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국제학 박사학위 논문

**South Korea's Wartime  
Operational Control Transfer Debate:  
The Military and the Presidents**

한국의 전시작전통제권 전환 논의:  
조직적 관점에서 본 군과 대통령

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서울대학교 국제대학원

국제학과 국제협력 전공

윤 서 연

**South Korea's Wartime  
Operational Control Transfer Debate:  
The Military and the Presidents**

by

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# South Korea's Wartime Operational Control Transfer Debate: The Military and the Presidents

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# ABSTRACT

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's suggestion to transfer the wartime Operational Control (OPCON) caused a heated debate. The senior military elites gathered to strongly oppose the decision. Despite such resistance, President Roh Moo-hyun and U.S. President George W. Bush agreed to have the transfer done by April 17, 2012, but the plan was delayed when the next President Lee Myung-bak came into office, and again delayed when the succeeding President Park Geun-hye administration started. *Cheonan warship attack* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> nuclear tests were the major reasons for such delay.

Why was the nation-to-nation agreement delayed not only once, but twice? More specifically, why have the senior military elites demonstrated such unbending opposition? Also, why were the Presidents not able to override the senior military elites' opposition?

To answer these questions, this research introduces a balanced and theoretical perspective that combines organizational studies, decision-making, psychology and security studies. Also, in-depth interviews were conducted to accurately examine the military and president's decision-making. Among 33 interviews, 23 interviews were with senior military elites, and 10 were with policy advisors and security experts.

For a large, bureaucratic, and unique organization like the military that has a special mission to win in wars, change is difficult. Interview results show that North Korean nuke, concerns over ROK-US alliance, cost, and inter-service rivalries were the reasons for the military's opposition to the transfer. Status quo bias and risk adverse tendencies were detected as well.

For the president's decision-making, three roles of the president were examined. Being the Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and a Political Leader, the presidents not only had to deal with the severe opposition from the senior military elites and conservative groups, but also had to consider defense budget, North Korean provocations, and the general public's attitude towards the wartime OPCON transfer matter. Such complexity makes it difficult for the presidents to override the military's opposition.

In conclusion, for a short-term period, both the military decision-makers and the presidents are unlikely to push the wartime OPCON transfer. This gives implications for the Korean civil-military relations. For a divided country, still technically at war, like Korea, the military with its expertise knowledge holds an important role in making changes to defense posture. It also provides implications to the leadership and political will of the president and military.

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Keywords: Wartime Operational Control, Military Organization, Decision-Making, President, Civil-Military Relations, Leadership.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> -----	<b>i</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> -----	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> -----	<b>vii</b>
<b>NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION</b> -----	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST ABBREVIATIONS</b> -----	<b>ix</b>

## **CHAPTER I.**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> -----	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Research Background</b> -----	<b>1</b>
(1) Initial Observations and Questions -----	7
(2) Literature Review on OPCON -----	10
<b>2. Research Aim and Scope</b> -----	<b>29</b>
(1) Research Objective -----	29
(2) Research Scope -----	31
(3) Research Methodology-----	32
<b>3. Structure of Dissertation</b> -----	<b>34</b>

## **CHAPTER II.**

<b>THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND RESEARCH DESIGN</b> -----	<b>37</b>
<b>1. Decision Making Theory</b> -----	<b>38</b>
(1) Military' s Decision Making -----	40
(2) President's Decision Making -----	57

<b>2. Civil-Military Nexus in Military Change</b> -----	<b>61</b>
<b>3. Research Framework</b> -----	<b>68</b>
(1) Senior Military Elites' Decision Making Analysis -----	69
(2) President's Decision Making Analysis -----	76
 <b>CHAPTER III.</b>	
<b>WARTIME OPCON TRANSFER AND DECISION MAKING</b> -----	<b>79</b>
<b>1. What is OPCON</b> -----	<b>80</b>
<b>2. Evolution of South Korea's OPCON</b> -----	<b>83</b>
<b>3. Decision Making Concerns in the Current Wartime OPCON</b>	
<b>Transfer Debate</b> -----	<b>110</b>
 <b>CHAPTER IV.</b>	
<b>ANALYSIS ON SENIOR MILITARY ELITES' OPPOSITION</b> -----	<b>123</b>
<b>1. Key Findings from the Senior Military Elites Group</b> -----	<b>123</b>
(1) Quantitative Analysis through AHP -----	125
(2) Qualitative Analysis -----	129
<b>2. Reaction to the Senior Military Elites Group</b> -----	<b>155</b>
<b>3. Lessons from the Research</b> -----	<b>157</b>
 <b>CHAPTER V.</b>	
<b>THE PRESIDENT AND THE WARTIME OPCON</b>	
<b>TRANSFER DELAY</b> -----	<b>166</b>
<b>1. Recapping the Question</b> -----	<b>167</b>
<b>2. Framework for the Presidential Decision Making</b> -----	<b>170</b>

<b>3. Three Roles of the President</b> .....	<b>173</b>
(1) Commander-in-Chief .....	173
(2) Executive Head.....	175
(3) Political Leader .....	176
<b>4. Analysis on The Three Governments</b> .....	<b>179</b>
(1) President Roh Moo-hyun (President from 2003-2008) .....	184
(2) President Lee Myung-bak (President 2008 – 2013) .....	205
(3) President Park Geun-hye (President 2013- Present) .....	222

## **CHAPTER VI.**

<b>CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS</b> .....	<b>235</b>
<b>1. Findings of the Research</b> .....	<b>235</b>
(1) Senior Military Elites’ Opposition .....	236
(2) President’s Decision on the Delay .....	241
<b>2. Implications on Civil-Military Relations and Leadership</b> .....	<b>245</b>
(1) Cooperation between the Military and the President .....	246
(2) Significance of Presidential Leadership and Military Morale.....	248
<b>3. Limitation and Future Studies</b> .....	<b>262</b>
<b>4. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>263</b>

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>268</b>
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<b>ABSTRACT IN KOREAN</b> .....	<b>306</b>
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## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1.</b> Interview Summary-----	73
<b>Table 2.</b> Definition of OPCON in Detail -----	81
<b>Table 3.</b> Brief Wartime OPCON Transfer Timeline -----	109
<b>Table 4.</b> Pros and Cons on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate-----	122
<b>Table 5.</b> Proportions of Army, Navy, Air Force in Korean Army-----	144
<b>Table 6.</b> Analysis Frame: President's Three Roles and Decision Criteria-----	181
<b>Table 7.</b> President Roh's Speeches on Wartime OPCON Transfer -----	191
<b>Table 8.</b> Major Domestic Security Issues in President Roh Administration--	197
<b>Table 9.</b> Public Polls on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate (Roh)-- -----	202
<b>Table 10.</b> Major Domestic Security Issues in President Lee Administration ---	218
<b>Table 11.</b> Public Polls on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate (Lee)- -----	222
<b>Table 12.</b> Major Domestic Security Issues in President Park Administration- -	226
<b>Table 13.</b> Public Polls on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate (Park) -----	232
<b>Table 14.</b> Three Governments in a Glance -----	234

# LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1.</b> Wartime OPCON Transfer Related Literatures Categorization -----	11
<b>Figure 2.</b> Categorization on Features of Military Organizations -----	42
<b>Figure 3.</b> DIV for Senior Military Elites Decision Making -----	70
<b>Figure 4.</b> DIV for Presidential Decision Making -----	77
<b>Figure 5.</b> ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command Structure -----	87
<b>Figure 6.</b> Senior Military Elites Decision Making Criteria-----	127
<b>Figure 7.</b> Pairwise Comparison Results -----	128
<b>Figure 8.</b> Importance Weighted to Each Factor-----	128
<b>Figure 9.</b> Senior Military Elites Decision Making -----	153
<b>Figure 10.</b> Defense Budget Increase Data (Roh) -----	189
<b>Figure 11.</b> Defense Budget Data (Lee) -----	214
<b>Figure 12.</b> Defense Budget Data (Park) -----	224

## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

1. The transliteration of Korean terms, personal, or place names was made to Romanization of Korean in accordance with the Korean Romanization System of the National Institute of the Korean Language. The exceptional cases are the widely accepted words such as Seoul, Pyongyang, and Yongbon.
2. The translation of the names of Korean institutions and scholars will follow their official publications and each author's preferred translation.
3. For Korean Presidents and government officials, naming order will be surname first and given name after as it is used in Korean language, government documents, and media reports worldwide. For example, President Roh Moo-hyun, Lee Myung-bak, and Park Geun-hye.
4. All other Korean names, mostly scholars, quoted in the main body of the dissertation, their naming order will be given name first and surname after same as other English names.
5. For the footnote, only the English title of the Korean literatures will be provided. Full Korean title is provided in Bibliography.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHP	Analytic Hierarchy Process
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFC	Combined Forces Command
CODA	Combined Delegated Authority
C4I	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence
DEFCON	Defense Readiness Condition
DIV	Dependent and Independent Variable
DoD	Department of Defense
EASI	East Asia Strategic Initiative
FOTA	Future of the Alliance
GPR	Global Defense Posture Review
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IOC	Initial Operating Capability
ISR	Information, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KAMD	Korea Air and Missile Defense
KCIA	Korea Central Intelligence Agency
KIDD	Korea-US Integrated Defense Dialogue
KRW	Korean Won
LLP	Pyeongtaek Land Partnership Plan
MC	Military Committee
MD	Missile Defense
MND	Ministry of National Defense
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCMA	National Command and Military Authorities
NPT	Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council
OPCON	Operational Control
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
ROK	Republic of Korea
SCM	Security Consultative Meeting
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SPI	Security Policy Initiative
UN	United Nations

UNC  
US  
USFK  
YRP

United Nations Command  
United States of America  
United States Forces Korea  
Yongsan Relocation Plan

# CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Research Background

President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea had no qualms about being straightforward with his bitterness during his speech in December 2006. The President lashed out against the South Korean senior military elites who tenaciously opposed him on the issue of Wartime Operational Control (hereafter “wartime OPCON”).

“Do we not have the ability to control the wartime operations? What has the Korean military done so far...What have those in the higher ranks done so far? Building a military force that does not even have its own ability to control its own war operations? Can you still go out and boast your ranks and say I am the Defense Minister, I am the Chairman of Army Chief of Staff? Then issue statements saying the wartime OPCON should not be retrieved? Shameful”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the origin of President Roh Moo-hyun’s frustration traces back to 2005 when he first officially raised the wartime OPCON transfer issue in

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<sup>1</sup> This is a part from President Roh Moo-hyun’s speech at the 50th Standing Committee of National Unification Advisory Council meeting. Translation is from the author, and it is not an official translation from The Roh Moo Hyun Foundation, which has President Roh Moo-hyun’s archives. <http://archives.knowhow.or.kr/> Written document is from Presidential Secretariat of ROK Office of the President, *President Roh Moo-hyun’s Speech Collection #4* (2007). See The Roh Moo Hyun Foundation (Saram Saneun Sesang)’s Archives Collection for video recording, which conveys President Roh’s discomfort over this matter. This speech was scheduled to be 20 minutes but President Roh spoke 1 hour and 8 minutes.

South Korea.<sup>2</sup> This action sparked up a heated debate which even involved slandering the other side, as it ignited the existing tension between the conservative and the progressive with regard to various agendas ranging from security versus sovereignty to pro-U.S. versus anti-U.S.. Whereas President Roh and his administration placed emphasis on ‘military sovereignty,’ and ‘national pride,’ the senior military elites and other conservative groups expressed concerns over South Korea’s lack of preparation for dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat and transfer’s likeliness of undermining the alliance between Republic of Korea and United States of America (hereafter “ROK-US alliance”).<sup>3</sup>

President Roh had initially set the day of transfer on April 15, 2012. However, his successor, President Lee Myung-bak escalated the ferocity of the ongoing debate by postponing the transfer agreement reached with the U.S. to December 1, 2015. The debate reached its climax when President Park Geun-hye delayed the transfer again from December 1, 2015 to sometime in the 2020s

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<sup>2</sup> Though officially raised in 2005, President Roh’s thoughts and interviews from 2003 show President Roh’s desire to execute wartime OPCON transfer. The heated debate started in 2005 when the issue was officially raised, and proposed to the US on the 37<sup>th</sup> SCM October 21, 2005. On March 8, 2005, the Inauguration Day of Air Force Academy and more specifically on October 1, 2005, Armed Forces day.

<sup>3</sup> South Korea’s official name is Republic of Korea. Here in this dissertation, I refer it as ROK-US alliance. Hereafter in the dissertation, ROK will be used in front of government documents to indicate it is from the South Korean government.

when Korea equips the required conditions such as Kill Chain and Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD).<sup>4</sup>

Such a development of South Korea's situation is intriguing. When a nation-to-nation agreement is made for a set time, usually, it is rarely expected to be delayed. What is more unusual is that kind of delay has happened not only once but twice. What caused such delay?

The official statements from each President and the senior military elite group provide a hint to such a puzzle. Since his inauguration, President Roh Moo-hyun appears to have reflected his belief in and vision of 'self-reliant defense' on the issue of transferring the wartime OPCON. His speech on October 1, 2005 at the 57<sup>th</sup> Armed Forces Day ceremony demonstrates his thoughts:

"I have been emphasizing on self-reliant defense. It is so natural and fundamental for a sovereign nation to have such" ... "through the exercise of the wartime OPCON, we will be born again as a 'self-reliant army' worthy of its name and be responsible of the Korean Peninsula's security."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kill Chain and KAMD are the two systems that the Korean military plan to build in order to proactively respond and deter North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. Kill Chain system aims to give the Korean military to immediately "Find, Fix, Target, and Engage." Korean Defense Ministry defines Kill Chain as the following. "Kill Chain is a series of attack systems that fixes the location of a target by finding missile threats in real time, targets with the means to effectively engage to destroy, and carries out the strike." (ROK Defense White Paper 2014 in EN pp. 60-63). KAMD system plans to intercept missiles targeting towards the South Korean territory. Korean Defense Ministry defines KAMD to be "consists of an early warning system, command and control system and intercept system." The ballistic missile early warning radar or Aegis radar will detect the enemy's missile launch, and this detection will be reported to the Korea Theater Missile Operations, and then the most fitted interceptor artillery battery will intercept the missile.

<sup>5</sup> Translation is from the author, and is not an official translation from the Office of the President.

Ultimately, President Roh Moo-hyun's strong determination to implement the transfer initiated official moves toward achieving such an objective.<sup>6</sup> In October 2005 at the 37<sup>th</sup> SCM (Security Consultative Meeting), both the Korean and the U.S. Defense Ministers agreed on the transfer to appropriately accelerate the transferring of wartime OPCON.<sup>7</sup> In September 2006 at the ROK-US Summit, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and U.S. President George W. Bush agreed upon the basic principle of transferring the wartime OPCON.<sup>8</sup> In February 2007, the Defense Ministers of both countries announced that the transfer was expected to be carried out on April, 17, 2012 and the Combined Forces Command (hereafter, 'CFC') will be dissolved.

After President Roh Moo-hyun's declaration that he will push forward with the wartime OPCON transfer generated stiff oppositions. A group of senior military elites composed of the most senior generals of Korea, who were Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff and Defense Ministers, issued an official statement on July 26, 2006, and the Korea Retired Generals and Admirals Association and Korea Veterans Association started their demonstration on

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<sup>6</sup> President Roh Moo-hyun and his team's preparation on self-reliant defense and wartime OPCON transfer plan started earlier even before his inauguration, however, the official meeting with the U.S. started from 2005 to execute the transfer.

<sup>7</sup> Established in 1968, ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) is an annual consultative body between ROK and US defense ministers discussing defense and security issues. More will be discussed in Chapter III. (Ministry of Defense, 2010)

<sup>8</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2010 (in EN) p. 48.

August 11, 2006.<sup>9</sup> The gist of their argument is that the wartime OPCON transfer will damage the ROK-US alliance, and eventually weaken Korea's deterrence against North Korea.

In line with the conservatives' reservation over President Roh's decision on the wartime OPCON transfer, President Lee Myung-Bak, as a presidential candidate, expressed his concerns on the issue and claimed that he would review whether the targeted year of 2012 is appropriate. He added that since the agreement has already been signed, renegotiation is difficult, but review of the transfer period - in light of the inter-Korean relations and the geopolitics of Northeast Asia – remains an option.<sup>10</sup> In June 2010, President Lee and President Obama agreed to delay the wartime OPCON transfer from 2012 to the end of 2015. An official reason for the delay was the deteriorating security situation of the Korean Peninsula, caused by North Korea's *Cheonan* warship attack in 2010, and nuclear tests and long-range missile launches in 2009.<sup>11</sup> Another reason was that year 2012 is a year when both South Korea, and the U.S. go through

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<sup>9</sup> *Donga Ilbo* July 26, 2006; see *Starflag Magazine* for official statement. <http://www.starflag.or.kr/>. (Accessed on May 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Presidential Candidate Lee Myung-bak's Press Conference held on November 6, 2007 at the Press Center. *Donga Ilbo*, November 6, 2007. <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20071106/8508421/1>. (Assessed on June 15, 2012). Presidential Candidate Lee Myung-bak said that if the U.S. does not think it is not helpful for their national interest, the alliance of yesterday may not continue on today, and his understanding of diplomacy is harmonizing national interest of both U.S. and Korea. By this conference, Lee showed the possibility of delaying the wartime OPCON and indirectly explained how the previous administration's decision did not fit to the national interest of both nations.

<sup>11</sup> *Cheonan warship sinking* is a tragedy caused by North Korea's torpedo attack on March 26, 2010 at 9:22 pm during its normal mission conduction near *Baengyeong Island*. This killed 40 navy soldiers and 6 were lost.

leadership changes, and also when North Korea declared to become a *Strong and Prosperous State*. President Lee and his team judged that it would be better to have the wartime OPCON transferred in a more stable situation. In addition to that, public opinions seemed to prefer delaying the wartime OPCON transfer.<sup>12</sup>

The current President Park Geun-hye administration started in 2013. She pledged not to delay the OPCON again during her presidential campaign but reversed such a pledge after she came into office.<sup>13</sup> In October 2014, both the Korean and the U.S. Defense Ministers agreed to postpone the transfer to the mid-2020s when Korea is expected to have its own Kill-Chain and Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) systems to deter North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.<sup>14</sup> Official statements included that Korea needs more preparation to effectively deter the North Korean threat and have the transfer done under more secure conditions.<sup>15</sup> Unlike her preceding administrations that laid out a specific timeline for the transfer, President Park Geun-hye administration refrained from deciding upon an exact date but rather placed a

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<sup>12</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2012, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> October 24, 2014. President announced her diplomacy, security, unification policy, and pledges on November 5, 2012 at *Saenuri* Party's Office. In her pledge, she said she will execute the wartime OPCON transfer according to the plan.

<sup>14</sup> *Yonhap News*. October 23, 2014

<sup>15</sup> *SBS News* . October 24, 2014.

‘condition’ for the transfer, shifting the character of the transfer plan from a ‘time-based’ transfer to a ‘condition-based’ one.<sup>16</sup>

## **(1) Initial Observations and Questions**

### ***Initial Observations***

When the debate started, three interesting points were detected. One, as far as the media can identify, former generals and senior military elites across the board were against the OPCON transfer. Two, distrust between the president and military surfaced. The president did not seem to respect the senior military elites advice, who are the so-called ‘experts’ in the field. Likewise, the military elite members - who are supposed to be strict with hierarchy - did not seem to properly respect the vision or value of the Commander-in-Chief (the President). Three, at least based on their comments, both sides seemed to agree on two major objectives in principle: deterrence against North Korea and preservation of the ROK-US alliance. Nonetheless, the aforementioned debates and delays suggested that despite sharing common principal arguments, the two sides were quite unsuccessful in bridging the gap between them.

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<sup>16</sup> *SBS News, CNB News*, October 24, 2014. In regards to the delay decision, there were conspiracies that the conservative President Lee and President Park always have had wanted to delay the wartime OPCON transfer and were only waiting for a cause to make such delay unlike their official statements as presidential candidates that they will keep the schedule of the agreement. This research, however, bases on the official statements of the government and the presidents in examining their intention on this matter. Presidential position is an official position that even if their intentions were to delay it, they cannot make a delay decision, if there are no persuasive reasons.

### ***Initial Questions***

Why were the senior military elites so unbendingly against the transfer? Indeed, the president, who has the supreme deciding power over war-related matters, proposed the transfer, which will enable South Korea to control operations during wartime. The senior military elites issued a statement against the Commander-in-Chief, arguing that the transfer decision will lead to dissolution of the CFC, collapse of the ROK-US alliance, and withdrawal of the U.S. forces in Korea. They emphasized the increased threat posed by the North Korean nuclear project, and missile threats. Besides, they pointed out that the transfer will require an immense amount of cost, because if Korea were to stand alone, it will need advanced intelligence system to overcome North Korea's intelligence ability and replace the U.S. troops in Korea.<sup>17</sup> Overall, the gist of the senior military group's main arguments lie on 'alliance, North Korean nuke, and cost.' Are these three elements the main reasons representing the senior military elites' position? Or are there other behind-the-scene causes that were not officially noticed? Do the official statements from the military provide enough information? How much does the characteristics of the military organization affect the senior military elites' decision?

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<sup>17</sup> *Donga Ilbo*, August 10, 2006 <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20060810/8338703/1>. (Accessed on May 15, 2015) This article explains the statement the former defense ministers and generals issued on August 10, 2006 at the Korean Veterans Association. They insist that such matter is related to the survival of the nation and its people, and the government should get consent from the National Assembly and the general public at large.

South Korea's 'wartime' OPCON issue was discussed in the past when President Roh Tae-woo raised the issue of 'peacetime' OPCON transfer. However, the major debate started during President Roh Moo-hyun's term. Opposition also existed when President Roh Tae-woo raised the issue of 'peacetime' OPCON transfer emphasizing 'self-reliant defense' in the late 1980s. But, it was not as formidable as that against the 'wartime' OPCON transfer. President Roh Tae-woo targeted, the 'peacetime' OPCON transfer to take place in 1994, and President Kim Young-sam completed the scheduled 'peacetime' OPCON transfer during his tenure. In contrast, the 'wartime' OPCON transfer-which President Roh Moo-hyun designed to be completed during his successor's term – has been delayed twice. Why did President Roh Moo-hyun's successors postpone his transfer plan? What are the core factors that affect the President's decision to execute the 'wartime' OPCON transfer or delay it? Do the official statements and answers explain the delay?

These questions indicate the salience of the wartime OPCON transfer discussion. The above backdrop, observations, and questions can be captured into the following main research question and two subset questions.

### ***Research Question***

The overarching question is why was the transfer not held in each President's tenure and delayed to the next, twice?

Under this question lies two subset questions.

- First subset question is regarding the military. Why were the senior military elites vehemently against the wartime OPCON transfer?
- Second subset question is regarding the president. Why the President, the Commander-in-Chief, was not able to override the military elites' opposition to the OPCON transfer?

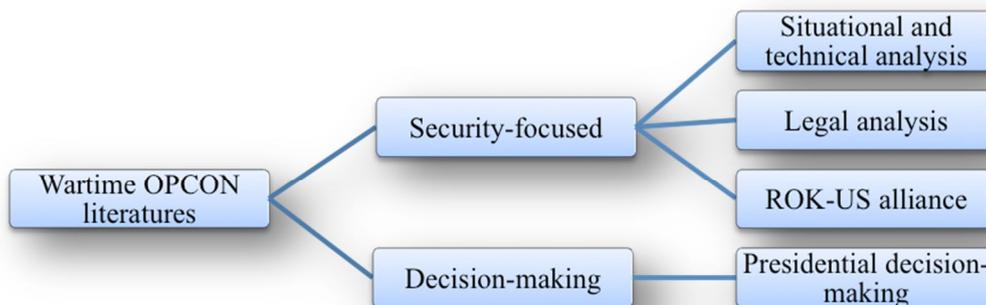
The answer to these questions will give implications to how do changes happen in the military. South Korea's wartime OPCON transfer is a case which civilian political leader initiated but eventually failed to be executed due to the reasons this research will explore.

