

South Korea's Diplomacy and the Evolution of Korea-Japan Security Relations, 1965-2015

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Abstract | Since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965, South Korea and Japan have developed their security relations in diverse ways. Concerning the causes and mechanisms of Korea-Japan security relations, some researchers have focused on the role of the US in the Asia-Pacific region in propelling the two allies towards more friendly or contentious security relations. Other scholars have emphasized the role of Japan's diplomacy in Korea-Japan security relations in terms of Japan's overall national security policy. This paper illuminates the role of South Korea's national strategy and diplomacy in developing Korea-Japan security relations. The Park Chung-hee, Roh Tae-woo, and Kim Dae-jung administrations underscored the importance of Korea-Japan security relations by developing the national strategies of Fatherland Modernization, Nordpolitik, and the so-called Sunshine Policy, respectively. In contrast, the administrations of Kim Young-sam, Roh Moo-hyun, and Lee Myung-bak failed to develop Korea-Japan security relations due to rising nationalist sentiment against Japan during their presidency. This occurred despite initial national strategy orientations that emphasized mutual security cooperation. The incumbent Park Geun-hye administration seemed to set South Korea on a similar path as her predecessors, Lee Myung-bak and Roh Moo-hyun. Considering these patterns and tendencies, South Korea's security relations with Japan in the near future will be determined by the interaction of its national strategy and national sentiment in the context of a rising China and a provocative North Korea.

Keywords | Korea-Japan relations, Korea-Japan security cooperation, Korea's national strategy, Korea's diplomacy, Korea's security policy

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Background

The strategies of nation states are comprised of diverse policies to protect the states' core economic and national security interests. Foreign policy, in particular, plays an important role in national strategy as the states' relations with other countries within the international system can determine the extent to which their goals are realized.

The foreign relations of states may take many different forms. The states may pursue alliances, engage in friendly cooperation, and exchange with other countries, or they may devolve into relations that are laden with distrust, conflict, and hostility. States may form alliances on the basis of a common security threat. In order to strengthen their deterrence to such threats, the states can sign written treaties, establish common military strategies, and implement regular joint military exercises under an alliance framework. Or, the states may choose to maintain cooperative and friendly relations without forging a formal alliance. In this case, diverse forms of security cooperation may appear, depending on the common economic interests and security threats among these non-allied states. For instance, they can seek low-level security cooperation, such as security dialogues and military exchanges, and mid-level security cooperation, such as intelligence exchange and joint military exercises that target a specific enemy (Suh Dong-man 2006). On the other hand, the states can also undertake confrontational or hostile relations if their national interests or ideology collide, or if they compete in the realms of economy and diplomacy.

In this backdrop, the characteristics of South Korea-Japan relations (hereafter Korea-Japan relations) until the 1965 diplomatic normalization would fall into the latter category: foreign relations characterized by hostility. The hostility mainly stemmed from the remnants of the colonial period, as reflected in the unilateral declaration of the 1952 Peace Line (also called the Syngman Rhee Line) and the seizure of Japanese fishing vessels and fishermen near the Tokdo Islands during the Rhee Syngman government. Korea-Japan relations after the 1965 normalization, however, transformed the way in which the two countries engaged in friendly cooperation and exchange. Although they did not become formal allies, they implemented joint military talks and exchanges, gradually improving their security relations. Nonetheless, these improvements rapidly deteriorated at times of mutual distrust and confrontation.

In light of this history of Korea-Japan relations, this article poses the following questions: Why do Korea-Japan security relations continue to falter even after the normalization? Why have their relations alternated between

cooperation and confrontation for the last fifty years? Many studies have looked into the transformation of Korea-Japan security relations.¹ However, in distinction from the previous literature, this article aims to analyze the changes in South Korea's national strategy and foreign policy and how these alterations influence the evolution of Korea-Japan security relations. This article assumes that a state's foreign security relations function as a key mechanism in accomplishing the state's overall foreign policy agenda and the grander national strategy that encompasses these policies. This article is structured into four different periods, scrutinizing the relationship between Korea-Japan security relations and the national strategies, as well as foreign policy agendas of the governments during the fifty years since Korea-Japan normalization.

The National Strategy of the "Fatherland Modernization" and Korea-Japan Security Relations in the Cold War Era: the Park Chung-hee Administration

1. National Strategy and Foreign Policy Agenda

The national strategy of the Park Chung-hee government can be observed in the "revolution pledges," which General Park announced immediately after the military coup on May 16, 1961. Here, he suggested that the new military government should implement the following policies: "uniting with their free liberal allies," "reconstructing the economy," "building national capacity to fight against communism and to achieve reunification," and "raising national morality and community spirit in the people." Likewise, in his book published in 1963, *A New Horizon in Asia* (*Kukka wa hyöngmyöng kwa na*), President Park emphasized that "the immediate goals of personally starting the revolution" were "to make a breakthrough in the national economy" and "to establish a self-sustaining economy," thereby accomplishing "the long-cherished wish to do my own housekeeping."

To explain further, the Park Chung-hee government began concrete

1. On the changes in Korea-Japan security relations, there are three major strands in the previous studies. The first strand focuses on the changes in the US's Asia-Pacific security policies as the key variable to the Korea-Japan security relations (Cha 2004; Tsuchiyama 2005; Lee Kitae 2014). Second, some studies look into the evolution of Japan's foreign policy as the determining factor (Kurata 2001; Soeya 2005; Azuma 2006). Third, many Korean scholars address South Korea's security interests as influencing Korea-Japan security relations (Rhee Sang-woo 1999; Choi Kang 1998; Suh Dong-man 2006; Park Young-June 2007).

implementation of national strategy around 1966 when the first five-year economic development plan began to progress. At the New Year's Annual Address on January 18 of the same year, President Park labeled his national strategy as "the vision to modernize the fatherland" and claimed that this strategy of "fatherland modernization" would be achieved in three phases. The first phase, establishing the industrial foundations of the country, would be completed by the end of the first five-year economic development plan in 1966. The second phase, industrialization, would be finished by the end of the second five-year economic development plan in 1971. The third phase, achieving mass production and mass consumption, would be concluded at the end of the third five-year economic development plan in the late 1970s.²

President Park had also begun to advocate an "export-first policy" as his national economic strategy since May 1964 (Oh Won-chul 2006, 37). In foreign policy, he proposed to seek "solidarity with other states toward the issue of unification, alliances for security, and practical diplomacy for economic prosperity."

