente and for the guarantee of peace;

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To realize many-sided cooperation and exchange for the promotion of the common interests and prosperity of the nation; and

To make concerted efforts to achieve peaceful reunification, admitting that the relationship between the sides is not the one between countries but a special one formed temporarily in the process of advancing towards reunification, the north and the south have agreed as follows:

1. North-South Reconciliation

Article 1. The north and the south shall recognize and respect the system that exists on the other side.

Article 2. The north and the south shall not interfere in the internal affairs of the other side.

Article 3. The north and the south shall cease to abuse and slander the other side.

Article 4. The north and the south shall refrain from all acts aimed at destroying and overthrowing the other side.

Article 5. The north and the south shall make concerted efforts to convert the present armistice into a durable peace between the north and the south and observe the present Military Armistice Agreement until such peace has been achieved.

Article 6. The north and the south shall discontinue confrontation and competition, cooperate with each other and make concerted efforts for national dignity and interests in the international arena.

Article 7. The north and the south shall set up and operate a north-south liaison office at Panmunjom within three months after the effectuation of this agreement in order to ensure close contacts and prompt consultation with each other.

Article 8. The north and the south shall form a north-south political subcommittee within the framework of the full-dress talks in one month after the effectuation of this agreement in order to discuss concrete measures for implementing and observing the agreement on north-south reconciliation.

2. North-South Nonaggression

Article 9. The north and the south shall not use arms against the other side, nor shall they invade the other by force of arms.

Article 10. The north and the south shall settle differences and disputes between them peacefully through dialogue and negotiation.

Article 11. The north and the south shall designate as the demarcation line and zone of nonaggression the Military Demarcation Line which was laid down in the agreement on the military armistice dated July 27, 1953 and the area which has so far been within the jurisdiction of the sides.

Article 12. In order to implement and guarantee nonaggression the north and the south shall set up and operate a north-south joint military committee within three months after the effectuation of this agreement. The north-south joint military committee shall discuss and promote the

realization of military confidence-building and disarmament, such as notification of and control over the transfer of large units and military exercises, use of the Demilitarized Zone for peaceful purposes, exchange of military personnel and information, the realization of phased arms cut down including the removal of mass destruction weapons and offensive capability and their verification.

Article 13. The north and the south shall install and operate direct telephone links between the military authorities of the sides in order to prevent the outbreak and escalation of accidental armed conflicts.

Article 14. The north and the south shall form a north-south military subcommittee within the framework of the full-dressed talks in one month after the effectuation of this agreement and discuss concrete measures for the implementation and observance of the agreement on nonaggression and the removal of military confrontation.

3. North-South Cooperation and Exchange

Article 15. The north and the south shall effect economic cooperation and exchange, such as joint development of resources and the exchange of goods in the form of exchange within the nation and joint investment for the coordinated and balanced development of the national economy and for the promotion of the well-being of the whole nation.

Article 16. The north and the south shall effect cooperation and exchange in various fields, such as science, technology, education, literature and art, public health, sports, environment and mass media including newspapers, radio, TV and publications.

Article 17. The north and the south shall effect free travels and contacts between members of the nation.

Article 18. The north and the south shall effect free correspondence, travels, meetings and visits between the separated families and relatives and their reunion based on their free will and take measures regarding other problems awaiting humanitarian solution.

Article 19. The north and the south shall connect severed railways and roads and open sea and air routes.

Article 20. The north and the south shall install and connect the facilities necessary for the exchange of post and telecommunication and ensure secrecy in this sphere of exchange.

Article 21. The north and the south shall cooperate with each other in economic, cultural and many other fields in the international arena and jointly conduct external activities.

Article 22. For the implementation of the agreement on effecting cooperation and exchange in various fields, such as economy and culture, the north and the south shall form a north-south joint economic cooperation and exchange committee and other departmental joint committees within three months after the effectuation of this agreement.

Article 23. In order to discuss concrete measures for the implementation and observance of the agreement on cooperation and exchange between

the north and the south, the two parts shall establish a north-south cooperation and exchange subcommittee within the framework of the full-dressed talks in one month after the effectuation of the agreement.

4. Amendments and Effectuation

Article 24. This agreement can be amended and supplemented by mutual consent.