### **(2) Literature Review on the Wartime OPCON**

With the research questions in mind, I looked up the wartime OPCON related literatures. As the wartime OPCON transfer is an empirical, military issue that has not occurred yet, the amount of theory-based literatures occupied only a small portion of the entire literatures on the topic.

Out of 350-400 literatures that are found based on keywords of OPCON, wartime Operational Control transfer, and CFC, more than two third are security-focused literatures. The literatures can be largely categorized into two major parts: security-focused literatures and decision-making literatures. Minor categories include media analysis of newspapers and opinions. Media analysis part will not be discussed in this research. I have put the categorization in Figure1.

**Figure 1. Wartime OPCON Transfer Related Literatures Categorization**



### ***Security-Focused Literatures***

The security-focused literatures can be further divided into three parts. First, there are studies that approach with a situational and technical analysis towards wartime OPCON, and studies that analyze the situation and propose

future plans for the current system.<sup>18</sup> Second, there are legal studies of the wartime OPCON. Third, there are researches that examine the wartime OPCON in the ROK-US alliance context, either historically or theoretically.

### **Situational and technical analysis**

Hwee-rhak Park and Jae-chul Kim are the representative scholars of security-focused literature who employed the situational and technical analysis.

<sup>19</sup> The gist of Hwee-rhak Park's main argument is the necessity of the CFC to maintain unity of command. Park (2010) notes that "If the CFC is dismantled, the ROK forces and the US forces should fight not in unity but in parallel in case of war...they would have difficulty in coordinating the objective, strategy and approach, if the conflict of interests or difference of opinions occurs between the two sides regarding the deterrence and conduct of war."<sup>20</sup> According to Park, unity of command worked well during the Korean War and the Iraq War

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<sup>18</sup> For books or articles written in Korean, only their official English title or English title translated by the author will be written in footnotes. Young-ho Kim, "The Impact of Wartime Operational Control Transfer and the Future Direction of South Korean Security Policy." *New Asia* 14, no. 4 (2007); Sung-ju Cho, "The Active Plan for the ROK-US Combined Coordination Organization after the Transfer of the Wartime Operation Control Authority," *Military History* 89 (2013): 389-413.

<sup>19</sup> Except for widely used and known names as the South Korean Presidents such as President Roh Moo-hyun, Lee Myung-bak, Park Geun-hye, all other Korean names will be written with the order of first name then last name just like other names referred in this dissertation. Thus, in this case, Hwee-rhak that is the first name comes first, and Park that is the last name follows after.

<sup>20</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, "The Transfer of Wartime Operational Control in Korea: History, Risks and Tasks from a Military Perspective," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 8, no. 2 (2010) : 328.

in 2003, but not during the Vietnam war nor the Afghanistan war in 2011 and this resulted in war failure.<sup>21</sup>

Young-sup Han and Sang-hyuck Jung (2015) argue that wartime OPCON transfer should not be discussed in the ‘national pride first’ or the ‘national defense first’ frame. They insist that the European nations had appointed US Commanders to be the NATO Commander during the Cold War period because the European nations chose practical benefit over national pride.<sup>22</sup> They conclude that Korea’s decision to postpone the decision was the optimal choice.<sup>23</sup>

Jae-chul Kim (2010) starts with a firm stance that the delay of wartime OPCON should not happen and Korea should surely take over the wartime OPCON. Kim stresses the readiness and preparation for this.<sup>24</sup> He argues that wartime OPCON is not a mere military matter but a very important national security one that affects ROK-US alliance, Northeast Asia’s balance of power, Korea-China cooperative relations, inter-Korea relations, and North Korean

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 338; for more understanding on unity of command and how it worked out for the aforementioned wars, see also Hwee-rhak Park, “The Transfer of Wartime Operational Control and Unity of Command” *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies* 81, (2008); “Transfer of Wartime Operational Control and Conduct of War: Re-establishment of Concept and Tasks,” *The Korean Journal of International Relations* 49, no.1 (2009).

<sup>22</sup> Young-sup Han and Sang-hyuck Jung, "Political, Economical, Military Analysis of the Wartime Operational Control Authority Transfer Issue: Theory, Evaluation, Countermeasures," *Journal of International Politics* 20, no. 1 (2015) : 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. pp. 16-32.

<sup>24</sup> Jae-chul Kim, “ROK-US Analysis for the Transition of Wartime Operational Control Authority and Korea’s Preparation,” *Asia Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010) : 119-146.

nuclear issues. He emphasizes the need for building an effective combined system for future defense and raises an issue with Korea's heavy dependence on the CFC for early detection systems, and information satellites and drones. Another emphasis point is that the government's strong support and will are indispensable to realizing this transfer deal. Kim stresses that the weak support from the government and lack of will have slowed down the preparation process.<sup>25</sup> However, he offers a modified perspective in his 2013 article, which examines the impact of perceptions toward national interests on decision making. He analyzed that core factors affecting the transfer decision – delay decision – re-delaying decision, are political military self-reliance, North Korea deterrence, North Korea's missile development, ROK-US alliance, and the effectiveness of ROK-US combined operations. Considering Korea's national interest, in the context of the 3<sup>rd</sup> nuclear test, he suggests that it is a reasonable choice to again delay the transfer deal.<sup>26</sup>

The first category literatures are based on an internal cost-benefit analysis. Though the authors do not explicitly mention such aspects they implicitly reveal their judgment on the benefits of delaying the transfer outweigh the cost of executing the transfer now. The literatures based on

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Jae-chul Kim, "Analysis of Changing Factors of Wartime Operational Control Authority Transfer Policy and Its Alternative: Focusing on National Interest of Korea and the US," *The Korean Association of Northeast Asia Studies* 69, (2013) : 183-204.

situational and technical analysis literatures are informative and educational as they offer much knowledge about wartime OPCON transfer and its consequences. They also reflect the senior military elites' position on the issue. However, the first category literatures are limited in addressing the arguments of those who stress national pride and military sovereignty. Most studies strongly state that 'damage to military sovereignty' is a misunderstanding. The CFC decision is made through the president and the military leadership of both countries.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, reading carefully through the lines, we can notice that these literatures also admit that the so-called the parallel system can not be an equal 50:50 one in which Korea exercises its rights fully. This is confirmed by the comments such as "full recovery of sovereignty can be restored."<sup>28</sup> They all acknowledge that Korea had a U.S.-dependent defense structure and joint defense is different from sole exercise of operations control.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> This is one of the core arguments from the senior military elites. The senior military elites contend that the argument of sovereignty invasion is an incorrect way of understanding the parallel system of CFC. Hwee-rahk Park, "Transfer of Wartime Operational Control and Conduct of War: Re-establishment of Concept and Tasks," *The Korean Journal of International Relations* 49, no.1 (2009).

<sup>28</sup> Young-sup Han and Sang-hyuck Jung, "Political, Economical, Military Analysis of the Wartime Operational Control Authority Transfer Issue: Theory, Evaluation, Countermeasures," *Journal of International Politics* 20, no. 1 (2015); Jae-chul Kim, "Analysis of Changing Factors of Wartime Operational Control Authority Transfer Policy and Its Alternative: Focusing on National Interest of Korea and the US," *The Korean Association of Northeast Asia Studies* 18, no. 4 (2013).

<sup>29</sup> Jae-chul Kim, "ROK-US Analysis for the Transition of Wartime Operational Control Authority and Korea's Preparation," *Asia Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010) : 119.

## Legal analysis

The other category of literatures is that examine the wartime OPCON from a legal perspective.<sup>30</sup> The two pieces that represent agreement with transfer and disagreement with transfer are respectively written by Gwang-chan Ahn and Jung-in Moon.<sup>31</sup> These literatures base on legal analysis, however, eventually lead into the conflict of security versus national sovereignty and military sovereignty, and national pride.

Gwang-chan Ahn's PhD Dissertation 'Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution: Focused on Operational Control in Korean Peninsula' in 2003 is one of the most quoted literatures in the wartime OPCON research. Ahn resorts to a combination of legal research and his experience with the army for many years and legal studies to analyze the legal aspect of the wartime OPCON debate. Ahn notes that the exercise of the Commander-in-Chief's supreme command over its own military forces is a necessary element to protect the national sovereignty of the nation. Thus, if the nation cannot exercise

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<sup>30</sup> Gwang-chan Ahn, "Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution: Focused on Operational Control in Korean Peninsula" (PhD diss., Dongkook University, 2003); Kuong-hwan Hwang, "The Constitutional Review of the Wartime Operational Control," *The Journal of Law* 15, no.1 (2007); Sang-hyun Lee, "Transfer of Wartime Operational Control and Legal-Diplomatic Issues for ROK-US Alliance." *Military Forum* 50 (2007); Jung-in Moon, "Delaying the Wartime OPCON Retrieval, What's the Problem?" *Naeileul Yeoneun Yeogsa* 58 (2015).

<sup>31</sup> Both Gwang-chan Ahn and Jung-in Moon worked as Director-level at the Office of the President. Former major general and Director of National Risk Management of the Office of the President Lee Myung-bak, Gwang-chan Ahn, interprets the Constitution national sovereignty from a security perspective that providing security is important for national sovereignty. Jung-in Moon, a scholar and Chairman of the Presidential Committee for Northeast Asia Cooperation Initiative of President Roh Moo-hyun administration interprets the Constitution from the military sovereignty perspective.

its supreme commandship to its nation's forces, then it cannot be regarded as a fully independent nation.<sup>32</sup> However, he argues that what is more important than 'sovereignty recovery' is 'ensuring security.'<sup>33</sup> He singles out a phrase in the Preamble of The Constitution of the Republic of Korea and the two main keywords from it: "To elevate the quality of life for all citizens and contribute to ... the common prosperity of mankind and thereby to ensure security, liberty and happiness for ourselves and our posterity forever" and more specifically two words "ensure security ... forever." Ahn stresses that ensuring security is the most immediately needed value in South Korea's situation than the full recovery of sovereignty value is. From a 'survival' perspective, and 'ensuring security', this concept is higher and broader in embracing the security concepts.<sup>34</sup> The main points of the article is that in legal terms, the Korean President's inability to solely exercising the wartime OPCON due to the U.S control over it may be an intrusion to South Korea's military sovereignty. However, from South Korea's standpoint, if we view national sovereignty as a concept of protecting the national and the citizens from threats, the U.S. having the wartime OPCON is not an invasion of national sovereignty but rather a way of protecting it more

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<sup>32</sup> Gwang-chan Ahn, "Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution: Focused on Operational Control in Korean Peninsula," 22.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 217.

<sup>34</sup>The Constitution of Republic of Korea. Korea Legislation Research Institute.  
<http://www.law.go.kr/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=61603&urlMode=engLsInfoR&viewCls=engLsInfoR#0000>  
(Accessed on March 2016).

effectively. Besides, Ahn understands how the people's pride was hurt when the OPCON issue was raised, but still he contends that national security matters should be considered rationally than emotionally.<sup>35</sup>

On the contrary, Jung-in Moon highlights military sovereignty. Article 74 (1) states that "the President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces under the conditions as prescribed by the Constitution and Act." The Command-in-Chief position has two categories: military administration and military command.<sup>36</sup> The military command is further divided into operations command and operations control. Thus, operational control is a distinct role of the President. Moon says that it is abnormal if the President cannot fully exercise its constitutional authority to command operations.<sup>37</sup> It is unacceptable as a sovereign nation to let the Commander of the U.S. troops of 27,000 in Korea to lead the 650,000 size Korean troops. For instance, what happens if the Commander ordered the ground forces to enter into Pyongyang and a few thousand Korean soldiers die in the battle? Then who will be responsible for this? The U.S, Commander made the decision to put the troops, but paradoxically, the

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<sup>35</sup> Gwang-chan Ahn, "Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution: Focused on Operational Control in Korean Peninsula."

<sup>36</sup> Military Command refers to managing the military power to attain the military goal. Thus this function includes planning military strategy, use of military power, operation planning and command and management. Military Administration refers to a function that builds, maintains, and manages military power to attain military goal. Thus it includes, planning defense policy, establish and enforce defense related legislations, resource acquisition, allocation, and management, and operation support.

<sup>37</sup> Jung-in Moon, "Delaying the Wartime OPCON Retrieval, What's the Problem?" *Naeileul Yeoneun Yeogsa* 58 (2015) : 16.

South Korean President has to be the one in charge of such casualties. Delaying the wartime OPCON is leaving the abnormal military sovereignty ruling as it is.<sup>38</sup>

The legal studies reinforce the opinions of those who are respectively for the transfer and against the transfer. It is a matter of choice whether one chooses to emphasize security or chooses national pride. This section of studies leaves room for more studies on how the perceived goals affect decision-making. Such differences in perception open up various ways of interpreting the Constitution and sovereignty. Different perspectives will continuously be addressed throughout this thesis. Ahn provides substantial amount of information on the history and development of the wartime OPCON and ROK-US relations and how such system has protected Korea. Meanwhile, Moon sheds light on how North Korea will perceive South Korea when the wartime OPCON transfer is done. While North Korea sees South Korea as a ‘puppet army’ of the U.S., it will feel more threatened by South Korea if the transfer is done.<sup>39</sup>

### **ROK-US alliance analysis**

The third category of literatures is the studies that analyze the wartime OPCON from the ROK-US alliance perspective, either historically or

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p.18.

theoretically. Many of them take a historical approach. These studies ponder upon the significant of the CFC by closely examining the development of OPCON and using examples from history.<sup>40</sup> Some others use the alliance model or the linkage and two-level game models.<sup>41</sup>

Most wartime OPCON-related studies provide the historical review of OPCON development. Otherwise it is difficult to explain why South Korea's OPCON is not in South Korea.<sup>42</sup> As many other, Yong-gu Chang and Wook Suh used the asymmetrical alliance models to explain the ROK-US alliance's development, but the two reached different conclusions.<sup>43</sup> Chang takes a historical approach explaining the development of South Korea's OPCON and

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<sup>40</sup> Representative literatures are Hwee-rhak Park, "The Impact of Dismantlement of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command on the United Nations Command: Policy Suggestions for the Republic of Korea," *New Asia* 19, no. 3 (2012); Jae-chul Kim, "A Role of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command and a Plan of Reinforcement of the ROK-US Combined Defense System," *Military Development & Research* 8, no 1. (2014).

<sup>41</sup> Representative literatures are Chan-baik No, "A Study on the Transfer of Wartime Operational Control Authority to ROK Army: the Focus on the Construction Scheme of their Military Coordination through the Consolidating ROK-US alliance," *The Korean Association of Northeast Asia Studies* 52, (2009); Jae-ik Song, "A Study on Variables Affecting the Korean-American Union and Operational Control of the Korean Army : Centering on Links between International and National Politics," *Military Development & Research* 6, (2012). Jae-ik Song uses James N. Rosenau's Linkage Politics Theory to examine South Korea's OPCON transfer development. Song argues that while Korea's national power was weak, the international factors affected OPCON but when a democratic system came into Korea, the voices to have military autonomy increased. However, the recent delay of the transfer shows, how the international dynamics still affect South Korea's OPCON transfer decision. South Korea needs to strengthen its political capability so that it can manage the international changes to South Korea's benefits.

<sup>42</sup> See Byung-hun Ryu, *ROK-US Alliance and OPCON* (Korean Veterans Association, 2007) to learn about ROK-US alliance and OPCON development. The author was the Korean representative for establishing the CFC. Byung-hun Ryu is a former general who had experienced three wars, the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, 6.25 Korean War, and Vietnam War written this book in 2007 after the debate of wartime OPCON transfer was heated up. He writes down how he negotiated with the U.S. in establishing the CFC and building an institutional framework for ROK-US alliance. This book is also one of the most quoted books for historical understanding of ROK-US alliance and South Korea's OPCON development. However, this book is not included in the literature review as I categorized it as biography.

<sup>43</sup> Glenn H Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 180-181.

quotes the classical asymmetrical alliance theory of James D. Morrow's which is structured on the concept of trade-offs between security and autonomy. He admits that the ROK-US relationship was asymmetrical and explains how South Korea traded security with autonomy from the beginning. The uniqueness of the ROK-US alliance is that the initial level of Korea's dependence on the U.S. has not decreased even though Korea experienced spectacular economic developments and an increase in military capability. The trade-off between security and autonomy did not seem to work in this case. In the 1990s, ROK-US alliance was making a frame of perpetual alliance, and in the 2000s, the alliance became more symmetrical than before.<sup>44</sup> Chang argues that expanding military autonomy is important but at the same time, South Korea should simultaneously maintain its tight alliance with the US, thus a skillful diplomatic and military approach is needed.<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, Wook Suh applies the security and autonomy model to President Roh Tae-woo's administration when President Roh Tae-woo pursued the peacetime OPCON transfer. Suh argues that under President Roh Tae-woo administration, the government pursued the transfer to receive more autonomy trading with security as South Korea's national power had strengthened and the

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<sup>44</sup> James D. Morrow, "Alliance and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (1991) : 907-911.

<sup>45</sup> Yong-gu Chang, *Military Autonomy of Korea in the ROK-US Alliance* (Paju: Korean Studies Information Service System, 2014).

public desired for autonomy. For President Roh Moo-hyun, Suh argues that the Roh Moo-hyun administration pursued the wartime OPCON transfer in order to overcome the fear that came from the possibility of U.S. abandonment and Korea's entrapment. During Roh Moo-hyun administration, the U.S. was making changes to its foreign policy due to the 9.11 attack. Such changes toward strategic flexibility occurred unilaterally by the U.S. reduction or relocation of the U.S. forces abroad, and request for its allies' increase in defense share. Korea had to deal with this type of fear of abandonment. The fear of entrapment existed as well. When North conducted its nuclear test in 2003, the administration became concerned about the chance of being entrapped by the strong stance of the U.S. against North Korea.<sup>46</sup>

The existing ROK-US alliance literatures go through the general history of the wartime OPCON, and use alliance models to apply them to South Korea's wartime OPCON transfer case. However, the limitations of these analyses on the alliance are that they do not go beyond the security versus autonomy (national pride) argument. Such a limitation of these literatures reconfirmed the need for further in-depth researches. Nonetheless, the historical analysis itself is valuable in that it provides the grounds for future studies in the field.

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<sup>46</sup> Wook Suh, "Alliance Model and South Korea's Operational Control Redemption Policy: Comparison of President Roh Tae Woo and Roh Moo Hyun's Government" (PhD diss., Kyungnam University, 2015).

### ***Summary***

The situational analysis, legal analysis, and alliance analysis literatures show a similar pattern of the contrast between those who are for and against the transfer. These literatures reveal the authors' own judgments of cost-benefit analysis. The distant gap between the security argument of the military, and the national pride and military sovereignty argument of those who support the transfer has been quite wide. However, whether the literatures is on the security side, or the sovereignty side, the difficulty of these studies lies in the fact that the studies were conducted by presuming future consequences of the decision. War matters are uncertain and can be proven only after a tragic and disastrous outcome takes place. Based on, literature review, the security argument seems clearer but at the same time, the sovereignty argument is not nonsensical, either. But there has to be a framework that can look beyond these arguments which were officially stated in public, in order to understand why the senior military elites were severely against the decision of the Commander-in-Chief.

### ***Decision-Making Focused Literatures: Factors affecting Presidential decision-making***

Aside from security-focused literatures, another part of literatures in the field are decision-making related studies. Factors that affected President Roh

Moo-hyun administration and his staff's decision making were examined.<sup>47</sup> Presidential decision-making is a broad subject that needs to be examined through multi-dimensional approaches.<sup>48</sup> The factors that may affect the decision range from domestic politics, international dynamics, personality factors, to risk and uncertainty.<sup>49</sup> Bo-seung Moon (2015) examines how perception of threat has affected the decision.<sup>50</sup> Hwee-rhak Park (2014), Sang-joong Park (2013), and Sang-won Kim (2011) observe that misperception and groupthink concepts were found to be the deciding factors in the wartime OPCON transfer decision-making.

Hwee-rhak Park brings in the concept of misperception from Robert Jervis and John Stoessinger to explain President Roh Moo-hyun administration's perception on the wartime OPCON.<sup>51</sup> Hwee-rhak Park argued that President

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<sup>47</sup> Sang-joong Park and Chan Ko, "Analysis of Key Factors in Operational Control Transition Resolution using Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)," *Journal of Digital Convergence* 9, no.6 (2011) : 153-163; Sang-joong Park, "A Study On Political Decision Of Wartime Operational Control Transition: Focused On Policy Stream Model," (PhD diss., Seoul Science Technology University, 2013); Sang-won Kim, "Foreign Policy Decision and President's Belief System: Focused on the Decision Making of Wartime Operational Control." (PhD diss., Hannam University, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> A large range of studies cover this area, from classical organizational theories, bureaucratic politics theories, political psychology, to personality studies. Valerie M. Hudson's *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*. (MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013) gives a broad overview of the foreign policy analysis theories.

<sup>49</sup> For an overview of risk and decision-making in foreign policy, see William A. Boettcher. *Presidential Risk Behavior in Foreign Policy: Prudence or Peril?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> Bo-seung Moon, "A Study on the Factors of Change in Decision of the Transfer of Operational Control in terms of Perceived Net-threat," *Korean Journal of Military Art and Science* 71, no. 1 (2015).

<sup>51</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, "An Analysis and Implications of Misperception on South Korean Defense Policies: Cases of the Wartime Operational Control and the Missile Defense," *Journal of Parliamentary Research* 9, no. 1 (2014) : 301-332. Also see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). John G. Stoessinger. *Why Nations Go to War*. 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2011).

Roh Moo-hyun administration's misperception of military sovereignty upon wartime OPCON, and Korean general public's misperception of the U.S. participation in Korean missile development transfer are the two examples that incurred waste of time and efforts due to the policy decision maker's misperception or the general public misunderstanding.<sup>52</sup> Park emphasized that wartime OPCON may be a relatively new terminology to the general public, but operational control is a common one terminology used by most militaries in the world. Any military official is likely to know the definition and limitations of this word. It means that there is control related to operations and it is a temporary system used for the sake of military operation's convenience. Thus it is not an invasion of sovereignty.<sup>53</sup> Park emphasizes that CFCs dissolution is dangerous for Korea's security situation, and in another article, in line with the misperception, he insist that President Roh Moo-hyun's staff was too emotional. Such a characteristic greatly hindered their making a rational decision to find the most beneficial policy for Korea.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, "An Analysis and Implications of Misperception on South Korean Defense Policies: Cases of the Wartime Operational Control and the Missile Defense," 302. According to Park, due to President Roh Moo-hyun administration's misperception, instead of focusing on strengthening Korea-US joint defense posture towards North Korean nuclear threats, the Korean military and defense ministry wasted time on building Task Force team for wartime OPCON transfer or future combined forces office. Also because the general public has misperceived that building missile system was building a US missile defense system, this naturally delayed time for building a Korean missile system to respond to the North Korean nuclear missiles.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 312.

<sup>54</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, "An Analysis on the Application of Irrational Elements in Discussions Regarding the Transition of Wartime OPCON Authority and Lessons from it." *Journal of Patriots and Veterans Affairs* 13, no. 4 (2014).

