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국제학 석사 학위논문

**‘American Boundary’:
South Korea’s Democratization during
the Chun Doo-Hwan Administration**

**‘미국의 범위’: 전두환 정권 시기
민주화 과정을 중심으로**

2014년 2월

서울대학교 국제대학원
국제학과 국제협력전공
서 지 형

**‘American Boundary’:
South Korea’s Democratization during
the Chun Doo-Hwan Administration**

Thesis by

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

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‘미국의 범위’: 전두환 정권 시기 민주화 과정을 중심으로

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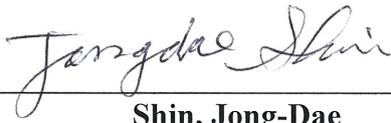
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Abstract

‘American Boundary’: South Korea’s Democratization during the Chun Doo-Hwan Administration

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This thesis aims to investigate behavioral patterns of U.S. intervention in South Korean domestic affairs during the Cold War. Unlike ideologically biased and emotionally charged views about the role the U.S. played in South Korea which prevailed in the 1980s, recent literature on ROK-U.S. relations suggest that U.S. foreign policy towards Korea was designed to maintain its national interest, which rested on maintaining security and stability in the Korean peninsula. This thesis proposes the concept of American Boundary as one of the leading studies adopting this perspective and furthers it to map the behavioral pattern of U.S. foreign policy and intervention during the democratization of Korea in the 1980s.

According to this research, it is suggested that any internal and external threats

that jeopardized U.S. interests in the Korean peninsula could trigger U.S. intervention. However, the existence and sovereign authority of the Korean government as a legal apparatus since 1948 has constrained any direct U.S. intervention in Korea's domestic affairs. Thus, to maintain the internal stability of Korea within a limited environment, the U.S. set an American Boundary and coordinated its modes of intervention accordingly.

Secondly, it is argued that in case the boundaries were crossed, the U.S. would let the Korean government deal with the situation in its early phases; however, if the situation intensified and the damaging of U.S. national interest became a possibility, the U.S. would gradually intervene. A specific mode of intervention would be decided based on the evaluation of the situation at that time, but normally, public channels, rather than traditional diplomatic channels, were used to produce dramatic effects which would urge the political actors involved to act within American boundaries.

In the case of the democratization of Korea, the U.S. pursued gradual democratization under the lead of Korean government in a way not damaging its national interests, that is, security and stability of the peninsula. As far as Chun Administration was on the right track towards democracy, any radical pro-democracy movement was perceived as a threat to the U.S. Therefore, the re-emergence of radical opposition party leaders – Young-Sam Kim and Dae-Jung Kim – who were not willing to make any compromise with the authoritarian government around 1985 were thought to be able to damage the internal security of Korea, despite their interests in the

democratization of the nation.

Under this circumstance, the U.S. let the Chun government deal with the situation in its initial phases, while monitoring if any violent clash between the government and anti-government movements would create another severe moment of internal turmoil. Then once the tensions intensified and Chun's governmental measures didn't yield promising results, the U.S. eventually intervened to urge compromise between both parties.

However, the conflict escalated dramatically in 1987, due to growing domestic unrest demanding for a democratic transition of power and Chun's willingness of use military force to crush social movements. Furthermore, economic development, the growth of a middle class, and the rising voices of the public citizenry would inevitably catalyze more conflicts with the authoritarian government. Ultimately, the U.S. took a more aggressive approach and implemented strategies for public intervention. The U.S. finally urged the Korean government to accept the public's desire for change and the democratization of the public sphere. Such U.S. intervention finally affected achievement of direct presidential election in 1987, restoring Korea's domestic affairs within American Boundary.

Keywords: American Boundary, U.S. intervention, ROK-U.S. Relations, Democratization, 1980s.

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Lists of Names (Chapter IV)

Original Name (Korean)	Translated Name (English)
강민창	Min-Chang Kang
김대중	Dae-Jung Kim
김영삼	Young-Sam Kim
김영식	Young-Shik Kim
김종호	Jong-Ho Kim
노무현	Moo-Hyun Roh
노태우	Tae-Woo Roh
노신영	Shin-Young Roh
문익환	Ik-Hwan Moon
박정희	Chung-Hee Park
박종철	Jong-Chul Park
윤보선	Bo-Seon Yun
이기택	Gi-Taek Lee
이만섭	Man-Seop Lee
이민우	Min-Woo Lee
이승만	Syng-Man Rhee
이중재	Joong-Jae Lee
이철승	Cheol-Seong Lee
장면	Myon Chang
전두환	Doo-Hwan Chun
주영복	Young-Bok Choo
최광수	Kwang-Soo Choi
최규하	Kyu-Hah Choi
허정구	Kyung-Ku Huh
홍사덕	Sa-Deok Hong

Lists of Organizations (Chapter IV)

Original Name (Korean)	Pronunciation	Translated Name (English)
개헌추진대회	Gaeheon Chujin Daehoe	Nationwide Campaign for Direct Presidential Election
국회 헌법개정 특별위원회	Gukoe Heonbeop Gaejeong Teukbyeol Wiwonhoe	Special Council for the Constitution Amendment
민주정의당	Minju Jeongui Dang	Democratic Justice Party
민주통일민중운동연합	Minju Tongil Minjung Undong Yeonhap	United People's Movement for Democracy and Unification
민주한국당	Minju Hanguk Dang	Democratic Korea Party
민주화를 위한 국민연락기구	Minjuhwareul wihan Gungminnyeollakgigu	National Alliance for Constitutional Reform
민주화추진협의회	Minjuhwa Cujin Hyeobuihoe	Council for the Promotion of Democracy
민주헌법쟁취 국민운동본부	Minju Heonbeop Jaengchwi Gungmin Undong Bonbu	National Alliance for Constitutional Reform
신한민주당	Sinhan Minju Dang	New Korea Democratic Party
한국국민당	Hanguk Gungmin Dang	Korea National Party
한국 기독교 교회 협의회	Hanguk Gidokgyo Gyohoe Hyeobuihoe	Korea National Council of Churches
카톨릭 정의 평화 위원회	Catholic Jeongui Pyeonghwa Wiwonhoe	Catholic Committee for Justice and Peace
통일민주당	Tongil Minju Dang	Unification Democratization Party

I. Introduction¹

1. Background

In the wake of the Second World War, the Korean Peninsula was divided into North and South Korea and occupied by the Soviet Union and U.S. respectively. The power had been turned over to and remained with the two newly established governments in North and South Korea in 1948 for some time. However the North Korean invasion of the South, characterized by its overwhelming military power, brought the U.S. back to South Korea in 1950. As a request from South Korean President Syng-Man Rhee, the Mutual Defense Treaty was enacted in 1954. The treaty guaranteed U.S. military protection of South Korea from external threats, mainly from North Korea, and this security defense commitment established the foundations for the ROK-U.S. alliance.

Since then, the alliance has grown and expanded its scope to encompass broader spheres of political, economic, cultural, and social relations. Much of these developments stemmed from South Korea's significant level of economic growth, political democratization, and its increasing role in the international community. However, the possibility of conflict has grown with the rising national power of Korea

¹ In this thesis, 'Korea' or 'Korean' without any specific remark indicates 'South Korea,' except for 'Korean Peninsula' which encompasses both North and South Korea. 'ROK-U.S.' is used to describe the alliance or relations between the United States and South Korea.

and the active pursuit of its own interests. As a result, disputes began to arise regarding the U.S. military presence in Korean soil, discrepancies on how both countries sought to effectively deal with North Korea², and challenges also emerged in trade negotiations. Furthermore, the growth of civil society and public anti-American sentiments often pressures the South Korean government to be more transparent and develop wiser negotiation strategies as an equal partner to the U.S.

Under these circumstances, finding ways to maximize South Korea's national interests while sustaining the ROK-U.S. alliance has become one of Korea's most crucial tasks. Unfortunately, discussions on U.S. policy toward the Korean Peninsula

² One of the most recent examples is last year's debate surrounding the reintroduction of tactical nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula as a deterrent against nuclear threats from the North. ("Hantmmi Jeongbu "Jeonsulhaeng Jaebaechi Goryeo Anhae" [The U.S. and Korean Government, "Reintroduction of Tactical Nuclear Weapons is Off the Table] *KBS News*, April 11, 2013 (accessed January 22, 2014,) available from http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/NewsView.do?SEARCH_NEWS_CODE=2641875; "Cheni Jeon Migung Butongnyeong "Jeonsulhaeng Jaebaechi Pillyote" [A Former U.S. Vice President Cheney, 'Tactical Nuclear Weapons should be reintroduced] *KBS News*, June 25, 2013. (accessed January 22, 2014,) available from http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/NewsView.do?SEARCH_NEWS_CODE=2680543&ref=S; "Haegeneun Haek? Jeonsulhaeng Jaebaechi-ttaen Hanbando Buranjeong Chora" [Jan-Marc Jouas, Commander of the 7th Air Force in South Korea Interview "Nuclear to Nuclear? Reintroduction of the Tactical Nuclear Weapons would Cause Instability of the Korean Peninsula,"] *Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, August 8, 2013. (accessed January 22, 2014,) available from <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20130809/56924714/1>; "Jeongmongjun, Mi Iran Jejae Junhaneun Daebung Gyeongje Jejae Pillyo" [Jung, Mong-Jun, "Similar Level of Economic Sanctions with Iran is Necessary to North Korea,"] *Money Today*, November 20, 2013. (accessed January 22, 2014,) available from <http://www.mt.co.kr/view/mtview.php?type=1&no=2013112009540437887&outlink=1>; "Simjaecheol Mi Jeonsulhaeng Jaebaechi-hago Jeonjakgwon Jeonhwan Yeongihaeya" [Sim, Jae-Cheol, "Strategic Nuclear should be Reintroduced and the Return of the Wartime Control should be Postponed"] *Younhap News*, April 11, 2013. (accessed January 22, 2014,) available from <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0006197867>.

among Korean public and politicians often contain sentimental evaluations and are “characterized by heated polemics, hyperbole and caricatures of positions and players, [rather] than nuance and a concern for context and complexity.³” This tendency has contributed to the formation of deeply rooted pro- and anti- America discourse in Korea that consumes political disputes and prevents a “sophisticated perception of reality.⁴” Such a dichotomized frame of perception toward U.S. foreign policy not only prevents objective analyses of past and present ROK-U.S. relations, but steers our future the wrong way.⁵

To establish effective strategies and overcome such fundamental limitations, it is a prerequisite to understand the nature and dynamics of ROK-U.S. relations objectively, for example by understanding the political intention of the U.S. and the overall processes through which its foreign policies are framed. The academic endeavor to provide more comprehensive and unbiased explanations on these matters is relatively

³ Robert A. Wampler, “Essay: The United States and the Two Koreas, 1969-2000: An Historical Overview,” (accessed November 30, 2013); available from the Digital National Security Archive. (<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/collections/content/KO/essayx.jsp>)

⁴ Yong-Rip Kwon, “A Puzzle between Pro-America and Anti-America,” *Critical Review of Contemporary Korea* 21 (2003): 169.

⁵ Il-Joon Chung (2004) asserts that a growing autonomy based on the development of democratic practices could make the U.S. nervous that Korea could outgrow the boundaries U.S. provides, which is to serve as a deterrent for direct intervention. On the other hand, the belief in the U.S. as a promoter of democracy leads to the argument that the development of democracy in Korea can lead to the positive development of ROK-U.S. relations. (Il-Joon Chung, “Yushin System and ROK-U.S. Relations – Korean Society and ROK-U.S. Relations based on U.S. Documents,” *2004 Sociology Conference*, Korean Sociological Association, (2004): 169-172.)

new. Based on the model of the American Boundary⁶ which is one of the leading studies in such efforts, this thesis aims to map the behavioral patterns of U.S. foreign policy in Korea during the Cold War⁷ and apply this model to further understand the democratization process of South Korea during the Doo-Hwan Chun presidency in 1980s.

2. Hypothesis and Research Method

It has been proven⁸ that the national interest of the U.S. in Korea during the Cold War rested on the security and stability of the Korean peninsula, as the peninsula served as a cornerstone for security in the Asia-Pacific region. Based on this finding, this thesis assumes that the U.S. took various measures to secure its national interest whenever situations surrounding Korean peninsula became unstable due to either external or internal threats. In case of such disturbances, direct interventions of the U.S.

⁶ This concept will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.

⁷ The model of American Boundary only suggests the scope of U.S. interventions during the Cold War, specifically from 1945 to 1987. Further studies are needed to examine applicability of the model.

⁸ Young-Myung Kim, "Political Transition and the U.S.: the U.S. Influence on Transition of Nation and Regimes", *The Korean Journal of Political Science* 22, no.2 (1988): 85-114; Tracy Williams, "Rhetoric, Reality, and Responsibility: The United States' Role in South Korean Democratization," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 4, no.1 (2004): 62-75; Hyun-Baeg Im, "The U.S. role in Korean democracy and security since cold war era," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 6 (2006): 157-187; Si-Seong Ko, "A Study of Influence U.S. Security Policy on R.O.K during R.O.K's Crisis," *The Korean Journal of Regional Innovation* 3, no.1 (2008): 61-83.

to South Korean domestic affairs were prevalent in early years of its trusteeship from 1945. However, the legitimate establishment of the South Korean government in 1948 prevented U.S. direct intervention and further constrained behaviors of the U.S. in Korea's domestic affairs.

Granted these assumptions, the underlying premise of this thesis is that U.S. interventions in Korea's domestic affairs were limited and contained certain behavioral patterns during the Cold War. In other words, the Korean government initially managed any domestic event that could damage U.S. national interests in Korea; however, the U.S. would determine its ultimate course of action, including direct intervention if events escalated to certain level.

This thesis adopts a model based on a rather extreme situation where the primary national interests of the U.S. were threatened by domestic affairs in Korea. If the U.S. behavioral patterns remain consistent in extreme cases, this model may help us map the predictability of U.S. behavioral patterns including state intervention. The timeframe for this model begins around 1980, namely the very beginning of the Doo-Hwan Chun administration, and ends with the June Democracy Movement and implementation of the direct presidential election in 1987.

During the Chung-Hee Park presidency, there was no room for any political opposition and civil society could not grow nor voice its desires due to systemic and forceful oppression from the government. However, Chun's strategic liberalization of society, coupled with the hosting of several international events (among other reasons),

resulted in a window of opportunity for those who were oppressed under Park's administration to further democratize the nation. Furthermore, the release of political dissidents and the establishment of *Sinhan Minju Dang*, [New Korean Democratic Party; hereafter NKDP] in 1985 prompted a full-fledged confrontation in the political arena, which was dramatically intensified due to the aggressive nature of several key NKDP members. This confrontation could have brought down Chun's administration, as it heavily attracted people to another violent clash between the government and civilians. Lastly, the growth of middle class based on economic growth stimulated their desire to face the authoritarian government in order to attain civil liberties. Due to these multifaceted clashes among actors, the latter half of the 1980s is considered as one of the most politically unstable period in Korean history.⁹ Under such an extreme situation, how did the U.S. behave to preserve its national interests?

⁹ Myung-Lim Park once called this period as a "catastrophic equilibrium," quoting Gramsci, and argued that this period needed further academic attention. (Myung-Lim Park, "'Loyalty with Voice' vs. 'American Boundary': Trajectory and Peculiarities of the Korean-American Relations from 1948 to 2008," in *Conflicting Alliance: 60 Years of ROK-U.S. Alliance*, ed. The Editing Committee of Critical Review of History, (the Critical Review of History, 2010), 262.) The concept of "catastrophic equilibrium" will not be detailed in this thesis, but a simple description of the concept suggested by William C. Smith is as follows: "the possibility of a class compromise depends on the calculations that state elites, entrepreneurs, and workers, along with party politicians and middle-class representatives, make regarding the risk or degree of certainty that the other actors will uphold their part of the bargain... Labor and leftist parties may attempt a socialist transformation. Capital may use its superior resources and access to the state's coercive power to impose a nondemocratic solution to labor militancy... Finally, when neither labor nor capital has the political power to impose unilateral solutions, and when a compromise is rejected, a sociopolitical stalemate may emerge. This stalemate, referred to by Gramsci as a "catastrophic equilibrium" and by Huntington as "praetorianism," is characterized by an erosion of regime legitimacy and high levels of class conflict poorly mediated by parties and representative institutions." (William C. Smith, *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy*, (Stanford University Press, 1989), 9-10.)

This thesis consists of three parts. In the first part, existing literature on ROK-U.S. relations and U.S. modes of intervention over Korean domestic affairs, and their problems will be briefly explained. It leads to current theoretical frameworks, including the concept of American Boundary, which is further explored in the second part. In the third part, the actual behavior of the U.S. during the democratization of the 1980s will be reconstructed within the framework suggested in the previous sections. The recent declassified documents from the U.S. government, including vast amounts of telegrams between the U.S. State Department and U.S. embassy in South Korea are used as main sources to reconstruct the U.S. perspective. Due to the lack of official sources, news articles and thesis papers are used to reconstruct the Korean side of story.

According to the research, the underlying premise of this thesis that U.S. interventions in Korea's domestic affairs were limited and contained certain behavioral patterns during the Cold War could effectively explain U.S. behavioral pattern during the democratization of Korea in 1980s. The reemergence of radical opposition party leaders in legitimate political party, around 1985, were perceived as threats to the U.S. since the Chun's administration was thought to be on the right track toward democracy. Key opposition party leaders – Young-Sam Kim and Dae-Jung Kim - were not willing to make any compromise with the authoritarian government; therefore, they were thought to be able to damage the internal security of Korea despite their interests in the democratization of Korea.

The U.S. let the Chun government deals with the situation in its initial phase,

while monitoring if any violent clash between the government and anti-government movements could create another severe moment of internal turmoil. However, once the tensions intensified and Chun's government measures didn't yield promising results, the U.S. eventually intervened to urge compromise between both parties.

In spite of U.S. effort, the conflict escalated dramatically in 1987, due to a growing domestic unrest demanding for a democratic transition of power and Chun's willingness of use military force to crush social movements. Furthermore, the U.S. perceived that a rapidly changing environment in Korea, economic growth and the growth of middle class, their rising voices would inevitably catalyze more conflicts with the authoritarian government. Ultimately, the U.S. took a more aggressive approach and implemented strategies for public intervention and finally urged the Korean government to accept the public's desire for change. The democratization of the public sphere, via direct presidential election, was achieved in 1987.

II. Literature on U.S.-ROK Relations and U.S. Influence on Korean Domestic Affairs

1. Perspectives on ROK-U.S. Relations

Much of the existing literature on ROK-U.S. relations, and its influence on Korean domestic politics, are framed as either a liberal perspective or radical perspective.¹⁰ Their origins and development are in line with prevalent images of the U.S. and Korea in specific times of history. For example, liberal perspectives were widely adopted before 1980, when the image of the U.S. as a benevolent patron of Korea dominated public sentiments.¹¹ This point of view directed its attention to the internal drive for political changes in Korea, while deeming the U.S. as beneficial yet

¹⁰ Young-Myung Kim, "Political Transition and the U.S.: the U.S. Influence on Transition of Nation and Regimes"; Myung-Lim Park, "'Loyalty with Voice' vs. 'American Boundary': Trajectory and Peculiarities of the Korean-American Relations from 1948 to 2008"; this approach is also described as "revisionist view." (Tae-Kyun Park, "On the Relationship between the Kwangju Uprising and the U.S.," *Democracy and Human Rights* 4, no.2 (2004): 158-162.)

¹¹ Such confidence and conviction on the positive role of the U.S. was significantly affected by modernization strategy of U.S., which was widely accepted by Korean scholars from the late 1950s to mid-1970s. The U.S. strategically enhanced the spread of modernization theories in Korea through academic exchange programs, establishment of social institutions, and support for academic activity of Korean scholars. (Il-Joon Chung, "Americanization of Social Science Paradigm: The Dissemination of Modernization Theory and Its Reception in South Korea," *Journal of American Studies* 37, no.3 (2005): 66-92.) Korean academia's overdependence on established theories and research from the U.S. and Japan was criticized by several scholars. (Young-Myung Kim, Yong-Rip Kwon, and Dong-Ho Shin, "Regional Studies in Korea: Present and Problems," *Korean Political Science Review* 21, no.2 (1987): 133-152.)

insignificant factors. In other words, international factors were not sufficiently incorporated in domestic analyses.

From the early 1980's, burgeoning anti-American sentiments accelerated the critical evaluation of the role the U.S. played in watershed moments of Korean history. This new trend of radical perspectives adopted the World System theory, which assumed that the power hierarchy of the world lied in a core and periphery and that core societies dominate and exploit weaker and poorer peripheral societies. In the ROK-U.S. relations, therefore, it was perceived that the Korean political scenes had been controlled and affected by the global military strategies and economic interests of a capitalistic and imperialistic U.S.¹² In these terms, the U.S. was considered as proactive,¹³ while Korea was regarded as passive and reactive to U.S. initiatives.

However, neither a purely liberal perspective nor radical perspective can account for the complexity of the ROK-U.S. relations. It is now commonly accepted that domestic politics and international relations are interrelated, that "it is fruitless to debate whether the domestic politics really determine international relations, or the reverse."¹⁴

¹² Beginning with Bruce Cumming's study on the Korean War, existing literature examines the role the U.S. has played in the political history of South Korea, with a tendency to adopt World System analysis. (Tae-Kyun Park, "On the Relationship between the Kwangju Uprising and the U.S."; Young-Myung Kim, "Political Transition and the U.S.: the U.S. Influence on Transition of Nation and Regimes.")

¹³ Tracy Williams, "Rhetoric, Reality, and Responsibility: the United States' Role in South Korean Democratization"; Hyun-Baeg Im, "The U.S. Role in Korean Democracy and Security since Cold War Era"; Si-Seong Ko, "A Study of Influence U.S. Security Policy on R.O.K. during R.O.K's Crisis."

¹⁴ Robert D. Putman, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,"

For a long time now, the focus of such research has moved on to more specific levels to determine the “When” and “How” these interactions occur.¹⁵ Thus, emphasis on pure domestic dynamics are considered an outdated approach, while radical approaches on their own are also incomplete in answering some of the questions raised.

For example, if the U.S. role is critical in influencing the course of domestic affairs in Korea, while Korea’s role is relatively less significant, why did the U.S. initiatives in Korea often fail to produce the results intended? How can one explain the recurring conflicts between the Korean and U.S. governments throughout modern Korean history? Such phenomena can only be adequately explained with a more comprehensive approach combining both sides of the story to consider how U.S. foreign policy was planned and implemented in Korea, and how Korean domestic political entities perceived these policies in order to take particular courses of action.

For this reason, the first step to further our analysis is to escape ideologically biased points of view and restore more objective and empirical points of view. In that sense, it is fascinating that the latest research on ROK-U.S. relations stands on more neutral and objective lines of thoughts in order to understand its subjects.¹⁶ By

International Organization 42, no.3 (1988): 427.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ This is due, in part, to public exhaustion with partisan politics and diplomacy following ideological classifications of being pro- and anti- American—conservative and liberal. Also, the growing self-reflection on the biased and slanted views prevailing in Korea academia has driven such trends. (Yong-Rip Kwon, “A Puzzle between Pro-America and Anti-America”; Hyun-Hwee Yi, “Paving the Way to America: A Metaphysical Reflection on the Pro- and Anti-American Controversies in the World of Korean Scholars,” *The Korean Journal of American*

accepting the premises of Realism in International Relations theory,¹⁷ which assumes an anarchical international system where autonomous and rational states seek their survival as a principal goal, they have contributed to set the basic premises of ROK-U.S. relations that the U.S. foreign policy toward Korea has been designed to maintain its national interest, which rests on security concerns developed during the Cold War.¹⁸ Within this approach, it is possible to explain that Korea, as a sovereign nation, has actively pursued its own national interest as well, which sometimes leads to clashes with the U.S.

History 25 (2007): 1-30.) Furthermore, the recent declassification of documents from the U.S. government and other institutions also provide empirical means to accurately reconstruct watershed events in Korean history to support such research.

¹⁷ This approach is one of the most dominant and prevalent international relations theories, only recently emerging as a prime tool to analyze ROK-U.S. relations in Korean academia. According to Young-Myung Kim, et al (1987), environmental constraints prevent the development of independent lines of scholarly traditions in Korean regional studies. Due to its turbulent and unsettled modern history, Korean scholars mainly referred to imported theories and research from Japanese or U.S. political studies. Furthermore, the focus on urgent, domestic political issues such as establishing democratic tradition and reviving economy has prevented in-depth regional studies. Especially in terms of American studies, several authors assert that “it is not too much to say that... [It] is probably the field in which the flaws of Korean political studies are most acutely reflected.” As we have failed to consider the U.S. as an objective research subject but as “given *donné*” out of inertia, studies on the ROK-U.S. relations have several critical shortcomings, such as superficial and chronological research, yet lacking in comprehensive studies, etc. (another article with similar arguments is Doo-Ha Ryu, “Current State and Problems of American Studies in Korea,” *Journal of international studies* 7 (2003): 171-184.)