It was under this context that the Park Chung-hee regime sought to normalize and diversify Korea-Japan relations as part of their foreign policy agenda, an issue on which the previous Rhee Syngman and Chang Myon governments failed to make much progress. President Park perceived that the introduction of foreign capital would be indispensable in establishing the "self-sustaining economy," which he advocated as a national goal. In this regard, he had significant expectations for the loans from the US and West Germany, and the possibility of capital inflows from Japan upon normalizing their relations.³ Indeed, not only did he see Korea-Japan normalization essential for accomplishing their economic goal, but he also saw that it would be compatible with the administration's national security interests. In the New Year's Address on January 10, 1964, he stated that the normalization of Korea-Japan relations would "contribute to strengthening the unity among the liberal allies in the Far East, thereby maintaining security and peace in the region." Also, in the special announcement on June 23, 1965, immediately after signing the Korea-Japan Basic Treaty, President Park drew attention to the preeminent situation in international affairs—the standoff against communist forces. He claimed that "in order to fight and win over communism, we have to shake hands with

2. For the original document of the New Year's Address from January 18, 1966, refer to Park Chung-hee (1967, 36).

3. In his autobiography, published in 1963, he indicated that "significant improvements can be expected as the relations between South Korea and Japan normalize and enable capital inflow, even from Japan" (Park Chung-hee 1963, 102-103).

anyone we can become friends with” and assured that the normalization of the Korea-Japan relations would provide critical momentum in both countries’ adaptation to geopolitical circumstances.

2. Challenges in the Policy toward Japan

Regardless of the plans to normalize Korea-Japan relations and to increase their security cooperation, the Park administration confronted a significant number of challenges in the process.

The first hurdle was the harsh domestic opposition within South Korea to Korea-Japan normalization. Many university students and intellectuals perceived that the Japan policy of the Park regime had several problems.⁴ First, they considered normalization prior to Japan’s expression of its intention to apologize for the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905 (*Ŭlsa* Treaty) and Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty of 1910 as equivalent to the South Korean government’s toleration of these illicit agreements. They also worried that the South Korean economy would become dependent on Japan, further estranging the goal of building a “self-supporting economy.” Additionally, regarding Korea-Japan military cooperation, they claimed that South Korea’s military would also become dependent on Japan’s advanced defense industry. For these reasons, students and scholars launched large-scale street demonstrations, even at the final stage of signing the Korea-Japan normalization treaty.

The second obstacle was the sense of superiority towards South Korea that existed within Japan. Most of the political forces, including the Liberal Democratic Party, perceived Japan to be superior to other Asian countries, even after the Tokyo Trials and the signing of San Francisco Peace Treaty. A sense of war liability was also lacking. Even Prime Minister Satō Eisaku and Foreign Minister Shiina Etsusaburō, who led the Korea-Japan normalization process, lacked basic remorse for Korea and its history. Although upon his first visit to Seoul, on February 17, 1965, Foreign Minister Shiina announced a statement that conveyed his “sincere regret and deep remorse over the unfortunate period in the relations between the two countries,” his previous evaluation on the colonial period should be noted. In his earlier publication in 1963, where he evaluated the first governor-general of Taiwan and other relevant personnel, he concluded that the Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan and Chosŏn produced magnificent results. Unlike Foreign Minister Shiina, Prime Minister Satō never

4. The following is from Min Byung-ki (1964), who was professor at Korea University at the time of writing.

even expressed his apologies about the past. In other words, the main political figures who were both directly and indirectly involved in the normalization process and overall Korea-Japan relations, were interested only in the security and economic aspects of establishing and maintaining Korea-Japan relations, while they lacked deep reflection and remorse about their history with Korea (Wakamiya 1995, 170-71).

Furthermore, some politicians in Japan brought the “two Korea policy” to the fore in the 1970s, which denied the legitimacy of South Korea as the sole legitimate government on the Korean Peninsula. In November 1972, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, for instance, mentioned that Japan needed a balanced foreign policy that could deal with the two Koreas. The following year, International Trade and Industry Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro even made a speech at the Diet implying the expansion of political, economic, and cultural exchanges with the North Korean government. In August 1974, Foreign Minister Kimura Toshio gave a further response in the Diet that North Korea posed no threat to Japan.

Although Korea-Japan diplomatic relations had normalized strong antipathy and distrust toward Japan within South Korea, inconsistent historical awareness in Japan, and the emergence of the “two Koreas policy” in the early 1970s within Japan were all significant factors that hindered the Park Chung-hee regime’s Japan policy, especially in the realm of security cooperation.

3. Security Policy toward Japan

Despite the domestic backlash against Korea-Japan normalization and the major Japanese politicians who lacked remorse on history problems, President Park Chung-hee consistently pursued multilateral exchanges with Japan. By establishing channels for cooperation, he aimed to use Japan to accomplish his national strategy of building an independent economy and strengthening Korea’s security within the international system. In August 1967, the Park government began ministerial-level meetings with Japan. Through these ministerial meetings, which were held annually, the Park regime could both ensure Japan’s cooperation on economic development and exchange their opinions on North Korea and their security situation, setting a direction for further security cooperation (Azuma 2006, 80). The joint communiqué announced at the second Korea-Japan ministerial meeting in 1968, for instance, confirmed that the security and prosperity of Korea have significant influence on Japan. In August 1969, the joint communiqué of the third regular ministerial meeting stated that both countries are closely involved in each other’s security

and prosperity. The communiqué also confirmed that the two countries share a common goal in establishing peace and prosperity in Asia and that they will continue to cooperate to realize this goal. The US-Japan summit in November 1969 between President Nixon and Prime Minister Satō Eisaku is also noteworthy in this regard. During the summit, Prime Minister Satō mentioned the so-called “Korean clause” in order to point out the significance of South Korea to Japan’s security; this signifies how the common security awareness formed through the ministerial-level meetings between South Korea and Japan was later conveyed to the US.

On the basis of their shared security concerns and their mutual goals to combat international communist forces, the Park Chung-hee regime pursued personnel exchanges with the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA). In June 1969, General Yamada Masao of Japan’s Ground Self-Defense Forces visited South Korea and its military bases. In response, Moon Hyeung-tae, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited Japan and had talks with the Japanese prime minister and the director-general of the JDA. In July 1979, near the end of President Park’s time in office, JDA Director-General Yamashita, visited Seoul for the first time. Through the talks with National Defense Minister Noh Jae-hyun, both countries agreed to expand their military exchanges, co-participate in the US-led joint military exercises, enable reciprocal visits of warships, and establish a joint early warning system. Korea-Japan security cooperation was not limited to the level of military personnel, but also expanded to the level of politicians during the Park administration. The Korea-Japan Parliamentarians’ Union, for instance, was founded in June 1975, enabling both South Korean and Japanese politicians to discuss various issues. In April 1979, a separate committee on security was also organized under the union to facilitate the discussions on security cooperation among politicians.