Sang-joong Park (2013) speculated that President Roh and his core staff group suffered from groupthink symptoms. He argued that the wartime OPCON transfer decision was a result of such a decision error.<sup>55</sup> Park uses Kingdon's three stream policy window model, Janis' Groupthink theory, and expert group's perception survey to conclude that during the Roh Moo-hyun administration, the President and the non-military civilian advisors' groupthink gave birth to the OPCON transfer decision.<sup>56</sup> For the problem stream, he put the level of ROK army's control for OPCON, the US army's strategic flexibility request, and the CFC's achievements and problem; for the policy stream, he used NSC's transfer first and military group's condition first; and for politics stream, he placed the progressive Roh Moo-Hyun government, the President's strong will, large opposition party, and concerns for North Korea's provocation.

Sang-won Kim (2011) delves deeper into the President's personal belief system, and how President Roh's upbringing and belief system have affected his decision over the wartime OPCON transfer.<sup>57</sup> Kim builds up from an established area of personality studies of Presidents that started from Alexander George and others.<sup>58</sup> Kim (2011) discusses how President Roh's belief systems forced

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<sup>55</sup> Sang-Joong Park, "A Study On Political Decision Of Wartime Operational Control Transition: Focused On Policy Stream Model" (PhD diss., Seoul Science Technology University, 2013).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Sang-won Kim, "Foreign Policy Decision and President's Belief system: Focused on the Decision Making of Wartime Operational Control"

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

significant political topics such as security, unification, and other foreign policy matters to be concluded with lack of expertise knowledge and objectivity, eventually with an irrational choice.<sup>59</sup>

As seen from above, these studies provide a platform to deal with the decision making process. They also reflect the senior military elites' argument that the transfer is a premature decision. These studies focused on the emotional or personal aspect of President Roh Moo-hyun administration, but in policy making, at least in the official form, there will be other reasons such as international or other domestic factors affecting the decision. Thus, adding President Roh's national agenda and policy vision to this personal and emotional factor will enable a balanced view in analyzing the personal factor's impact on decision making. Just like how the military side thought of President Roh and his team, President Roh Moo-hyun and his administration also considered the military to be irrational in decision-making when it comes to the issues on the ROK-US alliance and the CFC. Thus a balanced framework to analyze each decision making process is needed.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

### *Limitation of Previous Studies*

The existing literatures on wartime OPCON debate is skewed towards the security frame as most studies reflect the senior military elites' argument of national security, deterrence against North Korean nuclear threats, and the importance of ROK-US alliance. Even with the presidential decision making studies, the concluding logic supports the arguments of senior military elites. While the presidential decision making literatures provide a platform to look into the president's decision on the wartime OPCON, there are no decision-making literatures that looked inside of the senior military elites' mind and situation to understand their way of approaching this problem.

Is not there another way to view the senior military elites' decision other than examining the security argument? Is not there another way to view the Presidents decision making on this matter? The alternative way to tackle this problem is to broaden the scholarship by encompassing different disciplines. I suggest using organizational approaches in analyzing both the senior military elites and presidential decision making to delve into what lies beyond the official statements provided by the governments and organizations. This will provide a new perspective and a balanced viewpoint regarding the senior military elites argument, and the presidents' decision.

## **2. Research Aim and Scope**

### **(1) Research Objective**

Having the background, question, and literature review in mind, this study aims to take a new approach in viewing South Korea's wartime OPCON transfer debate. The research will provide a theoretical framework to explain the salient case of South Korea's wartime OPCON transfer debate. The theoretical approach will be taken from an organizational perspective that combines theories of decision-making, sociology, psychology and economics.<sup>60</sup> While most literatures were already tilted toward security reasons, this systematic approach will present a balanced view in understanding the senior military elites' decision. The decision making of the senior military elites and presidents will be examined. It will scrutinize the factors that affected the way by which the President made the decision or delayed the decision. It will also answer the factors that affected the senior military elites' decision to defy what the Commander-in-Chief has suggested.

#### ***Research Goal***

- To make it clear, this paper does not intend to find out whether the wartime OPCON transfer decision is right or wrong or whether it should be done or not.

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<sup>60</sup> This does not mean the organizational perspective will deal with each discipline but it is to indicate that the nature of organizational approaches entails combining theories from sociology, economics, and psychology.

- This research aims to provide a theoretical and systematic perspective from an organizational perspective in analyzing the senior military elites decision-making and the Presidential decision-making over the wartime OPCON transfer. By going beyond the security-sovereignty dichotomous approach, this study will provide an alternative approach to the existing researches, and a comprehensive overview of the transfer debate.
- This research contributes to empirical studies on wartime OPCON transfer debate by conducting in-depth interviews with senior military elites, security policy advisors, and experts in the field. These interviews contribute to the research enabling me to overcome the face value of the official statements and documents by highlighting the nuances of the policy formulation process.
- Through the analysis on the decision-making, this research is expected to provide the learnt lessons from the study and implications on civil-military relations and political leadership.

Unlike the previous literatures, this study takes a theoretical and organizational approach in analyzing wartime OPCON transfer and the senior military elites' behavior. While the study of the president's decision-making is an elaboration or development from the existing studies, the decision-making study over the senior military elites is a significant contributing factor as it will be the first study to do so. This study will introduce a frame that combines existing theories from defense studies, foreign policy studies, organization studies, decision-making studies, economics, and psychology. This research has

a high potential of academic contribution, since it adds to the literature of decision-making and studies on senior military elites.

## **(2) Research Scope**

The history of South Korea's OPCON started from the division of the Korean Peninsula and the Korean War. However, it was during President Roh Tae-woo administration when the transfer debate started. By 1994, the peacetime and wartime was divided. After the peacetime OPCON was transferred, wartime OPCON transfer was to be executed in the following administrations. But it fizzled out until President Roh Moo-hyun came into office and raised the issue.

To focus specifically on the wartime OPCON transfer debate, this study examines from President Roh Moo-hyun administration (2003-2008) to President Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) to President Park Geun-hye administration (2013- of end of 2015). The area of focus will be on the Korean Peninsula. Though the wartime OPCON's counterpart is the U.S., the research will be limited to South Korea, as this problem concentrates on decision-making of the senior military elites and the presidents.

### **(3) Research Methodology**

#### ***Primary Research Source: Field Research***

For field research, this study conducts an in-depth interview with senior military elites both those in office and retired ones. Military professionals who influence public policy include those who are on active duty in the government, but also retired military professionals.<sup>61</sup> In that sense, my definition of senior military elites will cover from the senior military elites above the rank of major or lieutenant commander to the most senior retired general.

Interview with the military personnel was not easy because the military itself is a very conservative and closed organization. 33 people were interviewed and among them 23 were senior military elites. 10 policy advisors and security experts were also interviewed to examine the decision-making of the Presidents. Most interviews were conducted from June 2015 to August 2015, while some others were conducted until the end of 2015. The interviews helped me articulate and sharpen the theoretical approach. The significance of this study lies in the interviews with policy advisors and senior military elites who are quite cautious about, disclosing, their opinions. Details of the interview procedures are discussed in the research design section.

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<sup>61</sup> William J. Taylor Jr., "Military Professionals in Changing Times," *Public Administration Review* 37, no. 6 (Nov.- Dec., 1977) : 636.

Due to the conservative nature of the military and their elites, full names of the interviewees will not be disclosed but the date of the interview will be noted to verify the authenticity of the interviews. It should be noted that the interviews were conducted in Korean, and the contents were translated to English for the purpose of this study. Senior military elites mainly refer to the generals. The interviewees' current age ranges from early 40s to late 80s. This paper assumes that in a cohesive organization like the military, homogenous leadership characteristics will prevail due to repetition of leadership isomorphism. Thus, this study will not explain the generational gap.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Secondary Research Source: Literatures***

The research will go through an extensive literature review on official government reports and documents, presidential speeches, short columns and editorials by military officers or military related opinion leaders, and news reports, and also literatures that deal with theories on decision-making and organizations.

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<sup>62</sup> Organizations demonstrate commonalities, even if organizations operate in different fields. See the following studies that explain more about isomorphism. Byung-Jun Jeon, "Isomorphism and Inertia of Leadership," *Korean Journal of Industrial Relations* 11, no. 2 (2001); Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Organizations and Organization Theory* (Boston: Pitman, 1982); Paul DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Collective Rationality and Institutional Isomorphism in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (1983).

### **3. Structure of the Dissertation**

To analyze the senior military elites' and presidents decision-making and behavior over the wartime OPCON debate, this dissertation is structured as follows.

Chapter I introduces the topic of this research. The wartime OPCON debate and its background and context are discussed. Also, initial observations, and research questions of why the wartime OPCON transfer was delayed twice, and research goals are proposed.

Chapter II examines the theoretical basis and research design. As the existing literatures on wartime OPCON was not able to explain what lied beyond the official statements from the president and senior military elites and answer why each side stretched their arguments to criticize the other to be irrational, this research examines decision-making and organizational theories, which provide theoretical underpinnings. The research design is also proposed.

Chapter III discusses the OPCON in details. The evolution of the OPCON and current debates demonstrates the President's and senior military elites' decision-making dynamics and the factors affecting the decision-making the process.

Chapter IV analyzes the interview results and investigates the military opposition at a deeper level. This chapter has the crux of this research. Interview

results from the senior military elites show that while North Korean nuke, ROK-US alliance, cost, and inter-service rivalries were main factors affecting the transfer delay decision, inside the reasons, a clear status quo bias exists beneath the surface of their attitudes. These biases are directly linked with the organizational resistance.

Chapter V deals with the Presidential decision-making. Each president is analyzed in his or her three roles: the Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and Political Leader. Closer examination on the factor under Commander-in-Chief demonstrates that the constant opposition from the military has affected the Presidential decision heavily. The factors under Executive Head - which are major security concerns regarding North Korea's provocations- and factors under Political Leader - general public opinion on the wartime OPCON transfer, political vision and political constituency of the president - seemed to be the official reasons for delay.

Chapter VI examines the findings of the research, implications for the political leadership and will. The results from the research indicate that the Military and the President both will not be able to make change for the short-term due to the organizational and structural reasons. While the organizational reasons lead the decision maker to not change, political leadership and military morale that may go beyond such barriers is reviewed as a lesson from the

research. In conclusion, this dissertation ends with the limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Portions of Chapter II, III, and IV appeared in Seoyeon Yoon's article: "South Korea's Wartime Operational Control Transfer Debate: From an Organizational Perspective," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 20, no. 2 (2015) : 89-108

## **CHAPTER II.**

# **Theoretical Approaches and Research Design**

Chapter II provides the theoretical foundation to answer the research question and complement the missing parts from the existing literatures, and the research design for this study.

The existing literatures were limited to the dichotomous approach of security versus sovereignty frame, and security-focused literatures that reflect the military's argument. In addition to that, the debate reached to a point where each side blamed the other's arguments to be irrational or emotional.

Thus in order to understand why the senior military elites were unbendingly against the wartime OPCON transfer, and why the Presidents seem to find difficulty in overriding the senior military elites opinions, this study plans to examine what has affected the decision-making for the senior military elites and the presidents. Such frames will allow this study to have a balanced and systematic perspective on the matter.

For the senior military elites' decision-making, I will look into the studies of organizations and additionally investigate the characteristics of

military, and for the presidents' decision-making, I study the President's decision-making on use of force literatures.<sup>64</sup>

This chapter consists of three parts. First, the decision-making model for the senior military elites' transfer decision is discussed, and second, the decision-making model for the presidents' transfer decision is discussed. Third, in order to understand the dynamics between the military and the civilian leader for the issues of change such as the wartime OPCON transfer debate, studies on military change are discussed. The wartime OPCON transfer debate cannot be explained without examination on the nexus between the military and the president. Under wartime OPCON transfer which is a 'change,' the military and president go through initiation, resistance, and accommodation to change. Literatures on military change are discussed because of such reasons. With that, the research design for this study is proposed.

## **1. Decision Making Theory**

While OPCON-related literatures provide information through literatures on situational, technical, military analysis, historical and legal approaches, they do not explain the decision-making process of the Military

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<sup>64</sup> Among the six major decision-making models, which are rational choice, bounded rationality, governmental politics, organizational behavior model, groupthink, prospect theory, this dissertation analyzes the military decision-making is based on the organizational behavior model, and the presidents decision-making is based on bounded rationality.

and the Presidents. Delving into the decision-making theories enables this research to look beyond the official statements, and provide in-depth reasons why the senior military elites were against the transfer and presidents were not able to override the military's opposition.

What was needed for the senior military elites decision-making is to find a new way to examine the senior military elites' security argument in opposing the transfer decision. As I propose to take an organizational perspective, I will look into the characteristics of military organization because the senior military elites arguments were based as a group not as individual representatives. In addition to that, the unique culture of the Korean army is examined. Even though many military organizations have similar characteristics due to their clear function to protect their people and win wars, the different historical, economic, political, social context may drive differences in military organizations across countries.

Here in the following section, I will use Suzanne Nielsen's categorization of viewing military as a large, federal bureaucracy, and special mission organization. According to Nielsen, the peacetime military change is difficult due to three organizational status of military.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Suzanne C. Nielsen, "Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2003).

What was needed for the presidents' decision-making was a broader view in analyzing the factors affecting the presidents' policy formulation. The previous literature reviews focused heavily on the personal factor of the president and his team. For the Presidents decision-making, I will use Charles Ostrom and Brian Job's categorization in analyzing the factors affecting decision-making. Ostrom and Job view President with its three roles, Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and Political Leader. This frame gives a balanced view in analyzing the decision- making.

### **(1) Military's Decision Making**

In her in her Ph.D. Dissertation on *Preparing War During Peacetime And The Dynamics Of Military Reform,*' Suzanne Nielsen analyzes the existing literatures and studies of organizations and military institution, and gives three categories as the military organizations' features: large organization, federal bureaucracy, and military culture. <sup>66</sup> According to Nielsen, because of these three characteristics, the military institutions face difficulties in making changes.

Nielsen's two categories - large organization and federal bureaucracy - are built-up from Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow's Organizational

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-15.

Behavior Model.<sup>67</sup> I will build up on Nielsen's model by elaborating the parts that is significantly related to the Korean wartime OPCON case. For military culture, the particular nature of Korea and its circumstances are heavily discussed as their influence on decision-making is high. With such a development, I will draw the possible implications and biases from what the military organization may have related to the senior military elites' wartime OPCON transfer decision.<sup>68</sup>

Figure 2 gives a snapshot of how my categorization and elaboration look like in conceptualizing the characteristics of military organization. While the military has three features from an organizational perspective, each feature can be specifically examined. A large organization has Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and large organization leaders have a tendency to stay with the status quo. And the status quo bias, which is a form of psychological commitment, can be revealed with sunk cost effect, anchoring effect, loss

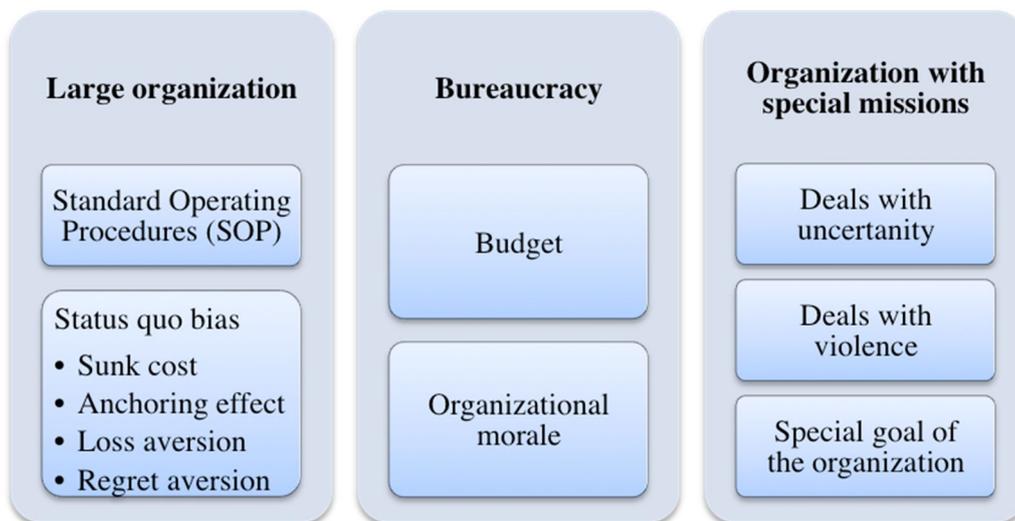
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<sup>67</sup> Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (New York: Longman, 1999), 143-196

<sup>68</sup> Nielsen, "Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform." Nielsen's main research is to examine cases of between the end of the Vietnam War and the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the U.S. army in the 1950s; the French army between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I; the British army between World War I and World War II; and the German Army between World War I and World War II, to see how particular innovation, doctrinal change alone, civil-military relations, technology, or other leadership factors worked out for change. Thus, the categorization, I use here is not her main research design but her categorization of understanding military institution. Nielsen's study finds out that uniformed leaders within military organizations are key to the process of military reform. It is the civilian political leaders who interpret the needs of international circumstances, and domestic politics and economics. This eventually shapes the military budgets that impacts military organization and the boundaries where the organization can operate. However, it is the military leaders who take an important role that impacts the contents of the military reform and manage the external challenges and constraints.

aversion, and regret aversion. Military is also a federal bureaucracy that has to deal with budget and organizational morale of the organization. Military organization has a special mission goal with special nature that has to deal with uncertainty and violence. Each category is examined in details.

**Figure 2. Categorization on Features of Military Organizations**



***Large Organization and Military Change***

Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow’s view on large organizations articulates the elements that military organizations have. According to Allison and Zelikow’s Organizational Behavior Model, as the government has a bounded rationality it cannot strive for maximizing its performance and utility and it can at best have ‘satisfaction.’ Such bounded rationality produces

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and when an event occurs, for foreign policy, the foreign policy follows the procedures. These parts of SOPs make the organization to function.<sup>69</sup>

### **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

SOPs are the “reliable performance of critical tasks and associated compliance with targets and constraints.” The SOPs include rules of thumb that a large number of individuals use and are simple enough for many to apply and use. However the “standard” change is slow. In large organizations, SOPs may make the organization appear formal, sluggish, or inappropriate, but most SOPs are “grounded in the incentive structure of the organization or even in the norms of the organization or the basic attitudes, professional culture, and operating style of its members”.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, if the SOPs have been instituted for a long time, change is even more difficult. Applying it to South Korea’s wartime OPCON case, we should consider that the CFC system was established in 1978 and the war operating related systems were built through this procedure, and have become the standard way of approaching it.

As Graham Allison argues, in large organizations, “less as deliberate choices and more as outputs of large organizations functioning according to

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<sup>69</sup> Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 169.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

standard patterns of behavior.”<sup>71</sup> In terms of organizational view, structural systems, norms, and standard operating procedures are the main causes that let military organization resist innovation. Usually the structural mechanisms will resist against the change. Unless the structure changes, change is difficult.

### **Status quo bias**

Allison also argues that the interests of the decision-makers may affect the leaders to have a status quo favoring decision. Looking more into William Samuelson and Richard Zeckhauser’s Status Quo Bias discovery provides an insight for military organizations. Organization leaders have a tendency to show status quo bias. Samuelson and Zeckhauser, in their 1988 study, noted that decision makers have a tendency to stick to the status quo.<sup>72</sup> From the decision maker’s perspective, rationally thinking, if the transition cost of switching exceeds the efficiency gain of the alternative, it is better to keep the status quo. Also, as there is uncertainty, decision makers keep the status quo.

Explaining the sunk cost, Edward Conlon and Judi Parks find personal responsibility as one of the factors affecting sunk cost effect. According to Conlon and Parks, the person who is responsible for the failure has a tendency

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.143

<sup>72</sup> William Samuelson and Richard Zeckhauser, "Status Quo Bias in Decision Making." *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 1, no. 1 (1988).

to select information that justifies the outcomes of previously made decisions than select information that focuses on future gains. Those who are accountable for the failure, therefore, have a tendency to show the sunken cost effect.<sup>73</sup>

Status quo inertia is also caused by cognitive misperceptions so called loss aversion. Decision makers will have the status quo as their reference point in viewing the decision on selecting the alternative, and this may cause the loss to be evaluated larger than the gain.<sup>74</sup> Another cognitive misperception is termed anchoring. Anchoring effect refers to sticking to the initially suggested selection or the status quo. Individuals will not accept new information or only use partial information especially when it is an overwhelming task to analyze the pros and cons of suggested plans.<sup>75</sup> Another is regret avoidance. People have a tendency to avoid regretting over their decisions, which may fail. Thus, individuals rather remain in inaction to adhere to the social norms than make a new decision and regret later. “Individuals often find that the path of least resistance is to conform to the institutional status quo- be it company policy, standard operating procedure, or the social norm- whether or not this constitutes an optimal decision in the circumstances.”<sup>76</sup> Finally, individuals prefer the

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<sup>73</sup> Edward J. Conlon and Judi M. Parks, "Information Requests in the Context of Escalation," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 72, no. 31 (1987) : 344.

<sup>74</sup> Samuelson and Zeckhauser, "Status Quo Bias in Decision Making," 34.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p.38.

status quo because they desire to feel in control.<sup>77</sup> One prefers the situation in which one feels in control.

Samuelson and Zeckhauser argue that status quo bias is pervasive and people have a strong tendency for status quo inertia. Status quo bias is a phenomenon that happens for decision makers. Though the decision makers in their thoughts think rationally, a bias tendency occurs frequently. Sunk cost, loss aversion, regret aversion, and self-perception theory all are in consistence with the bias.

Applying this to a large organization like the military and the South Korea's wartime OPCON case, the CFC system and its SOPs will be resistance to change, and the psychological commitment that the Korean military have made will be causes for status quo bias.

### ***Federal Bureaucracy and Military Change***

Nielsen refers to James Wilson's studies on the military in Bureaucracy to articulate the elements that the military organizations have.<sup>78</sup> Wilson points out the unique constraints of federal bureaucracies that make government executives different from those of private firms. Wilson argues that government executives cannot allocate production factors nor even set their own goals. In

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.41.

<sup>78</sup> Nielsen, "Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform," 11-13.

Wilson's words, "control over revenues, productive factors, and agency goals are all vested in an important degree in entities external to the organization – legislatures, courts, politicians, and interest groups."<sup>79</sup> So for the federal executive to execute change, political support is important. Only with political support will the federal executive be able to obtain the needed resources, for example budget, to maintain the organization, and also manage the organization as needed.

Nielsen quotes to emphasize the complexity of federal bureaucracy. Richard Stubbing observed the complication of the U.S. national security strategy and defense program formulation dynamics. While the congressmen want to make programs in their state or districts whether it is effective or not, industry officials favor sales and profits regardless of government and taxpayers, and the military officials focus on promotion and advancement.<sup>80</sup> Stubbing also argues that the US Secretaries of Defense need to remain in a good relationship with the White House, Congress, and the military services to effectively serve their role. Thus, for the defense minister or the top military leader to effectively maintain the military organization and manage the organization, they also need to juggle well with the politics going on with the federal bureaucracy.

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<sup>79</sup> James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1989), 115.

<sup>80</sup> Richard A. Stubbing and Richard A. Mendel, *The Defense Game: An Insider Explores the Astonishing Realities of America's Defense Establishment* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), xii; Nielsen, "Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform," 13.

The intertwined governmental networks, which work as a check and balance mechanism, also make it difficult to institute change. Wilson points out that key tasks of a federal executive are keeping maintenance of their organization. In addition to capital and personnel, he argues that political support is critical. Political support enables military organization to execute change when they perceive that change is needed.<sup>81</sup>

### **Budget**

In addition to the complicated nature of the bureaucracy and its tug of wars within the bureaucracy to protect its benefits, cost and organizational morale simplify the importance of the bureaucratic features.