¹⁸ Some scholars argue that other values, including democracy, were often sacrificed to maintain the security and stability of the nation. (For example, see Tracy Williams, “Rhetoric, Reality, and Responsibility: The United States’ Role in South Korean Democratization”); However, the composition and prioritization of a set of national interests can be, and have been, transformed and modified as the international and domestic environments change. (Moon-Suk Ahn, “The U.S. Intervention of Korean Presidential Election after 1987: Changes and Political Implications,” *Journal of Korean Political and Diplomatic History* 29, no.2 (2008): 293-322.)

Some researches stress the relevance of internal dynamics and naturally narrow down its focuses to domestic policy institutions and individual policy makers. Expanding the conventional assumptions of state-centric approaches which considers nation states as a unitary actor, this approach places emphasis on how the personal traits and interests of individuals, or the dynamics among political institutions, ultimately affect U.S. or Korea's course of foreign policy actions.¹⁹ In the context of ROK-U.S. relations, this approach distinguishes the *choices* and *willingness* of actors in Korea (or the U.S.) to act within a set of political options derived from the state's capabilities and its relationship with all aspects of its surrounding environment.²⁰

¹⁹ Young-Myung Kim, "Political Transition and the U.S.: the U.S. Influence on Transition of Nation and Regimes"; Jong-il Ra, "The Political Upheaval in 1952: Interactions among the Executive, Congress, Military, and Foreign Nations," *Korean Political Science Review* 22, no.2, (1988): 209-224.; Seuk-Ryule Hong, "Military Coup and the Relationship between Korea and the U.S. in 1961," *The Korean Historical Review* 168 (2000): 53-83; Tae-Kyun Park, *Ally and Empire, Two Myths of ROK-U.S. Alliance: From August 15 to May 18*, (Changbi, 2006); Il-Joon Chung, "Historical Sociology of ROK-U.S. Relations: International Relations, State Identity and State Project," *Society and History* 84 (2009): 217-261; Won-Gon Park, "The U.S. Carter Administration and Korea in the 12/12 Incident: Concession of Moral Diplomacy," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 50, no.4 (2010): 81-102; Such approach also reveals a pattern of conflicts between the U.S. State Department and U.S. Military. For example, the U.S. State Department tried to take political approach concerning about reputations of the U.S. in international society and Korean public, while the Joint Chiefs of Staff took military approach concerning military provocation from the North during the Rhee era. Disparities of opinions among them were coordinated considering various factors, one of which was regional and inter-Korean relations. A quasi-state of war between two Koreas, however, gave more leverage to them military. (Il-Joon Chung, *Ibid.* 234.)

²⁰ This analysis is different from the liberal perspective, which perceives external factors as insignificant and subordinate to internal factors. This perspective acknowledges the influence external factors do exert on domestic affairs in Korea, while stressing the relevance of the perception of domestic actors and their choices. Therefore, this approach could provide us with a more comprehensive and balanced point of view that considers both the interactions between domestic actors (Korea) and the environment surrounding them (the U.S.) compare to liberal perspective.

For example, Won-Gon Park (2010) asserts that the success of the military coup in 1979 was attributed to the well-planned, military strategy led by Doo-Hwan Chun, who had previously assessed the national interest and motives of U.S. intervention in Korea. Chun and his coconspirators acknowledged that there was limitation for the U.S. to intervene Korean domestic affairs. In other words, they acknowledged that as long as Acting President Kyu-Hah Choi and his administration maintained a functional government, it was hard for the U.S. to intervene in the domestic affairs of Korea. The removal of Seung-Hwa Chung, then marital law commander and head of an opposing faction, prior to the removal of the Acting President Choi and dissolution of his administration was Chun's attempts to take over the military power of Korea, thereby, applying pressure on the government before the U.S. could take any further action in the region.

This approach has been widely adopted in the academic field of International Relations, which is based on the practical perception that "in fact, on nearly all important issues, 'central decision-makers' disagree about what the national interest and the international context demand."²¹ In the case of Korean scholars studying ROK-U.S. relations, empirical research has now unveiled that there were divergent opinions among policy decision makers in regards to U.S. policy on Korea. By focusing on individual domestic actors, this approach provides more accurate and sophisticated accounts for the domestic dynamics of each country, as their decision-making process at varying levels

²¹ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," 432.

are better understood. This approach helps to enhance understanding of individual events or the interplay of actors within individual sets of environments as well. However, it is not able to provide general and common framework which can be applied in more various situation.

2. Research on U.S. Intervention

One of the studies on the U.S. intervention in Korea focuses on the publicity of U.S. intervention. As Il-Joon Chung (2007) argues, the importance of such efforts lies in the fact that the publicity of U.S. intervention affects the formation of the U.S.' public image in Korea. Public opinions about U.S. behavior have deeply affected ROK-U.S. relations, especially since the 1980s. Anti-American sentiments developed from Kwangju Democratic Movement in 1980 have disrupted the public acceptance of various American activities in Korea, which eventually influence Korean policy makers. Therefore publicity of U.S. intervention is one of the most important research subjects.

According to Chung's research, the "kind of intervention" was acknowledged as more significant than the intervention itself.²² Instead, the image of the U.S. would be enhanced if it supported democratization movements in Korea, while the image of the U.S. would deteriorate if it did not publicly criticize anti-democratic forces. (See figure

²² Il-Joon Chung, "Korean Democratic and America: American Intervention in the Korean Politics through Overt Means and through Non-Intervention during Park Chung Hee Era," *Memory & Future Vision* 17 (2007): 210.

1) In other words, the matter of whether U.S. supports pro-democracy movement bore importance than the intervention itself. This is arguably caused by the gap between the expectations of the U.S. as a supporter of Korean democracy and the domestic reality of the country. However, regarding the methods to determine the publicity of such intervention, studies were only able to offer basic levels of explanation, stating that U.S. “national security” determined the publicity of interventions.²³

Some researchers have studied U.S. modes of intervention further, by emphasizing the importance of the coordination among different opinions among U.S. policy makers.²⁴ This argument is now strongly supported by empirical evidence provided by declassified documents from the U.S. However, this type of analysis, which stresses the perception and reaction of actors to their environment, overestimates the individual characters’ capabilities to influence larger social dynamics, thus reducing the possibility for generalizations.

²³ Ibid; also see Chul-Soon Lee, “A Comparative Study of the U. S. Interventions in 'Pusan Political Crisis' and 'National Security Law Crisis' in Korea,” *International Politics* 8, 28, no.2 (2007): 81-246.;

²⁴ Differences are usually noted between the Department of State and U.S. military in Korea. (See the footnote 19.) Another example is: During the political upheaval in 1952, James A. Van Fleet, the commander of the 8th U.S. army and Mark W. Clark, Tokyo the U.N. Forces Commander had different ideas on how to prioritize national interests of the U.N in Korea with compared to Edwin A. Lightner, Jr. and John J. Muccio in the U.S. Embassy in Korea. (Jong-il Ra, “The Political Upheaval in 1952: Interactions among the Executive, Congress, Military, and Foreign Nations.”)

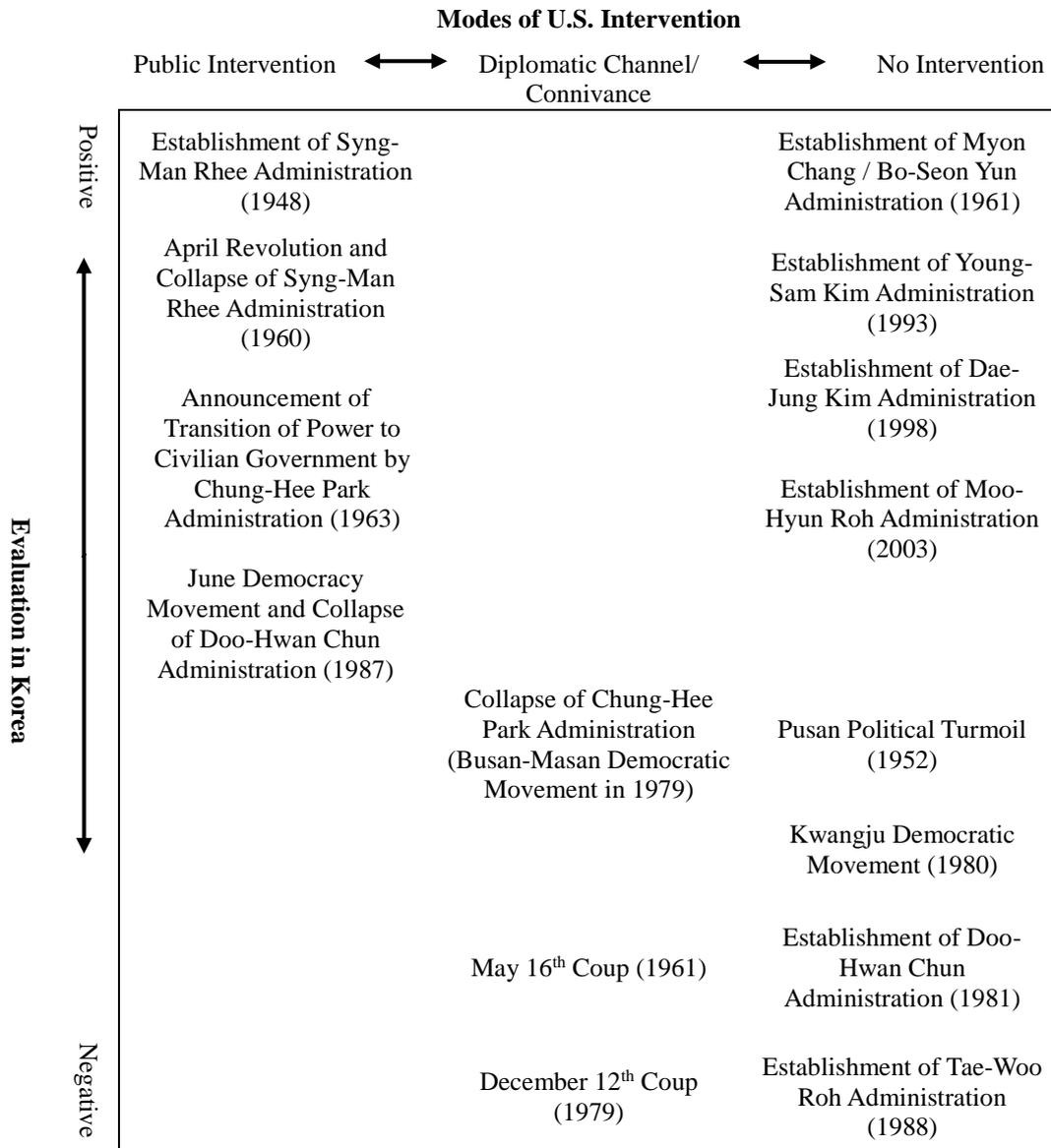


Figure 1. Modes of U.S. Intervention in Korean Political Transitions and Korean Evaluation. (Source: Il-Jun Chung, "Korean Democratic and America: American Intervention in the Korean Politics through Overt Means and through Non-Intervention during Park Chung Hee Era," 210.)

In the meantime, other scholars have argued that the U.S. standard for intervention alters with the changing national capacity of Korea. As the economic and diplomatic power of Korea grows, its dependence on the U.S. becomes smaller, making it harder for the U.S. to have leverage on Korea's domestic affairs. For example, the U.S. decided to pressure the Korean government towards the democratization of its political processes after witnessing the negative ramifications and violent oppression brought by the Kwangju Democratic Movement in 1980. However, there were "no valid means of intervention as long as the economic dependence of Korea to the U.S. was weak. Both parties acknowledged that the withdrawal of U.S. military from Korea was not considered as an option to choose. Also, the operational control the U.S. military had in Korea was different from the actual authority to command."²⁵

In this case, the next question would be how to determine what constitutes the 'capability' of a nation. If it refers to economic or military capability, it is logical to think that the leverage the U.S. could exert in Korea was reduced as the economic and military development in Korea grew in strides. Then again, considering that the Doohwan Chun regime, which was the last Korean regime in the Cold War, had a considerable level of dependence on the U.S., other important factors such as the Korean government's perception of the U.S., overall ROK-U.S. relations, and the public reception of U.S.' opinions arguably affect the way the U.S. decides to intervene in

²⁵ Guk-Hyeon Kim, "A Study on the Interaction of Structure and Political Actors in the Process of Democratic Transition in Korea" (Ph.D. diss., Korea National University of Education, 1997), 75.

domestic affairs in Korea.

In short, there has been a significant level of developments in Korean academic perspectives when studying ROK-U.S. relations. However, studies so far haven't been able to provide general and common analytic tool that can be applied in various situations. Therefore, the next question to be raised is whether it is possible to conceptualize the study of ROK-U.S. relations to discover behavioral patterns between the interactions taking place between the U.S. and Korea.

III. ‘American Boundary’ and U.S. Behavioral Pattern in Korea during the Cold War

1. ‘American Boundary’

A. Framework and Concept

Some scholars in Korea argue that the U.S. intervention in Korean domestic affairs has taken place in limited cases of situation, as oppose to popular belief that it has had unlimited access to Korean domestic affairs, especially during the Cold War when national capacity of South Korea was not as strong as it is now. As an attempt to conceptualize such limitation, the American Boundary²⁶ was suggested by one of the leading scholars in the field of Korean policy and international relations, Myung-Lim Park.

According to him, the U.S. could intervene in Korean domestic affairs without

²⁶ Several scholars have suggested the existence of such invisible boundaries, set by the U.S. and to be followed by others, more than Park; however, Park was the one who most aptly specified this concept. The model of American Boundary is based on Myung-Lim Park, “Chapter 10. ‘American Boundary’ and ROK-U.S. Relations,” in *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins, Vol.2: The Origins and Causes of the Conflict* (1996): 519-591. U.S. invisible boundaries have also been referred to by Young-Myung Kim, “Political Transition and the U.S.: the U.S. Influence on Transition of Nation and Regimes”; Jang-Jip Choi, *The Conditions and the Prospect of Democracy in South Korea*, (Nanam, 1996); Seuk-Ryule Hong, “The U.S. Plan to Remove Lee Seung-Man in the Wake of Korean War,” *Critical Review of History* 26 (1994): 138-169; Duk-Jung Kim, *et al. Review of the ROK-U.S. alliance* (The Institute for Far Eastern Studies, 1988), 157 quoted in Guk-Hyeon Kim, “A Study on the Interaction of Structure and Political Actors in the Process of Democratic Transition in Korea,” 73.

major constraints in early years of trusteeship started from 1945. Since South Korea assumed considerable geopolitical importance as a bastion against communism during the Cold War, the U.S. was actively involved in equipping South Korea with ideological, economic, and military power. It was to deter physical threats of the North and eventually achieve longstanding peace and stability of the peninsula to secure U.S. national interest. During the procedure, U.S. even established the Korean Army without any legal power to do so, in order to remove “revolutionary nationalists and their supporters” who sought for reunification with the North, therefore “to forge the system they [U.S.] prefer.”²⁷

However, the establishment of a legitimate government in South Korea in 1948 prevented the U.S. from further engaging in Korea’s domestic affairs without being accused of disregarding sovereignty of the nation. In order to avoid such accusation, any intervention or involvement in Korean domestic affairs became only possible through the Korean government. U.S. instead forged a “fundamental boundary which cannot be crossed”²⁸ by Korea to effectively handle domestic situations that could harm its critical national interests.

Park suggested a continuum of possible behavioral patterns in terms of U.S. foreign policy implementation in Korea, placing actions between two hypothetical

²⁷ Myung-Lim Park, “Special Series for the 30 Anniversary of May 16, Coup d’état and Korean Military 1: Formation and Character of Korean Army (1945~48.)” *Critical Review of History* 15 (1991): 191-211.

²⁸ Young-Myung Kim, “Political Transition and the U.S.: the U.S. Influence on Transition of Nation and Regimes,” 93.

situational extremes classified as a communist revolution and fascist authoritarianism. (See figure 2) Both situations were suggested as the worst case scenario U.S. would want to face in South Korea. While the U.S. could not risk Korea falling under communist influences, fascist authoritarian regimes could nevertheless provoke domestic revolutionary movements to topple the regime and endanger the national interests of the U.S. in Korea, as well.

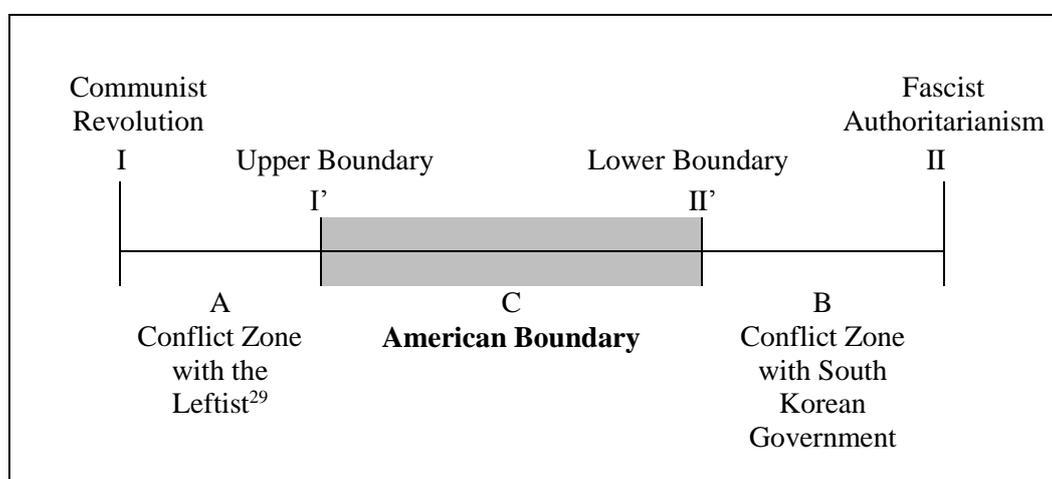


Figure 2. Conceptual Diagram for American Boundary. (Source: Myung-Lim Park, *The*

²⁹ Despite the lack of firm consensus on its distinction, the political terms of ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’ are widely used to indicate two opposite political values in various countries. In case of the U.S., those terms are generally associated with liberal and conservative values and such perspectives on social issues respectively. In Korea, the meaning of ‘leftist,’ in Korean ‘*Jwapa*,’ has been transformed throughout history to entail ideological assessments in it. The press and politicians politically used the term as negative way to indicate radical pro-democracy movements during military authoritarian era. Later, conservative political parties strategically used it to describe those who were conciliatory to North Korea and created the term ‘*Chin-Buk-Jwapa*’ [pro-North leftist]. In consequence, the term ‘leftist’ has been widely perceived as ‘pro-North Korea’ and ‘pro-Communist,’ therefore, ideologically dangerous in South Korea. (Dal-Hyo Kim, “An Empirical Analysis of Criteria to Distinguish the Left from the Right,” *The Journal of Human Studies* 29 (2012): 139-140) Despite that Myung-Lim Park didn’t specify his usage of term in his book, the term ‘leftist’ in this concept seems to indicate those who were conciliatory or receptive to communist ideology, therefore could obstruct U.S. effort to block communist expansion to South Korea.

Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins, Vol.2: The Origins and Causes of the Conflict, 523.)

In between both ends, tipping points (which are referred to as *boundaries* in this model) are the points in which U.S. behavior could dramatically change. Between the upper boundary and lower boundary³⁰ lies an area that is called the *American Boundary*, which depicts a range of Korean domestic policy compatible with U.S. national interests. Within these boundaries, domestic determinants normally influence Korea's domestic affairs, but any transgression of such boundaries would inevitably trigger U.S. intervention in domestic affairs to re-establish the status quo—that is, within the *American Boundary*. Throughout the Cold War period, these boundaries and constraints were applied more intensely in Korea when compared to any other region in the world, as Korea faced imminent communist threats across its northern border.

In the late 1980s, this dynamic was transformed with the democratization of Korea.³¹ The growth of a middle class, along with the industrialization and economic

³⁰ There are different opinions on how to determine the two extremes of this continuum. Jang-Jip Choi and Il-Joon Chung assert that the American Boundary works between the upper boundary of “the minimum level of democracy” and the lower boundary of “the minimum level of stability of the divided nation” (Jang-Jip Choi, *The Conditions and the Prospect of Democracy in South Korea*, 22; Il-Joon Chung, “Yushin System and ROK-U.S. Relations – Korean Society and ROK-U.S. Relations based on U.S. Documents,” and “Korean Democratic and America: American Intervention in the Korean Politics through Overt Means and through Non-Intervention during Park Chung Hee Era.”) Further research is needed on this point.

³¹ Myung-Lim Park, “‘Loyalty with Voice’ vs. ‘American Boundary’: Trajectory and Peculiarities of the Korean-American Relations from 1948 to 2008,” 238-275; Moon-Suk Ahn, “The U.S. Intervention of Korean Presidential Election after 1987: Changes and Political Implications.”

growth of Korea, catalyzed the re-evaluation of the U.S.' role in Korea. The result of such re-evaluation was a prevalent public antagonism toward the U.S., which raised concerns due to the negative ramifications it implied to the long-term national interest of the U.S in Korea. In consequence, the traditional relationship on a governmental level was expanded to consider civil society as an important actor within its scope. The U.S. could no longer support an authoritarian regime sacrificing democracy at the expense of national security, once Korea achieved significant economic development and enhanced its national capability. The pressure to choose between Doo-Hwan Chun's authoritarian government and pro-democratic forces grew deeper. A legitimate government, empowered through the direct presidential election of 1987, finally terminated the constraints of the American Boundary and the focus of ROK-U.S. alliance was realigned from domestic issues of Korea including democracy, to international relations, North Korean policies, and other common issues.

B. Contributions

Firstly, since the model posits the U.S. as an actor who has no preference on domestic actors in Korea and is only guided by its national interests, it became possible to explain U.S. behaviors such as “patronizing democracy, while guaranteeing [an] authoritarian regime,³²” which has been regarded as inconsistent and contradictory by

³² Myung-Lim Park, *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins, Vol.2: The Origins and*

Koreans. For example, President Syng-Man Rhee was supported by U.S. to become the first president of South Korea with his perfect qualifications to deter communist expansions and control internal turmoil against the government. However, growing complaints among the Korean public about Rhee's oppressive and authoritarian rule developed into a nationwide, anti-governmental movement in April 19, 1960, which ultimately led to the U.S. intervention in Rhee's regime to obtain control.

Similarly, the U.S. overlooked the military coup led by Chung-Hee Park in 1961³³ and stressed a non-intervention policy when the *Yushin* [維新; renewal] *Constitution* was declared in 1972, legitimizing Park's long-term seizure of power.³⁴ However, the nationwide anti-Yushin demonstrations starting in 1973 intensified conflicts between the government under Emergency Measures 1 and 2 in 1974, 9 in 1975, leading the U.S. to consider a more aggressive involvement once again. Even President Carter pointed out the seriousness of human right violations in Korea and personally requested the lift of Emergency Measure 9 in a presidential summit with Park in 1979.

Causes of the Conflict, 524.

³³ Il-Joon Chung, "Korean Democratic and America: American Intervention in the Korean Politics through Overt Means and through Non-Intervention during Park Chung Hee Era."

³⁴ Under the Yushin Constitution, the president was endowed with absolute power as the head of the nation. It permitted unlimited reelection of the president for six-year terms, and the president was elected by a selected Electoral College. Right after the declaration, U.S. ambassador Philip Habib informed Washington that "there is little doubt that these measures are unnecessary given any objective view of the situation." However, unlike the initial report, it was recommended to be "extremely circumspect" in public comments and "no action was recommended to change Park's mind." (Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: Revised and Updated a Contemporary History*, (Basic Books, 2001), 37-39.)

Similar to Park, the U.S. didn't take any effective measures to stop the military coup of Doo-Hwan Chun in 1979. Instead, it was reported that the era of ROK-U.S. relations were "less contentious than any period over the last eight or nine years."³⁵ The Chun administration and Reagan administration maintained close relations until a nationwide anti-government movement and the advent of a powerful opposition party led to a political upheaval which brought about the U.S.' strong denunciation of the Chun administration in the late 1980s.³⁶

Secondly, unlike the traditional World System theory, which stresses a single directional relation from the core to periphery, the American Boundary model stresses reciprocal relations between the external environment and domestic actors. Though decision-making processes of domestic actors were not described in Myung-Lim Park's original suggestion of the model, the model stresses the relevance of internal dynamics among domestic actors and examines the space in which domestic actors could autonomously pursue their policy goals.³⁷ Therefore, autonomous governments and interest groups in Korea who sought to pursue their own political goals and maximize their own interests — not necessarily compatible with those of the U.S.—could further explain the constant conflicts between Korea and the U.S. (See figure 3).

This tension has often been observed throughout the history of Korea: for

³⁵ Information Memorandum from Richard V. Allen to Ronald W. Reagan, "*President Chun of Korea*," January 29, 1981, Item No. KO00358.

³⁶ This part will be detailed from the Chapter 4.

³⁷ Il-Joon Chung, "Yushin System and ROK-U.S. Relations – Korean Society and ROK-U.S. Relations based on U.S. Documents," 172.