In addition to the channels for security dialogues between South Korea and Japan, the Park Chung-hee regime also envisioned far bolder plans for security cooperation. When the security crises heightened in 1968, following the USS Pueblo crisis and the invasion of armed communist guerillas in Uljin and Samch’ök, President Park directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to organize a collective security system for the Asia-Pacific region, Asia-Pacific Area Treaty Organization (APATO), which included South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. Similar to the Asia and Pacific Council that President Park Chung-hee advocated as a multilateral framework for economic cooperation in 1966, he also envisioned an organization for military cooperation against the communist forces in Asia with independent headquarters and troops, resembling NATO in Europe (Choi Hee-sik 2011, 297-98). Although the plan did not materialize,

President Park consistently sought diverse means of cooperation with Japan to strengthen Korea's national security during his term in office. When the possibility of US troops' withdrawal became a reality with the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine in 1969, the Park government considered cooperation with Japan on intelligence gathering and military exercises, and a mutual defense treaty, in order to fill the security vacuum. In this context, President Park also showed flexibility towards Japan's efforts to strengthen their own military and to expand their security policies. In the 1971 New Year's Address, President Park stated that Japan poses no threat to Korea, and that Korea does not object to Japan's expansion of military forces in the Asia-Pacific region.

As discussed above, the national strategies of the Park government were established upon the goals of constructing a self-supporting economy and international security system. The normalization of diplomatic relations and multifaceted cooperation with Japan were implemented as key parts of its foreign policy. However, it is evident that Korea-Japan security cooperation during the Park Chung-hee era remained at an elementary level, exemplified by exchanges between military personnel and politicians, based on the shared awareness of the changing security environment (Suh Dong-man 2006, 146).⁵ Nevertheless, it is also true that such developments signified an important turning point from the hostile relations during the previous Rhee Syngman regime to cooperative relations in the Park Chung-hee government.

The National Strategy of “Nordpolitik” and Korea-Japan Security Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: The Roh Tae-woo and Kim Young-sam Administrations

1. National Strategy of “Nordpolitik” and Foreign Relations

President Roh Tae-woo came into office in 1988 and began to explore different policies toward North Korea and foreign relations. He differed from the previous regimes' confrontational policy against the North under the Cold War system. The changes in policy began to appear in the “Special Declaration for

5. Such characteristics of Korea-Japan relations during the Park Chung-hee era seem to continue throughout the next Chun Doo-hwan government. Japan expressed support for the Chun Doo-hwan regime, which seized power by a coup. The Chun Doo-hwan government also seemed to value relations with Japan; the elementary level of security cooperation continued throughout the Chun Doo-hwan regime. For Korea-Japan relations during the early period of the Chun Doo-hwan government, refer to Park Sun-won (2002).

National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity,” which was announced on July 7 of the same year that he became a president. In the declaration, President Roh conveyed the idea that South Korea and North Korea are a single, national community where confrontational relations should be avoided. He advocated inter-Korean personnel exchanges in the areas of politics, economy, media, religion, and other socio-cultural realms, including visits by separated families and the opening of inter-Korean trade. Furthermore, he stated that North Korea should ameliorate its relations with the US and Japan, while South Korea improve its relations with the Soviet Union and China. President Roh further stated in his speech at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on October 18 of the same year that both Seoul and Pyongyang should establish normal relations with all countries directly involved in the issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula—the blueprint of his “Nordpolitik” for inter-Korean reconciliation and peace. In other words, President Roh outlined his policy vision in which the US, Japan, and other allies improve their relations with North Korea, while South Korea develops cooperative and friendly relations with the communist countries. His plan also envisioned the founding of the “Consultative Conference for Peace in Northeast Asia” by the US, Soviet Union, China, Japan, and South and North Korea, to promote peace and prosperity in the region.

In order to implement the “Korean National Community Unification Policy” and “Nordpolitik,” President Roh Tae-woo argued that Korea needed to adopt an “active and balanced diplomacy,” in order to reassure the neighboring countries of the larger benefits of a unified Korean peninsula (Roh Tae-woo 1990, 341-43). And as a part of the “active and balanced diplomacy,” President Roh Tae-woo promoted joining the UN early and strengthening the relations with the US, Japan, Europe, and other traditional allies. Specific to Japan, President Roh Tae-woo emphasized the need to deepen Korea-Japan relations at both government and non-government levels, considering the significance of the relations to the stability and prosperity of the entire Asia-Pacific region.

The Kim Young-sam government also continued to develop Korea-Japan relations as a part of their comprehensive foreign policy design. During a speech at the twenty-sixth APEC summit in May 1993, President Kim stated that the Korean government would seek reconciliation and cooperation with North Korea in the form of an inter-Korean federation toward the final phase of unification. He also proclaimed that South Korea would actively promote multilateral security dialogues in Northeast Asia to establish a framework for peace. President Kim placed cooperation with Japan as an important task for the government, especially as part of the efforts to reform and open up North

Korea, to establish an inter-Korean peace federation, and to promote multilateral cooperation for common security and reduction of tension in the Asia-Pacific region (Kim Young-sam 1995, 144).

Both the Roh Tae-woo and Kim Young-sam governments pursued an “inter-Korean national community” as their domestic policy goal, while trying to expand their diplomatic and security spheres of influence on the international stage through “Nordpolitik” and “multilateral security dialogues in the Asia-Pacific region.” Both governments considered their security cooperation with Japan as a significant element in the execution of these policies.

2. The Barriers and Stimuli for the Improvement of Korea-Japan Security Relations

Despite Japan policies of the Roh Tae-woo and Kim Young-sam governments, many factors continued to hinder Korea-Japan security cooperation. First of all, as the Cold War ended and confrontation eased between the two Koreas, many intellectuals and media outlets in South Korea began to question the possibility of Japan’s military expansion and its return to militarism as a new security threat against Korea. Some scholars claimed that, as Japan strengthened its military capabilities, it would continue on the path towards neo-militarism, becoming a potential enemy to Korea in the post-Cold War era.⁶ The 1990 and 1991 Defense White Papers, issued by the South Korean Ministry of Defense, evaluated Japan as moving towards militarism and Japan’s Self-Defense Forces (SDFs) as trying to stretch the meaning of “exclusive defense” to equip their military with offensive capabilities.