Article 25. This agreement shall become effective as from the date when the north and the south exchange its text after they go through necessary formalities.

Yon Hyong Muk

Chong Won Sik

December 13, 1991

Appendix D. 2000 Seoul-Pyongyang Joint Declaration

True to the noble will of all the fellow countrymen for the peaceful reunification of the country, Chairman Kim Jong-il of the National Defense Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and President Kim Dae-jung of the Republic of Korea had a historic meeting and summit in Pyongyang from June 13 to 15, 2000.

The heads of the North and the South, considering that the recent meeting and summit, the first of their kind in history of division, are events of weighty importance in promoting mutual understanding, developing inter-Korean relations and achieving peaceful reunification, declare as follows:

1. The North and the South agreed to solve the question of the country's reunification independently by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation responsible for it.
2. The North and the South, recognizing that a proposal for federation of lower stage advanced by the North side and a proposal for confederation put forth by the South side for the reunification of the country have elements in common, agreed to work for the reunification in this direction in the future.
3. The North and the South agreed to settle humanitarian issues, including exchange of visiting groups of separated families and relatives and the issue of unconverted long-term prisoners, as early as possible on the occasion of August 15 this year.
4. The North and the South agreed to promote the balanced development of the national economy through economic cooperation and build

mutual confidence by activating cooperation and exchanges in all fields, social, cultural, sports, public health, environmental and so on.

5. The North and the South agreed to hold dialogues between the authorities as soon as possible to implement the above-mentioned agreed points in the near future.

President Kim Dae-jung cordially invited Chairman Kim Jong-il of the DPRK National Defense Commission to visit Seoul and Chairman Kim Jong-il agreed to visit Seoul at an appropriate time in the future.

Kim Jong-il
Chairman
National Defense Commission
DPRK

Kim Dae-jung
President
Republic of Korea

June 15, 2000

Appendix E. 2002 North-South Joint Declaration

Upon request of the South side, a special envoy of President Kim Dae-jung, Lim Dong Won, the special Blue House advisor for foreign, national security and unification, visited Pyongyang from April 3rd till April 5th, 2002.

Special Envoy Lim Dong Won paid a courtesy visit to National Defense Council Chairman, Kim Jong-il, and hand-delivered a personal letter from President Kim Dae-jung and also, relayed President Kim's wishes to Chairman Kim in person.

During his stay in Pyongyang, Special Envoy Lim Dong Won held talks with Kim Yong Soon, Secretary of the Workers' Party Central Committee. After discussing in depth the grave situation the Korean people face today, the impending threats of catastrophes hanging over the Korean Peninsula and the other problems in the North-South relations, they have agreed as follows.

1. The two sides have agreed to respect each other and put forth efforts to minimize tensions in accordance with the spirit of the historic June 15th North-South Joint Declaration.
2. The two sides have agreed to unfreeze the deadlocked state of North-South relation and to abide by the principle of resolving the unification problems independent of any foreign influence as stated in the June 15th Declaration.
3. The two sides recognize the importance of reconnecting severed railways and roads linking North and South, and have agreed to build

new railways and roads along the east coast, to reconnect the Seoul-Sinyiju railway in the west and the Munsan-Kesong highway in the near future.

4. The two sides have agreed to actively pursue inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation.

The second meeting of the North-South Committee for the Promotion of Economic Cooperation will be held from May 7th to 10th in Seoul. In conjunction with this, it was agreed to form and activate subcommittees for linking railways and roads, for construction of the Kaesong industrial zone, for flood control of the Imjin river basin and for other issues.

The second round of the bilateral talks for promoting the Kumgang tourism will be held at Kumgang starting on June 11th.

The fourth round of reunion of separated families and relatives will be held at Kumgang from April 28th.

The north side will dispatch an economic study group to South Korea in mid-May in accordance with a prior agreement.

The two sides have agreed to hold the seventh round of the North-South ministerial meeting at a time based on the implementation of the above items and the progress made.

5. The two sides have agreed to resume defense officials' contacts.
6. The two sides have agreed to work together on the principle of compatriotism, humanitarianism and mutual respect and assistance.

Lim Dong Won

Kim Yong-sun

April 5, 2002