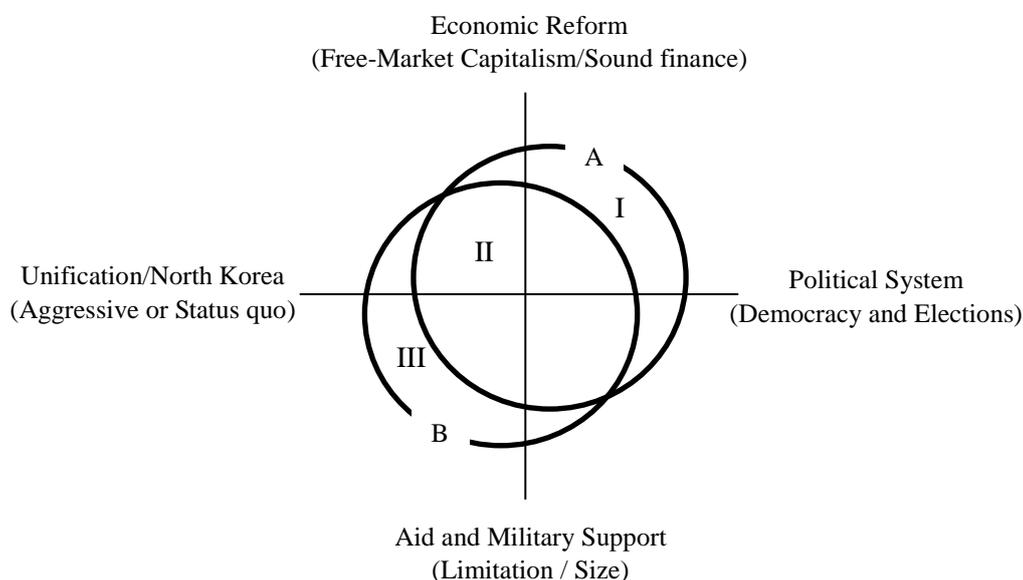


Figure 3. American Boundary and Conflicts between Korea and U.S. during the Syng-Man Rhee Era. This figure presents both Rhee’s governmental agendas (circle B) and those of the U.S. (circle A) Sections I and III represent the interests of both nations which do not overlap and are, therefore, conflict zones, while section II indicates the common interests of both nations. (Source: Myung-Lim Park, *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins, Vol.2: The Origins and Causes of the Conflict*, 531.)

example, President Rhee was a staunch proponent of anti-Communism and worked hand in hand with the U.S. in order to defeat communist threats, but for a long time his policies collided with the New Look policy of the Eisenhower administration.³⁸ Moreover, the U.S. approved the military coup of Chung-Hee Park in 1961 when the civilian government led by Myon Chang and Bo-Seon Yun turned out to be incapable of handling the internal and external challenges at hand. The Park government, however, also suffered from conflicts with the U.S. government regarding various issues such as

³⁸ Tae-Kyun Park, “Stepping on a Wrong Foot: Conflicts between South Korea and America in the 1950s,” in *Conflicting Alliance: 60 Years of ROK-U.S. Alliance*, ed. The Editing Committee of Critical Review of History, 12-38. Critical Review of History, 2010.

presidential elections, human rights, North Korean policy, and the democratization of Korean society throughout Park's presidency.³⁹

C. Limitation

Firstly, the American Boundary model doesn't sufficiently count all possibilities that might intensify domestic tension and conflicts in Korea. The model only suggests two scenarios as extremes, that is, when the regime with authoritarian tendency seeks for prolonged seizure of power and when those who support communist values seek for communist revolution. However, the basic premises of the American Boundary model and this thesis is that U.S. interventions are likely when domestic actors disrupt internal stability of Korea, thus further raise possibility of damaging U.S. national interest. In that sense, the American Boundary model doesn't account for sufficient amount of domestic scenarios when the internal stability of Korea is damaged.

For example, military coups, a phenomenon that has been observed throughout modern Korean history and has damaged the national security of Korea by disturbing law and order, thereby endangering the country by provoking the North was not

³⁹ Seuk-Ryule Hong, "Dangerous Honeymoon: ROK-US Relations during Johnson Administration, and the Vietnam War," in *Conflicting Alliance: 60 Years of ROK-U.S. Alliance*, ed. The Editing Committee of Critical Review of History, 40-66. Critical Review of History, 2010; Il-Joon Chung, "Korean Democratic and America: American Intervention in the Korean Politics through Overt Means and through Non-Intervention during Park Chung Hee Era," 213-214.

accounted for. Furthermore, heated anti-authoritarian movement requesting promotion of democracy also can damage social stability.

Secondly, the model doesn't present specific behavioral pattern of the U.S. when it intervenes Korean domestic affairs. For example, once Korean domestic situation is intensified to finally cross boundaries U.S. set, would the U.S. directly communicate with Korean actors who were responsible for such situation? Would the U.S. communicate with Korean government first before deciding to intervene? Were there any specific steps U.S. followed in case of such situations?

2. A Model for U.S. Behavioral Pattern in Korea

A. Modification of American Boundary Model

The model presented here is based on the concept of American Boundary, with slightly adjustment of Korean domestic situations that induce U.S. intervention. Unlike the original model, the revised model presented here classifies domestic actors who are responsible for turmoil into two groups: (authoritarian) Korean government and civilian actors. Throughout Korean history, domestic turmoil powerful enough to threaten internal stability of Korea has mainly manifested in the form of massive nationwide movements against authoritarian rule of the government. In every case of such movements, few

radical protestors and organizations raised concern for communist revolution or involvement of North Korea. Since such nationwide movements provided opportunity for radical actors to gather its forces and publicize their propaganda of communist revolution, movements led by civilian actors would be thought to be dangerous for U.S. even when majority of participants were moderates or without communist values. Therefore, turmoil caused by ‘civilian actors’ instead of ‘leftist’ is more adequate in encompassing nearly all possibilities of domestic disturbances, which were not accounted for in original model. However, this model is still not able to encompass case of military coups. Despite its impact on creating domestic disorder, military coup doesn’t induce fear of communist revolution, thus doesn’t fit in the model presented here. Further researches are needed on this matter.

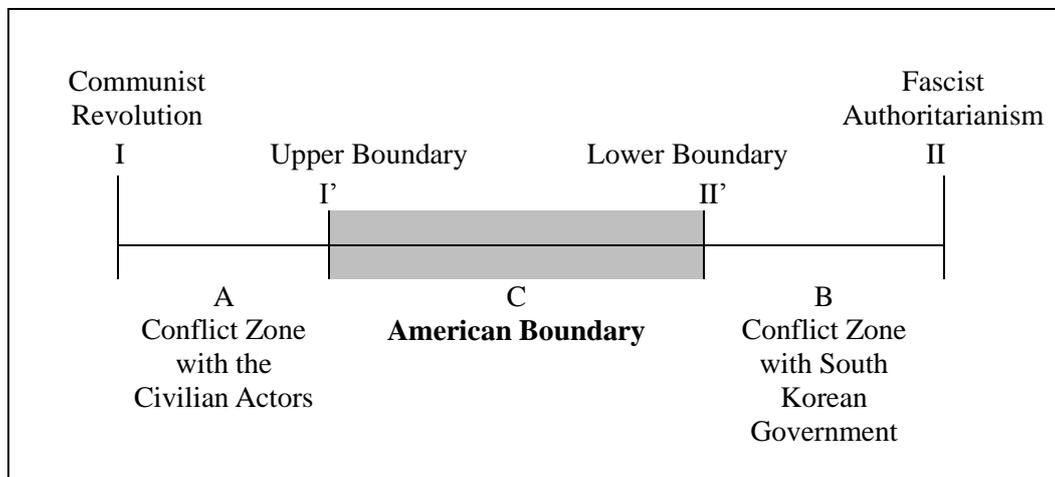


Figure 4. Modified American Boundary Model. Conflict zone A is altered to represent from ‘Conflict Zone with the Leftist’ to ‘Conflict Zone with Civilian Actors.’

B. A Model for U.S. Behavioral Pattern in Korea

The basic premise of American Boundary model is that the existence Korean government constrains direct intervention of U.S. foreign policy on Korea's domestic affairs. In order to avoid the accusation of violation of sovereignty of Korea, while implement legal and effective interventions, the U.S. would not consider direct interventions unless Korea's domestic reality reaches a point where aggressive U.S. involvement is considered critical. Therefore, until that point is reached, the model suggests that the Korean government works as a legal apparatus and counterpart of the U.S., to deliver and communicate U.S. opinions and assessments in regards to Korean domestic affairs.

However, once measures Korean government employ doesn't yield enough effect to recover status quo of Korean domestic situation, that is, within the American Boundary, U.S. government would take proper measures of more direct and active involvement to change the situation. In the process, specific measures would be determined based on U.S. perception and assessment of each situation.

Three case scenarios of when American Boundary is trespassed, and U.S. behavioral patterns in each case will be elaborated further in this section. Firstly, I will briefly explain how the U.S. interacts with the Korean government and how conflicts are addressed between the Korean and U.S. government, namely in case of the conflict in the zone B of the American Boundary model. Secondly, conflicts between the U.S. and Korean entities other than Korean government will be examined, focusing on first,

military forces who tried to take over the Korean government and second, civilian anti-government forces (conflict in the zone A in the American Boundary model).

a. Domestic Turmoil Triggered by the Korean Government

In case that there are conflicts within the Korean government, the U.S. would directly exert its influence through various measures, as there are different ways the U.S. government can apply pressure to the Korean government. In the past, there were threats to withdraw U.S.' military commitment to Korea's security or threats of economic sanctions to the country. Those measures were rarely carried out in reality, but psychological pressure built on the threats of the negative ramifications of such actions did impact the reaction of Korean government. In terms of communication channels, there were official (diplomatic) channels, back channels, and unofficial contacts. Each channel has its own merits, as the U.S. would resort to them depending on each situation.

In initial stages of domestic turmoil, the U.S. administration preferred diplomatic communications⁴⁰ to reduce unnecessary interference when dealing with delicate issues; however, public channels were sometimes used in parallel to diplomatic channels, in order to appeal to the general public and opposition on certain policy decisions, thereby applying pressure on the Korean government. For example, the Carter

⁴⁰ Therefore, strong, public denunciations from the Carter Administration in regards to human rights violations in Korea were thought to be an unusual practice.

Administration's management of the human rights situation in Korea during Chung-Hee Park era was altered as the situation worsened. The principle of non-intervention was stressed through diplomatic and private channels its earlier stages. Then a mild level of public denouncement of human rights violations was used in parallel to diplomatic channels around the presidential summit in 1979, when the situation grew visibly worse. When tensions finally reached their highest point, William Gleysteen, the U.S. ambassador to Korea was summoned as an ultimate way to protest against the oppressive Park regime for the first time in Korean history.⁴¹

However, the result such pressure yields can often be disappointing as the perception of the ROK-U.S. relations and the receptivity of U.S. influence in Korea depend on the attributions of the administration or President. For example, President Syng-Man Rhee, who was often described as "the master of diplomacy," was so autonomous and independent that his audacity finally led the U.S. to consider military operations to intervene in his regime.⁴² On the other hand, the strong dependence of President Chun on the U.S., as a means to compensate for his lack of legitimacy, reassured the U.S. of their diplomatic and political leverage in the Korea government,

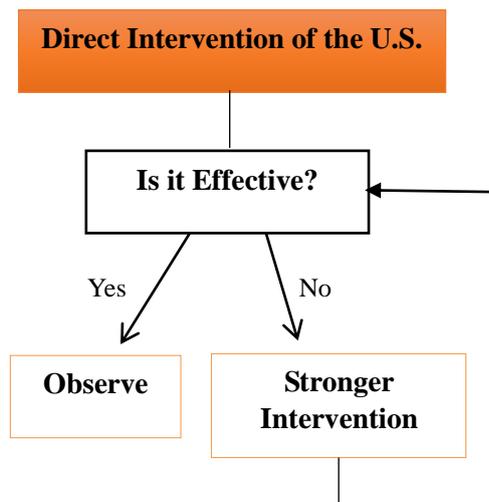
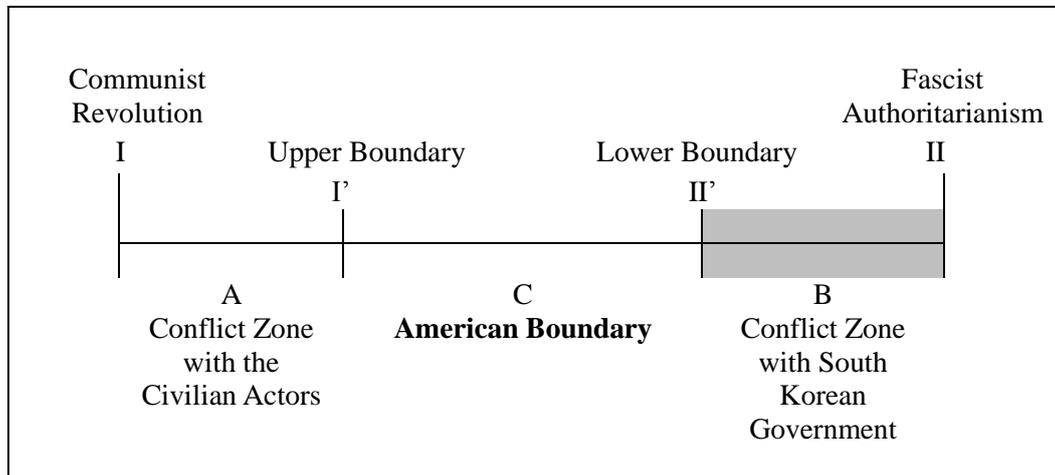
⁴¹ Won-Gon Park, "Carter Administration's Policy toward South Korea: The Accommodation of Moral Diplomacy around the 10.26 Incident," *Korean Political Science Review* 43, no.2 (2009): 215-234.

⁴² During the political upheavals in 1952, President Rhee dealt with U.S. pressure by "sometimes showing exhaustion, giving irrelevant answers to questions, strongly remonstrating about the U.S. intervention, threatening to withdraw Korean military in the U.N. forces, and even snorting at it." Threats for economic sanctions were not effective, diplomats and envoys who tried to humiliate Rhee through negotiation would rather be blamed by him. (Jong-II Ra, 219-220.)

thus enabling the U.S. to take relatively moderate measures.⁴³ Then again, such factors can also affect U.S. evaluation of situation to sometimes induce stronger intervention tactics until both nations reached certain compromises in order to protect U.S. national interests.

⁴³ U.S. efforts to save Dae-Jung Kim would effectively exemplify this point. Kim, who was serving his time in prison due to allegations of inciting anti-governmental movement in Kwangju, was sent to military court in August 14th, 1980 and accused in the “Dae-Jung Kim rebellion case,” which later turned out to be a malicious fabrication of the military regime. The Carter Administration made a lot of efforts to save Kim, but he was eventually handed down a death sentence on September 17th. A series of telegrams in that period indicate that the U.S. government was confident about positive results despite the prevalent gloomy prospects on Kim’s future. Then National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski was assured that “Chun has signaled clearly to us that he values the US relationship above all others, and that he wants to work closely with us.” Therefore, “I am quite certain that Kim will not be executed” after the U.S. threats that “Chun's handling of the Kim case will influence our willingness to work with Chun.” The U.S. decided to wait and see, continuously pushing Chun through private channels, without any other measures that could be counterproductive. Chun finally decided to reduce Kim’s sentence from execution to life sentence in January 23rd, 1981. (Action Memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski to Jimmy Carter, “*Kim Dae Jung*,” September 16, 1980, Item No. KO00345; Action Memorandum from Donald P. Gregg to Zbigniew Brzezinski, “*Lloyd Cutler and Kim Dae Jung*,” September 19, 1980, Item No. KO00347; Cable from William H. Gleysteen Jr. to the U.S. Department of State, “*Call on Defense Minister Choo*,” September 24, 1980, Item No. KO00348.)

Figure 5. U.S. Behavioral Pattern in Case of the Conflict between the U.S. and Korean Government (Conflict in Zone B)



b. Domestic Turmoil Triggered by the Civilian Actors

In case of domestic turmoil triggered by anti-government movement or radical pro-democratic movement, namely conflicts in zone A of the American Boundary model, the U.S. government requires the Korean government's engagement in the beginning. However, direct U.S. intervention was thought to be inevitable when the clashes of two opposing, domestic forces would damage the national interest of the U.S. in Korea, such as in case that a weak government was not able to, or choose not to, provide sufficient levels of control in domestic turmoil,⁴⁴ or that the overreaction from a strong government would trigger additional conflicts.

The first level of intervention would be to urge both parties, namely Korean government and anti-government forces, to compromise. In this case, the U.S. could not take sides. Conflicts with the Korean government were inevitable if the U.S. decided to support the democratic movement, even if it wanted to, while any support for the Korean government would risk damaging the public support for the U.S. Therefore, the only option left for the U.S. to choose is to urge compromise between two forces. The effectiveness of such intervention would be evaluated by a close observation of the situation to determine the next move.

Once the situation got better, the U.S. would keep monitoring its condition, and

⁴⁴ For example, the social liberalization policy of Doo-Hwan Chun government allowed a certain level of social demonstration from civil groups and the opposition political party.

if the situation got worse, it would either go back to urge compromise once again, or implement higher degrees of intervention if the situation reached a point which damaged U.S. national interest.

At its highest level of intervention, the U.S. would pressure the Korean government to accept the public's desire for changes, as neither the government nor anti-government forces would want to compromise but domestic turmoil could not be prolonged. In the worst case scenario, the government's willingness to use physical measures to take control over the situation could make the situation even worse, risking harm to U.S. national interest. In this scenario, U.S. would urge the Korean government to accept public desire for democratic reform to prevent further deterioration of situation, while serving the U.S.' long term goal of realizing a democratic regime in Korea at the same time.

The April Revolution in 1960 adequately demonstrates such behavioral patterns. (See figure 6) For example, the U.S.' initial response to the first Masan uprising against the rigged presidential election of March 15, 1960 was the reiteration of its non-intervention policy. However, as the demonstrations spread nationwide in April 11 (the 2nd Masan uprising), the U.S. determined to engage in the situation. By the time engagement was decided, the U.S. Embassy in Korea reported Washington that:

...there is [a] growing atmosphere of popular resentment marked by outright violence which could suddenly take [a] most dangerous turn leaving situation wide open for Communist manipulation. Severe repressive ROKG measures to

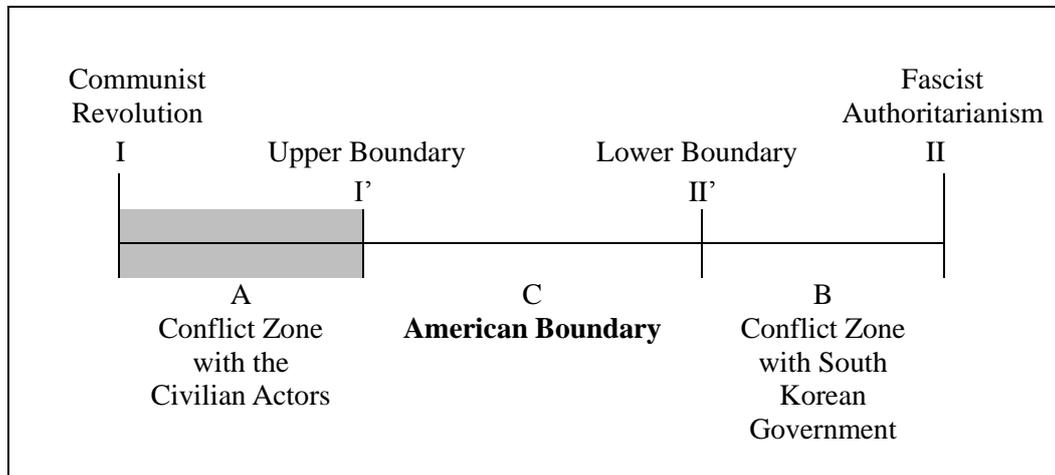
control such situation would only deepen popular antagonism, blacken ROKG reputation before world, and leave this nation even more susceptible to Communist subversion.⁴⁵

As a result, the official memorandum from the U.S. government was delivered to President Rhee, suggesting a few policy alternatives that the Korean government could take to alleviate the situation. When the situation got worse and yielded casualties from violent oppression, the Rhee Administration declared martial law. The U.S. government directly called for restraint from the Korean government and democratic movement, while instructing U.S. personnel to take a “strong”⁴⁶ position in dealing with President Rhee. The ongoing democratization movement finally led to direct U.S. pressure for the resignation of Rhee, which took place on April 27, 1960.

⁴⁵ *Telegram from the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State*, April 17, 1960, FRUS, 1958–1960, Vol.18, Japan; Korea, Doc. 297.

⁴⁶ Seuk-Ryule Hong, “April Revolution and the Fall of Syngman Rhee Regime in South Korea – Struggle for Democracy and Reactions from Democratic Party, United States, and Korean Troops,” *Studies on History and Culture* 36 (2010): 168.

Figure 6. U.S Behavioral Pattern in Case of the Korean Domestic Turmoil Caused by Civilian Actors (Conflict in Zone A⁴⁷)



⁴⁷ In this case, the conflict is often expanded to zone B, as anti-government demonstrations in Korea often associated with the government's pursuance of long-term seizure of power. Once the government kept insisting on the long-term seizure of power regardless of its clashes with the U.S. and anti-government movement, the U.S. would pressure the government through various means, as explained in the previous case.

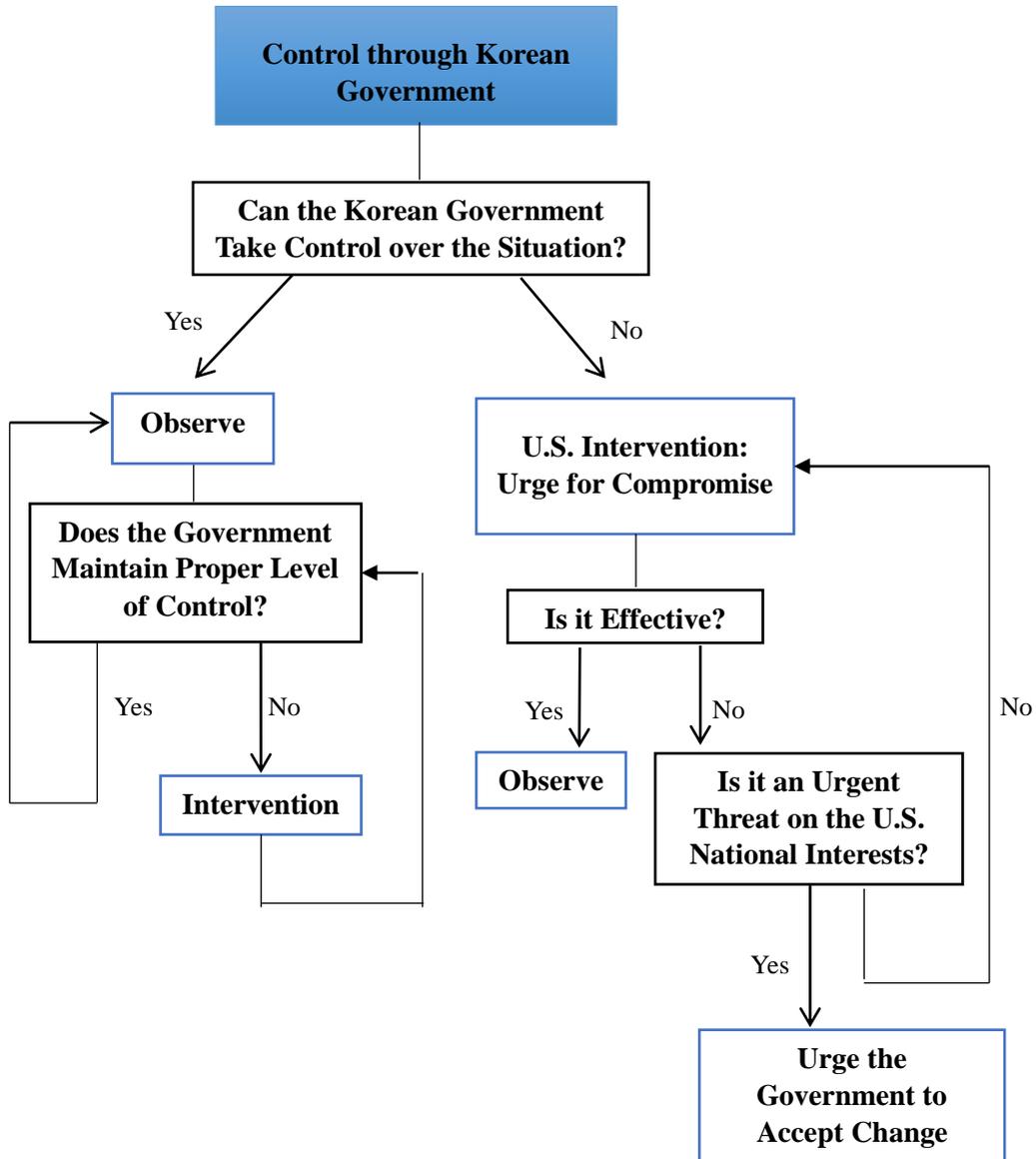


Figure 7. Application of Figure6: Revolution of April 19th, 1960 and Changes in U.S. Behavior⁴⁸

Date	Domestic Situation	The U.S. Reaction	Status/Cause of Change of U.S. Behavior
March 15 (The 1st Masan Uprising)	- Rigged Election - 8 Deaths during a Massive Protest in Masan	- U.S. Non-Intervention Policy - Mild Restriction of Temporary Halt on Economic Aid	Let the Korean Government Cope with Demonstration
April 11 (The 2nd Masan Uprising)	Involvement of Korean Civilians, other than Students	- U.S. Intervention. An Official Memorandum was Delivered to President Rhee - The Use of Military Forces was Approved by the U.S. Military to the Limited Means of Maintaining Public Order. (Discreet Operation was Repeatedly Stressed)	- Cross of the Upper Boundary of the American Boundary (Increasing Concern for Communist Manipulation) - U.S. Intervention
April 19	- Bloodshed - Declaration of Martial Law by Korean Government	- The U.S. Called for the Government and Democratic Movement Restraint - Direct Instruction from President Eisenhower to Take “Strong” Position in Dealing with President Rhee - The U.S. Government Delivered the Official Message to the Korea Embassy in the U.S.	- Conflict in the Zone A and B at the Same Time - Stronger U.S. Intervention
April 21		- Personal Meeting between U.S. Ambassador Walter P. McConaughy and President Rhee, which Yielded Little Results - The State Department Sent a Telegram to the U.S. Embassy in Korea stating that the U.S. Will Not Resume any Contact with Rhee’s Government	Stronger U.S. Intervention

⁴⁸ Based on Seuk-Ryule Hong, “April Revolution and the Fall of Syngman Rhee Regime in South Korea – Struggle for Democracy and Reactions from Democratic Party, United States, and Korean Troops.”