In addition, the Japanese politicians’ distorted remarks on historical problems and the sudden emergence of the Japanese military’s wartime sexual slavery (“comfort women”) issue critically undermined relations between the two countries, including security cooperation. Even President Roh, who sought to improve Korea-Japan relations in general, as part of the “active and balanced diplomacy,” also frequently raised questions to Japan on these issues. In June 1990, President Roh Tae-Woo (1991, 359) stated during an interview with the Japanese monthly magazine, *Bungei shunjū* (Literary Seasons) that the biggest problem in Korea-Japan relations was the basic interpretation of historical issues that were never resolved. During the press conference, which was held right after the summit with Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi, on January 17, 1992, President Roh requested the “Japanese government to actively investigate

6. As examples, refer to Lee Hae-yeong (1989) and Shin Yong-ha (1991).

historical problems, such as the military sexual slavery issue, and to take appropriate measures following the results of the investigation.” Similarly, President Kim Young-sam (1996, 527) often expressed that the repeated historical distortions by some Japanese politicians were “very unfortunate.” In other words, Japan’s historical distortions and South Korea’s increasing threat perception of Japan remained as potential impediments to Korea-Japan security cooperation.

Nonetheless, internal and external factors that could stimulate security cooperation between the two countries still existed. Above all, North Korea’s nuclear program began to develop in earnest in the 1990s as a response to South Korea-Soviet Union and South Korea-China normalizations in 1990-92 (Hwang Chang-yŏp 1999, ch. 8). Although the first North Korea nuclear crisis in 1993-94 concluded with the Agreed Framework between the US and North Korea in 1994, the incident was a precedent for further cooperation between South Korea and Japan (Tsuchiyama 2005, 120). Other external factors that thawed Korea-Japan security relations were China’s nuclear test in October 1993 and the exploration of seas near the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands by Chinese oil vessels after 1995. Although the Japanese Emperor’s visit to China in 1992 began to set the mood for reconciliation and cooperation between Japan and China, these incidents disrupted the momentum and instead became key external catalysts for Korea-Japan security cooperation.⁷ Overall, North Korea’s attempt to develop a nuclear weapons program and China’s assertive diplomacy in the early 1990s led both South Korea and Japan to overcome the existing impediments and seek more active security cooperation between the two countries.

3. Progress in Korea-Japan Security Cooperation

In order to improve Korea-Japan security relations, South Korea needed an objective evaluation of the Japanese militarization and neo-militarism thesis that had appeared within the country. In October 1991, Foreign Minister Lee Sang-ok expressed his view that Japan was not moving toward militarism, but merely expanding its political and diplomatic role in parallel to Japan’s economic power and international status at the time. Sharing the same perspective, Defense Minister Lee Jong-ku had made a statement at the National Assembly in July of the same year that Korea-Japan relations should overcome the previous limitations in security cooperation, expand cooperation step by step, and develop relations within a regional security framework. The 1992 and 1993

7. On the changes in Japan-China relations during this period, refer to Soeya (2005, 77-78).

Defense White Papers also laid out plans to expand student exchanges and military cooperation between South Korea and Japan.

In line with this policy stance, Kim Jin-young, chief of staff of the Army, visited Japan in January 1992 and met with the director-general of the JDA. Through the talks, they agreed to promote larger exchanges in military personnel and information. In April 1994, Lee Byung-tae, as the first South Korean defense minister to visit Japan, exchanged views with Japanese officials on the North Korean nuclear issue. During the visit, the two countries also agreed to prior notification of inter-visit plans of their vessels and operation plans of their combat aircrafts. On the basis of this agreement, a working-level meeting on defense policy was convened for the first time in the same year and became regularized thereafter, which brought together the heads of the South Korean Ministry of National Defense (MND) and Japanese Defense Ministry and Defense Agency. Furthermore, South Korea's naval fleet made a friendly visit to Japan that year, which was reciprocated by a visit from the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) in September of the following year, the first such visit in the post-war era. In April 1997, the two countries also agreed to hold regular Korea-Japan security dialogues between Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha and Foreign Minister Ikeda Yukihiko.

As shown, the security cooperation between South Korea and Japan began to progress beyond basic exchanges. On the basis of the common security threat that formed during the mid-1990s, momentum to improve Korea-Japan relations grew, and their security cooperation expanded to the point of military personnel exchanges, mutual use of bases, and regular government-level meetings to exchange information.⁸ Interestingly, this intermediate level of Korea-Japan security cooperation also began to influence the US-Japan alliance. A clear example is the US-Japan Defense Guidelines, which was revised in September 1997 and outlined the roles of the US forces in Japan and the Japanese SDFs in case of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. Although the South Korean MND announced a statement in the following month that Korea prohibited the operation of Japanese SDFs in Korean territorial waters and land, the guidelines signified how the potential cooperation between Korea and Japan could become a possibility in case of a contingency.

8. According to Suh Dong-man's (2006, 146) evaluation, Korea-Japan security relations began to develop since 1994 from simple security dialogues to the mid-level security cooperation. Tsuchiyama (2005, 120) also assesses the mid-1990s as a critical time for Korea-Japan security cooperation.

The National Strategy to “Dismantle the Cold War Structure” and Korea-Japan Security Relations: the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun Administrations

1. National Strategy and Foreign Policy Stance

The Kim Dae-jung regime began with the economic difficulties of the financial crisis that occurred just before his inauguration in February 1998. Despite the hardship, the government managed to establish their foreign policy agenda on the basis of the accomplishments of “Nordpolitik” from the previous government—the normalization of diplomatic relations with communist countries, such as Russia and China, the two Koreas’ simultaneous joining of the UN, and the signing of the inter-Korean Basic Agreement. In this context, President Kim Dae-jung (2004, 25) announced the following national goals in his inaugural address on February 25: the “development of democracy and economy at the same time” and “political reform for participatory democracy”; the establishment of “an independent collective security system” to strengthen national security as external policies; the promotion of “inter-Korean reconciliation, exchanges, cooperation, and non-aggression on the basis of the South-North Basic Agreement” in regards to the policy direction toward North Korea. On North Korean policy, President Kim Dae-jung specifically proclaimed the following three principles: (1) no toleration of armed provocation of any kind; (2) no intention to harm or absorb North Korea; (3) active inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, beginning with the areas most easily agreed upon. President Kim Dae-jung also clarified that South Korea was prepared to support North Korea’s interaction and cooperation with the US, Japan, and other allies, and with international organizations, if inter-Korean exchange and cooperation were accomplished. After the inaugural address, inter-Korean policies were further elaborated on by the work and discussions of Lim Dong-won, senior secretary of Foreign Affairs and National Security, and relevant strategic committees. The result was the creation of the “reconciliation and cooperation policy,” also known as “the Sunshine Policy.”