Halperin notes, “One of the truisms about bureaucracy is that it resists change.”<sup>82</sup> Also he mentions how organizations with large budgets face difficulties in making changes. Halperin notes “organizations with expensive capabilities are particularly concerned about budget decisions and about budgeting implications of policy decision.” ... “The armed service, for example, is responsible for creating and maintaining very expensive military forces.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, 181.

<sup>82</sup> Morton H. Halperin and Priscilla A. Clapp, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 357.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

## **Organizational morale**

Military is a bureaucratic organization. The members of the organization will desire to go to higher ranks and each would have to make distinguished devotion to get promotion. For this, the work routines, patterns of association, information channels, and predictable services are needed. Also, as a bureaucracy, the organization needs to maintain its influence and support from the government organizations and assembly. It is all related to managing revenues, productive factors, legislatures, courts, politicians, and interest groups.<sup>84</sup>

Military organization leaders consider organization morale. The organization becomes effective when the members of the organization are highly motivated. For the members to be motivated, organization should have a stable existence, and let the members know their job is a meaningful one that promotes the national interests. Also, the members will be motivated, when future opportunities for advancement and promotion to top positions are open. In a nutshell, leaders would not be pleased with contraction of size.<sup>85</sup> As leaders of an organization, especially a hierarchical organization like the military, organizational morale becomes critical. Any change that may contract the size

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<sup>84</sup> Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, 221.

<sup>85</sup> Halperin and Clapp, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, 54.

or weaken the military capacity, or affect the promotion pattern or budget will not be welcomed.

Thus, because of budget consideration and organizational morale, organizational leaders' priority becomes short-term accomplishments or budget increase than long-term benefits of the organization. Career officials would first consider the effect on budget increase when there is a proposal.<sup>86</sup> Also, career officials who become head of the organization, such as the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, calculate the national interest based on the organizational interest of the service they belong to.<sup>87</sup>

The above analysis that military organization is a large organization and bureaucratic organization shed light on why changes to standard procedures are difficult. Some have asked are not the generals the hawks who would even make nationalistic comments to defend the nation? Understanding the military organization and its characteristics as a large bureaucratic organization will answer why military armed forces are not as bellicose as people expect. These characteristics rather prove that the military is not idiosyncratically nationalistic but the military has features that make them to be analyzed as a unit of government or organization. Military is not an abstract organization that is motivated by bellicose or nationalistic interests but is a large and bureaucratic

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p .54

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p.61.

organization operated by such that military policies or decision should be understood in that light.

### ***Special Mission's Organization and Military Change***

#### **Uncertainty and violence**

While institutional resistance causes the large and federal bureaucracy features, there is a feature that comes within the organization.<sup>88</sup> Nielsen points out two features. First, the military organization deals with uncertainty. It is hard to make change and argue that it will enhance probability of victory in war. Even if the military prepares its best during peacetime, whether the preparation was working well or not can only be discovered after a battle occurs.<sup>89</sup> Second, the military organization operates in an environment of violence.<sup>90</sup> In terms of weapons, the leaders will prefer the “tried-and-true” ones, and strategies that do not put the soldiers' lives at risk.<sup>91</sup>

#### **Korean military's mission**

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<sup>88</sup> Nielsen, “Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform” 14.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>90</sup> Kurt Lang. "Military Organizations." In *Handbook of Organizations*, edited by James G. March. (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co, 1965), 838

<sup>91</sup> Nielsen, “Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform,” 15. Nielsen's examples for the weapons system selection is that when the commanders chose M1 Abrams Tank for the Persian Gulf, they hesitate to choose a lighter armored vehicles made with new technologies and systems.

Nielsen's two features are common for all military organizations. But in this elaborated section, the focus is on the Korean military and how its special missions and nature are described. Obstacles to change may come from the unique culture and role of the military.

The Korea Military Academy indicates that the goals and characteristics of military organization as following: during peacetime, the goal of military organization is to absolutely perfectly prepare military exercise to defend the nation in case of war. Characteristics of military are that it is rigid, values norms, has standardization in tasks, and has formal, strict rules and punishment measures, and charismatic leadership. The structure of the military organization is bureaucratic.<sup>92</sup> Military organizations fight with uncertainty.

Military force is a group of soldiers who are armed and trained under a special organization for the purpose of defending a nation.<sup>93</sup> Moskos compared institutionalism and professionalism in analyzing organizations. The military was examined to have institutional features. These organizations justify making organization and institutions that aim for higher values, norms, and missions that go beyond achieving self-interest. On the other hand, professionalism justifies values based on market needs.<sup>94</sup> Paik and Lee note that military

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<sup>92</sup> Korea Military Academy, *Managing National Defense and Security* (Seoul: Gyung Mun Sa, 1984).

<sup>93</sup> Syun-hyeon Kim, *Military Terminology Dictionary* (Seoul: Yeonkyung Munhwasa, 2007).

<sup>94</sup> Charles C. Moskos and Frank R. Wood, eds. *The Military: More than Just a Job?* (Pergamon-Brassey's Books, 1988).

organizations are large bureaucratic organizations and in newly born countries, the military works as social and political reformers.<sup>95</sup> Military can do the role because of its broad range of hierarchy, and professional soldiers have bureaucratic authority.

### ***Other Studies on the Korean Military Culture***

There are also some literatures that carefully project a path-dependent tendency. Literatures about the Korean army and strategic culture are limited but there are some thesis and dissertations about them.<sup>96</sup>

Strategic culture is not a simple concept. Jack Snyder first used this concept to explain the Soviet behavior with its nuclear policy. According to Snyder, strategic culture is ‘the sum of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community share with regard to nuclear strategy.’ Another popularly quoted definition is from Iain Johnston who mentions strategic culture as ‘an ideational milieu which limits behavior choices. Here the milieu is composed of ‘shared assumption and decision rules that impose a degree of order on individual and

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<sup>95</sup> Nak-suh Paik and Sang-hee Lee, *Military and Society* (Seoul: Beob Mun Sa, 1975).

<sup>96</sup> Il-do Hwang, “North Korea's Strategic Culture and Military Behavior : Focusing on Nuclear Weapons Development, Conventional Forces Deployment, and the Shelling of Yeonpyong Island,” (PhD diss., Yonsei University, 2013); Bong-soo Kim, “ROK-US Alliance, Military Culture, and Building a Military Power : Focusing On Survey and In-depth Interviews Conducted on Elite Reservists,” (Master's thesis, Yonsei University, 2011)

group conceptions of their relationship to their social, organizational or political environment.’<sup>97</sup>

Here applying the concept of strategic culture to the Korean army in a critical sense from those who view the army as a U.S.- dependent and path-dependent army say that the Korea army cannot be separated from the U.S. army. They have grown with the U.S. and the generals cannot think without the U.S. JJ Suh argues in mentioning identity politics that Korean army’s identity has developed with the US that it cannot separate from the it.<sup>98</sup> The textbooks and training methods are all from the U.S. and have the U.S. culture naturally embedded.<sup>99</sup>

Expanding the discussions of emotionally criticizing the military elites reliance on the U.S., ‘trust’ can be another element for consideration. According to many scholars, the level of trust between the allies is a significant element in defining the stability, sustainability, and efficiency of the alliance they form.<sup>100</sup> Initially when this research first started and was conducting interviews, a question occurred. The senior military elites’ trust and dependence on the U.S

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<sup>97</sup> Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture. Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*. R-2154-AF. (Santa Monica, Rand Corp, 1977)

<sup>98</sup> J.J. Suh, *Power, Interest, and Identity in Military Alliances*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> See Myongsob Kim, Suzanne L. Parker, and Jun Young Choi, "Increasing distrust of the USA in South Korea." *International Political Science Review* 27, no. 4 (2006) : 427-445. Also read Peter Hwang and Willem P. Burgers, "Properties of Trust: An Analytic View". *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 69, no.1 (1997), and Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

seemed to be so high. But at the same time, they seemed to distrust the U.S. to the extent that they need an institution, here the wartime OPCON, to ensure U.S. in case of war or emergent situation. Once there was a big issue of tripwire when the issue first came up. In trust related literatures that is called the ambivalence of trust where trust and distrust, love and hate coexist, some would analyze these mixed feelings to be anti-US, some would only bring out the amicable parts and emphasize it by providing future directions.<sup>101</sup>

In terms of organizational view, structural systems, norms, and standard operating procedures are the main causes that let military organization resist innovation. Historical institutionalism argues the possibility of a path-dependent process.<sup>102</sup> Changes can happen only when there is a “critical juncture” or “turning point.” Institutional system may not change until a strong socioeconomic or political pressures contest the institutional system.

### ***Summary***

Looking into Nielsen’s categorization on ‘military change is difficult,’ I evaluate that a similar frame can be applied to the Korean military. The SOPs for the wartime OPCON case equals to the CFC procedures, and the set system

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<sup>101</sup> See Neil J. Semelser, "The Rational and the Ambivalent in the Social Sciences: 1997 Presidential Address." *American Sociological Review* 63, no.1 (1998) : 1.

<sup>102</sup> Wendy Hunter, "Politicians against Soldiers: Contesting the Military in Post Authorization Brazil." *Comparative Politics* 27, no. 4 (1995) : 427.

within the bureaucracy and each service, will definitely make the military organization resist change. In terms of organizational morale, leaders will strive to protect its own service and maintain its size and budget. Thus, the senior military elites' resistance and opposition are an organizational aspect. More specifically, the special nature of the military, that is to win wars and deal with uncertainty, risk, and violence, makes the military organization conservative. The Korean military's systems established with the close cooperation and guidance from the U.S. army, which is the strongest nation in the world. It is natural for the Korean military to go through resistance in dropping such option. Organizationally, the Korean military, will resist change.

## **(2) President's Decision-Making**

To explain the second pillar of this study, I looked into Charles Ostrom and Brian Job's categorization of the president's role and decision-making. This categorization is meaningful because it divides the president's role into three parts and allows each factor under each role to be examined. As a result, the decision-making factors can be investigated in a balanced view. The existing literature on South Korean presidential decision-making was tilted toward political leader and personal factor of the president.

Ostrom and Job, in their article *The President and the Political Use of Force* written in 1986 used Herbert Simon's bounded rationality and decision premises with a cybernetic model to analyze president's decision on the political use of force.<sup>103</sup> Ostrom and Job examine the decision premises of the president and its role following Simon's "computational procedures for assessing the state of the environment and its implications for action"<sup>104</sup> Thus, it categorizes the president's role into three parts as Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and Political Leader. Ostrom and Job discover that the big influencers on president's decision for use of force are the domestic and political factors and not the well-known international balance of power or circumstances.<sup>105</sup> American presidents while acting as a commander-in-chief, were heavily affected by partisan politics rather than the international balance of power.<sup>106</sup> Ostrom and Job insist that the President cannot in a short period of time determine the state of the environment, place available alternatives, or figure out the consequences of each alternative that the president looks into a

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<sup>103</sup> For more, read Zeev Maoz, "The Decision to Raid Entebbe: Decision Analysis Applied to Crisis Behavior," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25, no. 4 (1981); John D. Steinbruner. *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton University Press, 2002); and Charles W. Ostrom and Brian L. Job "The President and the Political Use of Force". *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 2 (1986) : 543.

<sup>104</sup> Herbert A. Simon, "Theories of Decision-Making in Economics and Behavioral Science," *The American Economic Review* 49, no.3 (1959) : 274.

<sup>105</sup> Charles W. Ostrom, and Brian L. Job, "The President and the Political Use of Force," *The American Political Science Review* 80, no.2 (1986); Patrick James, and John R. Oneal, "The Influence of Domestic and International Politics on the President's Use of Force." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (1991).

<sup>106</sup> Ostrom and Job, "The President and the Political Use of Force."

limited package of essential or critical factors for decision making. The presidential decision premises suggested by Ostrom and Job are the following:<sup>107</sup>

1. International environment
  - a. Level of international tension
  - b. Relative strategic balance
  - c. Extent of US involvement in ongoing war
2. Domestic environment
  - a. Public attitude toward risks of international involvement – international tension
  - b. Public attitude toward risks of international involvement – strategic balance
  - c. Public aversion to war
  - d. Condition of the domestic economy
3. Political environment
  - a. Level of public support
  - b. Overall political success
  - c. Position on the electoral calendar

Ostrom and Job's categorization stems from Simon's bounded rationality which means that complete rationality do not exist. Though individuals make 'rational' choice, the human inability to fully know all factors and information leads people to have a limited rationality and also the decisions made are affected by the role of the actor in an organization. James G. March and Herbert A. Simon's *Organizations* in 1958, again explain how behaviors in

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 546.

organizations do not find the most optimal utility choice but a choice that is satisfying.<sup>108</sup> More specifically, an “administrative man” in an organization, may make efforts to make the most rational choice but eventually will not study all alternatives but end up with an alternative that is satisfying to one.<sup>109</sup>

Simon understands that decision-making in real-life is involved with goals, values, information of the environment, and inferences stemmed from the values and facts. Decisions are made through a process of “reasoning” going through the premises that is the values and facts, and inferred by these premises.<sup>110</sup> Simon notes that this whole process is metaphorically the “reasoning” process. Role of actor combines the rational element of economics and non-rational element of social psychology. Decision premises drive particular behaviors, which stem from the role of the actor. Role is a part of decision-making premise because role itself does not speak for itself but it becomes meaningful when the person who takes the role accepts the authority and the role that certain position should take.<sup>111</sup> Role of the organization members is prescribed by specific goal, and goal specification depends on the member’s position in the organization and the communication patterns of the

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<sup>108</sup> James G. March, and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations* (New York: John Wiley&Sons, Inc., 1958)

<sup>109</sup> Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-making Processes in Administrative Organization. 4th Edition* (New York: The Free Press, 1997).

<sup>110</sup> Simon, "Theories of Decision-Making in Economics and Behavioral Science,"; *Administrative Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1997).

<sup>111</sup> Simon, *Administrative Behavior*, 24-25.

organization.<sup>112</sup> The given role in the organization is related to the entailing values and facts and alternatives the person should take. These decision premises provide a conceptual framework guiding the way to the decision as an individual part of the organization. Barnard's emphasis on "private personality" and "organization personality" demonstrates the similar theme and role of decision makers in the organization.<sup>113</sup> Simon stresses that a rational individual becomes part of the organization and institutionalized.<sup>114</sup>

### ***Summary***

Ostrom and Job's categorization provides a balanced frame to analyze the presidential decision-making. The official statements and documents seem to argue that for President Roh it was the Political Leader factor, and for President Lee and Park, the Executive Head factor were the most deciding factors for their transfer decision. But the critical element is the military's massive opposition the Commander-in-Chief had to consider throughout the three administrations. This frame enables comparison of the magnitude of each factor in decision-making.

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<sup>112</sup> Simon, *Administrative Behavior*, 24.

<sup>113</sup> Chester I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1968), 88.

<sup>114</sup> Simon, *Administrative Behavior*; 111.

## 2. Civil-Military Nexus in Military Change

As noted above, in-between the military and president's decision-making lies the civil-military nexus in change. Unlike other government units, the military organization is not just a mere unit of the government body, but also a unit that receives direct command from the Commander-in-Chief. Military policy change related to war will be an epitome of the civil-military nexus.

Literatures related to military's resistance to change are found in roughly three categories such as organizational theory, bureaucratic politics, and organizational culture.<sup>115</sup> These literatures argue that military organizations are unlikely to change. This segment narrows down the literature review scope to the civil-military nexus. The main question related to the civil-military nexus applying to this research's question is how the bureaucratic body (military) was not willing to follow the need of the political (civilian leader) especially during President Roh Moo-hyun time, and how the political (civilian leader) were able

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<sup>115</sup> See details from Janine Davidson, *Lifting the Fog of Peace : How Americans Learned to Fight Modern War* (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2010); Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1984); Jack Snyder , *Ideology of the Offensive; Military Decision-Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press , 1984); Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (New York : Longman, 1999); Morton Halperin and Priscilla Clapp, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington DC : Brookings Institution, 2006); Deborah D. Avant, "The Institutional Sources of Military Doctrine: Hegemons in Peripheral Wars," *International Studies Quarterly* 37, no.4 (1993); James March and Johan Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Journal of Political Science* 78, no. 3 (1984).

to attentively listen to the bureaucratic body (military)'s opinion. The initial approach to this problem is dealt by who initiates the change: The President (civilian leader) or the military?

Many theories discuss whether the change of the military organizations are a result of political structures, civilian leader's choice, or within the military organization's own need. Carl von Clausewitz, Samuel Huntington, other organizational models, and the principal-agent model with the roots in economics discipline explain the relationship between the civilian leader and the military.<sup>116</sup>

The principal-agent model examines how the civilian leaders motivate and direct change in military institutions and also how the highest-level military leaders have to operate under constraints of civilian leaders but at the same time have to meet organizational needs of the military<sup>117</sup>

In continuation of the earlier section, the military will have propensity to stay with the status quo, prefer inertia, and stay in a short-term viewpoint. Deborah Avant and Peter Feaver have argued that civilian involvement is necessary for the military organization to change. For Avant, the structures of

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<sup>116</sup> Nielsen, "Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform,"; Stuart J. Kaufman, "Organizational Politics and Change in Soviet Military Policy." *World Politics* 46, no. 3 (1994) : 358.

<sup>117</sup> Deborah D. Avant. *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994); Peter Feaver, "Crisis and Shirking: An Agency Theory Explanation of the Souring of American Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces and Society* 24, no. 3 (Spring, 1998) : 421; Nielsen, "Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform."

domestic institution influence the organizations' change.<sup>118</sup> Feaver uses a game theoretic model to explain the friction in the civil-military relationship.<sup>119</sup>

Looking into the civil-military nexus in the past, Nielsen points out what the civilian leader or military neglects. First, the political leaders lack incentive to invest a lot of time on military topics during peacetime. Also military problems are "below the noise level" for political leaders who deal with various concerns. Second, the civilian political leaders lack the expertise knowledge and confidence or will to manage detailed solutions. Third, the possibility that military leaders will initiate change and innovation is neglected. Fourth, the principal and agent frame accepts that principal knows what to do and the agent only has issues to faithfully execute it. But Nielsen says that it may be only true in a very rough sense<sup>120</sup>

In *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, Barry Posen argues that military innovation happens when civilian leaders are motivated to get involve and implement the change.<sup>121</sup> The civilian leaders will be motivate to get involved when the international environment changes, mostly when international balance

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<sup>118</sup> Deborah D. Avant. *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

<sup>119</sup> Peter Feaver, "Crisis and Shirking: An Agency Theory Explanation of the Souring of American Civil-Military Relations." *Armed Forces and Society* 24, no. 3 (1998) : 421.

<sup>120</sup> Nielsen, "Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform," 24-25.

<sup>121</sup> Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 224.

of power seems to have a change.<sup>122</sup> Posen also acknowledges that civilian leaders do not have the needed expertise knowledge. Thus, finding a competing service or maverick's rebel within the military organizations will be used as a compensating source of such military knowledge.<sup>123</sup> Like Allison and Zelikow, Posen notes that big organizations have a tendency to stagnate when they are left on their own. However, when the organization faces a big performance failure, it will go on for the reform.<sup>124</sup> Posen argues in this organization theory that the military resists innovation because of bureaucratic inertia.<sup>125</sup> Rigidities and the routine basis of military bureaucracy are the factors for domestic organizational factors.

Compared to Posen, Stephen Rosen (1991) argues that civilian intervention cannot cause real innovation but the service or branch chief has to change the organizational structure to make the members motivated enough to carry out the innovation.<sup>126</sup> Kimberly Zisk emphasizes that military officers are national security professionals and their goal is to ensure the national security through their analysis and evaluation.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 74-77.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p.57 and pp. 174-175.

<sup>124</sup> Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*; Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 59.

<sup>125</sup> Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 58.

<sup>126</sup> Stephen P. Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and Modern Military* (Cornell University Press, 1991)

<sup>127</sup> Kimberly M. Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Kier in *Imagining War* argues that “civilian intervention is unusual” for doctrine changes but they do craft the environment of military choices by responding to the changes in the national security strategy.<sup>128</sup>

However, an important factor that Kier argues is that when civilian political leaders make decisions to formulate military policy, they will give domestic balance of power more priority than the international balance of power.<sup>129</sup> Avant argued a similar point that “We should not necessarily expect to see civilian leaders as unitary actors pursuing the best interest of their country in the international realm. We should expect them to behave as strategic political players who act first to ensure that they will stay in power.”<sup>130</sup>

Avant’s point makes it clearer why an analysis as political leader should be added in reviewing the problem of wartime OPCON transfer study. Often times, decisions made by ministers during war have politicized promotion because of domestic political battles not military effectiveness.<sup>131</sup>

And some other scholars studied that the civil-military relations is not easy to draw a line in between. Sarkesian discusses how traditional military professionalism is strictly recognized with military skills and weapons

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<sup>128</sup> Elizabeth Kier. *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> Deborah D. Avant. *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 7-8.

<sup>131</sup> Nielsen, “Preparing War During Peacetime And the Dynamics of Military Reform,” 35.

technology with accurate professional guidelines, and avoids controversial political-military issues. Alternatively, equilibrium model views the civil-military relations through the adequate balancing of political powers and purposes. The ideal model assumes that military professions are educated elites who pursue democratic values by organizing, controlling, and applying forces determined by the state. Here the military professionals control and supervise the military instrument following the established policy but also morally and ethically are committed to democratic ideals which means that they take a position in the political process.<sup>132</sup>

Kaufman notes that state's aims and priorities are important. Whether the state wants to defeat or the status quo or whether it is willing to fight a defensive war.<sup>133</sup> Many organizational theorists have suggested but at the same time a very commonsensical way of approaching a problem and decomposing the environment into various sub categories and hierarchically arrange it following to the priority of one's goals.<sup>134</sup>

Hermann also notes that "Policymakers attend to the highest priorities first: if everything is currently satisfactory with the highest ordered goal

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<sup>132</sup> Sam C. Sarkesian, "Military Professionalism and Civil-Military Relations in the West," *International Political Science Review* 2, no. 3 (1981).

<sup>133</sup> Stuart J. Kaufman, "Organizational Politics and Change in Soviet Military Policy," *World Politics* 46, no. 3 (1994) : 358.

<sup>134</sup> See more from March and Simon, *Organizations*; Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy." *International Studies Quarterly* (1990), pp. 3-21.

(national survival, for example) then they can move to the next level (political survival, for example). If feedback indicates trouble with performance in that area, then policymakers scan key subareas within the domain of political survival (such as satisfaction of support groups or strength of opposition) until the area of the problem is identified. Then corrective measures are attempted.”<sup>135</sup>

### ***Summary***

Understanding that the military will have organizational resistance to change, where does change come from? The civil-military nexus literature review depicts how scholars view the change initiation. So the change can come, either from within the military, or only with the consent and passion of the military, or through the civilian leadership.

The most ideal case is when both the military and civilian leadership cooperates to undertake such change. Applying the change initiation to the

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<sup>135</sup> Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1(1990) : 9.

Korean wartime OPCON case, Korean military was resistant, and the civilian leader initiated for change but the following term civilian leaders have delayed the change decision. What has to be investigated is how the military resistance affected the civilian leader's decision-making. The above literatures do not explain the dynamics in the change. It will be the task for the following analysis to come.

### **3. Research Framework**

Based on the literature review of decision-making, and organizational perspectives and military change, this section proposes the research framework for answering the two pillars of this study.