		Before a Clear Solution is Suggested on April 23	
April 25-26	Resurgence of Democratic Movement with the Demonstration of University Professors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct Pressure for Rhee's Resignation by U.S. Ambassador McConaughy and Carter B. Magruder, the UN Commander in Chief. - Pressure from the U.S. Embassy, USFK, CIA 	The Strongest U.S. Intervention
April 27	Resignation of President Rhee		

c. Domestic Turmoil Triggered by the Military Coup

The U.S. reaction in case of military coup could be trickier than the previous scenario of uprising of civilian actors because the military coup basically aims to replace the government in power, thus disabling U.S. official communication channel toward Korean domestic affairs. In previous cases of conflicts both in zone A and B, U.S. would not intervene Korean domestic scenes until it was proven that measures Korean government took was ineffective in recovering status quo. However, if the Korean government is no longer able to function due to sudden military coup, U.S. becomes incapable of communicating and taking part in Korean domestic affairs.

Furthermore, as the chance of prolonged turmoil dramatically increase and raise the possibility of North Korean provocation under the military coup, so do chances of damaging U.S. national interest. Considering the time needed to form a new government through legal procedures, those chances would increase more. Therefore, U.S. would try to prevent any military coup once it learns about its possibility. In this case as well, the U.S. would push the Korean government to control such turmoil in the initial phase to avoid accusation of intervention of Korean domestic affairs.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ For example, when the May 16th military coup was staged in 1961, General Magruder, then Commander in Chief of the UN Command, issued a statement calling upon military personnel “to support the duly recognized Government of the ROK headed by Prime Minister Myon Chang.” He expected that “the Chiefs of the Korean Armed Forces will use their authority and influence to see that control is immediately turned back to the government authorities and that order is restored in the armed forces.” The initial response of the emergency meeting in the White House regarding this statement was that it “went just about as far as you [Magruder] can

However, once the military coup successfully leads to regime change, the U.S. would try to build constructive relations with the newly built regime so that negotiations at a governmental level can resume. As the capacity of the Korean government to take control over domestic turmoil, while dealing with external threats is important to maintain U.S. national interest in the long term, it can be assumed that the U.S. would support regime changes that result in more capable ones. In other words, a military regime with stronger control would be preferred by U.S. to a weak civilian government that has little control over domestic turmoil,⁵⁰ so that the U.S. national

possibly go without becoming seriously involved in the internal affairs of the ROK,” which basically constraints further independent reaction of those who were in Korean soil without any prior consult with Washington to avoid possible accusation of intervention of Korean domestic affairs. (For Magruder statement, refer to the *Telegram from the Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces Korea (Magruder) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, May 16, 1961, FRUS, 1961–1963, Vol.22, Northeast Asia, Doc.213; Regarding the response from Washington, refer to the *Telegram from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Lemnitzer) to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces Korea (Magruder)*, May 16, 1961, FRUS, 1961–1963, Vol.22, Northeast Asia, Doc.214.) Hereafter declassified U.S. documents except for ones whose origins marked as ‘FRUS’ are from the collection of *The United States and the Two Koreas (1969-2000)* provided by the Digital National Security Archive

⁵⁰ In fact, an incapable government was one of the reasons the military insisted in legitimizing their action and this perception was widely spread among civilians sometimes. For example, it was reported that in the wake of Park’s military coup in 1961, “disappointed by the Second Republic’s [Myon Chang administration] ineffective experiment with democracy, the Korean people accepted the coup as a necessary treatment for the country’s deteriorating condition.” (*New York Times*, May 28, 1961, quoted by C.I. Eugene Kim, “Transition from Military Rule: The Case of South Korea,” *Armed Forces & Society* 1 (1975): 303) The Military Revolutionary Committee of Park also released a statement saying that the action was taken to “terminate corruption and overcome the difficult situation facing the nation.” The committee set political agendas that the new government will “(1) be strictly anti-Communist, (2) root out corruption, (3) observe the UN Charter and all international agreements and cooperation with the US and all other free nations, (4) endeavor to stabilize the national economy, (5) unify Korea as an anti-Communist nation, and (6) turn over the reins of government to “honest and competent political leaders.” (*Telegram From the Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces Korea (Magruder) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, May 16, 1961.)

interests are secured. This pattern has been observed in both cases of a Korean military coup.⁵¹

⁵¹ There are many researches to study relations between Korean military regimes and U.S. According to a research, the U.S. either *ignored* the plan for the military coup (May 16 coup in 1961) or *approved* it (December 12 in 1979) (Il-Joon Chung, “Korean Democratic and America: American Intervention in the Korean Politics through Overt Means and through Non-Intervention during Park Chung Hee Era.”)

IV. U.S. Behavior during the Democratization of Korea in the 1980s

1. Establishment of Doo-Hwan Chun Government and U.S. Pursuit of a Guided Democracy in Korea (early 1980s)

In the initial stages of the military coup, the U.S. did not intend to support Chun's regime. Though concerned with the incompetency and lack of charisma of Acting President Kyu-Hah Choi, the U.S. pushed Choi to take control over delicate domestic situations after the sudden death of President Chung-Hee Park. As a professional diplomat and bureaucrat, however, Choi was a "relative inactive"⁵² figure who "prefers to follow rather than to lead."⁵³ His goal was to work within the purview of Yushin constitution, until the next president assumed power according to the law.⁵⁴ This moderate personality and lack of political experience as a leader was not appreciated in time of emergency. The interim government wanted a more direct and active involvement of the U.S. in moderating both the Korean military and opposition. The U.S. took measures to avoid possible attacks from the North, by sending direct

⁵² Cable from the U.S. Embassy in South Korea (William H. Gleysteen Jr.) to the U.S. Department of State, "*Korea Focus—Secretary's Discussion with Foreign Minister Park Tong-jin November 3, 1979*," November 8, 1979, Item No. KO00326.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Cable from the U.S. Embassy in South Korea (William H. Gleysteen, Jr.) to the U.S. Department of State, "*Korea Focus—Secretary's Discussion with Acting President Choi Kyu-ha, November 3, 1979*," November 8, 1979, Item No. KO00325.

messages to the North and asking for the cooperation from both China and USSR, while urging Choi to give people a “sense of direction” and to “take initiative,” to “consult various [sic] elements of the political spectrum as you [Choi] decide what changes are needed, including amendment of the constitution.”⁵⁵ The U.S. pushed Choi several times to take on initiatives but it didn’t work.

When Chun succeeded in consolidating his power within the military power in December 12th, 1979 by coup, the U.S. chose to talk to the Choi government to take control of the situation as well. Assistant Secretary Richard Holbrooke warned Korean government in his meeting with South Korean Ambassador Young-Shik Kim stressing “the potentially grave implications for US-ROK relations if the events of December 12 should result in the reversal of the process of orderly political change in the ROK and re-imposition of political controls on freedom of expression such as EM-9 [Emergency Measure 9] which would be unacceptable to the Korean people and unsupportable by Korea’s friend abroad.”⁵⁶ He pushed Choi to “set forth [a] political timetable for the benefit of Korean people.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ From Cyrus R. Vance, to the U.S. Embassy in South Korea, “*Korea Focus: ROK Ambassador Kim Tries [sic] to Exert Influence*,” December 15, 1979, Item No. KO00329.

⁵⁷ After the meeting, Ambassador Kim sent “a very strong message” to President Choi expressing concerns from the U.S. government and “urging... to act more forcefully to retain influence over the situation and preserve the momentum toward political development.” He also consulted with Major General Ahn, who was a “fairly close friend” of Chun Doo-Hwan “seeking to enlist his influence to moderate the behavior of the young general’s group.” Furthermore, he contacted President Choi’s son-in-law to urge him “to act more forcefully to prevent erosion of the situation.” (Ibid.)

However, Choi decided to step down and Chun took over power from the Choi Administration on August 1980. The U.S. weighed several means to respond to the situation and there was only one condition attached to its actions: any further measure taken had to be in line with its ultimate goal toward the Korean peninsula, that is, reestablishing internal stability and security of the region. This meant enacting measures that didn't provoke North Korea nor the military. Fearing another coup and possible invasion of the North, military measures, economic sanctions, and threats were ruled out by the U.S. The most effective measure chosen was President Carter's "personal appeal to Chun, without threats, asking Chun to show mercy in an act of Christian charity."⁵⁸

The goal of promoting democracy was also pursued by U.S., only within the means and scope in which the national security of Korea would not be damaged. Therefore, the long term goal of bringing democracy and liberty to Korea was only thought to be achievable in a gradual manner by the voluntary guidance of the

⁵⁸ Military measures suggested by the Department of Defense were thought to only intensify instability in the peninsula. Considering the strong belief in America's imperative role in the national security shared among military officers, they perceived that "any measures suggesting a downward trend in US-ROK military relations would be to cause a split in senior Korean military ranks and weaken Chun's military support" and any case of U.S.' resentment to the current leader (Chun) might "set the stage for another round of military instability that could culminate in a coup against Chun." It was thought to create negative ramifications, while "his [Chun's] successor likely would be no better from the US point of view." A number of economic sanctions and restrictions on Korean goods were thought to be either "ineffective" or "devastate the already weakened South Korean economy, leading the further instability" and could also harm "US and Japanese business interests in Korea." U.S. could "threaten Chun with a reexamination of its policy toward North Korea," but it was also thought to "weaken Chun's support among the military and might bring about his downfall if it became known." Moreover, this "would encourage North Korea to continue its diplomatic offensive, including seeking ties with the US to isolate the South." (Memorandum from Stansfield Turner to Zbigniew Brzezinski, "*Korea: Policy Options [Excised]*," September 15, 1980, Item No. KO00344.)

government.⁵⁹ Furthermore, as “the assurance of continued U.S. support and the prospect of economic recovery and political stability”⁶⁰ were expected to lead to the relaxation of the government’s stringent controls on civil and political liberties, the U.S. decided to closely follow Chun administration’s political behaviors, while dealing with urgent issues of security.

From the very early years of his presidency, Chun planned to establish a regime that was a mixture of “selected Western democratic practices to Korea’s authoritarian political system,”⁶¹ which was led by a strong yet benevolent president that is “responsive to the public’s needs and aspirations.”⁶² The U.S. evaluated that “impressive progresses have already been made toward refining the electoral process,

⁵⁹ The democratization of Korea had been one of the consistent political goals of the U.S. Its interest and will are reiterated throughout documents in the 1980s. For example, in the meeting with the Chinese Vice President Geon Biao on May 29, 1980, the Secretary of State confirms that “we shared a common interest in the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula... the need for democratic development in the ROK.” (Cable from Edmund S. Muskie to U.S. Embassy in China et al., “*Vice Premier Geng Biao on Korea*,” May 29, 1980, Item No.KO00341) On September 24, 1980, Gleysteen stressed the importance of “establishing an atmosphere of stability and calm, and by moving steadily toward liberalization of the political regime” to Young-Bok Choo, then Minister of National Defense. (Cable from William H. Gleysteen Jr. to U.S. Department of State, “*Call on Defense Minister Choo*”) On April 3rd, 1982, the document recorded that “We [U.S.] believe that long-term stability is better assured by guarantees of free expression and fair treatment for all Korean citizens.” (Cable from the U.S. Department of State to the U.S. Embassy in South Korea, “*Draft Country Briefing (“Scope”) Paper*,” April 3, 1982, Item No.KO00395.)

⁶⁰ Briefing Paper from the U.S. Department of State, “*Political and Socio-Economic Overview*,” April 8, 1982, Item No.KO00403.

⁶¹ Cable from Alexander M. Haig Jr. to U.S. Embassy in China et al., “*South Korea: President Chun’s “Democratic Welfare” Society and Prospects for Stability*,” September 3, 1981, Item No.KO00379.

⁶² *Ibid.*

establishing a more cooperative national assembly, and creating new political parties.”⁶³

Restrictions began to loosen up towards the end of 1983. Prisoners were released, expelled students returned to school, police forces stationed in campuses were withdrawn, professors who were forced to leave classrooms returned. To lessen public grievances, the government even permitted university students to form their own campus’ organizations. Acknowledging the danger of Chun’s authoritarian tendency⁶⁴, the U.S. commended Chun’s efforts and progress for political and social liberalization. U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz assessed that,

Chun retains firm control and opposition activity is tightly circumscribed. However, over the past year there have been signs of increased respect for human rights and gradual political liberalization, which have been well received in Congress and by the American public. We need to signal our strong interest in further progress, and in particular to encourage Chun to carry through with his pledge to hand over power in a peaceful transition in 1988.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Cable from Richard L. Walker to the U.S. Department of State, “*Draft Country Briefing (“Scope”) Paper*,” April 6, 1982, Item No.KO00398; also see assessment of Chun by the U.S. Department of State saying, “Chun's rise to power was abetted by these factors and he, like his predecessors, has liberally used the danger to national security of instability as an excuse for stringent controls on freedom of speech and political activity and for the imprisonment of opposition politicians for anti-government activity on evidence we would find flimsy, at best” (Briefing Paper from U.S. Department of State, “*Political and Socio-Economic Overview*.”)

⁶⁵ Memorandum from George P. Shultz to Ronald W. Reagan, “*Korea—Your Meetings with President Chun*,” November 1, 1983, Item No.KO00479; This assessment continues in 1984: “The ROKG’s performance in the area of political development and human rights (which accounted for the only sour note during the President’s visit – the “house arrest” of a number of

However, the lack of concrete timelines and specific plans for a peaceful transition of power and fundamental democratization of the system was worrisome. The U.S. thought that a more fundamental reform was critical in achieving a democratized Korea and the protection of U.S. national interest. “This relatively happy situation is unlikely to last indefinitely, however; Chun needs to move more quickly toward something approaching full democracy.”⁶⁶ The U.S. decided to wait and see “whether he [Chun] will [step down from power in 1988 and realize full democracy].”⁶⁷

During this period, the U.S.—especially the Reagan administration—pursued the goal of democratization through the “traditional process of quiet diplomatic representations to the government.”⁶⁸ This approach of “private persuasion, behind-the-

dissidents) has continued to improve. While the government has yet to demonstrate convincingly that it intends a fundamental liberalization of the system, Chun has taken a number of steps in the past four months which are encouraging” (Briefing Book from the U.S. Department of State, “*President Reagan’s Trip to China, April 22-May 2, 1984: The Secretary’s Korea/Japan/Alaska Briefing Book*,” April 12, 1984, Item No.KO00502.)

⁶⁶ Briefing Paper from the U.S. Department of State, “*Background and Supplementary Talking Points: Your Presentation on the Objectives and Strategy for the Korea Trip*,” November 2, 1983, Item No.KO00480.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “A second important difference between this Administration [Reagan administration] and the last [Carter administration] is in our tactical approach to questions of human rights and political development. We have tried to avoid public posturing. If we are troubled by events in Korea, as we have been from time to time, we talk to the government about our concerns in diplomatic channels. We have some important results to show for our approach, in terms of amnesties of political prisoners and gradual progress toward a more open political system.” (Briefing Paper from the U.S. Department of States, “*Background and Supplementary Talking Points: Your Presentation on the Objectives and Strategy for the Korea Trip*”); Regarding further remarks on the usage of quiet diplomacy, refer to: Cable from U.S. Department of State to U.S. Embassy in South Korea, “*Draft Country Briefing (“Scope”) Paper*”; Briefing Paper from the U.S. Department of State, “*Private Meeting with Chun*,” November, 1983, Item No. KO00474; Briefing Paper from the U.S. Department of State, “*Korea: Background and U.S.-Korea Relations*,” October, 1983, Item No.KO00459; Cable from James R. Lilley to the U.S.

scenes attempt to solve the problem⁶⁹” was traditionally preferred by the U.S. presidents as the first step to raise delicate issues, especially to allies, before taking more public means. According to the introductions of Country Reports on Human Rights, the “public announcements...about human rights abuses in friendly countries are to be avoided on the theory that the United States can apply more leverage on these countries by pursuing private channels.”⁷⁰ Public statements were avoided as they can “isolate the countries at which they are aimed and neutralize the United States’ ability to effect change.⁷¹” Furthermore, it was thought that “much of the public criticism does little but serve as ‘self-satisfying but ineffective gestures.’⁷²”

Reagan curtailed public discussions of human rights issues, especially in Korea to avoid confrontation with this strategically sensitive country. Messages for democratization were delivered in private meetings.⁷³ To magnify the effectiveness and

Department of State, “*Korean Reactions to Secretary’s Visit*,” May 10, 1987, Item No.KO00554.

⁶⁹ Sullivan Heberton, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1981-1987: United States Human Rights Policy,” *Human Rights Yearbook* 1 (1988): 294.

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1982,” 1983, note 6, at 7-8 was quoted in *Ibid*, 294-295.

⁷¹ *Ibid*.

⁷² *Ibid*.

⁷³ For example, President Reagan was advised to nudge Chun for further democratization of Korea in their private meeting: “Aware your [Korea] history and traditions differ from ours [U.S.], and that your political evolution will follow its own pattern. Convinced, however, that democracy is more enduring form of gov’t, source of national strength and stability. Your pledge to hand over power to successor in peaceful transition in 1988 is bold and farsighted. May not prove an easy task, but urge you to persist. You will have my strong support. Will have created great legacy for your country.” (Briefing Paper from the U.S. Department of State, “*Private Meeting with Chun*.”)

to keep secret the nature of such approach, the U.S. was careful not to disclose their approach, particularly to political oppositions in Korea.⁷⁴ While nudging the Korean government behind the scene toward a more democratic system to replace the authoritarianism of its past, the U.S. government stressed that opposition leaders and pro-democracy forces remain peaceful and pursue democratization in non-violent ways.

2. Consolidation of Political Opposition Forces in Korea and Chun Administration's Control (1985)

A. The Return of Dae-Jung Kim

Under these circumstances, the U.S. was most concerned with a radical pro-democratic force. Therefore, the return of Dae-Jung Kim, one of the most prominent dissidents at that time widely supported by publics, on February 1985 was considered as the single most important event, which would affect the long-term stability of the nation. His return "should not threaten the stability of the Chun administration."⁷⁵ Despite the U.S. government's effort to save his life in the early 1970s, and the varied support of

⁷⁴ During the luncheon with opposition leaders, Vice President George Bush "deftly refuted some common misconceptions about quiet diplomacy and some doubts about the Reagan administration's commitment to the issue of human rights." (Cable from Richard L. Walker to U.S. Department of State, "*Vice President Bush's Visit to Korea*," May 3, 1982, Item No.KO00418.)

⁷⁵ Intelligence Brief from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "ROK: Kim Dae-jung's Return to Korea," February 6, 1985, Item No.KO00516.

Kim from a wide range of American political figures during his stay in the States⁷⁶, Dae-Jung Kim and “the passions which have swirled around Kim, both pro and con, have sharply divided Koreans”⁷⁷ from the 1970s. U.S. perceived that the best that could be hoped for Korea in 1985 was “a continued evolution of guided democracy toward a relatively more open system, including tolerance of a vigorous opposition.”⁷⁸ More “restraint”⁷⁹ acts of both Kim and Chun, more specifically neither seeking presidency, would help the country “muddle through”⁸⁰ to a “slightly more popular”⁸¹ democracy in 1988 when Chun promised to step down from power.

The U.S. government tried to relax the political and social atmosphere in Korea, but Kim’s deep-seated “fear and hatred in the military leadership,”⁸² the unsettled relations between both parties (based on their difference in expectations on the level and

⁷⁶ During a political competition with President Chung-Hee Park, dissident leader Dae-Jung Kim was abducted in Japan in August 8th, 1973. His life was threatened by Korean Central Intelligence agents who worked for Park, until active intervention of international society including Presidents Carter and Reagan in U.S. saved his life in August 13th. Later he was accused of instigating Kwangju Democratic Movement in May 1980, which resulted in the considerable number of casualties, and sentenced to death. This time again, the U.S. intervened to prevent the execution. Instead, he was forced to be exiled in U.S. in 1982 and spent 2 years there actively campaigning democratization of Korea until coming back to Korea in 1984.

⁷⁷ Cable from Edmund S. Muskie to the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “*NATO Regional Expert’s Meeting on East and South Asia*,” October 8, 1980, Item No.KO00351.

⁷⁸ Intelligence Appraisal from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, “*South Korea: The Domestic Political Outlook*,” April 5, 1985, Item No.KO00519.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

speed of reform), and the Chun Administration's lack of "tact and finesse"⁸³ in dealing with critical confrontations, significantly increased the possibility of conflict.⁸⁴ The U.S. decided to closely follow these developments— after all, "Kim's impact on the Korean scene will be determined by how the populace weighs his message of political liberalization against the stability and prosperity the Chun administration has brought."⁸⁵ However, it seemed clear that:

When the tensions increase, opposition political leaders, particularly Kim, will seek to use the U.S. Government and American and foreign supporters to ward off repressive actions by the regime and to further their own political ambitions. Chun will be sensitive to US intervention on internal political matters and will combine sternness with concessions in trying to deal with the US on such issues. The U.S. inevitably will be caught in the middle.⁸⁶

B. The Establishment of NKDP

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid; also see Intelligence Brief from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "*ROK: Dae-Jung Kim's Return to Korea*."

⁸⁵ Intelligence Brief from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "*ROK: Dae-Jung Kim's Return to Korea*."

⁸⁶ Intelligence Appraisal from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "*South Korea: The Domestic Political Outlook*."

The establishment of NKDP in January 1985 and its lopsided victory in the 12th National Assembly Election in following month had a profound impact on the structure of Korea's political realm. Its victory in the election was a manifestation of the public's desire for democratization, considering that the party was organized only 25 days prior to the election. The public's attention was easily diverted to this newly established, aggressive party, as the two major opposition parties in existence, the *Minju Hanguk Dang* (Democratic Korea Party, hereafter DKP) and *Hanguk Gungmin Dang* (Korea National Party, hereafter KNP), were incompetent and complacent with Chun's authoritarian system for the past 4 years.⁸⁷ NKDP made an issue of revising the constitution to provide direct presidential elections as their principal political demand, which had previously been avoided intentionally by the DKP and KNP.

By acquiring political headquarters, unorganized street demonstrations could now raise their voice through more systemic and official ways. Open and public political debates could not only gather a wide range of people, including those who held animosity towards radical movements, but also effectively appeal to international society. NKDP actively utilized benefit of public rally to fight against Chun administration and achieve its political goal as well, since political apparatus were still under Chun's influence. Public rallies became prevalent in early years of confrontation, so did physical clash between civilians and police forces. A full-scale competition between the two parties – NKDP and ruling *Minju Jeongui Dang* (Democratic Justice Party, hereafter

⁸⁷ Yong-Jik Moon, "Politicians and Party Politics in the Democratic Transition of South Korea, 1985-1992" (Ph.D. diss., Seoul National University, 1994), 43-44.

DJP) – surrounding the legitimacy of the DJP and the adoption of direct presidential election system officially began.

The sharp confrontation between the DJP and the NKDP over the amendment of the constitution, which was prerequisite for adopting direct presidential election system, continued through 1985 and neither party was willing to compromise in favor of mutual agreements. On March 8th, Tae-Woo Roh, the president of DJP sent conciliatory gestures to NKDP leadership, stating that he was willing to have a conversation with opposition leaders under the condition that the two Kims “acknowledge the efforts the government and the ruling party have made for democratization are as progress, not stepping back.” Also, he made it clear that the DJP was not going to change its official position on Constitution amendments.⁸⁸ Prime Minister Shin-Young Roh also expressed his dissenting opinion against the opposition party’s suggestion of constitutional amendment, worrying about “the destabilizing effect it would bring about,” and insisted that “foreign policy makers in Western countries, the U.S., and Japan”⁸⁹ support the DJP on this matter.