By the end of August 1998, the threat perception of North Korea heightened in the US and Japan, as North Korea launched its *Taepodong*-missile. In November of the same year, the Clinton administration appointed William Perry, a hardliner on North Korea, to the position of North Korean policy coordinator, and the Kim Dae-jung government sought to explain the Sunshine Policy again in order to persuade the US and their other allies. Senior Secretary

of Foreign Affairs and National Security, Lim Dong-won (2008, 400-404), together with others strategists of the administration, designed “a comprehensive strategy to dismantle the Cold War structure on the Korean Peninsula,” and reported to the president. With this strategic design, they also sought to persuade the US policy makers to cooperate on this policy direction. Their “comprehensive strategy” was based on the belief that North Korea’s rationale for nuclear and missile development was founded upon the Cold War structure that persisted on the Korean Peninsula: 1) the distrust and confrontation between the two Koreas; 2) the hostile relations between the US and North Korea; 3) North Korea’s isolation and rigidity in the international system; 4) the threat of weapons of mass destruction; 5) the implicit conditions of military confrontation and arms race; 6) the armistice agreement to end the Korean War in lieu of a peace treaty. Therefore, in order to deconstruct the Cold War structure in the region, their strategy suggested the following: 1) improvement of inter-Korean relations and controlled military spending; 2) normalization of the US-North Korea relations; 3) inducement for reform and opening of North Korea; 4) denuclearization and removal of weapons of mass destruction from the Korean Peninsula by eliminating North Korean security threats; 5) trust building between the militaries and disarmament through peaceful use of the demilitarized zone; 6) transition from the armistice to a peace treaty. In addition to persuading the US policy makers, including William Perry, the strategists of the administration, led by Lim Dong-won, also emphasized the importance of acquiring support and cooperation from neighboring countries, such as Japan, China, and Russia.

In summary, the Kim Dae-jung government set forth the inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation policy—the Sunshine Policy—as their national strategy. And in order to implement the strategy successfully, the government found that the support and cooperation from neighboring countries—the US, Japan, China, and Russia—would be indispensable.

2. The Barriers to Korea-Japan Relations

The Kim Dae-jung administration’s North Korean policy of reconciliation and cooperation—“the comprehensive strategy to dismantle the Cold War structure on the Korean peninsula”—was, however, a daunting task, which required the understanding and cooperation from the US, Japan, and other allies. The relations with Japan were especially aggravated at the time, as the territorial disputes surrounding the Tokdo Islands had begun to surface during the previous Kim Young-sam regime. Besides this, the relations between Japan and

the neighboring countries began to diverge as Prime Minister Mori Yoshihiro made frequent misstatements on historical problems in 2000. Similarly, during his election campaign prior to his inauguration in April 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō also called for the revision of the Peace Constitution to stipulate the SDFs as Japan's national defense forces and to allow the "right of collective self-defense" (*Asahi shinbun*, April 19, 2001). To make matters worse, Koizumi also paid an abrupt visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on August 13 of the same year, followed by a statement from Abe Shinzō, chief cabinet secretary under Koizumi, that Prime Minister Koizumi would pay tribute to the Yasukuni Shrine every year. In addition, 2001 was the year when the Japanese Ministry of Education approved conservative textbooks developed by historical revisionists at Fusōsha Publishing Company as partial textbooks for middle and high schools in Japan. In other words, Japan's historical interpretation problems and "normal country" agenda in foreign policy continued to hinder Korea-Japan relations during the Kim Dae-jung government.

3. Security Policy Direction Regarding Japan

President Kim Dae-jung (2004, 108) perceived that, in the given circumstances, taking a tougher stance on historical interpretation and territorial issues would only provoke hard-line policies from Japan, further aggravating Korea-Japan relations. Also, in order to implement the government's national strategy of seeking international cooperation on their North Korean policy, he believed that the restoration of Korea-Japan relations, which had worsened during the Kim Young-sam government, was necessary.

At the same time, Japan also found the need to improve their security cooperation with South Korea. In August 1998 North Korea launched its medium-long-range ballistic missile, *Taepodong*, which flew over the Japanese mainland before falling into the Pacific. Shocked by the incident, Japan made the decision to start the joint development of a missile defense system with the US; Japan also realized that security cooperation with South Korea would strengthen their deterrence capabilities against North Korea.

Given the consensus on security cooperation between South Korea and Japan, President Kim Dae-jung and Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō declared to establish a future-oriented Korea-Japan partnership during a summit held in October 1998. They agreed to expand the existing Korea-Japan security dialogues and military exchanges as a part of their bilateral cooperation agenda. Diverse inter-personnel exchanges in the field of defense were initiated on various levels, including joint military exercises. On September 1, 1998, for

instance, South Korean Defense Minister Chun Yong-taek visited Japan for talks with his counterpart, Nukaga Fukushiro, a director-general of the JDA. Reaching a mutual consensus on the security threats from North Korea's *Taepodong* launch, which occurred a day before their meeting, they agreed to perform joint military exercises between the South Korean navy and Japan's MSDF for disaster and relief operations (Azuma 2006, 106). Subsequently, South Korea and Japan launched their first joint exercise for search and rescue operations near Japan's Kyushu area and Korea's territorial waters in August 1999. Two South Korean naval vessels and three Japanese patrol vessels participated in the exercise. The joint exercise continued thereafter, amounting to a total of eight drills by 2013.

In parallel with the joint exercises, South Korea and Japan agreed to install military-to-military hotlines to facilitate intelligence exchanges in times of crisis. As a result, three hotlines were established in May 1999, linking the South Korean MND with the JDA, the South Korean Naval Operations Command with the Japanese MSDF, and the South Korean Combat Air Command with the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF). The two countries also reached consensus on the need for a consultative framework between the Republic of Korea Joint Chiefs of Staff (ROK JCS) and the Japan Joint Staff Office (JSO). Beginning in 1999, regular meetings were held between the chief director of Strategic Planning (J5), ROK JCS, and the Japanese counterpart of the JSO. In addition, another consultative channel was established in June 1998 and was utilized on a regular basis, in which director-generals of the Korea and Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs also participated. Overall, dialogues between Korea and Japan expanded to include diverse meeting groups and exchanges during the Kim Dae-jung government. Starting from the Korea-Japan ministerial-level talks, the consultations included meetings of both countries' chairmen and chiefs of staff from each branch of the military, directors of the policy planning bureau in the Ministry of Defense, and the chief directorates of strategic planning. South Korea and Japan also held regular joint military exercises and exchanges among units of each military service. Additionally, academic exchanges between research and educational institutions related to defense and foreign affairs became frequent during this period.