#### **(1) Senior Military Elites' Decision Making Analysis**

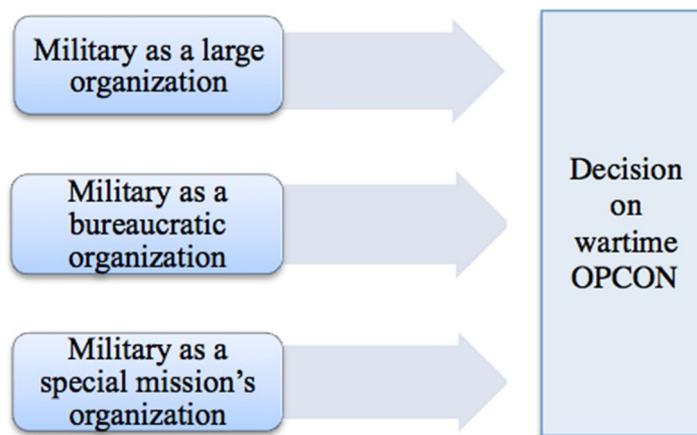
While the literatures have proved that the military organization is resistant to change, this part aims to examine the arguments of the senior military specifically and see what lies beyond these opposition arguments.

#### ***Independent and Dependent Variable***

Applying the three categorization from Nielsen's research to the Korean context, the dependent variable is decision on the wartime OPCON transfer, and

the three independent variables featuring characteristics of military organization are examined: Large, bureaucratic, and an organization with special nature. The interview results will show the direct factors that have affected the senior military elites decision-making, and I will classify it under these three categories. The interview results will examine how each factor affects the decision. And the analysis will provide how to view these characters as organizational factors.

**Figure 3. DIV for Senior Military Elites Decision Making**



***Arguments***

- Since the military organization is a large, bureaucratic, and an organization with a special nature, change is difficult. Thus, the senior military elites, at least for the short time, will go against the transfer decision.

- The military as a large organization the elites show a status quo bias in their decision making.
- The military as a bureaucratic organization, the intertwined networks and system hinder the military elites to make change.
- The special nature of the military organization has to deal with, uncertainty and risk, cause the military leaders to remain in the way it has been “tried-and-tested”, thus the senior military elites decision to be against the transfer is plausible.
- Military organizational factors are magnified by a high value of security condition and reduced by a low value of security condition.
- Inside the official statement lies in the organizational resistant factors.

### ***Analysis Procedure***

Field research was conducted mainly focused to study the decision-making of the senior military elites. Other interviews with policy advisors and security experts are also conducted to give empirical data to the research.

### ***Target, Type, and Period of Interview***

The researcher interviewed each person for an hour to three hours depending on the discussion. For those who were older above 75, the interviews

were shorter and only the main points were discussed. For some interviewees, phone interview was conducted. Among the 23 senior military elites, 15 interviews were conducted as one-to-one in-depth interviews. Among the 10 policy advisor and security expert group, 7 interviews were conducted as one-to-one in-depth interviews. The interviewers were not gathered together as a ‘focus group,’ of but to make the interview more active and honest and communicable, benefits of focus group interview were picked up to have needed results. The interviewer shared and worked as a moderator to drive opinions from the interviewees, and especially for the interaction of the group with different opinion.<sup>136</sup> For the policy advisors and security experts interview, while many related news reports and books were released, the in-depth interviews were conducted for an average of 2 hours each. Table 1 gives a summary of the interviewees.

This field research of interview was held from June 2015 to August 2015, and some were continued until end of 2015.

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<sup>136</sup> Linda C. Lederman, "Assessing Educational Effectiveness: The Focus Group Interview as a Technique for Data Collection," *Communication Education* 39, no. 2 (1990).

**Table 1. Interviewee Summary**

Senior Military Elites	
Korea's most senior top ranked generals and military leaders (current age as of interview date over 80)	3
Generals during President Roh Moo-hyun administration (current age as of interview date between 50-60)	13
Senior military officers (above major and lieutenant commanders, lieutenant colonels and colonels, and generals) on duty during President Roh Moo-hyun administration (current age as of interview date between 35-50)	7
Total	23
Policy Advisors	
High level government officials, politicians, policy advisors during President Roh Moo-hyun administration	5
Security Expert and Policy Advisor during President Lee Myung-bak administration	1

Security Experts (including 1 journalist)	4
Total	10

### ***Questions Format***

As a qualitative method, this research conducted interviews with the related senior military elites and policy advisors. The interview was prepared with a structured format, however, based on the interview, it changed to semi structured, with open-ended questions.<sup>137</sup> Follow-up investigations were designed and addressed to delve into the experiences and perceptions of each individual participant.

To all the senior military elites who were under the interview had the following questions, however, follow-up probes were added for in-depth interviews. The common discussion questions and subjects were:

1. What are your views on President Roh bringing up the topic of the wartime OPCON transfer debate?
2. What are the pros and cons and benefits or loss to Korea if we transfer?
3. What is the special relation of ROK-US alliance? How would the transfer affect ROK-US alliance? How should we deal with the ROK-US alliance?

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<sup>137</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, "Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation: Revised and Expanded from Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education," (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009). Merriam notes that open-end questions make the researcher/interviewer carefully listen to what the interviewees share. Also the follow up probes stimulate interviewee to provide additional contributions.

4. President Roh Moo-hyun emphasized on 'self-reliant defense' and 'national sovereignty and national pride', what are your thoughts on this?
5. How do you view Korea's military capability, especially to combat against North Korea?
6. What should the Korean military, the government, or the civil society do to strengthen its military capability?
7. Korean does not seem to have the respect culture towards those in uniform. I wish Korea would also become a society where military officers are well respected and trusted. What should be done?

To the policy advisors, the following subjects were included:

1. What are your views on the wartime OPCON transfer debate?
2. Why do you think the generals were so against the transfer decision?
3. How does it affect ROK-US alliance?
4. But isn't US deterrence the best way to deter North Korea?

***Interview Interpretation Method: Analytic hierarchy process (AHP)***

As the research was conducted mostly on qualitative approach, to translate the qualitative values into quantitative values, in the analysis, this study will use the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) method.

Thomas Saaty created the technique in 1970s based on how people make decision in everyday life.<sup>138</sup> First, to clearly set the goal, “the need and purpose of the decision, the criteria of the decision, sub criteria, stakeholders and groups affected and the alternative actions” are analyzed. After prioritization is done, then finding alternatives or prioritizing the alternatives are suggested to be done. These processes are in a hierarchy and by checking the interaction and causality of the factors, the importance proportions are exhibited. AHP disassembles each element and conducts a pairwise comparison to discover the importance and sensitivity of the factor. Decision maker’s assessment will put decision weights and priorities to the hierarchy and the most significant factor or the best alternatives can be figured out.<sup>139</sup> This is a method that used mathematical technique to conducting decision making.<sup>140</sup>

## **(2) President’s Decision Making Behavior Analysis**

For the president’s decision making, same as Ostrom and Job, this research evaluates the three roles of the president as Commander-in-Chief,

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<sup>138</sup> Thomas L. Saaty, “A Scaling Method for Priorities in a Hierarchical Structure,” *Journal of Mathematical Psychology* 15, no. 3 (1977); *The Analytic Hierarchy Process*. New York: McGraw-Hill 1980; Axiomatic Foundation of the Analytic Hierarchy Process. *Management Science* 32, no. 7 (1986).

<sup>139</sup> Iwan J. Azis, and Walter Isard, "The Use of the Analytic Hierarchy Process in Conflict Analysis and an extension." *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 3, no. 3 (1996).

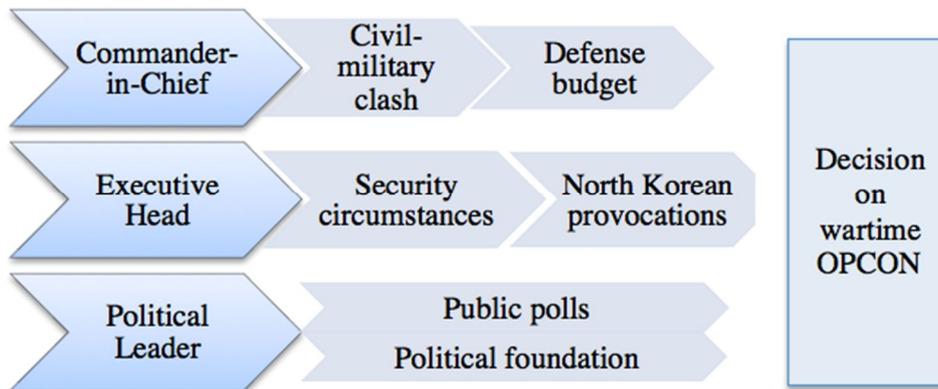
<sup>140</sup> Thomas L. Saaty, “Decision making with the Analytic Hierarchy Process,” *International Journal Services Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2008).

Executive Head, and Political leader, and how their roles and core decision factors have affected the transfer decision.

### ***Independent and Dependent Variable***

Three factors affect the decision making of the President whether the transfer should be done or delayed. The magnitude of each factors change depending on the administration. There are three factors affecting the President's decision: Civil-military nexus and the defense budget, North Korean provocations, and public polls. These independent variables affect the dependent variable that is the decision on the wartime OPCON transfer.

**Figure 4. DIV for Presidential Decision Making**



### ***Arguments***

Each government had different factors affecting the decision-making depending on the characteristics and situations of each government. Official statements show that for President Roh, his role as the political leader operated as a deciding factor. For President Lee and Park, the security circumstance, and public polls, their role as Executive Head operated as deciding factors. My arguments are:

- While there are many deciding factors for the President's decision making, the military's opposition caused by their organizational factors heavily affected the decision.
- The military's opposition is strengthened when the security condition goes bad and the public polls show their doubt on the wartime OPCON decision.
- The political leaders' constituencies and foundation strengthen the military opposition.
- For the Korean case, the military has a strong voice in exercising its expertise knowledge.

### *Analysis Procedure*

The analysis bases on collection of official government documents, related literatures, news reports, columns, and interviews with senior military

elites and policy advisors. Interviews were conducted through the same method as that for the senior military elites.

### **CHAPTER III. WARTIME OPCON TRANSFER AND DECISION MAKING**

This section delves into the research topic, OPCON. Discussions on OPCON and the evolution of OPCON demonstrate the decision-making dynamics of military and the president. In details, first, the definition of OPCON is clarified. This is to have the facts correct and provide the needed information. Clear definition of OPCON provides the range of the President's authority and its decision making power and how the role of the military dynamics work. Second, the evolution of Korea's OPCON is examined. This part investigates how Korea's OPCON has evolved since its first transfer. Every

move of OPCON evolution is involved with the President's decision and the military decision. While the President makes the big decisions, the military makes the decision in implementing the set decision of the President. Thirdly, the heated debate related to the current wartime OPCON is described in detail thoroughly describing the pros and cons and the opinions for each position. Interviews are included as empirical evidence.

## **1. What is OPCON?**

OPCON “includes authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations and joint training necessary to accomplish missions assigned to the command.” But it “does not, in and of itself, include authoritative direction for logistics, or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training.” In other words, OPCON gives the command authority to the commander of a certain unit different from the existing organization to accomplish certain mission under a certain situation. Thus, OPCON is not a command authority over all composed units but a ‘limited’ command authority over a certain set unit.<sup>141</sup> Before explaining the detailed composition of

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<sup>141</sup> Gwang-chan Ahn, “Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution: Focused on Operational Control in Korean Peninsula” (PhD diss., Dongkook University, 2003).

OPCON, it has to be noted that OPCON was divided into peacetime and wartime from 1994. The Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff will be in charge during peacetime but when DEFCON goes over level 3 to level 2 or 1, then the OPCON authority automatically goes to the CFC Commander.<sup>142</sup>

**Table 2. Definition of OPCON in Detail**

Personnel	Information	Operations		Log-istics	Budget
	Information	Combat Operations	Requirement control, Resources acquisition		
		Organizing, Employing Commands and Forces	Education, Discipline		
	<b>Operational Control:</b> Level below combatant control. Authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces in involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative directions necessary to accomplish the mission.				

<sup>142</sup> See US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Association terms to see the definition of DEFCON. DEFCON (Defense Readiness Condition) is an alert state used by the United States Armed Forces. It is composed of 5 levels. Level 5 is the safest, meaning there is no threat of enemy. The military should have normal readiness. DEFCON level 4 means no possibility of military invasion though the enemy is confronted. DEFCON 3 means a tension situation that may cause significant problem or there exists possibility of military invasion. Air Force should be ready to mobilize in 15 minutes. DEFCON 2, requests to strengthening the state to attack position. Armed Forces are ready to deploy and engage in less than 6 hours. Level 1 means nuclear war is about to happen thus maximum readiness is needed..

	Operational Command	
Command		

Source: Gwang-chan Ahn, “Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution: Focused on Operational Control in Korean Peninsula”; ROK Joint Reference Publication.

The above Table 2 shows the range of what the wartime OPCON covers. Out of the whole range of ‘command’ that covers personnel, information, operations, logistics, and budget of the military, operational command takes information, and operations. Again, out of operational command which is divided as peacetime and wartime since 1994, the OPCON is in charge of the command over subordinate forces in organizing, employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving directions to accomplish the mission. <sup>143</sup> That is, the commander with the wartime OPCON will have the authority to plan operations and train, assign, employ the subordinate forces, and assign these forces the goals and objective that are needed to accomplish the mission in the combat. <sup>144</sup>



<sup>143</sup> Gwang-chan Ahn, “Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution: Focused on Operational Control in Korean Peninsula”; ROK Joint Reference Publication.

<sup>144</sup> Jung-in Moon, “Delaying the Wartime OPCON Retrieval, What’s the Problem?” *Naeileul Yeoneun Yeogsa* 58 (2015) : 15.

A former major general and director of the National Risk Management Office of the Office of the President and who have worked at CFC for many years, has put wartime OPCON in simple terms. “Wartime OPCON is that letting the U.S. generals have the commandship to build war strategies and assign who will be taking or attacking which object, for instance, mountain A or mountain B during wartime. The CFC is best understood in terms of unity of command,” the general says.<sup>145</sup> According to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, unity of command, refers to “all forces operate under a single commander with a requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of common purpose... ensures the unity of effort under one responsible command for every objective.”<sup>146</sup> The most common quotation for unity of command is that of the French military and political leader, Napoleon. *“Nothing in war is more important than unity of command. Thus when war is waged against a single power there must be but one army, acting on one line and led by one chief...Better one bad general than two good ones.”*

## **2. Evolution of South Korea’s OPCON**

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<sup>145</sup> Interview held on August 27, 2015.

<sup>146</sup> US Joint Chiefs of Staff, p. A-2.

In this segment, the evolution of South Korea's OPCON transfer is examined. It first offers how the OPCON transfer started in the 1950s when the Korean War broke out. ROK-US alliance was established and for a nation like Korea, having the U.S. support was critical to Korea's development. However, a few incidents happened and a need for change in the OPCON was indicated. This coupled with the U.S. situation lead into the establishment of the CFC. With the CFC, the combined defense system was stabilized. A decade later after its establishment, the peacetime OPCON was transferred and again after another decade, issue of wartime OPCON was raised.

### ***Origin of the OPCON Transfer***

Korea's OPCON issue traces back to 1950 when President Rhee Syngman delegated the command authority to the commander of the United Nations Command (UNC), General Douglas MacArthur. When the Korean War broke out by the attack from North Korea, the South Korean army was not well-equipped. Being a two-years-old army, it did not have proper war operation execution ability or a weapons system. Moreover, it did not have allies who could support South Korea nor was a part of a collective security agreement such as NATO. It resulted in letting North Korea occupy the capital city Seoul. The Korean government appealed to the UN to provide an immediate and

effective countermeasure to keep peace and security.<sup>147</sup> Then the UN Security Council adopted resolution S/1511. Raised by US President Harry Truman, the resolution recommends that ‘the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in that area.’ With such, the U.S. dispatched an army composed of 16 nations, and for effective management of the war, the resolution S/1588 adopted on July 7<sup>th</sup> ‘requests the United States to designate the commander of such forces; Authorize the unified command at its discretion to use the United Nations flag in the course of operations against North Korean force.’ Since then the army fought under the name of the UN. However, problems occurred, as Korea was not a UN member then. The command order was in two separate lines that Korea and the UN had to operate two different strategies. And to resolve this problem, President Rhee Syng-man wrote to the UN commander to assign the command authority. President Rhee sent the letter on July 14<sup>th</sup>, and on July 15<sup>th</sup>, and the U.S. Ambassador to Korea John Muccio delivered the letter from General MacArthur containing the agreement upon the assignment.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> ROK Research Institute for National Security Affairs, *ROK-US Alliance 60th Anniversary: Tasks for Constructive Future Alliance* (Seoul: Korea National Defense University, 2014) : 267-353.

<sup>148</sup> KODEF (Korea Defense & Security Forum), *Wartime Operational Control: The Misunderstandings and the Truth* (Seoul: Planet Media, 2006); Hwee-rhak Park, "The Transfer of Wartime Operational Control in Korea: History, Risks and Tasks from a Military Perspective," *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 8, no. 2 (2010).

President Rhee's letter on July 14, 1950 assigns "the command authority over all land, sea, and air forces of the Republic of Korea (ROK)" to the commander "during the period of the continuation of the present state of hostilities."<sup>149</sup> With this letter, all the forces on the Korean Peninsula became controlled under one commander, General MacArthur. General MacArthur responded to President Rhee's letter that he would have the "operational command authority" meaning that he will have authority regarding operations. The ROK-US alliance agreement in 1953 did not include the terms on the command authority, so in July 1954, President Rhee added the part. That is why the U.S. and ROK included the stipulation regarding command authority in the "Agreed Minutes and Amendments between the Government of the Republic of Korea and United States of America." Article 2 notes that "Retain Republic of Korea forces under the operational control of the United Nations command while that Command has responsibilities for the defense of the Republic of Korea, unless after consultation it is agreed that our mutual and individual interest would best be served by a change." In short, the term limited its range from command authority to operational command authority to operational control. In Appendix A, Article 1 notes that it is the intention and policy of the United States to help "strengthen the Republic of Korea politically,

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<sup>149</sup> Gwang-chan Ahn, "Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution," 67.

economically, and militarily, with programmed economic aid and direct military.”<sup>150</sup>

### ***Establishment of the CFC***

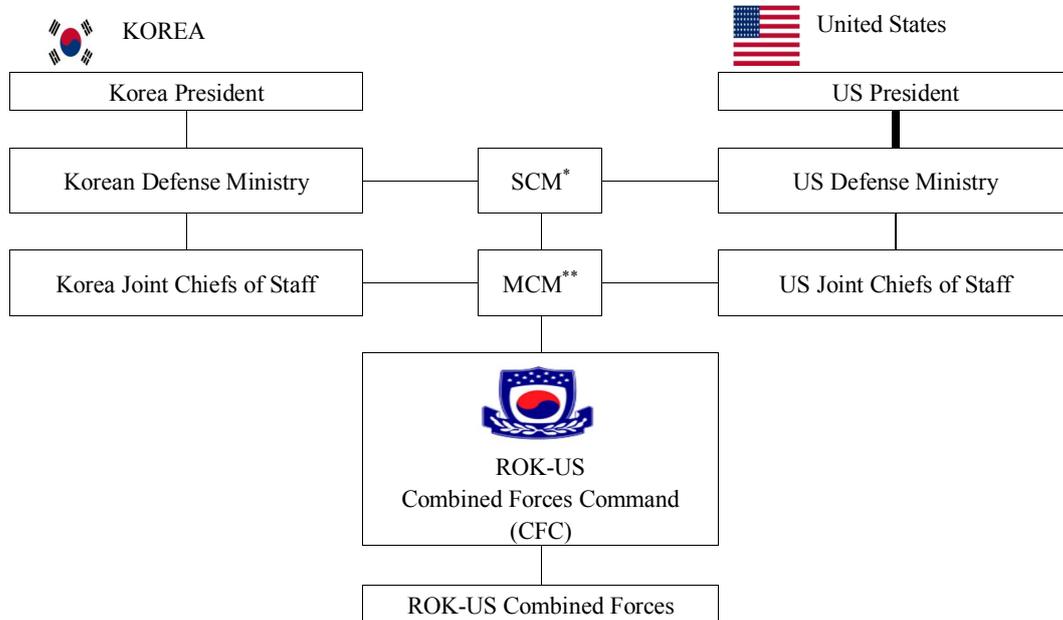
With the establishment of the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC) in 1978, the operational control authority switches from the UN Commander to the U.S. commander.<sup>151</sup> The command order used to be ‘US President → US Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff → US Pacific Commander → UN Commander’ in the past. Since the foundational of the CFC, the command order changed to ROK President and US President → Defense ministers’ annual meeting which is called ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) → ROK-US Military Committee (MC) → the ROK-US CFC.

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<sup>150</sup> Agreed Minutes and Amendment Thereto Between the Governments of The Republic of Korea and the United States of America Related to Continued Cooperation in Economic and Military Matters and Amendment to the Agreed Minute of November 17, 1954 (Amended entered into force August 12, 1955). [http://mofaweb.mofat.go.kr/inter\\_treaty\\_real.nsf/alldoclist/23700D367B6ECE7549256701002C5659?opendocument](http://mofaweb.mofat.go.kr/inter_treaty_real.nsf/alldoclist/23700D367B6ECE7549256701002C5659?opendocument) (Accessed on June 30, 2015).

<sup>151</sup> Gwang-chan Ahn, “Study on the Military System Regarding the Constitution,” 118.

**Figure 5. ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command Structure**



\* SCM: Security Consultative Meeting \*\* Military Committee Meeting

Source: ROK MOPAS's Policy Research Report, 2008. p.27

As described in Figure 5, in the CFC structure, the decision mechanism of the operation control is exercised in a parallel manner. If there is an order from the Korean President, it will go to the Korean defense minister, and this will be discussed at the Security Consultative Meeting with the US defense minister. This will be discussed in the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff level and then, the finally agreed decision will go to the CFC commander. Thus, the CFC commander is taking an order that was commanded by both the Korean and the U.S. president. There will be no decision that is done solely by one

side's discretion. At the CFC, manning is binational. It is composed of half Korean army, and half U.S. army in positions. For instance, if Korea takes the chief of staff, then the U.S. takes the deputy position. Such manning applies to all positions in the CFC. Each position has their Korean or U.S. counterpart.<sup>152</sup>

### ***Four Incidents and the Building of CFC***

#### **President Park Chung-hee's ruling**

In 1961, when President Park Chung-hee was taking over government, the UN Commander Carter Magruder, with his command authority ordered the Korean army to get back to its position instead of participating in the Coup. However, based on the Agreed Minutes between the two countries, the Korean army refused to follow the command as the US commandership only applied to problems related to North Korean provocation. As the interpretation over the command authority generated a debate, Korea and the UN command announced to limit UN Commander's operational control scope to be within the range of defending Korea from the communist attack, and the UN Commander will not have operational control over reserve division 30 and 33, Team 1 of Air Force operational detachment team, and 5 other military policy companies. With this, the command authority's range was narrowed down and limited. However, a

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<sup>152</sup> Byung-hun Ryu, *ROK-US Alliance and OPCON* (Seoul: Korean Veterans Association, 2007).

prerequisite was made for this joint announcement. If the Korean army leaves the range of the U.S. command, the Korean army should consult with the US in advance.<sup>153</sup>

### **The Vietnam War**

In 1965, the Korean army was dispatched to Vietnam. At the Vietnam War, the operational control for the Korean army belonged to the Korean commander.<sup>154</sup> Though the official main cause for the dispatch was prevention of communism expansion, Korea expected the US to continue not only its economic support but also military support. That means not withdrawing the US troops stationed in Korea, and helping the Korean army gain war experience.<sup>155</sup> President Park thought that the US could easily withdraw from Vietnam because they did not conduct a combined command system. He was also disappointed how the U.S. decided to withdraw the US troops and then decided to relocate them without consulting with Korea despite Korea's dispatch to Vietnam.<sup>156</sup> President Park strongly pushed to build a self-reliant

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<sup>153</sup> KODEF (Korea Defense & Security Forum), *Wartime Operational Control: The Misunderstandings and the Truth* (Seoul: Planet Media, 2006).