In this ongoing tug-of-war with the ruling party, opposition party leaders turned their eyes to the U.S., allegedly a supporter of the Chun administration but also, the

⁸⁸ “No Minjeong Daepyo, Gaeheon-en Banae, "Du Gimssi-wado Daehwa-hal Lyong-ui” [Roh, the President of DJP, disagree on the Constitution Amendment yet willingly talk to Two Kims] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, March 8, 1985, Political Section 1.

⁸⁹ “No Chongni, “Gaeheo Nnonui-neun Anjeong Jeohae”” [The Prime Minister Roh, “Amendment would deteriorate stability”] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, April 6, 1985, Political Section 1.

most significant supporter of democracy and human rights.⁹⁰ The U.S.' retraction of support for Chun Administration or the U.S.' support for the pro-democracy Korean movement would exert significant leverage in favor of the democratization of Korea.⁹¹ The opposition party members' demands were expressed publicly and intensely, often provoking unpleasant reactions from the U.S. Young-Sam Kim criticized the ambiguous attitude of the Reagan Administration regarding the democratization of Korea and urged the U.S. for "clear answers"⁹² on its position – whether it supported the democratization

⁹⁰ Bruce Cummings argues that President Carter's strong emphasis on human rights policy, which was later focused on strategically selected places, mostly on Latin American countries rather than regions such as Korea and the Philippines, triggered widespread anti-Americanism and student protests during the 1980s. According to Cummings, "President Jimmy Carter had built up hope that the United States might do something about Park's dictatorship, human rights violations, and terror." The perception of Carter "mak[ing] some idle protests about the bloodletting at Kwangju" in 1980 resulted in the loss of a significant level of Korean public support for Carter and his successor. (Bruce Cummings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 87.)

⁹¹ It is notable that the opposition leaders' basic drive for democratization seemed to be mainly based on nationalism. Their demands for U.S. support were firm and persistent, however, they made it clear that it should be Koreans who achieve democratization in Korea. Considering the strong emotional attachment of Koreans to the U.S. as a patron and savior of Korea in the early stages of Korean independence, a recurring memory of 'betrayal' from the U.S. in critical moments of Korean history resurfaced. For example, the Potsdam and Yalta agreement in 1945, and the indiscretion of the U.S. during their governing of South Korea accelerated a strong nationalism based on deep-rooted suspicions toward the U.S. and its motives (Myung-Lim Park, *The Korean War: The Outbreak and Its Origins, Vol.2: The Origins and Causes of the Conflict*, 539-551.) During this time, Young-Sam Kim stressed that democratization will be achieved by Koreans, not by external actors. The opposition was not the only one with such nationalistic perception. In spite of their strong dependence on the U.S., the ruling party also resisted and criticized the U.S. effort to open Korean markets as "economic colonialism" ("3dang Daepyo – No Chongni Habui Mi Gaebang Yogu Gongdong Daeung" [Representatives of 3 Parties act in Concert against the U.S. Request for Market Opening] *The Kyunghyang Sinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, September 28, 1985, Political Section 1.)

⁹² "Hangung Minjujuui Hoebog-e Mi Bunmyeong-han Gwansim Boyeoya Gim Nyeong Sam-ssi Oe-sin Hoegyeyon" [The U.S. should Show Interest in the Democratization of Korea, Interview with Young-Sam Kim] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, September 12, 1985, Political Section 1.

of Korea or not. He continued that the U.S.' support for the current Chun government would eventually deteriorate ROK-U.S. friendship.⁹³

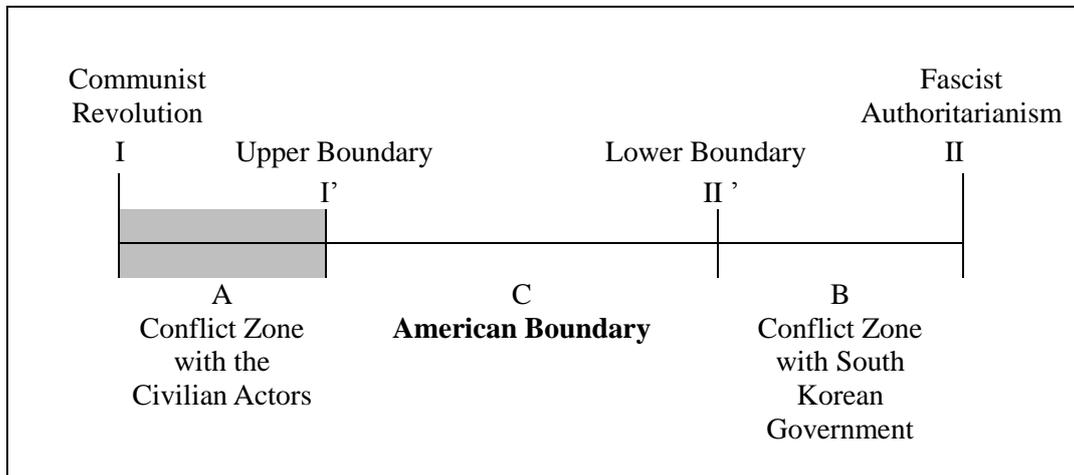
The U.S. reaction, however, was consistent with its original position of gradual democratization led by Korean government. Any radical movement for democratization was perceived as potential threat to its national interest. For example, on May 23th, a group of students occupied the United States Information Service building for four days. After the students were turned over to the police, the U.S. ambassador to South Korea, Richard L. Walker firmly stressed that "As United States Ambassador, I deplore the forceful occupation of our cultural center. We do not believe that the use of force by student activists is an appropriate manner for the expression of their views,⁹⁴" and that it is the Korean government who was responsible for investigating what happened in Kwangju in 1980.⁹⁵

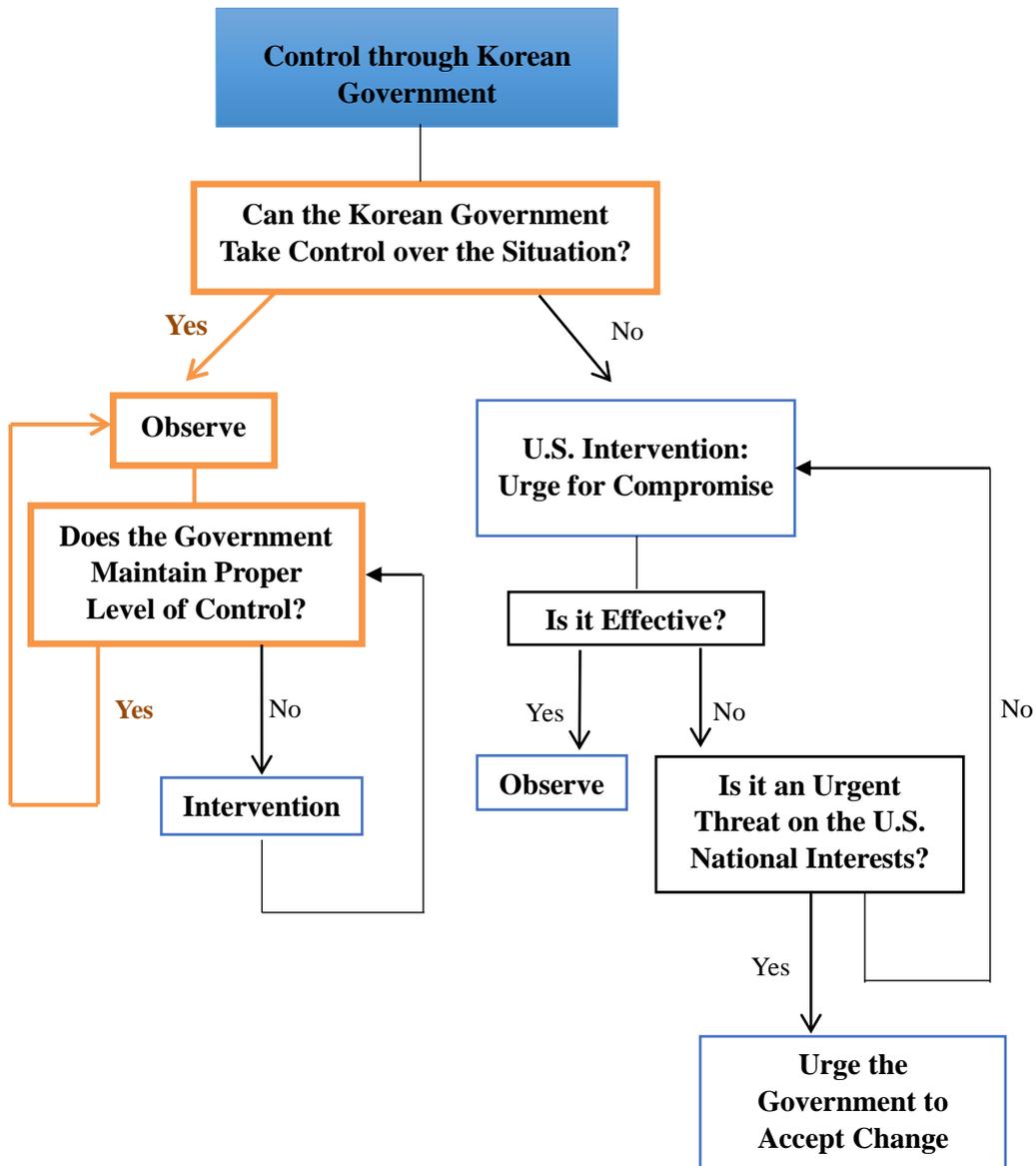
⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Susan Chira, "Students in Seoul arrested after Leaving U.S. Office," *The New York Times*, May 27, 1985. (accessed November 30, 2013); available from <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/05/27/world/students-in-seoul-arrested-after-leaving-U.S.-office.html>

⁹⁵ "Wokeo Mi Daesa Nae-oesin Gija Hoegyeon Minjuhwa Yogu-hamyeo Pongnyeong Sayong" [Press Conference of the U.S. Ambassador Walker: Violent Protest while Demanding Democratization] *The Kyunghyang Sinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, May 27, 1985, Life/Culture Section 10.

Figure 8. American Boundary and U.S. Behavioral Pattern in 1985





3. Rising Democratization Movement and U.S. Urge for Compromise (early 1986 - mid 1986)

A. Disputes over Constitutional Reform

The opposition party refused Chun's January 16th appeal to postpone the debate on Constitutional Amendment after the 1988 election. A petition to gather 10 million signatures to support direct elections was soon after launched on February 1986. The largest public demonstration since Chun's seizure of power in 1980 gained vast public support from major religious and academic organizations, including many ordinary citizens.⁹⁶ On March 17th, *Minjuwareul wihan Gungminnyeollakgigu* (the National Alliance for Constitutional Reform, hereafter NACR) was formed with five major organizations, NKDP, *Minjuhwa Chujin Hyeobuihoe* (the Council for the Promotion of Democracy, CPD), *Minju Tongil Minjung Undong Yeonhap* (United People's Movement for Democracy and Unification, hereafter UMDU), *Hanguk Gidokgyo Gyohoe Hyeobuihoe* (Korea National Council of Churches, hereafter KNCC), and *Catholic Jeongui Pyeonghwa Wiwonhoe* (Catholic Committee for Justice and Peace, hereafter CCJP) in order to press the government on constitution amendment.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Tim Shorrock, "The struggle for democracy in South Korea in the 1980s and the rise of anti-Americanism," *Third World Quarterly* 8, no.4 (1986): 1195-1218.

⁹⁷ "Sinmin, Jaeya Danche Mingungnyeon Guseong Habui" [KNDP, *Minjung* Organizations Agreed to Form NACR] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], March 18, 1986, Political Section 1.

At first, the government tried to block the petition drive and began a crackdown on opposition leaders. Dae-Jung Kim was placed under house arrest under heavy police surveillance and blocked from any contact to the outside. The NKDP headquarters were closed and the government ransacked the CPD office. The Chun Administration insisted that the opposition's call for direct presidential election by popular vote would endanger national security and induce social chaos.

Under such circumstances, a group of 18 NKDP members visiting the U.S. Democratic Party on April 12th stated that “the fever of democratization is higher than ever before in Korea and supports from our ally, the U.S., is as important as how domestic situation folds out ... We will appeal current situation in Korea to the U.S. to prevent any further support for authoritarian regime.”⁹⁸ On April 29th, in a meeting of the NACR, the president of the NKDP Min-Woo Lee, co-chairman of CPD Dae-Jung Kim, and the chairman of UMDU Ik-Hwan Moon announced that “the U.S., who has supported the Chun regime is also responsible for the current political turmoil in Korea,” therefore, “we urge the U.S. a serious reconsideration of their position.”⁹⁹

The popularity of the proposal and the demise of the Marcos Administration in the Philippines led Chun to drop his original appeal and promised that the constitution amendment would proceed. On April 30th, he finally indicated that if a consensus on the

⁹⁸ “Minjuhwa Chujin Siljeong Gangjo-hagetda” [The Process of Democratization will be stressed] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], April 12, 1986, Political Section 2.

⁹⁹ “Banmi Banhaeng Haebang Nollu Jiji Motae” [Demonstration for Anti-Americanism, Anti-Nuclear, and Independence will not be supported] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], April 29, 1986, Political Section 1.

issue of direct electoral votes was made, and if the National Assembly passed such legislation, he was willing to support and abide by such amendment. Chun also called on opposition parties to meet with the DJP to arrive at a consensus on how democratization should be accomplished.¹⁰⁰ Opposition leaders, however, opposed Chun's proposal, condemning it as a political ploy as the DJP held majority in the National Assembly, which would allow for this process to be easily manipulated by the government, and that this would fail to elicit full participation of the public. Instead, NKDP decided to organize a nationwide rally for the revision of the constitution. The president of DJP, Tae-Woo Roh blamed the NKDP: "I don't understand the NKDP strategy to draw international attention and ruining the image of Korea."¹⁰¹

As mentioned in previous section, the NKDP strategized to achieve its political goal by gathering popular support during early years of confrontation with Chun administration. They actively threw public rallies to publicize injustice of Chun administration and justify their political goals. Rallies often went violent as desire for democratization grows, so did the number of physical clashes between civilians and police forces. Then the Incheon Incident on May 3rd changed the course of NKDP's constitutional petition strategy.

¹⁰⁰ "89nyeon Gaeheon Sosineun Byeonham-eopjiman Yeo Ya Habui-myeon Jaeim-jung Gaeheon Bul-bandae" [Chun is OK to Constitutional Change if the Ruling and Opposition Parties Agree] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, April 30, 1986, Political Section 1.

¹⁰¹ "Daehabui-ro Ganeun Gil (2) Yeo Ya Jinno Mosaek" [A Road to Grand Concurrence (2): Future of the DJP and NKDP] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, May 2, 1986, Political Section 3.

The campaign for direct presidential election was scheduled in Incheon as one of NKDP's nationwide rallies. However, radical individuals and organizations occupied the scene clamoring for anti-DJP, anti-America, and anti-NKDP right before the rally started. They claimed that "the U.S. has misled Korean public desire for democratization by manipulating petition for constitutional amendment between its first son, DJP and second son, NKDP."¹⁰² The rally soon turned into the largest anti-government and anti-American rally in six years, resulting in 4,000 people fighting with the police. During the confrontation, over 100 policemen were reported injured, one died, and a few civilians were also hurt.

This stroke both DJP and NKDP as "shocking"¹⁰³ incident that proved that there was "clearly disparate flow of anti-government, anti-America, anti-opposition party in the society."¹⁰⁴ The movement denied existing values and the older generation. Antagonism among moderate civilians, which took up majority of population, toward such violent behavior brought negative effects on the NKDP's plan for a peaceful rally. Opposition leaders were in a dilemma: they needed to separate themselves from radical movements by decrying the radical tendency of militant protesters, while still embracing them. Fearing backlash from its rallies, three opposition leaders, Min-Woo Lee, Young-

¹⁰² "Daehang Idaero Joeunga (6) Banbosu Yeolbyeong" [Is Everything OK with University Students (6) Fever of anti-conservatism] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, May 5, 1986, Social Section 3.

¹⁰³ "5wol Jeonggug-ui Punghyang (9) Chunggyeong Sinmin - Gaeheon Tujaeng Gadoe Bokbyeong" [Direction of Korean Politics in May (9) NKDP was 'Ambushed' by Radical Movements] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, May 5, 1986, Political Section 3.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Sam Kim and Dae-Jung Kim, blamed the government for such incident, while advocating in support of opposition groups and students who were fighting for the democratization of Korea. Dae-Jung Kim condemned the government for “plotting such incidents with Secretary of States George Shultz’s visit ahead.” Young-Sam Kim also stressed that “opposition groups don’t have any intention to sabotage NKDP’s events” and “students [who were involved in Incheon incident] were also not meant to disturb the rally.”¹⁰⁵

B. The Visit of George Shultz, U.S. Secretary of State

On May 7th, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz visited Korea to brief South Korean officials on the just-concluded Tokyo summit and to attend the annual ROK-U.S. Foreign Minister summit. Known as the real power within the Reagan Administration, having pulled strings in military operations against Kaddafi in Libya and the Philippines, his visit at this critical juncture attracted a lot of attention domestically.¹⁰⁶ Recent speeches and messages from the U.S. government about its role in the overthrowing of

¹⁰⁵ “Incheon Josadan Jachega Simgakseong Injeonghan-geot” [Research Committee for Incheon Incident Reflects the Seriousness of the Situation] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, May 7, 1986, Political Section 3.

¹⁰⁶ “Sylcheu Yejeong-doen Banghan-e Gwansim-ui Nungil” [Attention on Shultz’s Visit] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, May 5, 1986, Political Section 4; “Sylcheu, Jeongbu Yadang Tahyeom Chokguhal-deut” [Shultz, Expected to Urge Compromise between the Government-Opposition Party] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, May 7, 1986, Political Section 1.

Ferdinand Marcos, an authoritarian leader in the Philippines, raised expectations of official support from the U.S. in favor of the democratization movement in Korea.¹⁰⁷ To promote their democratization movement, two Kims (Dae-Jung Kim and Young-Sam Kim) tried to acquire support from Secretary Shultz. “We cannot cooperate with the government until it respects the will of the people and agrees to direct elections,”¹⁰⁸ Dae-Jung Kim said, “I hope Secretary Shultz can encourage the Chun government to give people a free choice.”¹⁰⁹

However, such expectations were betrayed by Shultz’s strong support for the way things were proceeding in Korea. His visit was short, but there were several incidents that were perceived as the U.S.’ support for the Chun administration, which disappointed the opposition in regards to the U.S. official position on domestic affairs. In a news conference on his plane from Tokyo to Seoul, Shultz made it clear that what matters was progress itself, and the way democratization had been made, not the speed of it. He stressed that he was “impressed”¹¹⁰ by Korea’s “sensational economic

¹⁰⁷ President Reagan sent the message saying “The United States is opposed to any type of authoritarian regimes, whether it is pro-Soviet regime or anti-communist regime.” George Shultz said that “The U.S. government support human rights and opposed to whatever form of authoritarianism.” (“Jeonsegye-jeong Minju Undong” [International Democratization Movements] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], April 17, 1986, Political Section 2.)

¹⁰⁸ Doyle McManus, “Shultz Urges 'Stability' in South Korea: Sees Some Regime Opponents, Asks They Reject Strife,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1986. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from http://articles.latimes.com/1986-05-08/news/mn-4626_1_kim-dae-jung.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Bernard Gwertzman, “Shultz, in Seoul, says U.S. backs Korea’s efforts,” *The New York Times*, May 8, 1986. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/05/08/world/shultz-in-seoul-says-us-backs-korea-s-efforts.html>.

performance”¹¹¹ facing “as severe a threat as any country faces.”¹¹² He continued that “what we would like to see is the continuation of that movement in a stable and orderly way,”¹¹³ and “part of the process of becoming a genuinely democratic nation, it seems to me, is taking in the fact that the way to have change take place is a nonviolent way and that violence is not tolerated as a part of the democratic way of changing things.”¹¹⁴ When he was asked about his “seeming enthusiasm for the Chun government,”¹¹⁵ he answered indirectly that “I didn't say the situation is perfect. I said it was moving impressively in the right direction.”¹¹⁶

In his meeting with the presidents of political parties including Min-Woo Lee, two Kims were not invited as they were not the official leaders of the party. The reason was legitimate, but for some it seemed that this measure was “apparently out of deference to President Chun,”¹¹⁷ who was in conflict with opposition leaders. When the opposition was asked to meet with Assistant Secretary of State Gaston J. Sigur, who was traveling with Shultz, two Kims refused to attend. They later explained that there was a misunderstanding about the meeting, but there was a speculation that “Dae-Jung Kim perceived the invitation ‘insignificant’ considering his negative reaction of the U.S.’

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

recent stress on compromise with the government, as compromise on the direct presidential election,”¹¹⁸ which was not acceptable for Dae-Jung Kim. “They [Dae-Jung Kim and Young-Sam Kim] both were irked at not being given more important recognition and had decided to snub the Americans.”¹¹⁹ Without further comments, Dae-Jung Kim expressed his hope that Shultz would press Chun to lift censorship and other restrictions on civil liberties, as well as to accept the opposition’s demand for direct elections. “We are watching the Reagan Administration carefully,”¹²⁰ he said. “Unless there is progress, we will see more anti-American feeling and perhaps more serious violence.”¹²¹

However, Shultz’s continued praise, or seemingly praising comments for the Chun Administration in public interviews exacerbated the situation. Shultz insisted that “it does take time to build a tradition”¹²² of democracy and “the idea that somehow there isn’t an effort to bring into play democratic institutions and have an orderly transition of power is all wrong.”¹²³ He continued, “It is right there for everyone to

¹¹⁸ “Du Gimssi Bulcham-e Chucheung Museong” [Speculations on Two Kim’s Absence] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, May 8, 1986, Political Section 3.

¹¹⁹ Bernard Gwertzman.

¹²⁰ Doyle McManus.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² “S. Korean opposition irked by Shultz's praise of President Chun,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 12, 1986. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from [http://www.csmonitor.com/1986/0512/oshul.html/\(page\)/2](http://www.csmonitor.com/1986/0512/oshul.html/(page)/2).

¹²³ *Ibid.*

see.”¹²⁴ His comments were clearly consistent with the position U.S. had maintained from the beginning of Chun administration on democratization of Korea, which supporting gradual process led by Korean government. However, his strong public statements on Korea’s domestic issues definitely seemed to be an unusual practice in U.S. foreign policy, which usually “careful to avoid taking sides.”¹²⁵ His comments and behaviors, which “dismiss alleged human rights abuses in South Korea,”¹²⁶ shocked many people domestically and internationally. His final comments finally provoked bitter reproaches from opposition leaders. “There can be problems. No one says the situation in human rights is perfect...Not here, not in the United States, not anywhere.”¹²⁷ He said that constitutional reform was a question for the Korean people to decide by themselves, but “without taking sides on the issue,”¹²⁸ he continued, “I think it is not particularly typical around the world that the leaders of democratic countries are put there by direct elections. They aren't.”¹²⁹

Shultz’s comments were far from what the domestic opposition parties perceived as reality. The U.S.’s moderate approach towards the Korean situation provoked some Koreans, who thought they had been waiting too long under dictatorial rule, which had lasted for almost 30 out of the 40 years of Korea’s modern history. The

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Chicago Tribune published an interview with one of Korea's radical students, Young-Gun Chung, who opposed both Chun's government and the U.S. Chung insisted that "Mr. Shultz is viewing Korea from a far-away mountain,"¹³⁰ and "when Mr. Shultz looks at Korea, he sees a nation of green hills and forests and harmony, but those of the U.S. who live here see that beneath the green canopy, there is unrest and anger and streets red with blood. The democracy Mr. Shultz praises is not democracy, and the movement toward it is not really movement, but the illusion of movement."¹³¹ For those who pursued a greater level of democratization, the U.S. was just dragging its feet on the issue.

Despite domestic backlash for his comments, Shultz didn't stop from saying: "Washington supports the Chun government and would continue to do so."¹³² Even the concern for anti-Americanism, which surfaced the previous year, was not enough to stop him. Shultz insisted that the U.S. "objective in Korea have been basically magnificent objectives,"¹³³ and burgeoning anti-Americanism is based on misunderstanding toward U.S. intentions and actions.¹³⁴ Upon Shultz's departure, the opposition leaders severely criticized his comments during the visit. Some press analyzed the situation on more

¹³⁰ Ronald E. Yates, "Korea Wary As Iron Rule Eases: Shultz, Dissidents Disagree On Move to Democracy," *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1986. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1986-05-11/news/8602020839_1_chun-government-south-korea-rallies.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² "S. Korean opposition irked by Shultz's praise of President Chun."