On the basis of these security cooperation efforts, the South Korean government could enhance Japan's understanding of and support for the government's North Korea policy of reconciliation and cooperation. These improvements in Korea-Japan cooperation also facilitated the government's accomplishments in developing Korea-Japan-US trilateral cooperation and Korea-Japan-China joint summit meetings. In early February 1999, a strategic planning team, led by Lim Dong-won, visited the US and Japan right after the

drafting of their “comprehensive strategy to dismantle the Cold War Structure on the Korean Peninsula.” During their talks in Japan, they were able to create understanding and consent on their North Korea policy from their Japanese counterparts, Foreign Minister Kōmura Masahiko, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nonaka Hiromu, Professor Okonogi Masao, and other experts at the meeting (Lim Dong-won 2008, 419). Based on these efforts, another high-level meeting was convened in Hawaii in mid-April of the same year, where the deputy foreign ministers of South Korea, Japan, and the US came together to discuss and coordinate their policies on North Korea. This specific body developed into the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group, which convened at least once every quarter thereafter. As illustrated, the Kim Dae-jung government was successful in initiating regular consultative frameworks that facilitated the government’s efforts in acquiring support from their major allies and friends—the US and Japan—on their North Korea policy and in coordinating their policy in detail.

By developing mutual trust in Korea-Japan relations, the Kim Dae-jung government also succeeded in launching Korea-China-Japan joint summit meetings on a regular basis. On November 24, 2000, the first joint summit meeting was held during the ASEAN+3 Summit in Singapore, where Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji participated under the initiative of President Kim Dae-jung. On November 5, 2001, the second Korea-China-Japan joint summit meeting was held during the ASEAN+3 Summit in Brunei. As one of the results of these summit meetings, the year 2002 was declared as the Year of Korea-China-Japan National Exchange, taking the opportunity for closer ties offered by the joint hosting of the 2002 World Cup. The heads of three states also agreed to cooperate on joint countermeasures in non-traditional security areas, such as the economy, environment, terrorism, and drug-trafficking.

The long standing feud on historical and territorial disputes between Korea and Japan persisted during the Kim Dae-jung regime. However, some progress was possible in their bilateral security cooperation, as President Kim took a moderate stance on these problems and focused instead on accomplishing the ultimate goals of the government’s national strategy. The Kim Dae-jung government was able to institutionalize Korea-Japan security cooperation through defense ministerial-talks and other meetings at various levels, inter-personnel exchanges in military, and joint military exercises. Through these efforts, the Kim Dae-jung government nurtured mutual trust in Korea-Japan relations, on the basis of which they further established Korea-US-Japan cooperation on the North Korean problem and the Korea-China-Japan regional cooperative

framework for non-traditional security issues in Northeast Asia.

National Strategy and Korea-Japan Security Relations in the Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye Administrations

1. National Strategy and Foreign Policy Stance

President Lee Myung-bak, who came into office in 2008, strongly believed that South Korea needed to take a more proactive role in creating a new world order in the international community. At the New Year's Address on January 2, 2009 President Lee stated: "The Republic of Korea is not the marginal state that it used to be in the latter part of the nineteenth century when it suffered the whims of international currents; nor is it the flickering candle that it used to be during the foreign exchange crisis. The country is emerging as a responsible member of the leading nations helping to create a new international order." During a special press conference at the Pittsburgh G20 Summit on September 30, 2009, which was held immediately following the announcement that the 2010 G20 Summit would be held in Korea, President Lee Myung-bak evaluated Korea as follows: "Although Korea has become one of the world's top ten economies, it did not have a voice befitting its status in the international community." However, as hosting the G20 Summit signifies, "Korea has now ... become one of the leading players in the international community, recognized by advanced countries." He continued by noting that while Korea used to remain "satisfied with playing only a passive role in setting the international order, leaving it to other nations, [Korea has now] emerged as a pacesetter in helping to forge a new framework for the world order" ("G20 Chöngsang hoeüi yuch'i pogo t'ükpyöl kija hoegyön," 2009).

Conceptualizing South Korea's identity as such in the international sphere, the Lee administration proposed "Global Korea" as the new strategic direction for the government. The slogan envisioned Korea "to become more proactive in their engagement with the international community in peace building and development" and "a mature global state" that can "actively cooperate on global issues and offer solutions to the problems" (Chöngwadae 2009, 12).

Setting the goal of becoming a "mature global state" as its key foreign policy direction, the Lee government also put forth specific policy guidelines, such as promoting "coexistence and co-prosperity in inter-Korean relations," "expanding cooperative network diplomacy," "promoting a comprehensive and pragmatic

foreign policy,” and “building a future-oriented advanced security system.”⁹ For the main task of forging “cooperative network diplomacy,” the Lee Myung-bak administration suggested that South Korea should strengthen their strategic alliance with the US, develop a mature partnership with Japan, and enhance strategic and cooperative partnerships with countries like China and Russia. In addition, the administration also stated that it aims to institutionalize the “Korea-China-Japan trilateral relationship” and the “Northeast Asian multilateral cooperative system.”

In this regard, President Park Geun-hye's national strategy and diplomatic stance did not fundamentally change despite differences in its use of terms. During her inaugural address on February 25, 2013, President Park Geun-hye pledged to “open a new era of hope” through economic revival, people's happiness (*kungmin haengbok*), and cultural enrichment. In foreign policy and security issues, President Park proposed the “Trust Building” process on the Korean Peninsula in tandem with other countries in the region, including the US, China, Japan, and Russia, in order to alleviate tensions and conflicts and to promote peace and cooperation.

The National Security Strategy Paper, *A New Era of Hope, National Security Strategy (Hüimang üi saesidae, kukka anbo chölyyak)* released in July 2014, presented “a new era of hope” as the nation's vision, a reflection of the inaugural address. Four guiding principles were also introduced, such as economic revival, happiness of the people, cultural enrichment, and the establishment of a foundation for peaceful unification (Ch'ongwadae Kukka Anbosil 2014). In particular, “establishing a foundation for peaceful unification” became the government's core national security strategy, encompassing the areas of national defense, unification, and diplomacy. For successful implementation of the strategy, the paper provided the following principles: 1) establishing a solid security posture; 2) pursuing the trust building process on the Korean Peninsula; 3) promoting trust-based diplomacy in Northeast Asia to address problems, such as climate change, terrorism, drug trafficking, nuclear safety, environmental protection, and disaster relief.

The Park Geun-hye government also presented strategic cooperation with the US, Japan, China, Russia, and other neighboring countries as the direction for foreign policy. According to the National Security Strategy Paper, the Park administration pledged to enhance its security capabilities by “promoting common interests with neighboring countries such as Japan, China, and Russia,

9. For details on the foreign and security policy agenda of the Lee Myung-bak government, refer to Park Young-June (2012).