<sup>154</sup> Young-sup Han and Sang-hyuck Jung, "Political, Economical, Military Analysis of the Wartime Operational Control Authority Transfer Issue: Theory, Evaluation, Countermeasures," *Journal of International Politics* 20, no. 1 (2015) : 11-12.

<sup>155</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, "The Transfer of Wartime Operational Control and Unity of Command," *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies* 81, (2008).

<sup>156</sup> US efforts to prevent expansion of communism that lasted until the end of 1960s, and the prolonged war worsen the US economy. This let President Nixon announced his new Asia policy announcing that

military capability and also wanted to make an institutional system to continue on with the combined command system.<sup>157</sup>

### **1.21 and the Pueblo incident in 1968**

In 1968, two incidents occurred. On January 21, 1968, North Korean special troops soldier attempt to ambush the President's office. Two days after that the USS Pueblo, a US Navy Intelligence vessel, was captured by North Korean military forces.<sup>158</sup>

Towards these two shocking incidents, Korea and the U.S. had different views. The UN commander did not respond to the attack on Korea's President's office, but regarding USS Pueblo, declared DEFCON-2 showing a readiness for war. President Park Chung-hee was upset with the response and requested the US to transfer the OPCON and emphasized the need to independently carry out an infiltration operation. With this, on February 1th, Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff launched a spy operation, and on April 1th, created the reserve forces to

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since each nation has the power to stand alone, though the nation to nation treaty will be kept, but support will be limited as Asian should take care of their own security. On July 6, 1970 UN Ambassador Porter conveyed US decision to withdraw the US troops. This was the third time since 1949, 1954, the US decided to withdraw the US troops. The withdrawal timeline until the end of June of 1971, around 20,000 soldiers left Korea. Despite Korea's attempt to renegotiate, President Nixon pushed the withdrawal. In addition to that, President Carter after his inauguration on March 9, 1977, made a press conference that he will withdraw all ground forces. Eventually, only 3,500 soldiers withdraw but in spring 1979, the administration stopped the withdrawal plan considering the North Korean nuclear threat.

<sup>157</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, "The Transfer of Wartime Operational Control and Unity of Command," *The Quarterly Journal of Defense Policy Studies* 81, (2008).

<sup>158</sup> Byung-hun Ryu, *ROK-US Alliance and OPCON* (Korean Veterans Association, 2007).

take care of the infiltration operation at the rear area.<sup>159</sup> On April 17, 1968, at the ROK-US summit, the U.S. agreed to support Korea's independent spy operation, and thus let Korea able to exercise its OPCON. Anti-US sentiment was worsening to cope with Korea's strong stance, the US decided to provide special army equipment but refused to transfer the OPCON. Only the OPCON for infiltration operation was transferred, and since then Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) was held every year.<sup>160</sup>

### ***Security Consultative Meeting (SCM)***

SCM was an indication of the need to hold a general level meeting system. On April 18, 1968, the Korean and the U.S. presidents announced that they will hold this general level yearly meeting. And from 1971, at the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, both countries decided to have diplomatic departments to join the meeting, making this meeting a high-level consultative organization. The leaders of SCM are the defense ministers of both nations and under the leaders, there are 5 working level committees which work on the agendas and directions for negotiation and cooperation direction before the actual meeting is held. From 1978, this organization became the team, which receives the command

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<sup>159</sup> Byung-tae Lee and Bok-hyeon Cho, *Evolution of Defense Policy: 1945-1994*, (ROK Ministry of Defense's Institute for Military History, 1995).

<sup>160</sup> KODEF (Korea Defense & Security Forum), *Wartime Operational Control: The Misunderstandings and the Truth*.

from both presidents, and his national security team, being the main source of the combined forces control. SCM receives ‘National Command and Military Authorities (NCMA)’ of both countries and this order goes down to both nations’ Chairman of JCS and then it goes down to the MC. The MC then in turn commands the CFC. <sup>161</sup>

### ***Military Committee (MC)***

Another committee was established with the MC. As the CFC was established on November 7, 1978, Military Committee (MC) was created to discuss specifically on military matters. MC holds MCM yearly at the same time with SCM to manage military matters with both countries’ chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff presiding over them. <sup>162</sup>

MCM is composed of Plenary MCM and Permanent MCM. This committee reviews the combined forces strategy and development direction and orders and then orders to the CFC commander. Plenary MCM is composed of both countries’ Chairman of JCS, one person each appointed by each Chairman, and the CFC commander. Plenary MCM is held at the same time with SCM and

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<sup>161</sup> ROK Ministry of Defense Publications. *ROK-US alliance and US Forces in Korea, 2009*, 50-54  
[http://ebook.mnd.go.kr/src/viewer/main.php?host=main&site=20131121\\_161724](http://ebook.mnd.go.kr/src/viewer/main.php?host=main&site=20131121_161724) (Accessed on May 20, 2015)

<sup>162</sup> Byung-tae Lee and Bok-hyeon Cho, *Evolution of Defense Policy: 1945-1994*, (ROK Ministry of Defense’s Institute for Military History, 1995), 12

the conference results are reported to SCM and additional orders are taken by the defense minister of each nation.

The permanent MCM is a consultative group created to respond immediately to any Korean peninsula national security matters. Either party can utilize this group frequently and the CFC commander stands as the representative of each nation.

From December 1, 1992, the vice commander of CFC took the OPCON over the Korean Marine Corps and became responsible as the army component commander. CFC's chief of staff became the vice commander for the army component commander. This was agreed by both nations in October 1992 at the 10<sup>th</sup> MC.

Looking into the decision making process of CFC, institutionally, it is difficult to say that one country has the dominating power. However, in the real world, not all runs as the institution is set up. In an interview with a former vice defense minister who was involved in creating the SCM, MC, and CFC, he emphasized that these yearly meetings are unprecedented actions, and until now, it has been well maintained. He emphasized that there is no other country, which can have the US defense ministers participate in the meeting like this on paper.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Interview held on June 19, 2015.

Thus with the establishment of the CFC, it institutionally enabled both countries to have voice and prevent the U.S. from dominating the combined forces system. On November 7, 1978 the CFC was established. Korea now can actively participate and raise its voice. This system could be also a system that was prepared for the U.S. troops withdrawal and its aftermath. Initially SCM had the symbolic meaning that both defense ministers get together to discuss, but from the end of 1980s, it became a substantial policy consultative meeting that make long term plans for military relations development.<sup>164</sup>

***Peacetime OPCON Transfer (OPCON divides into peacetime and wartime from this point)***

**Internal management over the transfer dynamics**

The public discussions from political leaders on OPCON started when then the presidential candidate Roh Tae-woo pledged to retrieve the OPCON from the US in August 1987.<sup>165</sup> In his memoires, Roh said the following:

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<sup>164</sup> Additional consultative groups between the US and Korea include FOTA: Future of ROK and US Alliance Policy Initiative established in 2002 through the 34<sup>th</sup> SCM. It has dealt with enhancing the Korean military through transferring 10 military obligations, Yongsan base relocation, and Unit 2 relocation. Main agendas were to review and cooperate to enhance the joint defense capability. Another one is the SPI: Security Policy Initiative. This is also an initiative that looks into the future development of the relationship between two countries. This is a closed meeting between Korea's deputy assistant minister for policy and US assistant deputy minister for Asia and Pacific Affairs. It started from January 2005. In 2005, it dealt with the vision of the ROK-US alliance and from September 2005, it discussed the wartime OPCON transfer matter. In 2006 at the 10<sup>th</sup> SPI, the specific blueprint for wartime OPCON transfer was built, and in October 2006, at the 38<sup>th</sup> SCM, the transfer date was announced. In 2011, both nations agreed to have KIDD Korea-US Integrated Defense Dialogue when SCM is not held and in 2012 MCM, the two nations agreed to hold MCM twice a month to execute the wartime OPCON transfer.

<sup>165</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2012.

“The fact we do not have the operational control on our own is a shameful matter as a nation with national sovereignty. Though people feel proud of our nation discussing national pride and self-reliant defense, there are quite a number of people who have some sense of defeat regarding national security because we do not have our own operational control though its only about peacetime. Moreover, how much ups and downs do we go through whenever US brings up the topic of US forces withdrawal. I think we have to overcome this problem. When I came into office, there were still those who were attached to the fixed idea and worry that it will become serious if the US forces leave. However, I judged that ‘it is time for us to decide our matters, and we do have arrived at a time to have such confidence.’ Thus though I do not know when the US will leave but we should prepare and train ourselves to exercise our operational control. In this context, I carried forward the 8.18 plan.”<sup>166</sup>

After President Roh Tae-woo came into office in 1988, he officially raised the issue of OPCON transfer as part of his pledge to transfer OPCON and relocate *Yongsan Army Base*.<sup>167</sup> In 1990, Korea initiated the transfer by proposing to the US to have peacetime OPCON transfer first and then wartime OPCON transfer later. With that in November 1991 at the 13<sup>th</sup> MCM, the peacetime OPCON was decided to be transferred between 1993 and 1995, and

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<sup>166</sup> *President Roh Tae-Woo's Oral Memoir*, edited by Cho Gab-jae (Seoul: Cho Gab-Jae.com, 2007) (translated by author).

<sup>167</sup> ROK Korean Defense White Paper 2012.

wartime OPCON to be transferred after 1996.<sup>168</sup> The division of peacetime and wartime started with this agreement.

When President Roh Tae-woo was pursuing the peacetime OPCON transfer, his administration had to deal with internal opposition from the military, and opposition from the then CFC commander Robert W. RisCassi (CFC Commander from 1990 to 1993).<sup>169</sup> On August 21, 1992, Defense Security Commander Suh Wan-soo reported to President Roh Tae-woo that the peacetime OPCON transfer agreement should be reconsidered. Some senior military elites including the Army Chief of Staff were worried because Korea is not ready for operations and the transfer may give North Korea wrong signals and cause them to make violent moves, and in addition to that harm the ROK-US alliance.<sup>170</sup> This made Kim Chong-hwi, the Office of President's Diplomacy and Security Secretary furious. The Office of the President ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Strategy Planning Team, which was the main body managing the transfer, to refute such concerns.<sup>171</sup> With this, Chairman of Joint

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<sup>168</sup> See the ROK Defense White Paper (2002) for details on the peacetime OPCON transfer and Defense White Paper (2010) pp 64-65 (in KR). See 26<sup>th</sup> SCM on October 7, 1994 and 16<sup>th</sup> MCM on October 6, 1994.

<sup>169</sup> Jong-dae Kim. *Roh Moo-hyun, Going Beyond the Era* (Seoul: Namuwa Sup, 2010), 160-182; *Shindonga* July 1st, 2009.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Unlike the peacetime OPCON transfer, the wartime OPCON transfer did not have a clear order line or management team. It was not clearly noted. Some of the officials in the working level complained that they do not know which order they should take with more priority whether it is strategy planning team or the operations team. (*Shindonga* July 1st, 2009).

Chiefs of Staff Lee Phil-sup and Army Chief of Staff Kim Jin-young agreed to have the transfer done for sure.<sup>172</sup> In the process, future Defense minister Chun Young-taek (then major general) in the President Kim Dae-jung administration and future defense minister Kim Kwan-jin (then colonel) in the President Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye administrations were heavily involved in persuading the military on the need of peacetime OPCON transfer to Korea.<sup>173</sup>

Secretary Kim from the President's Office thought Commander RisCassi was controlling the generals behind the scenes. This was different from what was known. The general understanding was that that the U.S. had intentions to transfer the peacetime OPCON in order to free itself from the ordinary Koreans' criticisms that the U.S. - who had the OPCON then - gave tacit approval to President Chun Doo-hwan's invasion during the *Gwangju democratic movement*.<sup>174</sup> However, Commander RisCassi was making a different voice. RisCassi insisted that the peacetime OPCON should be transferred in 1996, and that the wartime OPCON should be transferred after 2000. Some of the President's Office officials criticized that RisCassi is acting

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<sup>172</sup> Jong-dae Kim. *Roh Moo-hyun, Going Beyond the Era* (Seoul: Namuwa Sup, 2010).

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> *Donga Ilbo*, May 22, 1980. This newspaper article reports that CFC Commander John Wickham had agreed to the Korean government's request to use forces to repress the public mass.

like a colony governor.<sup>175</sup> Secretary Kim called the US Ambassador to Korea, Donald Gregg, and Commander RisCassi to his office in the President's Office.

After the discussion, Commander RisCassi wrote that the transfer of peacetime OPCON will be 'envisioned, barring military emergency.' Secretary Kim used a red pen and erased the word envisioned to 'decided' and also removed the 'barring military emergency' part.<sup>176</sup> With this, President Roh Tae-woo made it clear that the peacetime OPCON transfer will be done by 1994.

As of December 1, 1994, the peacetime OPCON was transferred to Korea and wartime OPCON was left to the CFC.<sup>177</sup> The CFC Commander will be in charge of wartime OPCON, the Combined Delegated Authority (CODA).<sup>178</sup> CODA refers to the authority for combined crisis management, planning of operational plans, joint exercise, joint doctrine development, ROK-US intelligence management and C4I interoperability.<sup>179</sup> With this the Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff is now allowed to exercise its role as a military command institution by building military strategies and operation of theater.<sup>180</sup> The

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<sup>175</sup> Jong-dae Kim. *Roh Moo-hyun, Going Beyond the Era* (Seoul: Namuwa Sup, 2010).

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2012 in KR : 64-65.

<sup>178</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2010 in EN : 80.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p.80.

<sup>180</sup> President as the Commander-in-Chief has a command order system to be President-Defense minister-Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) (Military Command) and to Army, Navy, Air Force Chief of Staff (Military administration). Among this the military command is a particular exercise of what the Commander-in-Chief can use. Korea's OPCON is divided into two parts: Peacetime (Armistice) Operational Control and Wartime Operational Control. To be more specific, Military Command refers to managing the military power to attain the military goal. Thus this function includes planning military strategy, use of military power, operation planning and command and management. Military

peacetime OPCON transfer gives the JCS to practice for wartime OPCON transfer.

When President Roh Tae-woo raised the issue, there were many interpretations to President Roh Tae-woo's intention. Some argued that President Roh Tae-woo politically used the peacetime OPCON transfer to gather people's support using national pride argument, defuse the anti-US sentiment caused by the *Gwangju democratic movement*, and give more legitimacy to his presidency by showing actions of reforming the military which has taken over the government illegitimately before and which he was part of.<sup>181</sup> OPCON transfer being President Roh Tae-woo's presidential pledge reflects the people's sentiment and interest in the OPCON after the *Gwangju democratic movement*. President Roh Tae-woo wanted to use OPCON transfer as a tool to boost national pride and deal with the anti-US sentiment.<sup>182</sup> With regard to the *Gwangju democratic movement*, some argued that CFC commander who had the OPCON rights, approved the Chun Doo-hwan

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Administration refers to a function that builds, maintains, and manages military power to attain military goal. Thus it includes, planning defense policy, establish and enforce defense related legislations, resource acquisition, allocation, and management, and operation support. According to the Act on the Organization of National Armed Force Article 9 (2), the Chairman of JCS assist the Defense minister following the military command, and take the ministers orders to command operations.

<sup>181</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, "An Analysis and Assessment on Logics of the Roh Moo-hyun Administration Regarding the Retake of Wartime OPCON Authority from the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command," 64.

<sup>182</sup> Nam-sung Huh, "Process of Peacetime OPCON Retrieval and Future Directions," *Foreign Relations* 33, no.3 (1995).

administration to oppress the democratic movement.<sup>183</sup> And this action was to subordinate Korea under the U.S. In other words, the OPCON was a tool to suppress Korea's democratic movement.<sup>184</sup>

Those who put strong emphasis on President Roh Tae-woo and President Roh Moo-hyun's presidential will to have the OPCON transfer done, argue that President Roh Tae-woo pushed the peacetime OPCON transfer to have peace with the North and pursue his Northern policy.<sup>185</sup> The time when President Roh Tae-woo pursued Northern policy was when the communist countries were collapsing and President Roh Tae-woo planned to expand his

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<sup>183</sup> *Gwangju Democratic Movement* was caused by Chun Doo-wan's military junta occurred on December 12, 1979. Chun took over the power by accusing general and martial law commander, Jeong Seung-hwa as one related to the assassination of President Park Chung-hee. Chun and his military team took over the government. Chun, at that time, a recently promoted lieutenant general, of course, it is assumed that he was not promoted through the proper process but almost self-promotion because he and his team had already illegally taken over the government taking advantage of the fragile domestic situation after President Park Chung-hee's assassination. On April 14, 1980, Chun became the Acting Director of KCIA. Now he was totally in position controlling the army and government officials. As the people noticed Chun Doo-hwan's actions to usurp the government, many movements desiring for democracy occurred. The conflict between the democratic movement group and Chun and his military junta team reached its peak in May 17th, 1980 when he expanded the martial law to national at large, and making schools to close for the emergent time. On May 18, 1980, the martial law army brutally oppressed the students' rallies. As the army injured students, peoples' rage skyrocketed and the bloody fight became severe. During this process, people noticed that the U.S. army was involved with Chun and his team. (Man-gil Kang, 1992) The total causality was estimated to be 191 people died and 852 injured.

<sup>184</sup> Sam-sung Lee, *US Policy on Korea, Korea's Nationalism: Gwangju Democratic Movement, Unification, Korea-US relations*. (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1993).

<sup>185</sup> Interview held on July 31, 2015 and July 22, 2015. Those who argue that President Roh Tae-woo pursued the transfer because he wanted to have 'peace' with North, uses this case to support the argument for President Roh Moo-hyun that OPCON has to be transferred in order to enhance the communicate line with North Korea better as North Korea does not want South Korea's OPCON to be at the US.

country's diplomatic range towards the Northern part, which refers to the nations North to South Korea.<sup>186</sup>

But unlike the President Roh Moo-hyun administration, there is no strong evidence such as policy advisor's interview or articles, indicating that President Roh Tae-woo wanted to have the transfer done in order to make peace with the North. However, President Roh Tae-woo's Northern Policy was in line with his unification policy but there is no evidence that the President pursued unification by trying to meet the needs and requests of the North.<sup>187</sup>

### **Impact of external factors over the transfer dynamics**

Meanwhile, the international circumstances have also affected President Tae-woo's decision. The U.S. adopted the *Nunn-Warner Amendment* that aims to reduce the size of the U.S. troops. This bill implicitly demonstrated that the U.S. also had a clear mind to have the peacetime OPCON transferred. The bill notes that by the end of 1990s, Korea should have the peacetime OPCON

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<sup>186</sup> ROK National Office of Public Information, *Fruits of Nordpolitik: President Roh Tae-woo's Historic Visit to USSR* (Republic of Korea, 1990); Sin-uck Lee, "Northern Policy and Foreign Strategy of Roh Tae-woo Administration: Theoretical Application of Network Theory and Soft Power" *The Journal of Peace Studies* 15, no. 4 (2013) : 145-163.

<sup>187</sup> Jong-dae Kim. *Roh Moo-hyun, Going Beyond the Era*, 160-182; Sin-uck Lee, "Northern Policy and Foreign Strategy of Roh Tae-woo Administration: Theoretical Application of Network Theory and Soft Power" *The Journal of Peace Studies* 15, no. 4 (2013).

totally transferred and build a new combined defense system when war occurred.<sup>188</sup>

President Roh Tae-woo took this situation as a political opportunity. The *Nunn-Warner Amendment* approved the budget for U.S. to execute its military actions for the fiscal year for 1990-1991. There was further request to amend the budget by lowering number of soldiers in East Asia. *The East Asia Strategic Initiative* (EASI: 1990-1992) was written to reflect the Nunn-Warner Amendment. This initiative draws a 10-year and 3-phase plan to reduce and modernize troops in Korea, Japan, and the Philippines. It also suggests the US role to be changed from leading to supporting.<sup>189</sup> However in 1992, the U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney held off the withdrawal plan. EASI's first phase was implemented but Secretary Cheney froze the implementation plan because of the North Korean nuclear crisis from 1991 to 1992.<sup>190</sup> The 24<sup>th</sup> US-ROK Security Meeting (SCM) Joint Communiqué's Article 5 notes that both the US Secretary Cheney and Korean Minister Choi Sae-chang "expressed concern that North Korea's continuing efforts to develop weapons of mass

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<sup>188</sup> Nunn-Warner Amendment refers to the bill that contained the U.S. Congress' proposal regarding ROK-U.S. relations, which was added to an existing bill that had been submitted to Congress for approval of the U.S. defense budget and regulation of the number of troops for the years 1990-1991.

<sup>189</sup> East Asia Strategic Initiative (EASI) is a US Defense Department report to the US Congress requested under the Nunn-Warner Amendment submitted in 1990, 1991, and 1992. (ROK Defense White Paper in EN, 80); US Department of Defense 1990, 15).

<sup>190</sup> Scott Snyder, "Strengthening the US-ROK Alliance," *Center for US-Korea Policy*, (2009) : 4.

destruction and long-range missiles.”<sup>191</sup> In Article 6, Secretary Cheney confirms U.S. commitment to South Korea if any armed attack occurs, and this in accordance with the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954.<sup>192</sup> The situation worsened when North Korea started to threaten the international society that it may withdraw from the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) in 1993.<sup>193</sup> Consequently, in 1995, both Korea and the U.S. agreed to delay the wartime transfer. This agreement did not include a set date of the transfer.<sup>194</sup>

Ever since the peacetime OPCON was transferred, the wartime OPCON transfer issue has become a pending issue that has to be resolved sometime in the future. However, it was not a national priority for President Kim Yong-sam and President Kim Dae-jung. During President Kim Yong-sam administration, the peacetime OPCON was transferred, and the wartime OPCON transfer discussion was delayed due to North Korea’s nuclear threats starting from 1993.

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<sup>191</sup> “U.S., in Pact With South Korea, Delays Further Troop Withdrawal,” *The New York Times*, October 9, 1992

<sup>192</sup> See U.S.-ROK Security Meeting Joint Communiqué, October 8, 1992.

<sup>193</sup> In 1992, IAEA requested North Korea to get a special investigation on the plutonium reproduction facilities, however, North Korea refused it. Meanwhile Korea and US starts the TeamSpirit joint exercise. North Korea opposes this and then on March 12, declares to leave the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On March 19, 1994, North Korean representative said “Seoul is not far from here. We will make Seoul into ‘sea of fire.’” And on June 13, North Korea declare to leave IAEA. In summer of 1994, former US President Jimmy Carter meets North Korean leader Kim Il-sung. Then the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework between United States of America and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was issued in October 1994. North Korea agrees to give up on nuclear developments and have dialogues with South Korea but in return receives energy and economic compensation, and a more normalized relationship between North Korea and the US. (*The New York Times*, June 18, 1994 <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/18/world/carter-visit-to-north-korea-whose-trip-was-it-really.html> Accessed on June 30, 2015).

<sup>194</sup> *The Hankyoreh, Defense 21 Magainze*, June 16, 2015.