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

objective perspectives, reflecting the United States' continued national interest to maintain status quo in the Korean peninsula,¹³⁵ but NKDP didn't hide their disappointment. NKDP commented that "Shultz's visit didn't meet our expectation at all,"¹³⁶ and "it is probably because of the U.S. lack of understanding over the fact that only democratization guarantees the stability and security which are primary concerns of the U.S."¹³⁷ "The U.S. should stop its 'one-sided' support of the military dictatorship,"¹³⁸ Young-Sam Kim argued. "The government of the U.S. obviously supports the Chun government and that is the reason for the new anti-Americanism in South Korea."¹³⁹ "His remarks were very disappointing to the Korean people... I am concerned that this might fuel anti-American feelings among students and dissident groups,"¹⁴⁰ Dae-Jung Kim asserted, "It would have been better if Shultz had not visited Korea."¹⁴¹

In a telegram reporting Korea's situation to Washington, David F. Lambertson, the U.S. State Department Deputy Chief of Mission, analyzed that "their [the

¹³⁵ "Syulcheu-ui 24Sigan" [Shultz's 24 Hours in Seoul] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, May 9, 1986, Political Section 2.

¹³⁶ "Sinmin, Syulcheu Banghan Nonpyeong Minju Seryeong Jeongsin Jiwon Gidaee Mon michyeo Yugam" [NKDP, Criticism on Shultz's Visit: its Pity that His Remarks didn't Meet the Expectation] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, May 9, 1986, Political Section 1.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Cable from David F. Lambertson to the U.S. Department of State, "*Lee Min Woo Off to U.S. Amidst Opposition Grumbling over Secretary's Visit*," May 13, 1986, Item No.KO00542.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ "Anbo Cheungmyeon-man Bwaseon Andwae" [Security is not the Only Concern] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, May 12, 1986, Political Section 3.

oppositions] vociferous public criticism of the Secretary's visit (as contrasted, for example, with Lee Min Woo's comments at the breakfast) derives at least as much from the NKDP's domestic dilemmas as it does from the visit itself."¹⁴² He continued,

The NKDP and especially Kim Dae Jung are at pains to ensure a degree of continued cooperation from their left flank of student and dissident sometimes-supporters in the aftermath of Inchon and amidst suspicions that the NKDP, as activist Moon Ik Hwan put it, may be tempted to enter into a "conspiracy" (read compromise) with the government. We also believe distorted press coverage, dashed expectations, and some misinformation spread by the rumor mill played a role in arousing and sustaining opposition ire.¹⁴³

Soon after Shultz's departure, Min-Woo Lee took a 12-day trip to the U.S. and Canada to "help founding realities between the United States and the democratic, civilian government soon to be established in Korea."¹⁴⁴ He continued, "I have emphasized at every opportunity that the democratization of Korea should be achieved by Koreans. Yet it is also important that the United States, who holds operational control over the Korean armed forces, should not cooperate in the creation and maintenance of

¹⁴² Cable from David F. Lambertson to the U.S. Department of State, "*Lee Min Woo Off to U.S. Amidst Opposition Grumbling over Secretary's Visit.*"

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ "Migugi Uriui Ubang-iramyeon Hangug-ui Siljeong Aneun Geonni Jungyo" [If the U.S. is Our Ally, It is Important to See What is Going On in Korea] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], May 12, 1986, Political Section 3.

military government here.”¹⁴⁵ On May 14th, three members of NKDP including vice President Joong-Jae Lee called on Richard Schifter, the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, to discuss political and human rights issues in Korea. They complained about Shultz’s comments during his visit and opined that “without U.S. support the Chun government could not remain viable.”

On May 23rd, Lambertson reported a letter to President Reagan signed by 32 national members of NKDP. The letter contained a warning of the backlash from U.S. government’s support for the Chun Administration. It was reported that:

POLOFF [cable abbreviation for Political Officer] replied that...up until April 30 and the Secretary's visit, the opposition had welcomed the U.S.G's [U.S. Government] remarks in support of Korean democratization. What has changed is the political situation - from one in which the ROKG [Republic of Korea Government] was opposing political change and reform and the opposition faced substantial obstacles in presenting its views to one in which the ruling camp, at least ostensibly, has indicated its willingness to negotiate constitutional revision but the opposition, because of internal divisions¹⁴⁶, is not prepared to respond with constructive proposals. In short, the opposition has shifted its position, not the U.S. Moreover, POLOFF said, the NKDP, by

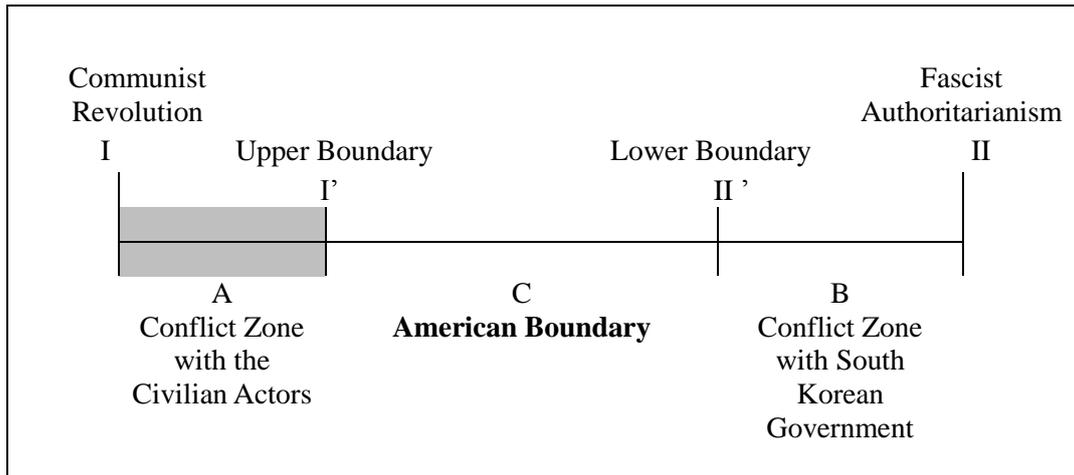
¹⁴⁵ Cable from David F. Lambertson to the U.S. Department of State, “*Lee Min Woo Off to U.S. Amidst Opposition Grumbling over Secretary’s Visit.*”

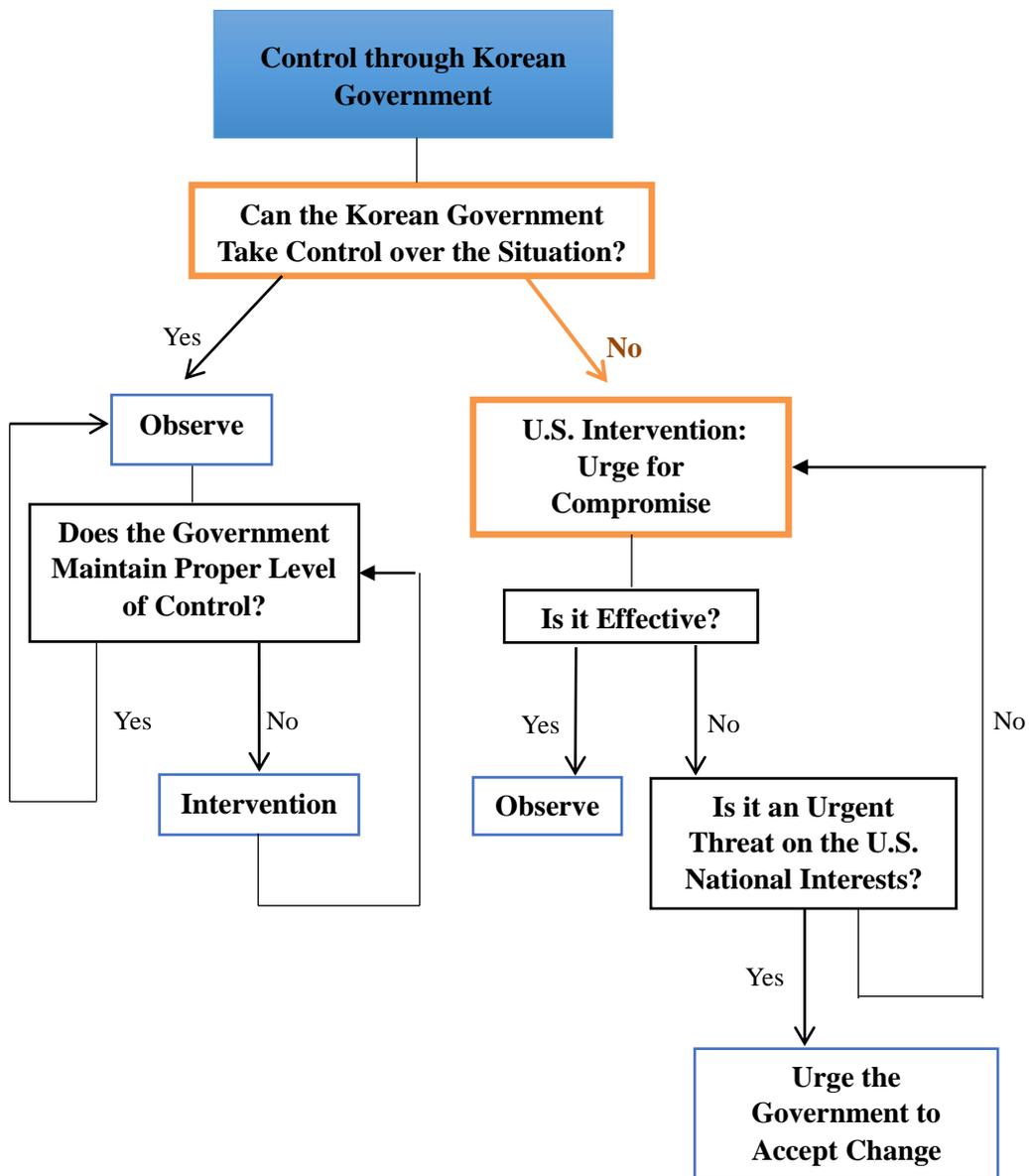
¹⁴⁶ This will be explained in the following section.

lending credence to the assertion by radicals that the U.S., far from supporting democratization, supports dictatorial regimes, is abetting the growth of anti-Americanism in an irresponsible manner, especially since Huh [Kyung-Ku Huh, NKDP assemblyman who later lead the letter petition to President Reagan] and his colleagues know full well that the radicals' assertions are specious and fallacious.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Cable from David. F. Lambertson to the U.S. Department of State, "*ROKG Opposition Legislators' Message to President Reagan: Disappointment over U.S. Policy towards Korean Democratization*," May 23, 1986, Item No.KO00546.

Figure 9. American Boundary and U.S. Behavioral Pattern in Early 1986 – Mid 1986





4. Internal Division of NKDP surrounding the *Min-Woo Lee Idea* and U.S. Urge for Compromise (mid 1986-early 1987)

A. Internal Division of NKDP surrounding the *Min-Woo Lee Idea*

Towards the end of 1986, the main political agenda between Korea's two parties were realigned to determining a future type of political system: a presidential system or parliamentary system with a strong prime minister. It is unclear when and how the idea was planted,¹⁴⁸ but it seems that Chun was already "fascinated"¹⁴⁹ by the idea of this European style of parliamentary system by the time he returned from his very first trip to Europe in early 1986. This system was also welcomed by most DJP members, who didn't see much chance of winning under the direct election system considering the nationwide popularity of two Kims.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, it was considered as the only option that the DJP could choose to negotiate any compromise with the opposition party.¹⁵¹

On June 24th, 1986, the Congress finally passed a resolution for *Gukoe*

¹⁴⁸ Tae-Woo Roh, *Tae-Woo Roh Memoir: Vol.1, Nation, Democratization My Fate*, (Chosun News Press, 2011), 316.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 315; also see Sun-Ja Lee, "Chun was fascinated by the Parliamentary System" (accessed January 22, 2014); available from <http://www.donga.com/docs/magazine/leesunja/lee-06.html>.

¹⁵⁰ Yong-Jik Moon, 59.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

Heonbeop Gaejeong Teukbyeol Wiwonhoe (the Special Council for Constitution Amendment, hereafter SCCA) consisting of roughly 45 members with the same ratio from both the DJP and NKDP. However, severe opinion gap between two parties regarding future type of political system remained: on August 4th, NKDP proposed a constitutional amendment requesting for a 4 year, two-term presidency and direct presidential election to the SCCA. Two weeks later, DJP proposed a constitutional amendment whose contents centered on the parliamentary cabinet system. When the negotiation reached the impasse, two Kims notified their absence from the SCCA, demanding direct talks between people with real power in both parties (“*Silse Daehwa*”). During the prolonged deadlock, the non-mainstreamers in NKDP began to accept incompatibility between their political goals with the DJP’s and necessity for compromise. Growing disputes between civil society and NKDP furthered the perception that it is inevitable to reach a compromise with the DJP,¹⁵² unlike two Kims who wanted to continue their fight against DJP.

Such internal conflict within the NDKP was already expected since the establishment of the NKDP. NKDP was basically the strategic coalition of political groups in which the common goal of defeating Chun’s administration maintained the unity of the party. The party was divided into several subgroups with different, often incompatible interests and perspectives. Furthermore, there were generational discords among members. The independent and nationalistic attitude of younger members over U.S. “interference in domestic affairs” was harshly criticized by senior members, who

¹⁵² Ibid, 64-65.

appreciated “grateful advice” from the “major alliance.¹⁵³” The official president of the party was Min-Woo Lee, but in substance it was operated by the members of CPD led by two prominent dissidents, Dae-Jung Kim and Young-Sam Kim.¹⁵⁴

Min-Woo Lee finally announced the “Min-Woo Lee idea” on December 24th, 1986, without any prior consultation with the two Kims. The idea suggested inter-party negotiations on the parliamentary system that the DJP suggested, under the condition that the government accepted several democratic reforms: freedom of press, releasing political prisoners, initiating local autonomy in selected cities, etc. In fact, the parliamentary cabinet system was in some way more democratic than the presidential system, and was supported by a considerable number of NKDP members. However, both Kims were furious. Young-Sam Kim asserted that “the NKDP under no

¹⁵³ On August 16th, 1985, Sa-Deok Hong, the spokesperson of NKDP, sarcastically commented on Paul Wolfowitz’s criticism on the student riots in Korea by stating that “we appreciate the U.S. concern over democratization of Korea and friendly advice. Such comment from foreign officer, however, is not pleasant as it gives an impression of interference to domestic affairs.” This remark was criticized by some senior members that “it is unprecedented in the 40 years of the history of opposition parties that the spokesperson of a party was not appreciative and grateful for advice from the U.S.,” or “you [Sa-Deok Hong] had better go over to DJP.” Even after Hong excused his comment as his ‘private opinion’, he was forced to resign for not being “responsible for the party and the ally.” (“Yadangga-ui Sedae Byeonhwa” [Generational Change in the Opposition Party] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* [Kyunghyang News], August 21, 1985, Political Section 3.)

¹⁵⁴ Such factional strife was reflected in their pursuance of a political platform, which finally led to the dissolution of the party in 1987. On August 30th, 1985, Congressman Cheol-Seong Lee in NKDP publicly denounced the idea of the presidential system, which was the official platform of the NKDP. He argued that “I cannot accept the behavior of some members of NKDP trying to distort the demand for presidential system as a *fait accompli*” (“Icheolseung-ssi, Miguk-seo Uiwon Naegakje Jechang” [Cheol-Seong Lee, advocate the parliamentary government system in the U.S.] *Maeil Kyungjae* [Daily Economics], August 31, 1985, Political Section 2) On the other hand, Dae-Jung Kim thought that “the only way for democratization is NKDP’s victory for direct elections” and that a “parliamentary government system is unacceptable,” while Young-Sam Kim was more flexible on matters. (“Daehabui-ro Ganeun Gil (2) Yeo Ya Jinno Mosaek” [A Road to Grand Concurrence (2): Future of the DJP and NKDP.]

circumstances would participate in inter-party negotiations on the DJP's parliamentary system proposal."¹⁵⁵ Dae-Jung Kim recalled this moment as when "something was definitely going wrong." Criticizing Lee's indiscretion, Kim argued that "it is nonsense to achieve democracy without direct presidential election. Min-Woo Lee idea should be nullified. Democratization, as a general value regardless of time and regimes cannot be a subject of compromise."¹⁵⁶

The plan was eventually retracted by NKDP on January 16th, 1987. Two Kims were harshly criticized by the underlying messages of their opposition, which were perceived as the pursuit of personal political ambitions over the realization of democracy. An article criticized,

Two Kims prefer to retain their posture – above compromise, steady in the struggle and true to the purity of their principles – for it is from such higher virtue that the moral authority will flow to allow (one of) the two Kims to one day rule all Koreans, and rule them absolutely... How much the spirit of democracy in Korea is being sacrificed in the struggle for democracy is evident in the iron grip that the Kims retain at the helm of the opposition. There is little democracy in their own camp, where loyalty is prized above all else. Constitutional issues are not debated openly. And even though--indeed

¹⁵⁵ Rodney P. Katz, "Democracy in the Republic of Korea: Real or Imaginary? Factionalism in the New Korea Democratic Party," the Federal Research Division in the Library of Congress, February 1987, 3.

¹⁵⁶ Dae-Jung Kim, "Autobiography of Dae-Jung Kim" (Samin, 2010), 509-510.

because--an estimated 40 of his party's 90 assembly members were sympathetic to Lee's seven-point program, the Kims forced him into an ignominious retraction of the scheme.¹⁵⁷

As the NKDP, or two Kims, reaffirmed their opposition to the parliamentary cabinet system, interparty relations became frozen. Such series of conflict surrounding the 'Min-Woo Lee idea' manifested incongruity among the leaders of NKDP and their factions. Relations among factions within the party were ruptured when unity was the most necessary.

B. The Visit of George Shultz, U.S. Secretary of State

On March 6th, 1987, Secretary of States George Shultz visited Korea on his way from Beijing to brief the Chun Administration on his visit to China. The visit was short – Shultz only stayed for 5 hours – but the expectations of many South Koreans were higher than ever facing the revolutionary transition ahead. A U.S. journalist warned that during Shultz's visit to Seoul, "He may well find that South Koreans' expectations for the trip far exceed what he would like,"¹⁵⁸ and "in a country where expectations for

¹⁵⁷ Richard Nations, "Democracy Sacrificed in Korean Struggle," *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 1987. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from http://articles.latimes.com/1987-02-22/opinion/op-5232_1_ruling-party.

¹⁵⁸ Maggie Ford, "S. Koreans want more from Shultz than he's expected to deliver. Citizens seek signs of U.S. support for nation's evolving democracy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 27, 1987. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from

change grow almost daily, the danger is that unrealized hopes could backfire into more bitterness.”¹⁵⁹ Koreans looked for evidence of U.S. commitment to democratic reform in South Korea and two Kims raised the expectations for a changed U.S. perspective on Korea’s domestic situation.¹⁶⁰

Most of Shultz’s comments, however, were a repetition of what had already been mentioned in his last visit. In an effort to “chart a middle course between the Chun government and opposition groups,”¹⁶¹ Shultz reaffirmed the U.S. support for democratization and stressed non-violent political change through compromise and cooperation between parties. The U.S. was convinced that Secretary Shultz’s visit “successfully reinforced our concerns without appearing to meddle,”¹⁶² and reminded Koreans that “we mean what we say about supporting democracy in Korea, but that it is up to Koreans themselves to make it happen.”¹⁶³ Also, they commented that the visit “had a positive impact in reinforcing to ruling and opposition sides as well as the general Korean public that we mean what we say about the need for political progress

[http://www.csmonitor.com/1987/0227/ochun2.html/\(page\)/2](http://www.csmonitor.com/1987/0227/ochun2.html/(page)/2).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ “Sinmindang-i Araseo Hal il” [It is up to the NKDP] *Mail Kyungjae [Daily Economics]*, March 4, 1987, Political Section 2.

¹⁶¹ Norman Kempster, “S. Korea's Chun Tells Shultz He Is Ready to Compromise With Opposition on Selecting Leader,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 07, 1987. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from http://articles.latimes.com/1987-03-07/news/mn-8246_1_south-korea.

¹⁶² Cable from James R. Lilley to the U.S. Department of State, “Korean Reactions to Secretary’s Visit.”

¹⁶³ Ibid.

but that we are also serious about not taking sides.”¹⁶⁴

C. Meetings with William Clark, Assistant Secretary of State

Two Kims and Min-Woo Lee tried to get U.S. support on their own ideas. However, U.S. maintained its original suggestion of compromise based on conversation. In a private meeting with William Clark, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (DAS) on March 4th, 1987, two Kims appealed their political agendas towards a direct political system, while denouncing the parliamentary cabinet system suggested by the DJP and Min-Woo Lee. Clark reiterated the U.S.’s official position for “gradual democratization”¹⁶⁵ and importance of “conversations and compromises.”¹⁶⁶ He also stressed that “the democratization measures take place in the near future, such as election law and a local self-governing system, regardless of the consequence of discussion on the Constitution amendment.”¹⁶⁷

Attendees at the meeting somehow reached a different conclusion on the U.S.’ position, based on their own interest and assessment of situation. Man-Sup Lee, the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ “Mi Keullakeu Buchagwanbo Du Gimssi Deung Itdan Jeopchok” [U.S. DAS Clark, Meetings with Two Kims and Others] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], March, 5, 1987, Political Section 1.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

President of the KNP answered that the emphasis was on gradual progress.¹⁶⁸ However, when asked about the specific mediations the U.S. offered after the meeting, Dae-Jung Kim bluntly mentioned that “there was no suggestion but he [Clark] mentioned the Min-Woo Lee idea. Lee should have consulted with us [two Kims] prior to making it public if he thought it was such an important idea.”¹⁶⁹ Young-Sam Kim’s conviction of a changed perspective of the U.S. toward Korea’s democratization became stronger after his meeting with Clark. He asserted that “there have been arguments between conservatives and liberals in the U.S. regarding their approaches toward Korea. They came down to a decision, however, to support democracy to maintain security and defeat Communism.”¹⁷⁰ He continued, “The U.S. should support democratization in Korea rather than authoritarian regime in order to reduce anti-Americanism in Korea and maintain strong relations between two countries.”¹⁷¹ Next day, it was reported that Clark “stressed compromise between the ruling and opposition parties, especially showed a keen interest in the seven-point compromise of Min-Woo Lee.”¹⁷²

The alleged support of Clark to the Min-Woo Lee idea exacerbated internal

¹⁶⁸ “I Chongjae Gusang Yaegi Hadeora” [He mentioned about the Lee’s Idea] *The Kyunghyang Sinmun* [*Kyunghyang News*], March, 5, 1987, Political Section 2.

¹⁶⁹ “Sylcheu Banghan Migugui Hangung Gwansim” [Shultz’s Visit to Korea...the U.S. Interest in Korea] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], March 5, 1987, Political Section 3.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² “Yeoya Insa Jeopchong Jeongchi Baljeon Nonui” [Political Figures in Ruling Party and Opposition Party, Discuss about Political Developments] *The Kyunghyang Sinmun* [*Kyunghyang News*], March, 5, 1987, Political Section 1.

conflicts in the NKDP. A few members, including Min-Woo Lee and Ki-Taek Lee, were encouraged by Clark's seeming support on the "Min-Woo Lee idea," while two Kims were disappointed.¹⁷³ Min-Woo Lee was assured by Clark's remark, as they could be a considerable leverage to his position within the party.¹⁷⁴ Dae-Jung Kim commented on his disappointment that the "[U.S.] understanding of the proposed direct election system, which is a concentrated form of the Korean people's fervent desire for democratization, remains insufficient." Young-Sam Kim let his discomfort show by avoiding making any specific comments on the visit.¹⁷⁵

However, Clark's remarks were simply a reiteration of the U.S. official position. In another meeting with a group of politicians from both parties, Clark clarified his, and U.S. position on conflicts surrounding 'Min-Woo Lee idea.' He stressed that it didn't matter who took credit for the idea or what name the idea adopts, as long as the opposing parties worked together to find a compromise, which was the official position of the U.S.¹⁷⁶ In the report back to the Washington, James Lilley mentioned the Min-Woo Lee idea and controversies surrounding it:

¹⁷³ Cable from James R. Lilley to the U.S. Department of State, "*Korean Reactions to Secretary's Visit.*"

¹⁷⁴ "Gimchiguk-buteo Masyeotdaga Silmang-man" [High Hopes only Resulted in Disappointment] *The Kyunghyang Shinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, March 7, 1987, Political Section 3.

¹⁷⁵ Cable from James R. Lilley to the U.S. Department of State, "*Korean Reactions to Secretary's Visit.*"

¹⁷⁶ "Gaeheon-gwa Byeoldo Minjuhwa Meonjeo Irwojigil Keullakeu Buchagwanbo" [DAS Clark, Democratization regardless of Constitution Amendment] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, March 6, 1987, Political Section 1.