[and] bolster[ing] strategic cooperation to ease concerns over regional security.” The paper also stated that South Korea will strengthen multilateral cooperation with the US, China, Japan, Russia, and other countries to tackle the North Korean nuclear problem and to improve inter-Korean relations through the trust building process.

As my analysis on the Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye administrations reveals, a clear continuity can be found in their national security strategies, which extends from the previous Park Chung-hee and Kim Dae-jung regimes’ policies. These governments shared a fundamentally similar strategy that emphasized cooperation with the US, China, Japan, and Russia in order to alleviate the tensions on the Korean Peninsula, improve inter-Korean relations, and promote stability and prosperity throughout Northeast Asia.

2. Deepening Security Cooperation between South Korea and Japan

As a way of forging a “mature global state,” the Lee Myung-bak government made the establishment of mature relations with Japan as the government’s key diplomatic goal. From the outset of his tenure, President Lee focused on restoring Korea-Japan relations that had begun to falter in the previous regime. The Lee administration also tried to further develop security cooperation. Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee and his Japanese counterpart Hamada Yasukazu signed the “statement of intent on Korea-Japan military exchanges” on April 23, 2009 during Minister Lee’s visit to Japan to attend the fourteenth Korea-Japan defense ministerial talks. The statement called for high-level military personnel exchanges, including meetings between the defense ministers and vice-ministers, chiefs of staff, and commanding officers from each military service. The statement also included provisions for exchanges between military units, inter-country visits to observe each others’ military exercises, joint exercises in search and rescue operations between the South Korean navy and Japan’s MSDF, inter-country visits of vessels and aircrafts, and cooperation in international peacekeeping operations. The result was the establishment of a framework for bilateral cooperation on security issues.

Henceforth, many qualitative improvements emerged in their military and security cooperation. On May 26, 2009, the South Korean government, in response to North Korea’s second nuclear test, announced that it would join the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a global effort against North Korea’s nuclear program and weapons of mass destruction. On October 13, 2010, South Korea hosted a PSI exercise in the coastal areas near Pusan with fifteen participating members. From then on, Korea took part in maritime exercises

with the US, Australia, and Japan, which had already been actively facilitated in the PSI.

Building on these initiatives, South Korea and Japan began to discuss signing of the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) at the defense ministerial talks between Defense Ministers Kim Kwan-jin and Kitazawa Toshimi, on January 10, 2011. In June 2012, Shin Gak-su, the South Korean ambassador to Japan, almost signed the agreements with Japan. Just as South Korea had already signed GSOMIA with twenty countries, including the US, Russia, and Vietnam, the initiative aimed to share intelligence on North Korea with Japan. Similarly, ACSA was already signed by South Korea and ten other countries, including the US and New Zealand. By signing ACSA with Japan, South Korea envisioned the possibility of sharing military supplies with Japan during the UN peacekeeping operations (*Asahi shinbun*, June 28, 2012). Yet the agreement was scuttled in the face of negative public sentiment.

These early efforts of the Lee Myung-bak administration—the statement of its intent on military exchanges, joint exercises with Japan through the PSI, and the discussions on GSOMIA and ACSA—reflect the government's attempts to establish mid-level security cooperation with Japan, as it would with any other friendly countries, without necessarily forging formal alliances. Indeed, many similarities can be found in the efforts to develop Korea-US-Japan and Korea-China-Japan security relations, during the Lee Myung-bak era. In May 2008, for example, several tripartite heads of state meetings, and ministerial and vice-ministerial talks were held among South Korea, the US, and Japan. Similarly, the Korea-China-Japan trilateral summits were held annually since the first Fukuoka summit in December 2008. Ministerial talks on foreign affairs, economy, environment, and tourism were also held. In June 2011, the three countries initiated the Korea-China-Japan Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) to facilitate cooperation in multiple areas.

Progress in Korea-Japan security cooperation and multilateral frameworks among Korea-US-Japan and Korea-China-Japan were possible due to the dynamic interplay of both internal and external security factors—North Korea's increasing nuclear threats, the relaxation of historical revisionist tendencies in Japan, and the US expectations for Korea-Japan cooperation. For example, North Korea's second nuclear test on May 25, 2009 provided an external stimulus for security cooperation between South Korea and Japan. Also, the historical perspectives of the Hatoyama Yukio and Kan Naoto governments of the Democratic Party of Japan, incumbent since November 2009, were more forward-looking than the previous governments. On August 10, 2011, Prime

Minister Kan Naoto apologized for colonial rule and expressed his intention to return the cultural properties that were brought to Japan during the colonial period, such as the Royal Protocols of the Chosŏn Dynasty. In addition, key figures in the US policy circles constantly emphasized the benefits of Korea-Japan security cooperation on the implementation of policies toward North Korea and China.¹⁰ As explicated in the National Security Strategy Paper, it was under such circumstances that the Lee Myung-bak government advocated security cooperation with Japan as a part of their foreign policy strategy to become a “mature global state.” However, the government’s Japan policy began to lose its initial impetus in mid-2012 and continued to falter throughout the Park Geun-hye administration.

3. Problems in Korea-Japan Security Cooperation

The efforts of the Lee Myung-bak government in Korea-Japan security cooperation began to falter in mid-2012. Many civilian organizations and politicians in South Korea began to oppose GSOMIA and ACSA, which were nearly finalized and ready to be signed by the two countries. South Korean civic groups such as People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy claimed that the signing of the treaties would justify the military activities of the Japanese SDFs, triggering a New Cold War in the Northeast Asian region. Several politicians also shared similar concerns. As result, the treaties fell through at the last moment, heavily straining diplomatic relations between the two governments.

Additionally, in December 2011, the tensions between Korea and Japan began to heighten over historical problems, as discussions between President Lee Myung-bak and Japanese Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko broke down over their inability to come up with an agreement on the sexual slavery (“comfort women”) issue. Furthermore, President Lee’s visit to the Tokdo Islands and his statements on Japanese Emperor in August 2012 stirred up strong opposition within Japan. Such deterioration in Korea-Japan relations inevitably disrupted their security cooperation efforts. The visits to Japan by the South Korean Air Force’s southern combat command and South Korean Navy officers in charge of education and training, which were scheduled for September 2012, were cancelled, as were visits to Korea by Japanese ASDF students and military officer students.

Korea-Japan relations and security cooperation worsened even further as the

10. From the same perspective, Michael Green, who served as senior director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council, argued that Korea must cooperate with Japan in the field of security.