The US and North Korea signed the ‘Agreed Framework 1994’ to freeze its plutonium productions and replace them to light water reactor plants by 2003.<sup>195</sup> Thus this made it difficult for President Kim Yong-sam administration to have both the peacetime and wartime OPCON transfer done. President Kim Dae-jung administration changed the word of ‘self-reliant’ defense to ‘Advanced Elite Defense (*Seonjin Jeongye Gugbang*)’ as President Kim expressed that the ‘self-reliant’ wording is not proper in the era when most countries in the world are building a collective security system.<sup>196</sup> During President Kim Dae-jung administration, there were other issues such as the *Sunshine Policy* that stood at the top of diplomacy and security issues. He made the first historic Inter-Korean summit in 2000 from June 13 to June 15 at North Korea, and the Nobel Peace Prize award recognized such commitment.<sup>197</sup>

### ***Start of Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate***

As President Roh Moo-hyun administration came into the office, under the name of military sovereignty recovery, the wartime OPCON transfer issue

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<sup>195</sup> US-North Korea Agreed Framework, 1994. Council on Foreign Relations Primary Sources.

<sup>196</sup> Jong-dae Kim. *Roh Moo-hyun, Going Beyond the Era*, 218.

<sup>197</sup> Sunshine Policy is President Kim Dae-jung administration’s North Korea engagement policy that aims to increase inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. President Kim Dae-jung was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize 2000 “for his work for democracy and human rights in South Korea and in East Asia in general, and for peace and reconciliation with North Korea in particular.”

was raised. Meanwhile, the U.S. started its new military security strategy after the 9/11 attack.

The Roh administration perceived that Korea was being dragged along the US. As the US shifted its policy focus on terrorism after the 911 attack, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 2001 and the Global Defense Posture Review (GPR) published in 2003, discussed the U.S. strategic policy.<sup>198</sup> QDR defined that the current security dynamics as “an increasing diversity in the sources and unpredictability of the locations of conflict” and thus offered flexible adjustments to the US troops abroad through relocation and reduction.<sup>199</sup> GPR provided a clear definition of strategic flexibility. “Strengthening allied roles, contend with uncertainty, focus across regions as well as within them, develop rapidly deployable capability, and emphasize capacity rather than numbers.” This means that the U.S. plans to deploy, relocate, and station the troops became more flexibly so that when unexpected threats come up, they can respond quickly.<sup>200</sup> When President Roh made a speech in February 2005 at the Air Force Graduation ceremony emphasizing that Korea would not be swept away by a regional conflicts in Northeast Asia, it gave a controversial connotation about the role of the U.S. troops and how

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<sup>198</sup> Global Defense Posture Review is a US Department of Defense document on evaluation on realignment, relocation, and review on the US Armed Forces abroad.

<sup>199</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review (Washington, DC, 2001), 4.

<sup>200</sup> Also check President Bush’s speech on the New Global Defense Posture on August 16, 2004.

Korea perceives this situation.<sup>201</sup> On January 19, 2006, the U.S. State Secretary Condoleezza Rice and Korean foreign minister Ban Ki-moon agreed upon the strategic flexibility and that the U.S. will not make Korea get involved in any activity that is against the will of the Korean people.<sup>202</sup>

### ***The U.S. Position on President Roh Moo-hyun's Move***

When the wartime OPCON transfer discussion jump started, US continued to have a consistent position of early transfer. In October on the 37<sup>th</sup> SCM, both nations agreed to properly expedite the agreement and at the 19<sup>th</sup> SPI in July 2006, the U.S. asked Korea to have the transfer done before 2010 instead of 2012. CFC Commander Bell, served as commander from February 3, 2006 to June 3, 2008 said in a conference on January 10, 2007 that without political considerations and only considering military judgment, three years will be enough in transferring the wartime OPCON to Korea, so 2009 will be appropriate. However, he added that Korea said six or seven years afterwards would be more desirable. In addition to his interview in 2007, the *Stars and Stripes* magazine reported on April 5, 2008, Commander Bell's will about the

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<sup>201</sup> Jae-ik Song, "A Study on Variation Factors of the Korean's Forces Operational Control Authority-Focused on the Linkage of International and Domestic Politics."

<sup>202</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Korea-US Strategic Dialogue for the Strategic Consultation for Allied Partnership. Results report from the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs.  
<http://www.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/korboardread.jsp?typeID=24&boardid=11695&seqno=3444> (Accessed on January 5, 2015)

wartime OPCON transfer. Bell said that there are “no holes” and “no risk” to South Korea’s plan to transfer wartime OPCON in four years. “I know how to do this. This is my job.” “We’re not going to screw this up.” He also shared that he has made the South Korean military to lead two of the five military exercises during his years as the USFK commander. Quoting Bell’s interview with another media, the Stars and Stripes reported, “In every case, those Korean generals have made the right decisions at the right time, with the right application of military power.” Bell also said “OPCON transfer makes sense. It is the right thing to do. As military professionals, we know what to do, and we know how to do it right.” And he also mentioned the concerns about the U.S. support in case of North Korea’s attack. “If for some reason deterrence should fail and North Korea should attack the Republic of Korea, alliance forces will quickly and decisively defeat the enemy, and we will defeat the fighting on our terms.”<sup>203</sup>

On the other hand, on January 26, 2006, Commander LaPorte, served from May 1, 2002 to February 3, 2006, took a careful stance when President Roh raised the issue and said he will finish the discussion within 2006. LaPorte said that transfer would be done when Korea is equipped and the timeline should be decided after discussions, as it is a complicated matter. This shows

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<sup>203</sup> Bell: OPCON Transfer is Safe, Stars and Stripes, April 5, 2008. <http://www.stripes.com/news/bell-opcon-transfer-is-safe-1.77322> (Accessed on March 1, 2016).

how the U.S. changed its stance on early transfer after President Roh's desire to expedite the transfer occurred.<sup>204</sup>

Table 3 is a brief timeline of the wartime OPCON transfer debate. This timeline will recap the incidents mentioned in this section and understand the evolution of South Korea's OPCON development.

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<sup>204</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, October 23, 2006; *Monthly Chosun*, February 2007.

**Table 3. Brief Wartime OPCON Transfer Timeline**

July 14, 1950	South Korean President Rhee Syng-man assigns the command authority to United Nations Command (Commander Douglas MacArthur)
November 17, 1954	Term changes from command authority to command control noted in the Korea-US military alliance treaty
November 7, 1978	Command authority moves from UNC to CFC (Establishment of CFC)
	President Roh Tae-Woo shared thoughts of raising issue of peacetime OPCON transfer as inaugurated in 1987.
December 1, 1994	Peacetime OPCON transferred to Korea. Korean Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff is in charge of peacetime wartime OPCON. (during President Kim Young-sam). Discussed to transfer wartime OPCON after 1996
2003	President Roh Moo-hyun shared thoughts of raising issue of wartime OPCON transfer as inaugurated in 2003.
September 16, 2006	President Roh Moo-hyun of Korea and President George Bush of U.S. agree to have wartime OPCON transferred to Korea
February 23, 2007	Korea and U.S. defense ministers agree to have wartime OPCON transferred by April 17, 2012
June 26, 2010	President Lee Myung-bak of Korea and President Barack Obama of U.S. agree to delay wartime OPCON transfer to December 2015
April 25, 2014	President Park Geun-hye of Korea and President Barack Obama of U.S. agree to reschedule due date of wartime OPCON transfer
October 24, 2014	Korea and U.S. defense ministers agree to have wartime OPCON to mid 2020s based on conditions that Korea becomes capable.

Source: Information collected by the author from ROK Defense White Papers.

### 3. Decision Making Concerns in the Current Wartime Operational Control Transfer Debate

As noted in Chapter I, President Roh Moo-hyun raised the wartime OPCON transfer since his inauguration when anti-US sentiment was strong. However, it was on October 1, 2005 at the Armed Forces Day ceremony, when President Roh Moo-Hyun's strong will for self-reliant defense was officially expressed. "I have been emphasizing on self-reliant defense. It is so natural and fundamental for a sovereign nation to have such." ... "through the exercise of the wartime control, we will be born again as a 'self-reliant army' worthy of its name and be responsible of the Korean Peninsula's security."<sup>205</sup>

The logic behind those who are for transfer can be found in President Roh's Interview. The following questions and answers selected by the author to accurately convey the background without any bias:<sup>206</sup>

**[Question:** What is the President's thought on the wartime OPCON transfer?]

"Korea is the only country that does not have wartime OPCON over their own troops. We are the 11<sup>th</sup> largest economy, has the sixth-largest military forces but still do not have our own OPCON. The OPCON is the core of self-reliant national defense. And self-reliant national defense is the essence of being a sovereign nation.

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<sup>205</sup> President Roh's Speech at the 57<sup>th</sup> Armed Forces Day's Ceremony. The translation is from the author, and is not an official translation from the Office of the President.

<sup>206</sup> Special Interview with President Roh Moo-Hyun, *Yonhap News*, October 9, 2006. Translation is from the author, and is not an official translation from the Office of The President.

If there are not much practical problems in transferring, we must transfer the OPCON even though it takes a certain amount of cost. The U.S. offered 2009, we said 2012. If it is between 2009 to 2011, then that's fine."

**[Question: Worries about the damage it will give to ROK-US alliance]**

"Transfer of OPCON is something the US wants to do as well. With issues such as US Forces in Korea, returning the *Yongsan Army Base*, and burden sharing, we should negotiate more. We can't do everything the counter-part desires. That's where we need negotiation. I hope we can be more courageous. ROK-US relations will not be broken because of this one issue. This is a matter of national pride and destiny. We should be proactive in expressing our opinions."

**[Question: Opposition of former generals on this matter]**

"Then when is the most appropriate time? This issue was brought up in 2003 and will happen in 2012. That is a long time. I don't think this harms national security. I believe Korean army has the capability and the ROK-US alliance will not be shaken. Don't worry."

**[Question: US Forces in Korea]**

"Though the ROK/US Combined Forces Command (CFC) is dissolved, the US troops will be stationed. Stop saying that we cannot even protect ourselves from the North, it is so shameful and hurts our national pride."

[**Question:** Readiness of the Korean military and timeline]

“Korean military is up to a high level. Their standards are high, thus want to have the military capability up to the US level. But that takes time. That’s why I’ve agreed with 2012 but we can do 2009 as well... Now the President has a strong will for the transfer. Then the military is asking for advanced gears and system, and I am saying I will give it. We will do it until 2012 but there is no problem transferring before 2012.

[**Question:** Cost]

“The budget we use are mostly for military reform and structural reform. The actual budget needed for the wartime OPCON transfer is minimal. We can do the transfer even now.”<sup>207</sup>

Those who were favorable toward transferring the wartime OPCON transfer to Korea in 2006, and disagreed with its delay in 2014, estimated that first and foremost, national sovereignty is important. Second, they say that the estimation that Korea’s army cannot defend oneself is unacceptable. Thirdly, despite the transfer and dissolution of the CFC, the U.S. troops will assist in case of war, and the ROK-US alliance will not be damaged because of the transfer. Fourth, South Korea needs to prepare for the against U.S. strategic flexibility move.

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<sup>207</sup> Now refers to 2006 when the interview was conducted.

Arguments against the transfer are not understandable thoughts from the hardcore conservatives who are taking this as a political matter.<sup>208</sup> On the other hand, those who insist the delay of the transfer's thoughts can be most well reflected from a security lecturer to the Korea Veterans Association<sup>209</sup>:

“It is absurd of Roh Moo-hyun’s administration to act as if they are doing an independence movement by insisting on wartime OPCON transfer emphasizing self- reliance. South Korea’s sole execution on the wartime operational control will bring national security instability and damage on the economy. It is unacceptable that our nation is doing, as North Korea wants us to do. Only when North Korea’s nuclear and missile problems are resolved, we should reconsider of wartime OPCON transfer.”

Opinions against the transfer are mostly supported by the military elite groups and the conservative.<sup>210</sup> The common concerns of those against the transfer are first, sole execution of wartime OPCON is dangerous. South Korea cannot effectively deter and defeat North Korea with sole execution of OPCON. And there is no one nation who can win the war by itself at this time and era. If we transfer the wartime OPCON, immediate support from the U.S. will be

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<sup>208</sup> Read opinion articles such as “OPCON Transfer is Key to Unification and Strong Army,” *JoongAng Ilbo*, November 12, 2014; “OPCON transfer delay is a second *Eulsa Joyag*” *JeonbookIlbo*, October 29, 2014; “OPCON transfer delay is a national fraud against the people.” *The Hankyoreh*, July 18, 2013; “Even with such big financial investment, the army doesn’t have the ability to defend?” *The Hankyoreh*, October 26, 2014; “Goodbye OPCON,” *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, November 4, 2014; “OPCON transfer will make North Korea fear,” *Pressian*, October 31, 2014; “President Park Chung-Hee’s dream of self-defense, and his daughter delaying it” *Pressian*, October 26, 2014.

<sup>209</sup> Interview held on July 29, 2015.

<sup>210</sup> Read opinion articles such as “There is no country where citizens criticize the military,” *Dailian*, May 11, 2006; “OPCON transfer discussion is not appropriate.” *The Yonhap News*, July 31, 2006; “Former generals, military leaders argue wartime OPCON transfer is premature” *The Yonhap News*, August 2, 2006.

delayed and effective execution of power will be impossible.<sup>211</sup> Second, wartime OPCON transfer will damage the ROK-US alliance, which was maintained for a long time. Third, this is not a matter of sovereignty. The US four-star general will be the commander of the combined forces and South Korea's four-star general will be the vice commander, and for the commander to move on with agendas they need to get approval from both the US and Korean Presidents.<sup>212</sup> Minor arguments include that we do not have the funding enough to sustain the current military capability.

Public opinion seemed to be quite mediocre compared to the heated debates the conservative and the liberals are showing. On the recent delay decision from 2015 to 2020, 51% of the public said, "it's a good job" according to *Korea Gallup* research, while 32% said, "it's not a good decision."<sup>213</sup> Another survey conducted by the *Munhwa Ilbo* in October 30, 2014, 55.2% said they are favorable toward the wartime OPCON transfer delay, while 36.4% are against it.<sup>214</sup> On the other hand, an opinion group, which has criticized the transfer delay, quoted a survey. According to the survey, 51.2% of the people

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<sup>211</sup> KODEF (Korea Defense & Security Forum), *Wartime Operational Control: The Misunderstandings and the Truth* (Seoul: Planet Media, 2006).

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> *The Financial News*, October 31, 2014.

<sup>214</sup> The 23 Anniversary Special Coverage, *Munhwa Ilbo*, October 30, 2014.

<http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=20141030010703301260010> (Accessed on May 20, 2015).

think President Park should apologize for not keeping the presidential pledge.<sup>215</sup> Another progressive media group's survey conducted in 2006, show that 52.5% said we should transfer the wartime OPCON while 40.3% said the U.S. should take it, and 61.3% said the transfer will weaken the deterrence power against North Korea.<sup>216</sup> In summary, the general public seemed to agree upon the transfer in principle that Korea should take the wartime OPCON, but in terms of timeline, they do not show a preference to an immediate or within a short time change.

### ***Self-reliant Defense***

One of President Roh's core national security advisor Lee Jong-seok, who became the unification minister and the National Security Council leader recalls, "retrieving the wartime OPCON is the core of self-reliant defense."<sup>217</sup> The peacetime OPCON that we have taken back from the U.S. on December 1, 1994, is only the title. There is no meaning to have OPCON during peacetime and not wartime".<sup>218</sup> He continues on "President Roh Moo-hyun strongly pushed to retrieve the wartime OPCON because even before talking about self-

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<sup>215</sup> "President Park should apologize for the OPCON transfer delay." Voice of People, October 29, 2014.

<sup>216</sup> *The Hankyoreh* (through Research Plus)

<sup>217</sup> According to President Lee Syng-man's transfer, the accurate wording for the issue is 'transfer' not 'retrieve' or 'getting it back' which has a connotation that it was taken by force and not Korea's will. However, there is no official wording for this matter and many use 'retrieve' or 'transfer' interchangeably.

<sup>218</sup> Jong-seok Lee. *Peace Hanging on the Blade of a Sword* (Seoul: Gaema Gowon, 2014)

reliant defense, having the wartime OPCON is a very common function for a sovereign nation. It is a necessary process in normalizing the nation. Thus President Roh expressed that Korea has consigned their military sovereignty to a foreign nation. It shows the strong will to recover that military sovereignty of Korea. In addition to that wartime OPCON retrieval is a process to develop Korea-US relations to a more normal, balanced, and amicable one, and it became a turning point to make a healthy Korea-US relations".<sup>219</sup> Lee also notes that 'peace' meant 'self-reliance' and 'balance' in President Roh's administration.<sup>220</sup> Lee Jong-seok's thoughts represent the perception that a fundamental change in CFC is needed. President Roh Moo-hyun and his team desired to have a self-reliant defense nation, which has its own power to take care of their people's security, and Korea should no longer be dragged around by the U.S. and be subordinated to it. He wanted to put an end to the dependent defense situation.

As President Roh Moo-hyun raised the issue with national pride, military sovereignty, dependence on the U.S., and others that were enough to touch the people's mind, the debate became so heated. Later, the debate between those who are pro-transfer and those who are against-transfer extended to a confrontation between the progressives and conservatives. Most

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

significantly, the senior military elite group was across the board against the transfer making every effort to stop the transfer, by voicing their concerns through the media. Former defense ministers and generals together expressed their official opposition and concerns over President Roh's decision. The opposition rally included the Korean Retired Generals and Admirals Association and 20 other conservative organizations. Army, Navy, Air Force Academy Alumni Associations and retired groups, and former generals continued on to issue opposition statements. However, despite the massive protests against the transfer decision, President Roh strongly pushed to go proceed with the transfer by April 17, 2012.<sup>221</sup> Korean Retired Generals and Admirals Association and Korea Veterans Association started to collect 10 million signatures that show people's opposition to the wartime OPCON transfer decision. From September 29, 2006 to May 28, 2010 they have collected 10,070,000 signatures achieving their aim.<sup>222</sup>

Hwee-rhak Park notes that from 2009 with a new defense minister, wartime OPCON issue had a balanced perspective. He argued that the previous administration leaned overly too much towards pro-transfer because of the anti-American '386' generation political leaders that held big influence during President Roh Moo-hyun's tenure. The new defense minister worried that 2012

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<sup>221</sup> *YTN News*, June 27, 2010.

<sup>222</sup> *KONAS.NET*, January 1, 2011.

is a year of “strong and prosperous nation” for North Korea. He listened to those who were against the transfer. As a result, the defense minister recommended to President Lee Myung-bak that the wartime OPCON transfer should be delayed.<sup>223</sup>

A former Diplomacy and Security Committee Member of the Lee Myung-bak administration’s Presidential Transition Team has also said during his interview for this research that when he interviewed different organizations to gather opinions in the transition office, members of Korean Retired Generals and Admirals Association and Korea Veterans Association, came to him and strongly appealed for the need to delay the wartime OPCON transfer.<sup>224</sup>

North Korea’s *Cheonan* warship sinking attack killing 46 South Korean soldiers occurred on March 26, 2010 also added reasons for wartime OPCON transfer delay.<sup>225</sup> President Lee Myung-bak delayed the transfer agreement to December 1, 2015. Then again when the next President Park Geun-hye came in, the transfer was delayed to the 2020s.<sup>226</sup> This time the agreement was a “condition-based” instead of “time-based.” The conditions state that Korea

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<sup>223</sup> Hwee-rhak Park. "The Transfer of Wartime Operational Control in Korea: History, Risks and Tasks from a Military Perspective," 341.

<sup>224</sup> Interview held on July 3, 2015.

<sup>225</sup> *Korea Herald*, June 30, 2010.

<sup>226</sup> *Yonhap News*, October 24, 2014; “Press Brief by Secretary Hagel and ROK Minister of National Defense Han Min Koo in the Pentagon Briefing Room” October 23, 2014. <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/606950/press-brigadieregadierefing-by-secretary-hagel-and-rok-minister-of-national-defense-han-min> (Accessed August 10, 2015)

should have “critical” military capabilities. The critical capabilities included Kill-Chain preemptive strike, Korean Air and Missile Defense systems.<sup>227</sup>

In very politically sweeping terms, there were opinions that the two conservative party presidents, President Lee and President Park, did not want to continue on what President Roh Moo-hyun did.<sup>228</sup> Those who were against the transfer, especially the senior military elites strongly argue that the progressive and the supporter of President Roh, who are non-experts of the military reality, and ignorant of the current security situations, are using the general public’s emotion.<sup>229</sup> There is no more effective deterrence than the U.S.<sup>230</sup> Senior military elites requested the politicians to think rationally and practically in recognizing what is needed for Korea.<sup>231</sup>

Meanwhile those who are pro-transfer cannot understand the senior military elite’s refusal of the transfer. They questioned, why the senior military elites cannot let go of the U.S. when Korea is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the

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<sup>227</sup> *Korea Herald*, October 24, 2014.

<sup>228</sup> While *Weekly Chosun*, July 5, 2010; *Pressian*, July 22, 2013 deal with this matter, the most interesting is how President Roh Moo-hyun mentioned in his interview with *Yonhap News Special Interview* on August 9, 2006. President Roh Moo-hyun said twice the conservatives are “starting an argument because Roh Moo-hyun raised the issue.” The Roh Moo Hyun Foundation (*Saram Saneun Sesang*)’s Archives Collection. See the time between 42 to 43 minutes. <http://archives.knowhow.or.kr/record/video/view/2055368?page=12> (Accessed on June 7, 2015).

<sup>229</sup> Hwee-rhak Park, “The Transfer of Wartime Operational Control in Korea: History, Risks and Tasks from a Military Perspective,” 329-330.

<sup>230</sup> Park notes that the risks were not fully mentioned in the initial debate. “The possible ramifications, risks and complementary measures of the transfer were not fully discussed due to the strong anti-US campaign by the so-called “386 generation” progressive political and opinion leaders in the Roh Moo-hyun administration from 2003.”

<sup>231</sup> Young-sup Han and Sang-hyuck Jung, “Political, Economical, Military Analysis of the Wartime Operational Control Authority Transfer Issue: Theory, Evaluation, Countermeasures.”

world and is currently spending 30 times more money than North Korea for military build-up. Pro-transfer people criticize the senior military elites that they are too pro-America, afraid to stand alone, live in the old way of thinking, and lazy to make changes.<sup>232</sup> Pro-transfer opinions include how OPCON transfer will improve relations with North Korea. Those who are pro-transfer consider wartime OPCON transfer will bring a step closer to make peace with North Korea and closer to unification.<sup>233</sup>

Additionally, the high-level officers of President Roh Moo-hyun administration, continued on to emphasize the need of wartime OPCON transfer to establish a peace system between the two Koreas. Song Min-soon, former Director of the Diplomacy and Security Office of The Office of the President shared in a press conference on August 10, 2006 that Korea needs to control its own military if South Korea wants to be the main counterpart for inter-Korea peace system.<sup>234</sup> Defense minister Yoon Kwang-ung at the National Assembly on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006, insisted that North Korea will not discuss peace system nor disarmament issues when South Korea does not have its own wartime OPCON. Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon on September 1, 2006, answered the doubt of the conservatives that President Roh Moo-hyun is

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<sup>232</sup> *Oh My News*, June 10, 2015.

<sup>233</sup> *Yonhap News*. November 27, 2013; *Yonhap News English*, October 21, 2015.