Because the U.S. is already perceived by many Korean observers to be behind the “Lee Min Woo proposal”, our continued use of the term will likely be seen as meddling in the internal politics of both the opposition and the ruling camp, and will therefore be counterproductive. As an idea, however, Lee’s proposal remains the only “innovative” suggestion thus far put forward which constrains the seeds of a negotiated and peaceful settlement. To voice continued support for the concept represented by the “Lee Min Woo proposal” without being enmeshed in the controversy associated with the term, we propose to shift to broader formulations such as “democratic reforms.” We will still be understood.¹⁷⁷

In the end, conflicts surrounding the Lee Min-Woo Idea enabled two Kims to break away from the NKDP to create *Tongil Minju Dang* (the Unification Democratization Party, hereafter UDP.)¹⁷⁸

These misunderstandings and miscommunications of Korean actors seem to repeated scene for U.S. Ambassador James Lilley later pointed out the popular distortion and political use of the U.S. remarks among Korean politicians. “As usual,” he said,

¹⁷⁷ Cable from James R. Lilley to the U.S. Department of State, “*Korean Reactions to Secretary’s Visit.*”

¹⁷⁸ Later, Dae-Jung Kim recalled that non-mainstreamers in the NKDP, such as Chul-Seung Lee, incited the compromise with the government, which was “encouraged by the U.S.’s supportive remarks.” His conviction was reaffirmed when Clark didn’t seem to agree with his explanation of the U.S. public support for a presidential system. He also mentioned that there was a rumor that the Agency for National Security Planning was behind the scene. (Dae-Jung Kim, 511-512.)

“ROKG officials tried to put their own “spin” on the visit [of Shultz], with MOFA director general Chang Sun Sup¹⁷⁹ venturing up to the edge of allowable interpretation when he told the press that the Secretary had “expressed understanding” of the government’s ‘resolute counteraction against the opposition's challenge against order.’”

¹⁸⁰ The document elaborates opposition leaders’ political use of their remarks:

The two Kims in particular sought to use the meetings to convey the impression that DAS Clark’s meeting with them was an important signal of a changed U.S. attitude toward the opposition. Both Kim Dae Jung’s delivering his points in Korean rather than English and Kim Young Sam’s reported implication to followers and reporters that a private understanding had been reached with Clark appeared aimed at encouraging a domestic perception of the meetings favorable to them. On balance, however, the two Kims’ most genuine disappointment was not because Secretary Shultz did not signal his “support” but because of the *perception*, fanned by the newspapers, that DAS Clark was explicitly encouraging a resurrection of the “Lee Min Woo Idea” of negotiations on democratic reforms rather than the power structure. Others with whom DAS Clark met have also interpreted their own and DAS Clark’s comments for the press in a manner suggesting U.S. support for the “Lee Min

¹⁷⁹ Exact Korean name of this figure is not identified in this thesis.

¹⁸⁰ Cable from James R. Lilley to the U.S. Department of State, “*Korean Reactions to Secretary’s Visit.*”

Woo Idea.” These persons include Lee Min Woo himself, oppositionist Kim Sang Hyun (who wants to bolster Lee Min Woo as part of his own plan for a “moderate compromise” sans the two Kims), NKDP no mainstreamers including Lee Ki-Taek, and DJP moderates including Lee Chong-Chan.¹⁸¹ (stress was added by the author)

In the meanwhile, student riots and anti-Americanism intensified by 1986. The illegal occupation of U.S. properties and students’ riots continued. On May 21st, 21 students from Seoul National University and Korea University illegally occupied the U.S. Culture Center in Pusan. From October 28th to 30th, around 1,500 students from 27 universities protesting at Kunkook University were arrested, among which 1,274 were later indicted. The students demanded “an end to South Korea's strong anti-communism”¹⁸² and supported “many demands voiced by North Korea, including a call for Seoul and Pyongyang to be co-hosts to the 1988 Olympic Games.”¹⁸³ On November 29th, police forces blocked “*Daetongnyeong Jikseonje Gaeheon Jaengchwi Min Yeonggu Jipgwon Eummo Bunswae Beom Gungmin Daehoe*” [A National Convention for Constitutional Amendment for Direct Presidential Election and Chun’s Preventing Permanent Seizure of Power] hosted by NKDP.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Times Wire Services, “S. Korea Police Battle Students Holding Campus,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1986. (accessed January 19, 2014); available from http://articles.latimes.com/1986-10-31/news/mn-8283_1_riot-police.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

But the U.S. seemed to maintain its distance, neutral, balanced position. On June 4th 1986, the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee under the Congress adopted a resolution concerning the democratization situation in Korea.¹⁸⁴ The resolution submitted by Congressman Edward F. Feighan in 1985 was revised and submitted by Gerard B.H. Solomon; this new resolution was more toned down and did not reflect a preference over any person or party.¹⁸⁵ In his short visit, Gaston Sigur reiterated that “compromise is the only way to achieve democratization.”¹⁸⁶ Opposition leaders condemned the U.S. for its support of the Chun administration, and urged its support for

¹⁸⁴ “Gusongnyeog-en Opjiman Modeun Angeon-e Yeonghyang” [No Legal Binding Force but Affects All Agendas] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], June 6, 1986, Political Section 4.

¹⁸⁵ The table below is comparison between the resolution submitted by Edward F. Feighan (left) and Gerard B.H. Solomon (right)

H.CON.RES.261	H.CON.RES.347
(1) The replacement of the current climate of intimidation and abuses of human rights with dialog between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the democratic opposition	(1) Cease its attempts to subvert the Republic of Korea and agree to measures that will reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula
(2) Restoration of the political rights of Kim Dae Jung and others	(2) Take steps to reduce its international isolation by considering the cross recognition of the two Korean governments by other countries and dual membership in the United Nations
(3) The peaceful democratic transfer of the Presidency of the Republic of Korea in 1988 elections that will be open to all who are committed to democracy	(3) Cease human and political rights abuses

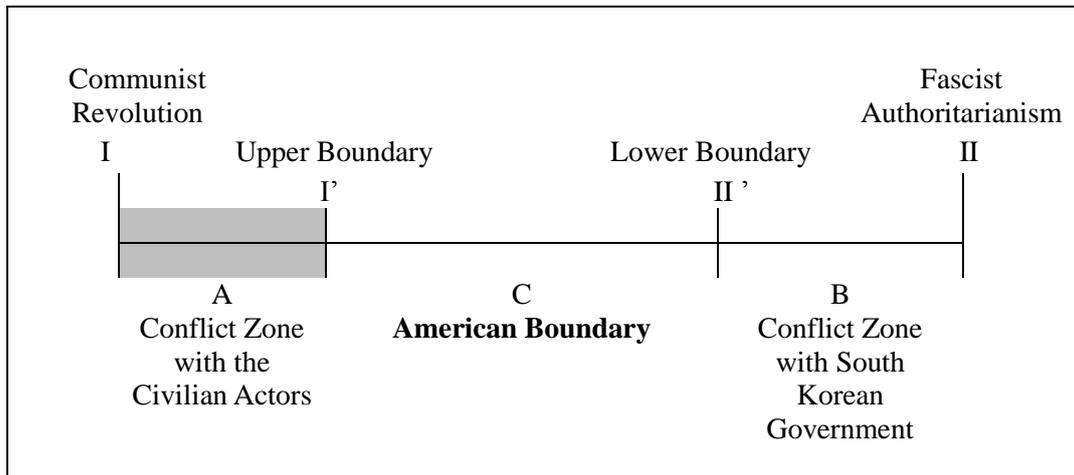
House, *A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the Republic of Korea should restore the civil and political rights of Kim Dae Jung and that true democracy should be instituted in the Republic of Korea*, 99th Cong., 1986, Res.261 (accessed November 30, 2013); available from the Library of Congress and House, *A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress concerning the human rights situation in North Korea and the reduction of tensions on the Korean peninsula*. 99th Cong., 1986, Res.347 (accessed November 30, 2013); available from the Library of Congress.

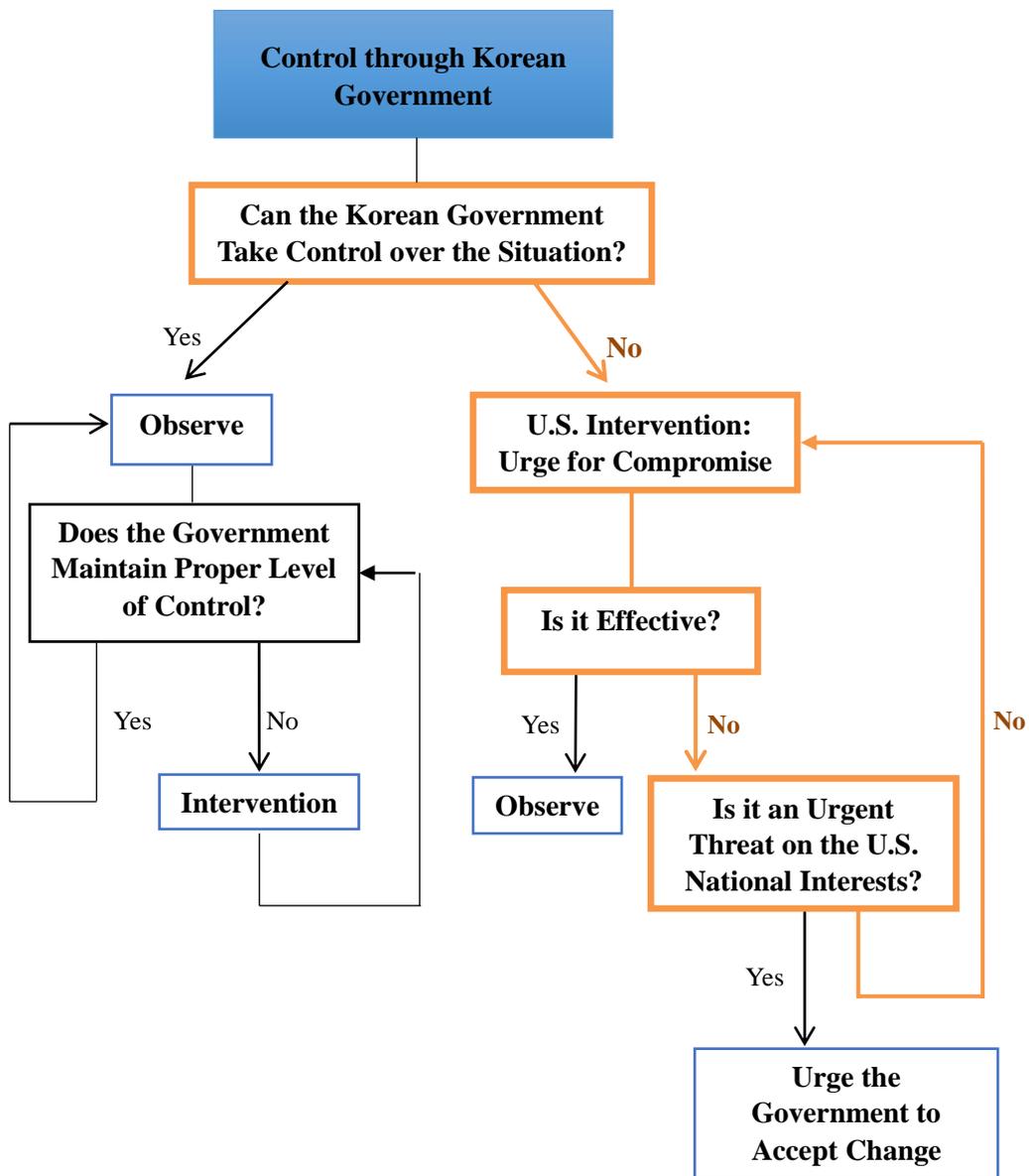
¹⁸⁶ “Sigeo Seoul 2bang 3ir-i Namgin Geot” [Aftermath of Sigur’s Seoul Visit] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], November 10, 1986, Political Section 3.

democratization.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Hwang Jae-Hong, “Gimnyeongsam Sinmin Gomun Dandog Inteobyu” [Exclusive Interview of Young-Sam Kim, an Advisor for NKDP] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, May 28, 1986, Political Section 3; “Habui Gaeheon Andoemyeon Eomcheongnan Bulhaeng” [Disastrous Result ahead without Compromise on Amendment of Constitution] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, July 2, 1986, Political Section 4; “Mi-ui Hyeon Jeonggwon Jiji Cheolhoe” [The U.S. retreat of Support for the Current Regime – Urge for Support for Democratization] *The Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily News]*, November 10, 1986, Political Section 1; “Gimdaejungssi Hateu Manna” [Mr. Dae-Jung Kim meets Mr. Hart] *The Kyunghyang Sinmun [Kyunghyang News]*, December 12, 1986, Political Section 1.

Figure 10. American Boundary and U.S. Behavioral Pattern in Mid 1986 – Early 1987





5. Growing Social Unrest and U.S. Urge for Korean Government to Accept Change (1987)

A. U.S. Intervention through Public Channels

On January 14th, 1987, Jong-Chul Park, a Seoul National University student was found dead showing signs of torture from a police interrogation. Next day, Min-Chang Kang, the Director General of the National Police Headquarters, announced that Park died of shock, that he suddenly collapsed when police asked whereabouts of the radical leader. However, when the autopsy result came out reporting sign of water and electrical torture, contradictory to the official announcement from the police, policy admitted that they tortured Park to death on January 19th. This incident not only damaged integrity of Chun administration, but triggered a nationwide anti-governmental movement that later developed to June Democracy Movement. NKDP and the civil society requested government full disclosure of what had happened, and protests over the Park incident mounted. A week later, Chun dismissed Jong-Ho Kim, the Secretary of the Interior and Min-Chang Kang making them taking responsible for the incident, while expressing personal regret. On January 23th, James Lilley, the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea announced clear opposition to torture.

Along with intensified conflict between pro-democracy movements and Chun administration, growing suspicions on Chun's promise of a peaceful transition of

power¹⁸⁸ finally led to a change in the U.S.' position on the democratization in Korea. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Gaston Sigur sent a clear message to Chun's Administration in support of a peaceful transition of power through a speech at the Astoria Hotel in New York on February 26th. Acknowledging the tense internal situation of Korea, he emphasized that a "more open political system"¹⁸⁹ was "an integral part of the solution to these problems."¹⁹⁰ A power transition was not only a solution of such needs, but needed to maintain security of the nation. He continued, urging the Korean government to "civilianize,"¹⁹¹ referring to its opportunity to "civilianize" its politics in 1988, when Chun's presidency was supposed to end.

The South Korean military has taken on a major role in the development of various areas in recent times. However, Seoul has now entered a new era. When a large part of the private sector was destroyed during the Korean War, the South Korean military was an important group which had experience in managing a large, modern organization. However, nowadays many Koreans are achieving success in various broad areas and Korean universities are

¹⁸⁸ The earliest record found was in late 1983, stating: "The possibility is strong, however, that he [Chun] will choose a successor amenable to continued control from behind the scenes; his brother would be an unpopular choice." (Cable from Kenneth W. Dam to all East Asian and Pacific Diplomatic Posts, "*South Korea: The Domestic Situation*," December 28, 1983, Item No. KO00492.)

¹⁸⁹ Kyong-Chae Yi, "Recent 'Strong' U.S. Voice, Various Reactions," in *JPRS Report: East Asia (Korea)*, ed. U.S. Department of Commerce National Technical Information Service, June 10, 1987, 24.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

graduating world-renowned scholars. On the other hand, due to the development of new technology, there is increasing complexity in the defense area. The military are living in an era when they need to regard national security as their main mission and devote themselves to the perfection of various techniques required to achieve their objectives.¹⁹²

There was no ambiguity in his words. By urging President Chun to keep his promise of peaceful transition of power, Sigur made it clear that it was time for change.

When President Chon recognized these trends, he moved in the direction of completing the change in the South Korean political system which is necessary to satisfy the needs of the younger generation. He promised that he would transfer power peacefully at the end of his term in February 1988, thus terminating the historic vicious cycle in which every transfer of power was followed by instability and uncertainty...He said he would be the first president to step down peacefully in order to be a model for future leaders of South Korea. He will join the group of retired politicians which no longer engages in political activities, and whose advice and counsel will be a precious national resource. When President Chon keeps his promise, history will praise his service to his country.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 25

As Sigur demonstrated, this speech was not coincidental or a personal idea, but part of well-planned strategy of the Reagan administration. He recalled,

More and more, though, as President Chun began to get to the end of his term, which was coming up in 1987, we had to consider how a presidential change was going to take place, if indeed it was. There were all sorts of rumors in Korea that Chun really had no intention of giving up power, and that he would use the military to stay in power. We decided to get rather bold in our policy...I felt very deeply, as we all did, that we would take President Chun at his word that he intended to step down and that he intended to allow the people to choose his successor.¹⁹⁴

This speech was originally made without the approval of Secretary of State George Shultz but was later endorsed as “in every comma, in every dot of the i, in every..., that is the policy [of the U.S.]¹⁹⁵” Later in a meeting with President Chun, Shultz reaffirmed that “I hope you understand, Mr. President, that that speech is the basic policy of the American government. This is the policy of the president and of me. And so read it carefully and take every word, because that is our policy.”¹⁹⁶

However, this speech didn't necessarily mean a change in the U.S. position on

¹⁹⁴ Gaston J. Sigur, Interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project*, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, April 24, 1990. 14.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

the democratization of Korea. As Sigur said himself, it was merely a *public* reiteration of what had always been the position of the U.S.

... so there was a great deal of interest, obviously, as I said, in Korea over that speech and what this meant, whether the United States was changing policy in the sense of withdrawing full support from Chun. That was not the point. The point of the speech was to say that we support President Chun's determination to step down.¹⁹⁷

Though the speech stressed consensus, without suggesting a course to follow or U.S. preference of specific person or party, some senior opposition politicians interpreted it as encouraging the opposition.¹⁹⁸ Sigur's background as Korean expert in the White House and his political connection with a wide range of people in Korea amplified such expectation.

James Lilley also worked with Sigur "along parallel tracks," that is, "using the high posture in Washington of pushing for improved performance, with me [Lilley] trying to 'work the seam' in South Korea."¹⁹⁹ Three days after the Sigur speech, James Lilley began to meet with opposition leaders Young-Sam Kim and Min-Woo Lee on consecutive days – both actions, for the first time. DJP underestimated the meetings

¹⁹⁷ Gaston J. Sigur, 14.

¹⁹⁸ Maggie Ford.

¹⁹⁹ James R. Lilley, Interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project*, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, May 21, 1998. 110.

saying that it was “a courtesy call²⁰⁰” of a newly appointed ambassador, but such rare occasion was interpreted as signs of shifts in U.S. policy toward South Korea. It was “the U.S. recognition of the actual opposition power²⁰¹” for some, and the sign that “U.S. policy toward South Korea is currently shifting in the direction of recognizing the importance of the opposition party as compared to the party in power.²⁰²” Representative Kyung-Ku Huh described the situation as follows: “in the past, the United States considered the importance of the opposition party in relation to the ruling party as 1 to 9 or 2 to 8. Now it is moving toward an assessment of about 4 to 6.”²⁰³

This fantastic double play of U.S. officials between Washington and Seoul contributed to “the progress of Korean transitions by catalyzing the radical opposition and influencing reformers to act against hardliners.”²⁰⁴ Looking back, such change could even have unfolded a different road towards democratization, for example, a democratization based on a moderate and compromising way.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ “Mi-ui Jeokgeuk-jeong Eonhaeng Yeoya Jeongjungdong Tamsaek” [Deliberation on the “Active Movement” of the U.S.] *The Dong-A Ilbo* [*Dong-A Daily News*], February 10, 1987, Political Section 3.

²⁰¹ Kyong-Chae Yi, 27.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ James Fowler, “The United States and South Korean Democratization,” *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no.2 (1999): 281-282.

²⁰⁵ Samuel Huntington categorized members of the ruling party and the opposition (see below) and argued that the composition of actors within each party and interactions among them assume three different ways of achieving a democratic regime. First, ‘transformation’ is led by reformers within the government who take power and play decisive roles in terminating authoritarian regimes and move toward democratization. This process is plausible in well-

B. Chun's Change of Mind and Growing Social Unrest

On April 13th, 1987, Chun suddenly banned further discussion on constitutional amendments until the end of the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul²⁰⁶. In a special statement,

established military regimes, as it requires the power of a government stronger than that of the opposition. Second, the opposite situation is considered a 'replacement.' In this case, standpatters dominate the government, while reformers are weak or nonexistent. The opposition wears down the government and shifts the balance of power in its favor. Government is brought down by the mass mobilization of outraged citizens demanding and eventually forcing a change of regime. Third, 'transplacement' is produced by the combined actions of government and opposition. Due to the balance between standpatter and reformers, the government is willing to negotiate a change of regime, but it is unwilling to initiate a change of regime. It has to be pushed and/or pulled into formal or informal negotiations with the opposition. Within the opposition democratic moderates are strong enough to prevail over antidemocratic radicals, but they are not strong enough to overthrow the government. Hence, they too see virtues in negotiation. (Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 109-163.)

	Against <-----	Attitude toward Democracy	-----> For
Party	Government		Opposition
Members	Standpatters Reformers		Democratic Moderates Revolutionary Extremists

Political Groups Involved in Democratization (Based on Samuel P. Huntington, 1991, 122.) “Reformers and standpatters divided over liberalization and democratization but presumably had a common interest in constraining the power of opposition groups.” (Ibid.)

²⁰⁶ This was, in fact, already suggested as one of the prospects for the future of Korea. On October 17th, 1986, a report from the Northeast Asia Division in the Office of Analysis for East Asia and the Pacific suggested that even if Chun was willing to move towards a peaceful transition of power, which would achieve his personal mission of being a “historically important Korean leader... his personal security may not be ensured without his continuing to control the ruling party - at least for a time after Feb. 1988,” as this type of political transition lacked precedence. It was expected that “in the current Korean context, pragmatism would dictate permitting a transfer of power to another DJP leader such as No Tae U [sic] for a transition period of say 2 years, before kicking off a nation-wide, no-holds-barred presidential election. (Memorandum from Paul Ray to Sherrod McCall, “*Political Events to Watch over the Near Term*,” October 17, 1986, Item No. KO00549.)

he defended his and the ruling party's effort to democratic reform while criticizing the uncooperative attitude of NKDP. Due to the lack of time for deliberation to carry out the revision, he declared that his successor would be chosen in an indirect election of 5,000 Electoral College, just as he was elected.²⁰⁷ The opposition party reacted immediately and furiously and demonstrations began again.

Four days after Chun's speech, Congressman Stephen J. Solarz had a private meeting with Chun to say that he had found "a widespread desire for democracy"²⁰⁸ in Korea and that political stability would be enhanced by a national consensus, which would bring about genuine democracy in Korea. However, Chun was "defensive and forceful"²⁰⁹ in defending his role as "being legal, according to a good constitution."²¹⁰ James Lilley asserted that "we need to keep pressing on democratization – one speech and one reaction should not lock us in."²¹¹

On April 23rd, a group of gangsters took over the inauguration ceremony of UDP. University professors officially declared their support for the direct presidential election system. On April 25th, Richard Walker reported to Washington that "as far as we can tell, he [Chun] has not developed a political game plan for 1988. We see Chun's

²⁰⁷ "Jeonduhwan Daetongnyeong Teukbyeol Damhwa Jeonmun" [The Special Speech of President Chun] *Mail Kyungjae [Daily Economics]* April 13, 1987, Political Section 3.

²⁰⁸ Cable from James R. Lilley to the U.S. Department of State, "President Chun's Meeting with Congressman Solarz, April 17, 1987," April 18, 1987, Item No. KO00557.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

failure to designate the DJP candidate as increasingly a negative factor, increasing suspicion of Chun's motives and heightening uncertainties and unease.²¹² Furthermore, anti-Americanism grew in the general public, not only in students but civilians,²¹³ placing the U.S. in a delicate position. In the Subcommittee Hearing on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman Stephen J. Solarz suggested using rather more public diplomatic channels than personal contacts to prevent nationwide anti-Americanism from damaging the ROK-U.S. alliance.²¹⁴

Consequently, the U.S. began to actively seek to publicly intervene in the Korean domestic scene²¹⁵. Two effects were expected: first, a push to the ruling party's democratization and Chun's delivery of his promise of a peaceful transition of power in 1987; second, the urging of compromise to the opposition party. In other words, the U.S. was trying to pull both opposing forces back to the American Boundary.

²¹² Cable from Richard L. Walker to the U.S. Department of State, "Assessment of Korean Internal Political Scene on the Eve of Secretary Shultz' Visit," April 25, 1986, Item No. KO00540.

²¹³ Import regulations and U.S. pressure to open markets, especially the agricultural market, which was one of the biggest market shares in the world, was one of the significant factors that triggered the spread of anti-Americanism among civilians. (Kang-Ro Lee, "The Analysis of the Developmental Process of Anti-Americanism in South Korea," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 44, no.4 (2004): 252.)

²¹⁴ *Assessing the Prospects for Democratization in Korea: hearings and markup before the Committee on Foreign Affairs and its subcommittees on Human Rights and International Organizations and Asian and Pacific Affairs, House of Representatives, 100th Congress, first session, on H. Con. Res. 141, May 6, June 17, 24, and 25, 1987*, U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations, 1988.

²¹⁵ There were, however, opposing voices within the U.S. administration. For example, Casper Weinberger, then Secretary of Defense, felt uncomfortable about such decision. (Gaston J. Sigur, 15.)