Abe Administration came into power in December 2012, followed by the inauguration of Park Geun-hye in February 2013. Although Prime Minister Abe emphasized the importance of security cooperation with South Korea in the National Security Strategy Paper and National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) released in December 2013, he maintained his historical revisionist perspective on the sexual slavery (“comfort women”) issue and Japan’s wartime actions. These problems of historical interpretation with Japan induced the Park government to remain passive in holding a bilateral summit, despite the initial plan for strategic cooperation with Japan outlined in the National Security Strategy Paper (Park Young-June 2013, 63-66). Also, the Park government officials continuously raised the issue of historical revisionism at the Korea-US and Korea-China bilateral summits. After the Korea-China summit with President Xi Jinping on July 4, 2014, for example, President Park Geun-hye instructed Senior Presidential Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ju Chul-ki, to present a brief on how the two leaders expressed concern over Japan’s recent moves to allow the right of collective self-defense and to revise the Kōno statement.

In short, both the Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye governments generally acknowledged the necessity to increase their cooperation with Japan. However, by becoming fixated on their rules-based, rigid responses to the revisionist attitudes of Japanese politicians, their policies began to slow down and even reverse the improvements that were made by previous governments in institutionalizing Korea-Japan security cooperation and exchanges. Several factors seem to have caused these changes, including wariness of Japan’s rising nationalism, strong anti-Japanese sentiment within South Korea, and the belief that security cooperation with an emerging China could be more compatible with solving both the North Korean nuclear problem and other national strategic interests.

Conclusion

Korea-Japan relations remained fraught and almost hostile during the Rhee Syngman regime. However, ever since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965, security cooperation between the two countries gradually proceeded from low-level to mid-level cooperation throughout succeeding administrations. While many domestic and external factors were instrumental in the development of this relationship, this article focused on how the national security strategies and foreign policy stances of South Korean governments acted as the key determinants in formulating Korea-Japan security cooperation. There were four

Table 1. The National Strategy of Previous South Korean Governments and the Evolution of Korea-Japan Security Relations

Previous Governments	National Strategy	Precipitants and Barriers to Korea-Japan Security Cooperation	Security Policy toward Japan
Park Chung-hee	Fatherland Modernization	Changes in the US Security Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region Japan's "Two Koreas" Policy China Threat Nationalism	Normalization of Korea-Japan Relations Military Personnel Exchanges (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Defense Ministers) Security Committee under the Korea-Japan Parliamentarians' Union APATO
Roh Tae-woo / Kim Young-sam	Nordpolitik	US Security Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region Japan's Korea Policy North Korea Threat	Proposal for the Consultative Conference for Peace in Northeast Asia Defense Ministry and Chief of Staff-Level Talks Regular Working-Level Meetings on Defense Policies Inter-Country Visits by Naval Ships
Kim Dae-jung / Roh Moo-hyun	North Korea Policy for Reconciliation and Cooperation	Tokdo Islands Issue Historical Interpretation Issue	Defense Ministry-Level Talks Regular Joint Chiefs of Staff-Joint Staff Office Talks (1999- Present) Korea-Japan Naval Exercise, SAREX (1999- Present) Hotline Installment Regular Security Consultations (1998- Present) Korea-US-Japan Trilateral Cooperation
Lee Myung-bak / Park Geun-hye	Mature Global State Trust Building Process on the Korean Peninsula Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI)	Historical Interpretation Issue Tokdo Islands and Other Territorial Disputes China Factor	Signing the Statement of Intent on Korea-Japan Military Exchange PSI Joint Exercise GSOMIA, ACSA Establishing the TCS

significant changes in South Korea's foreign policy and security strategy in the past fifty years. The security relations with Japan changed accordingly, as illustrated in table 1.

As the table indicates, previous South Korean governments promoted distinctive national strategies and foreign policy agendas, evolving from the fatherland modernization to Nordpolitik, inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, global Korea, and the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI). The governments commonly advocated improvements in Korea-Japan relations and security cooperation as components of their diplomatic plan, although the progress remained inconsistent throughout successive administrations.

The barriers to Korea-Japan relations, such as nationalism in South Korea and Japan, persisted throughout the Park Chung-hee, Roh Tae-woo, and Kim Dae-jung governments. Nonetheless, relatively consistent and gradual improvements were made through strengthening of Korea-Japan security cooperation, which emerged as part of the regimes' varying national strategies. As a result, by the time of the Kim Dae-jung administration, the active implementation of Korea-Japan military-to-military exchanges and joint exercises became viable, in addition to the previous working-level meetings between South Korea and Japan.

However, the Kim Young-sam, Lee Myung-bak, and Park Geun-hye governments allowed Korea-Japan relations and security cooperation to falter. Although they advocated strategic cooperation with Japan as part of their national strategy, similar to the three governments mentioned in the paragraph above, Presidents Kim Young-sam, Lee Myung-bak, and Park Geun-hye were also constrained by the problem of nationalism in South Korea and Japan. For these internal and external reasons, Korea-Japan security relations continued to lack mutual trust, thus limiting their efforts to regularize and institutionalize their joint military exercises and cooperation in intelligence gathering.

Then, what should be the way forward for security cooperation between South Korea and Japan? In Korea, there seems to be two countervailing perspectives that are propelling the discourse on the question. On the one hand, some experts argue that it is necessary to achieve higher-level security cooperation with Japan by overcoming the constraints posed by the nationalistic sentiments. They expect that cooperation with Japan will strengthen their deterrence against North Korea and also play a complementary role to Korea-US alliance.¹¹

11. Although South Korea and Japan remain non-allies, with many internal and external factors that constrain their cooperation, Rhee Sang-woo (1999) claims that guidelines for Korea-Japan security cooperation need to be devised in order to address the security needs of both countries

However, other experts demand far more caution and a deeper consideration for the relations with China and North Korea when proposing a change in Korea-Japan relations (Suh Dong-man 2006). My research finds that the level of Korea-Japan security cooperation will be determined, in the end, by South Korea's national strategy—a comprehensive plan that includes South Korea's policy towards North Korea and its status in the context of relations between a rising China and the US. If South Korea takes a reconciliatory and cooperative approach to North Korea and, at the same time, diversifies its security cooperation with China, for instance, Korea-Japan security relations will more likely to remain at their current level. On the other hand, if South Korea prioritizes Korea-US alliance over its relations with China and, at the same time, tilts towards a hard-line policy on North Korea, a higher level of security cooperation will be required between South Korea and Japan. In other words, Korea-Japan security relations remain open to changes, as they have been in the last fifty years, depending on South Korea's national strategy.

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