C. June Democracy Movement and June 29 Declaration

On May 18th, 1987, it was revealed that the government had covered up its responsibility for the death of Jong-Chul Park, a student at Seoul National University, who was tortured to death in January during a police interrogation. On May 27th, *Minju Heonbeop Jaengchwi Gungmin Undong Bonbu* [the National Movement Headquarters for the Democratic Constitution, hereafter NMHDC] was established as a coalition among a large number of political and civil oppositions. On June 9th, Han-Yeol Lee, a student at Yonsei University was injured with a tear gas grenade penetrated his skull during the protest. The demonstration intensified, making Lee as a symbol of the victim of violent and inhumane treatment under Chun's authoritarian government. On June 10th, Chun nominated Tae-Woo Roh as the DJP's candidate for president²¹⁶, which was perceived as an attempt to prolong military authoritarian rule.

To demonstrate against Roh's nomination, NMHDC organized street matches in twenty-two cities across the nation. Violent protests erupted everywhere, and the

²¹⁶ James Lilley attended the electoral convention of the DJP while 60 other embassies didn't, to "avoid the public's misunderstanding." His action took place against the will of members at the Embassy, who worried about the false message it could bring. The Embassy's political counselor persuaded Lilley not to attend the convention to "express disapproval" of another authoritarian regime. However, Lilley "saw Roh as the type of leader who could be influenced if we supported him at crucial times." (James R. Lilley, *China Hands: Nine Decades of Adventure, Espionage, and Diplomacy in Asia*, (New York: Public Affairs Books, 2005): 271.) Lilley also attended two other conventions of the two Kims, but these were not adequately reported. (Ibid, 121.)

police attacked the protesters with every measure possible. As a group of students occupied Myongdong Catholic Cathedral in Seoul, violent measures and forceful eviction were discussed in the Chun Administration. On June 13th, James Lilley strongly appealed to foreign minister Kwang-Soo Choi not to take any violent measures.²¹⁷ Disasters at hand were taken care of, but the situation seemed to be aggravated when Chun showed his willingness to use violent measures on the continuing demonstrators. On June 19th, James Lilley conveyed a personal letter from President Reagan to Chun calling for non-violent measures to deal with protestors. The letter was not delivered through normal diplomatic channels, via Chun's advisors, but handed over directly to Chun, which weighs more importance of such measure U.S. decided to take.²¹⁸ In the letter, President Reagan warned that any use of military would be "damage to Korean-American relations and that it would be hard for the U.S. to continue to support him [Chun]."²¹⁹ On June 23rd, Gaston Sigur flew to Seoul in the middle of ANZUS (The Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty) meeting in Australia to "find out exactly what's going on" and "make it very clear where the United States stands."²²⁰ President Reagan gave him full support, answering questions on Sigur's sudden change of course stating that: "Well, he's got my full confidence and he's doing what has to be

²¹⁷ Ibid, 274.

²¹⁸ The process of delivering the message was vividly described in James Lilley's book. At first, Chun, or his close advisors, avoided arranging the meeting with U.S. officials and Reagan's letter. After a few attempts and yelling, James Lilley met Chun on June 19th. (Ibid, 274-279.)

²¹⁹ James R. Lilley, *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project*, 111.

²²⁰ Gaston J. Sigur, 16.

done. I'm not going to say any more than that.”²²¹

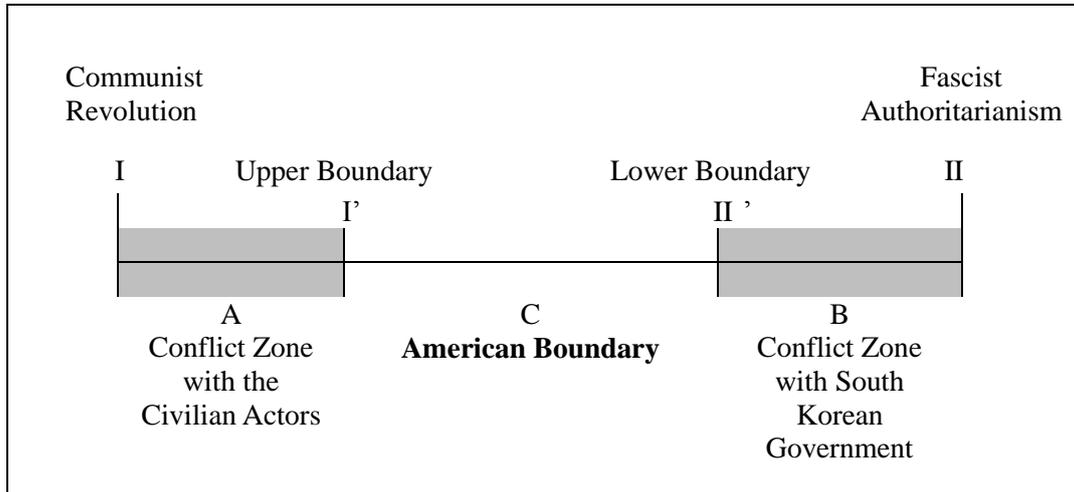
On June 29th, Tae-Woo Roh announced that the government accepted the protesters' demands including direct presidential elections, amnesty for Dae-Jung Kim, and the release of political prisoners. This reform plan was endorsed by President Chun a few days later. The compromise for a constitutional amendment accelerated to initiate the Political Conference of 8 congressmen and culminated with the constitutional amendment of July 24th. The constitution was finally revised in October 27th, with a 93.1% supporting rate in referendum. The opposition party split and the two Kims respectively ran the presidential election against Roh. Roh won the election with a plurality and became the 13th president of South Korea.

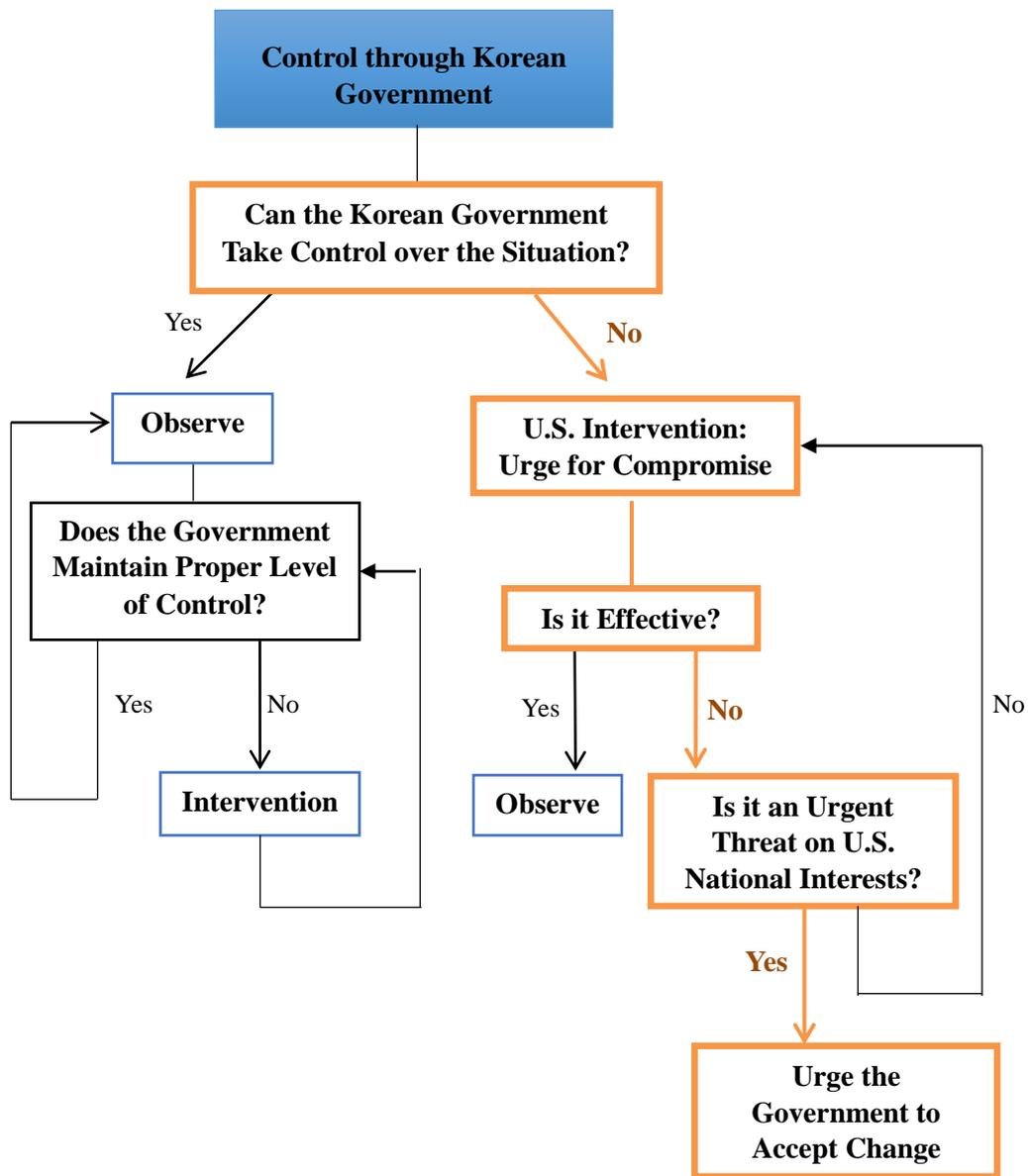
The ongoing people's desire to terminate Korea's authoritarian regime was finally achieved in 1987, with the first democratic transition of power in decades through the adoption of direct presidential elections. The defeat in the first direct presidential election in 1987, however, weighed heavily on the two Kims, which resulted in a fundamental schism of the two. The election of Tae-Woo Roh, a close colleague of Chun and ex-military politician who was also involved in the military coup in 1980 made it look like an extension of Chun's authoritarian regime, thus suspicions and criticisms lingered on during his presidency. As the slogan of the “*Munmin Jeongbu* (the Civilian Government)” Young-Sam Kim later published in the next presidential campaign shows, opposition leaders weren't accepting Roh's election as the victory of

²²¹ Ibid, 17.

democratization. It was not until the election of Young-Sam Kim in 1992 and his series of ‘cleansing’ policies that finally signaled, arguably, the era of *real* democracy in Korea.

Figure 11. American Boundary and U.S. Behavioral Pattern in 1987





V. Conclusion

This thesis aims to analyze U.S. foreign policy in South Korea and map its behavioral patterns during the Cold War with examples from the democratization of Korea during the late 1980s. The concept of American Boundary and U.S. behavioral patterns based on it were presented as a tool to analyze and predict U.S. foreign policy. The logic underlying this thesis and findings are as follows:

First, the principal U.S. national interest in Korea during the 1980s was to promote and maintain security in the Peninsula. Any internal and external threats that could jeopardize such interests would trigger U.S. intervention. However, the existence of the Korean government as a legal apparatus, and its sovereign authority since 1948, has constrained any direct U.S. intervention in Korea's domestic affairs. To maintain the internal stability of Korea within such a limited environment, the U.S. set an American Boundary and coordinated its modes of intervention accordingly.

Secondly, in case the boundaries were crossed, the U.S. let the Korean government deal with the situation in its initial phases; however, once the situation intensified and showed the possibility of damaging U.S. national interest, the U.S. would intervene in a sequential way. A specific mode of intervention would be decided based on the evaluation of the situation at the time.

During the 1980s, the U.S. pursued its long-term goal of democratization in

Korea by supporting a gradual and government-led democratization, not to compromise national security of Korea. The U.S. employed its traditional, quiet diplomacy to nudge the government to democratic reform, while strategically praising the gradual liberalization progress in public. Especially in early years of Chun administration, the Chun administration was thought to be on the right track toward democratization. Therefore, the emergence of radical, opposition party leaders who were not willing to make any compromises with the authoritarian government in their quest for democratization in 1985 were perceived as threats to the U.S. The U.S. remained alert over possible clashes between them and the Korean government, but not directly intervened Korean domestic scene.

Once tensions intensified, and Chun's government measures didn't yield promising results, the U.S. eventually intervened to urge compromise between both parties. However, the dramatic escalation of conflict in 1987 - growing domestic unrest demanding for a democratic transition of the power, growing hatred for the U.S. as a supporter of authoritarian regime, and Chun's willingness to use military force to crush such movements - finally turned the U.S. to take a more aggressive approach. The U.S. urged Chun to accept public desire for democratization and step down from power in 1988 as he promised. As a result of U.S. intervention and public movements, ruling party agreed to accept demands of public toward democratization in June 29, 1987. According to revised constitution and direct election, Tae-Woo Roh, was finally elected to the 13th president of Korea in 1987.

Aside from the main argument, there is an important implication that the American Boundary addresses: the American Boundary provides a place where domestic entities perceive and react to the external environment, in this case U.S. foreign policy toward Korea. Therefore, what affects the direction Korea takes is not the *intention* of the U.S., but how it is *perceived* by Korean actors. This means that the U.S. can expect and control different results of their foreign policy to some extent by altering its modes of intention, but Korean actors can also wisely deal with such situations by understanding the U.S. national interest in Korea—its scope of behavior and modes of intervention. As Myung-Lim Park states, “motives of change comes from the external environment, but it is internal dynamics that makes success or failure of such change. What determines the direction and level of survival and development is the capability of internal actors.”²²²

In that sense, the modality changes of U.S. intervention in 1987 could have worked in favor of the leaders in NKDP, who sought U.S. support from the very beginning of their fight. Chun’s lame duck²²³ status and the rise of Tae-Woo Roh, who had a reformist²²⁴ tendency in the military, would have allowed for an earlier

²²² Myung-Lim Park, “Perceptions of the World and Foreign Relations after Democratization in South Korea: Large Shifts in Policy, Discourse, and Civil Society,” 198.

²²³ For example, by 1985, Chun already appeared to be “dangerously isolated,” surrounded by conservative, hardline advisors who “are reluctant to convey unpleasant news.” (Intelligence Appraisal from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, “*South Korea: The Domestic Political Outlook*”; also see Intelligence Brief from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, “Republic of Korea: Democratic Political Outlook in 1986,” March 10, 1986, Item No.KO00539.)

²²⁴ In-Soo Kim analyzed the various political orientations within the military at that time, which

democratization, and the opposition leaders could have achieved a peaceful and non-violent transition of power in a presidential election that united people and left differences behind. However, the miscalculation of U.S. national interest and the way it was manifest in its behavior in the Korean Peninsula boosted anti-Americanism and the political ambition of the two Kims resulted in their loss in the elections in Korea.²²⁵

South Korea has shown incredible level of economic growth and political democratization past decades. It is taking significant roles in international community and, based on such developments, has actively pursued its own national interest. As ROK-U.S. relations have grown and expanded its scope, so has possibility of conflicts. Therefore, finding ways to maximize South Korea's national interests while sustaining

influenced significantly the course of democracy. James Fowler (1999) aptly analyzed Roh's role as a reformer in bringing democracy in Korea. (In-Soo Kim, "Intra-Military Divisions and Democratization in South Korea," *Armed Forces & Society* 39, no.4 (2012): 695-710; James Fowler, "The United States and South Korean Democratization.") Roh was progressively consolidating his position within the party and administration: he was appointed as the Second Minister of State for Political Affairs on July 16th, 1980; the first Minister of the Ministry of Athletics on May 20th, 1982; the Secretary of Interior a month later; Head of the Committee for Organizing Seoul Olympics on July 6th, 1984; President of DJP on February 23rd, 1985.

²²⁵ As an aside, the ruling party seemed to be a little more aware of the U.S. behavioral limitation over domestic affairs of South Korea, probably from the repeated experience of enduring earlier military coups. For example, a news article around Shultz's visit in 1987 describes that,

"What got on the nerves of the DJP members were attitudes of the NKDP members in dealing with the U.S. officials... DJP members didn't hide their uneasiness over the 'excessive interest' of the NKDP members to U.S. ambassador James Lilley's every single movement and the Secretary of States, George Shultz's visit... DJP perceives that it is impossible for the U.S. to intervene on national affairs of South Korea as it once did during the 1950s and 1960s, and its influence is limited to 'friendly advice', no more or less. Therefore, the obsequious manner of NKDP members will merely accelerate U.S. intervention and let them overrate their words." ("Gimchiguk-buteo Masyeotdaga Silmang-man" [High Hopes only Resulted in Disappointment.])

the U.S.-ROK alliance has become one of Korea's most crucial tasks.

This thesis, as an attempt to patternize U.S. policy behavior in Korea, is a new departure in understanding ROK-U.S. relations. Despite it needs further academic researches on its applicability and limitations, this new approach is providing useful analytic tools to objectively understand U.S. foreign policy behavior in Korea. Such endeavor is especially important because discussions on U.S. policy toward the Korean Peninsula among Korean public and politicians often contain sentimental evaluations. This tendency has contributed to the formation of deeply rooted pro- and anti- America discourse in Korea that consumes political disputes and prevents a “sophisticated perception of reality.”²²⁶ Such a dichotomized frame of perception toward U.S. foreign policy not only prevents objective analyses of past and present ROK-U.S. relations, but steers our future the wrong way.

To establish effective strategies and overcome such fundamental limitations, it is a prerequisite to understand the nature and dynamics of ROK-U.S. relations objectively, for example by understanding the political intention of the U.S. and the overall processes through which its foreign policies are framed. The academic endeavor to provide more comprehensive and unbiased explanations on these matters should be continued in the future.

²²⁶ Yong-Rip Kwon, “A Puzzle between Pro-America and Anti-America,” 169.

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요약 (국문초록)

‘미국의 범위’: 전두환 정권 시기 민주화 과정을 중심으로

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한미동맹은 1945년 광복 이후 한국전쟁을 거치며 체결된 한미 상호방위 조약과 이로서 시작된 군사협력에 그 뿌리를 두고 있다. 한미 간 국력의 차이로 인해 이 초기 군사 협력이 일방적인 성격을 강하게 띠고 있었다면, 이후 한국의 눈부신 경제적, 정치적, 외교적 성장은 한미 간의 역학관계를 바꿔놓았다. 교류와 협력의 범위가 사회, 경제, 문화를 포괄하는 보다 넓은 범위로 확대되고, 한국이 적극적으로 자신의 국익을 추구하면서 대북정책, 주한미군, 통상협상 등 여러 민감한 이슈들을 둘러싼 갈등의 여지도 커지게 된 것이다. 이러한 상황에서 한미관계를 훼손하지 않는 범위 내에서 한국의 국익을 극대화할 수 있는 전략을 구상하는 것이 현재 한국의 가장 시급한 과제 중 하나라고 할 수 있을 것인데, 이를 위해서는 미국의 사고방식과 한반도에서 그들의 외교정책이 구현되는 방식 등 미국의 행동 양식에 대한 보다 객관적인 분석이 필수적이다.

하지만 미국의 대한반도 정책에 대한 국내 인식은 여전히 감정적이고 이데올로기적인 잣대 위에서 이루어지며, 여기에서 파생된 뿌리깊은 친미, 반미 논쟁은 객관적인 현실 인식을 저해하고 있다. 그리고 그간 학계에서는 이러한 경향을 반영하듯 미국을 한국의 ‘수호자’로 파악하거나, 그와 정 반대인 ‘필요악’으로 파악하는 등 편향된 연구 패턴을 보여왔다. 하지만 다행히 최근 들어 한미관계의 연구 범위와 접근 방식이 다양해 지면서, 미국과 한국 사이의 역학관계를 보다 사실적이고 객관적으로 파악하기 위한 시도 또한 점차 늘어나는 추세이다. 본 연구는 그러한 시도 중의 하나로 제시된 냉전시기 미국의 한반도 국내정치 침투에 관한 이론인 ‘미국의 범위’라는 개념을 수정, 발전시켜 1980년대 민주화 과정에서 미국이 한국 국내 정치에 침투하고 영향력을 행사하는 패턴을 분석하고자 시도했다.

‘미국의 범위’에 따르면, 미국은 한국에서 자신들이 받아들일 수 있는 한계의 상한(공산주의 혁명화)과 하한(파시스트 독재화)을 설정해 놓고, 그 범위를 벗어나지 않는 선에서는(‘미국의 범위’) 한국의 주체들이 국내 상황을 이끌어갈 수 있도록 했다. 하지만 한국의 상황이 ‘미국의 범위’를 넘어서 미국의 국익을 해칠 것으로 생각되면 적극적으로 개입해 상황을 ‘미국의 범위’ 안으로 재설정하기 위해 힘썼다. 본 논문은 여기에서 한걸음 더 나아가, 미국의 구체적인 개입 방식은 한국 국내 상황 전개에 대한 미국의 판단을 바탕으로 결정되었으며, 우선 한국 정부에게 상황 통제를 일임한 뒤 그 효과가 미미하다고 판단될 때서야 비로소 직접 개입하는 등 순차적 절차를 따른다고 보았다.

보다 구체적으로 냉전 시기 동안 한반도의 민주주의 증진에 대한 미국의 태도를 살펴보면, 서로 다른 이데올로기가 충돌하는 지정학적 위치 때문에 한반

도의 불안정은 또 다른 세계적 갈등을 일으킬 수 있을 것으로 생각되었으므로 한반도에서 미국의 가장 큰 국가 전략은 한반도의 안보와 안정을 도모하는 것이었다. 민주주의의 신장은 장기적인 관점에서 미국의 국가 이익에 부합하는 것으로 장려되었으나, 이 또한 남한의 내부 안정을 바탕으로 이루어져야 했으므로 정부가 주도하는 점진적인 민주화가 가장 이상적인 방법으로 생각되었다.

더군다나 전두환 대통령 집권 초기에는 아시안게임, 88올림픽 등을 앞두고 시행된 다양한 유화정책으로 인해 민주화로의 진전이 이루어지고 있는 듯 보였으므로 미국은 전두환 대통령의 1988년 평화적 정권 이양 선언을 주시하며 점진적인 정부 주도의 민주화를 지지했다. 이런 상황에서 1985년 김대중의 정치권 재등장, 국회의원 선거에서 야당인 신한민주당의 압승으로 정치권에서의 여야 경쟁이 본격화되고, 덩달아 뜨거워진 민주화 열기는 한국의 내부 불안정에 대한 미국의 우려를 불러일으키기에 충분했다. 미국은 일단 직접적인 개입을 삼간 채 정부를 통한 점진적 민주화라는 기존 입장을 고수하는 한편, 한국의 국내 상황 추이를 관망한다.

하지만 1986년 신민당이 개헌을 위한 천만인 서명운동을 시작하고, 같은 해 5월 인천에서 대규모 유혈사태가 발생하면서 정부와 민주화 요구세력의 갈등은 심화된다. 미국은 같은 달 조지 솔츠 미 국무장관의 방한 시 정부를 통한 점진적 민주화 달성이라는 자신들의 기존 입장을 재강조하는 한편, 야당과 민주화 운동 세력에게 대화와 타협을 통한 평화로운 민주화 달성을 강조한다. 이러한 미국의 행동은 한국 시민들의 반발을 불러일으켰다. 이미 1980년 광주사태로 인해 한국인들의 마음 속에 깊이 자리하고 있었던 전두환 정권과 미국의 결탁에 대한 확신이 심화되며 미국에 대한 불신이 더 깊어지는 역효과를 낳은 것이다. 게다가

한국인이 가지고 있던 민주주의의 수호자로서의 미국에 대한 이미지, 기대와 이를 배반하는 듯한 미국의 태도는 반미구호를 드높이는 결과를 가져왔다.

1987년, 당시 서울대학교 학생이었던 박종철이 경찰 심문 과정에서 고문으로 인해 사망하고, 이를 정부가 조직적으로 은폐하려 했음이 밝혀지면서 전두환 정권에 대한 분노는 극을 향해 치닫는다. 전두환 대통령이 평화적 정권 이양에 대해 뚜렷한 계획을 제시하지 않은 채 약속한 1988년이 다가오자, 미국은 기존의 태도를 버리고 보다 적극적인 방식으로 한국 국내 정치에 개입하기 시작한다. 미 국무부 동아·태 담당 차관보 개스톤 시거의 1987년 2월 연설이 대표적인데, 시거는 연설을 통해 군부 정권의 퇴진과 국민의 힘에 의해 선출된 정권으로의 평화적 이양을 강조했다.

하지만 정부와 민주화 세력의 대결이 심화되는 와중에 전두환 대통령은 국내 안정이라는 미명하에 직선제 개헌 논의를 1988년 올림픽 이후로 미루고, 선거인단의 투표를 통해 노태우를 자신의 후계자로 지목한다. 반정부 시위 도중 연세대학교 학생이었던 이한열이 경찰이 발포한 최루탄에 맞아 의식불명이 되면서 시위는 전국으로 확산되고, 전두환 정권 내부에서 무력 사용 의견이 적극적으로 제기되는 가운데 미국은 이러한 시도를 적극 제지하고 전두환 정권에게 국민들의 민주화 요구를 받아들일 것을 종용한다. 1987년 6월 29일, 노태우 후보가 민주화 요구를 적극 수용하고 헌법 개헌, 직선제 개헌이 이루어지면서 같은 해 최초로 직선제를 통한 대통령이 탄생한다.

주요어: 미국의 범위, 미국 개입, 한미관계, 민주화, 1980년대.

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