<sup>234</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, January 30, 2007.

pushing the wartime OPCON transfer to hold Inter-Korea Summit by doing what the North wants us to do. Minister Ban said that wartime OPCON retrieval is not a strategic move to hold Inter-Korea Summit but it does create better circumstances when the wartime OPCON is retrieved to negotiate peace with the North. By this, South Korea can block the propagandas from the North that they cannot discuss peace system with a nation that does not have wartime OPCON.

Those who are against the transfer, including the senior military elite group, argue that President Roh Moo-hyun and the team members are those who grew up with the anti-American sentiment, so they eventually want the U.S. army to withdraw from Korea, and are North Korea-friendly people. Many of those who argue the transfer should happen say that North Korea looks down on South Korea because the South does not even have its own wartime OPCON. To such arguments, conservatives rebuts by asking, what is the point of doing something your enemy wants you to do?<sup>235</sup>

Table 4 summarizes the pros and cons of the transfer debate that were discussed in this section. The pros and cons are categorized in three perspectives of defense, finance, and international politics.

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<sup>235</sup> *SBS News*, September 20, 2014; *Korea Herald*, October 29, 2014.

**Table 4. Pros and Cons on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate**

Pro-transfer	Against-transfer
<p>[Defense perspective]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Korea has enough military capability to deter North Korea</li> <li>• Remove fear of U.S. abandonment</li> <li>• Balanced development of army, navy, and air force (currently more focused on the army)</li> <li>• Wartime OPCON transfer does not mean dropping ROK- U.S. alliance as those who are against the transfer worry.</li> <li>• Military will be more motivated and be desperate to build a stronger army</li> </ul>	<p>[Defense perspective]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective deterrence on North Korea</li> <li>• Guarantee U.S. intervention and support in case of war.</li> <li>• Complete areas of Korea's military capability that need improvement. Such as strategic information and war strategy building (U.S. is the country who have experiences of war until recently)</li> <li>• Keep effectiveness on the combined forces operation</li> </ul>
<p>[Financial perspective]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. will raise defense share</li> </ul>	<p>[Financial perspective]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save defense budget in purchase weapons systems</li> </ul>
<p>[International politics perspective]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restore Military Sovereignty/ Boost National Pride</li> <li>• Not be swayed by U.S.'s Asian foreign policy change.</li> <li>• Balanced diplomacy with China and mitigates concerns over U.S. THAAD or other pressures</li> <li>• Improve relations with North Korea by doing what the North asks for and become the main negotiation party for peace treaty.</li> </ul>	<p>[International politics perspective]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Korean Peninsula stability</li> <li>• Should not do what the enemy (North Korea) wants South Korea to do.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's collection on the resources and data.

## **CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS ON SENIOR MILITARY ELITES' OPPOSITION**

This section deals with the analysis on the senior military elites' opposition on the wartime OPCON transfer decision. The first part discusses the key findings from the senior military elites group and the second part examines the reactions from those opposing the senior military elite group's opinions. Third part deals with the lessons drawn from the study.

### **1. Key Findings from the Senior Military Elites Group**

This section's analysis is based on how the large, bureaucratic organization with a unique nature has affected the senior military elites' decision on the transfer opposition. Interview results were examined carefully. Through the quantitative analysis, the decision factors were put in an order, and through the qualitative analysis, these factors were classified within the three organizational elements above, empirically proving how organizational factors affected the senior military elites decision.

The interview results are investigated both quantitatively and qualitatively. The AHP method helped to collect the semi-structured question

answers and put it in order, and qualitative analysis enabled describing the in-depth interview results. The quantitative analysis bases on the structured/semi-structured interview results. The responses for these questions repeated what the official statement of the senior military elites expressed through government documents and media. It was that the North Korean nuclear weapons issues and the concerns over ROK-US alliance caused by the CFC's dissolution. However, the qualitative analysis allowed elaboration to the quantitative results. Qualitative analysis bases on the interview results that were produced from open-ended and follow up questions continued from the semi-structured questions. This part proves the status quo bias and organizational resistance and culture supporting this dissertation's arguments. While 23 senior military elites, may come across as a small number, compared to the 630,000 of Korean soldiers and a large group of retired military groups, it does have representative values. It is important to note that the one person who expresses one's opinions is not just a simple personal opinion but such 'personal' thoughts, naturally reveal the foundational thoughts of the organization and atmosphere of the policy formulation process. Also the opinions of security experts and policy advisors, who have closely observed the interactions and behaviors of the top military leaders, provide an extensive source for the senior military elites'

behavior pattern. The inputs from these experts provide meaningful results as well.

### **(1) Quantitative Analysis through AHP**

In the interviews, I asked what are your opinions on the wartime OPCON transfer, based on whether it was ‘delay is better’ or ‘transfer now is better,’ I asked what is the most deciding factor affecting such answer. The following seven criteria were the reasons that I got from the 23 senior military elites. I have provided the main points of each criterion.

- **NK Nuke** North Korea has nuclear weapons, which South Korea does not have. Nuclear weapons were the most threatening factor but those who had talked about NK nuke have always mentioned NK’s asymmetrical, biochemical, long-range missiles together. And they have also discussed NK’s cyber military capability though it was not counted as the most threatening factor. In short, NK nuke was a symbol to point out that NK has a stronger weapon than South Korea.
- **ROK-US Alliance** The main point of the concern over the ROK-US alliance was dissolution of the CFC. Transferring the wartime OPCON means dissolving CFC. To the senior military elites who disagree with the transfer, the CFC is the symbol of ROK-US alliance and, transfer means breaking the ROK-US alliance.
- **Cost** Those who answered with cost points to the weapons purchase and advanced technology

purchase. So far, Korea has relied on the U.S. for the most advanced information and technologies, especially those detecting the preemptive strikes from the enemies.

- **Military Readiness** Military readiness is a rather vague category, which combines NK nuke issues, South Korea's military capability, cost, and international security dynamics. There were some who answered 'military readiness' as the first factor finding difficulty in pinpointing one factor that affects the transfer decision.
- **Military Willingness** Those who answered military willingness referred to the spiritual and emotional readiness of the military.
- **Strategic Culture** Those who mentioned strategic culture mainly referred to the culturally formulated belief that Korea strategically needs the U.S. to make a good strategic military move.
- **Inter-service Rivalries** Those who mentioned inter-service rivalries referred to Korea's Army-focused military structure. Korea's Army is much larger than Korea's Navy or Air Force.<sup>236</sup>

Interview data were translated into numbers through the AHP technique.

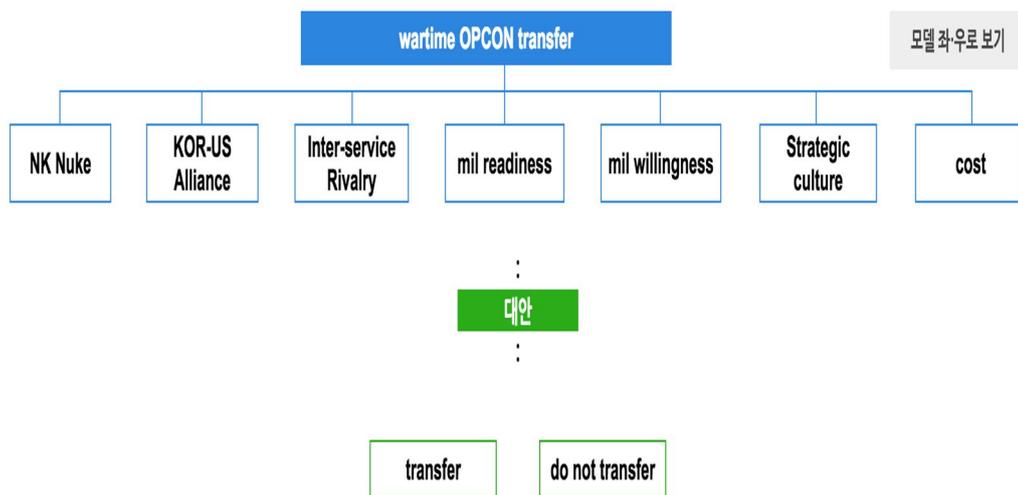
First, I have put the wartime OPCON transfer as the goal of the model, and input the criteria that are affecting the decision of wartime OPCON transfer.

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<sup>236</sup> Korea's army-focused military structure comes from the national geographical concerns that Korea has more mountains and lands and the major enemy is North Korea. Also, in terms of numbers, the army generals are way more and in terms of Chairman of JCS, and defense ministers, definitely, the army was strong.

The seven criteria were drawn from the answers I have asked the interviewee of which has the largest effect in making such decision. Second, for pairwise comparison, which is the most significant feature of AHP, I compared each criteria based on the weight the each interviewee assigned to each factor. AHP's pairwise comparison allowed this analysis to demonstrate the weighted value of each factor.<sup>237</sup> The following Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8 were screenshots from the modeling results. This AHP modeling was done through the software provided through the web.<sup>238</sup>

**Figure 6. Senior Military Elites Decision Making Criteria**



<sup>237</sup> Pairwise comparison refers to the comparing each criterion to the other to prioritize the criteria. A unique comparison that can be done by the AHP model.

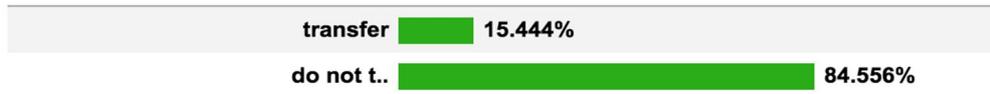
<sup>238</sup> I Make It program. <http://expertchoice.co.kr/makeit.html>(Accessed on Sep., 2015).

Figure 7. Pairwise Comparison Results

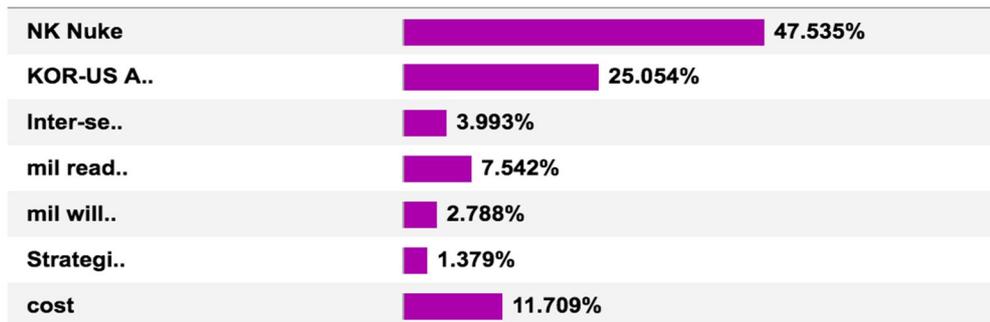
기준	극히 적음	대 단 히 적음	아 주 적음	매 우 적음	많 이 적음	상 당 히 적음	약 간 적음	중 립	약 간 중립	상 당 히 중립	많 이 중립	매 우 중립	아 주 중립	대 단 히 중립	극 히 중립	기준		
NK Nuke	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	KOR-US Alliance
KOR-US Alliance	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Inter-service Rivalry
Inter-service Rivalry	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	mil readiness
mil readiness	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	mil willingness
mil willingness	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Strategic culture
Strategic culture	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	cost
NK Nuke	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Inter-service Rivalry
KOR-US Alliance	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	mil readiness
Inter-service Rivalry	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	mil willingness
mil readiness	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Strategic culture
mil willingness	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	cost

Figure 8. Importance Weighted to Each Factor

대안의 종합중요도



기준의 종합중요도



The consistency weight was 0.09375 below 0.1 proving that the data collection was consistent. Through the AHP model, I was able to see how much value the 23 senior military elites put on each factor. Among 23 senior military elites, 3 elites were against the delay, that is, they were those arguing that transfer is needed now. The importance weighted diagram shows what the senior military elites see as the primary factors. The survey results show that the interviewees consider NK nuke to be the deciding factor in their wartime OPCON transfer decision, and strategic culture to be the least factor.

The rank of each factor is as the following:

NK Nuke > ROK-US Alliance > Cost > Military readiness >  
Inter-service rivalries > Military willingness > Strategic culture

## **(2) Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative analysis summarizes the in-depth interview results and examines the factors that were not explained through the semi-structured questions. Through this process, I was able to understand the perception of the senior military elites, and discover the factors that were not revealed in the formatted questions.

The core results from the interviews show that senior military elites show a pattern of organizational resistance against the wartime OPCON transfer. While the official reasons such as NK Nuke, and concerns over ROK-U.S.

alliance, and cost are facts, the factors represent some structural reasons that support military organization's resistance to change, and also reveal the bias the decision makers can have. Qualitative analysis is examined through each factor discussed above. The most representative interview comments are introduced.

### ***North Korean Nuke***

Interviewees mentioned North Korean nuclear weapons and other threatening weapons such as the biochemical and asymmetrical, long-range missiles are the reasons why the transfer should be delayed. While South Korea does not have nuclear weapons, North Korea does. And this makes, the senior military elites - whose mission is to win the war, defeat the enemy, and protect their citizens - stick with the current defense cooperation system with the US who has nuclear weapons. Military's special nature lies in its goal to win war and protect their nations. In doing so, it has to deal with uncertainty and risk.<sup>239</sup> Naturally, the leaders of the organization will find ways to reduce uncertainty and risk, and this leads the military decision makers to have a tendency to not change and rather keep with the current weapons system and use the tested

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<sup>239</sup> Nielsen, "Preparing for War: The Dynamics of Peacetime Military Reform."

technique.<sup>240</sup> For Korea's case, it is better to maintain the same defense system, in which the U.S. serve as the most effective deterrence against North Korea.

Many former generals gave a succinct answer that transfer should be delayed because North Korea has nuclear weapons. Some of the interviewees responded with gestures that they could not understand why the interviewer is asking such an easy and clear-cut question. One former lieutenant general said, "security experts who say Korea can still win the war with North Korea are those who are making empty discussions because they do not have any clue about reality or experience in the military. They are just talking over conferences and papers. North Korean nuclear weapons are serious."<sup>241</sup>

Former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized the careful approaches the military takes in dealing with decisions related to war. He said, "Military is unique. Supervisor can command orders to one's own subordinate even though one knows that their lives may be at risk. Military matters are extremely sensitive. Thus, decisions are made based on the worst situation that may happen." The Chairman emphasized that "wartime OPCON is a military matter that must be discussed from a military perspective. Politicians should not politicize wartime OPCON issue to their advantage. Also, accurately speaking, there is no such thing as self-reliant defense (*Jaju Gugbang*) in fighting in a war.

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Interview held on June 19, 2015; Interview held on July 29, 2015.

No one goes into war by themselves.” He refutes those opinions of President Roh Moo-hyun and his team that South Korea is not exercising self-reliant defense. “I fought in Iraq cooperating with armies of other nations. Countries have to cooperate to win in battles. History has proven that and it’s a strategic technique.” He also emphasized how the current wartime OPCON situation with the US is a strategic move and transferring will harm the relationship. “Maintaining a stable diplomatic and military relationship with allies is important to receive the needed cooperation when we need it.”<sup>242</sup>

### **Goal clash between the military and President**

Another interesting part discussed under North Korean nuclear weapons part is the goal clash between the military and President Roh Moo-hyun administration. The vision on building partnership with the North did not seem to go well with the military’s view on North Korea as enemy. President Roh Moo-hyun’s approach was to separate North Korean nuclear weapons from North Korean policies, and Roh administration pursued ‘peace’ with North Korea. President Roh’s emphasis on peace was projected through the Defense White Papers from 2004 to 2008.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Interview held on August 10, 2015.

<sup>243</sup> ROK Ministry of Defense’s Defense White Paper 2004, 2006, 2008. Looking into the Defense White Papers in the past, it is an unusual section where ‘peace’ with North Korea comes out as an agenda for Ministry of Defense.

Former South Korea's representative for South-North general-level military talks, and former brigadier general shared that after dealing with the North for many years, he has noticed the importance of understanding North Korea's intention. He advises the politicians should be cautious and not naïve in understanding their talks that they want peace. He said he would be very cautious in analyzing the weight and danger of the nuclear weapons North Korea has. He argued that transfer should be done when Korea equips the ability to tackle North Korean nuclear weapons on our own.<sup>244</sup>

Another interesting point was that discussions with those who were against the senior military elites' transfer opposition. Even the most hard core critics of the senior military elites did not deny that it is true that North Korea has nuclear weapons and the US is the best deterrence as of now. But the two sides differed in urgency and use of such deterrence option. While those who pursue peace was less urgent or worried on North Korean provocations, the military took it as an immediate threat that they cannot waste any minute having a strong defense posture.

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<sup>244</sup> Interview held on August 4, 2015.

### ***ROK-US Alliance***

The concerns over the ROK -US alliance were answered as a primary factor why some senior military elites think that the transfer should be delayed. One interview emphasized the importance of the ROK-US alliance, the possible tendency of status quo bias. The interview with a former vice defense minister who was involved in creating SCM, MC, and CFC emphasized that,

“these yearly meetings are unprecedented actions, and until now, it was well maintained. There is no other country in the world, which can have the U.S. defense minister participate in the meeting like this, especially in a written format. Transfer means CFC dissolution, and means ROK-US alliance is over. The CFC system is the most blessed system a nation can have. Those people from the Roh Moo-hyun administration are those who say they are shameful of being Koreans in front of the diseased ancestors. They do not know what is strategically most important for Korea. They eventually want to withdraw US troops from Korea.”<sup>245</sup>

In this interview, the interviewee noted that the younger generation people do not know how difficult it was to set this CFC structure, and maintain it so far. Being in the senior positions in conservative organizations, he emphasized how the retired people should raise their voice for those on duty who cannot raise their voice because their voice is saying something different

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<sup>245</sup> Interview held on June 19, 2015; President Roh’s speech at the 51th Memorial Day ceremony.

from the government. He also said more education and historical understanding are needed so that the younger generations can comprehend the full context.

Also, this interviewee suggested policy moves. Referring to some of the international theories, he said reality is different from just paper and books. Managing international dynamics possibly getting a hint from the popular balance or bandwagon theories from the balance of power theories.<sup>246</sup> He said that Korea should choose one nation, US or China, diplomatically. A clear message to the US should be conveyed that they are sticking into US in terms of security cooperation. He said unfortunately, we still need U.S. help if war occurs.

### **Status quo bias revealed**

The interview however indicates the possible status quo bias this interviewee and those who share the same idea have. Words like ‘how difficult it was’ to establish this system, indicate the psychological commitment, the sunk cost effect. Also, anchoring effect was also detected. Many argued to stick with the current decision. However, the general did not forget to mention that it is a tragedy that Korea has not prepared to have its own secure military system

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<sup>246</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the state, and war: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: New York Print, 1987); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2001).

over the years when Korea had an institutional covering such as the wartime OPCON, and is now going through a painful process of asking US to stay longer because we are not ready.

Another interview with a former brigadier general said, “in the current situation, we need US help. But how would your parents help you, when the parent-child relationship breaks up.”<sup>247</sup>

This interviewee refers ROK-US alliance as a parental relationship, and also considers the wartime OPCON transfer to mean breaking up the relationship with the US. The wording such as parent-child relationship indicates the psychological commitment, and loss aversion effect. To this interviewee, transfer meant losing a parent or breaking up with your parent.

Another former lieutenant general explained that the gist of ROK-US alliance is the unity of command in war strategy.

“the transfer of wartime OPCON is what North Korea strongly desires. Kim Il-sung saw that the U.S. lost in the Vietnam War mainly due to failure of unity of command, and since then he had a plan to make U.S. leave Korea.”<sup>248</sup>

The emphasis on ‘unity of command’ leaves questions, such as, why is it not possible for Korea to be the one commander during war and lead the

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<sup>247</sup> Interview held on July 29, 2015

<sup>248</sup> Interview held on June 19, 2015; Gulf war was one case where the parallel command system worked out for victory of war. Ministry of Defense, 2005.

combined forces. There was an answer to such inquiry. A formal general, answered that “there was no case in which the US was under another country’s commandership. So far, it is the US that has war experience and its techniques and strategies, and power was again strengthened through the recent war experiences. ROK-US alliance is a strategic move that works for the best for the two countries. It should not expand into a political problem.”<sup>249</sup>

When the generals analyzed the reference point to be the U.S. having the wartime OPCON, switch from the U.S. to Korea commandership would come across as a loss. Rather say sorry to the change than regret in the future. Sunk cost, loss aversion, regret avoidance all go together for status quo inertia here.

Two other former brigadier generals raised their voice over the wartime OPCON issue by emphasizing the danger of North Korea. Here the danger include a spiritual aspect, hatred towards North Korea’s communist ideas. Both generals who became generals during President Roh Moo-hyun administration said that the younger generation do not know the history well and are easily susceptible to emotional stir up and propagandas.<sup>250</sup> The CFC was considered to be a sacred historical gift. Especially for those who have been working with the US or related positions of ROK-US alliance, or at the CFC, which is also

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<sup>249</sup> Interview held on August 10, 2015.

<sup>250</sup> Interview held on July 29, 2015; August 4, 2015.

considered to be an elite course in the military, they were strongly against the wartime OPCON transfer.

Another interview showing the sunk cost effect is from a former major general. He said that the progressive views are in some way correct.

“Yes, it makes sense to say that my seniors, who have experienced the wartime and served the military which could not have had properly operated without the support of U.S. right after war in the 1950s, can view the Korean army from their perspectives. However, still, practically, it is strategically better to delay the wartime OPCON transfer.”<sup>251</sup>

While the answers on ROK-US alliance and advice of the senior military elites have significant points that comes from experience, at the same time, the statements include status quo bias caused by psychological commitments. This resistance from the senior military elites does indicate that there will be no perspective change or paradigm shift on linking transfer to ROK-US alliance break up.

### *Cost*

Those who have chosen cost to be the main reason for transfer delay argue that in ‘practical’ and ‘national interest’ sense, it is better to remain in the current system. Interview with former brigadier general who was in charge of weapons purchases and supplies for many years have cautiously noted how

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<sup>251</sup> Interview held on August 27, 2015.

costly it will be for Korea to take the wartime OPCON at this moment. “I also believe,” brigadier general says “that wartime OPCON has to be transferred, however, for now, it is better to delay it. As our weapons systems have been built with the U.S., radical change will be costly, and change process should be implemented incrementally, not radically as President Roh suggested. It will be hard for Korea to fill in the gap when the U.S. weapons systems leave.”<sup>252</sup>

However, the cost argument assumes that Korea needs to keep up with the current level of military capability and systems, thus, shows a possibility of loss aversion. When there is a system change, it is natural that there will be difficulties in rearranging the system, however, it seems that the military has no room for such change rearrangement time because of its ‘special’ nature to defend the nation and be ‘alert’ at all times. This leaves a question why the military has not worked to build its own military capability when such ‘alertness’ and ‘desperateness’ were there. These factors repeat the organizational resistance.

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<sup>252</sup> Interview held on July 31, 2015. Younger generation refers to the younger generation in the military and the society.

### **Bureaucratic challenges**

Budget allocation and cost factors represent the bureaucratic characteristics and challenges the military faces. Budget allocation was put under cost because anything related to money is linked together due to the limited set pie allocated for the military. The intertwined system of the bureaucratic organization structurally causes organizational inertia, hindering moves toward changes.

An interview with the former defense minister clearly states his difficulty as a former defense minister with the bureaucratic challenges.

“Though one has ideas and dreams to execute once becoming the defense minister, actually, there are not many that the minister can do. While the Finance ministry controls the budget, the Blue house (or the executive power or politicians) controls the personnel matters.<sup>253</sup>

### ***Military Readiness***

As noted above, military readiness is a vague term because it is hard to know how much ‘readiness’ refers to ‘readiness.’ In military terms, it means to be ready to fight against its enemy. For the senior military elites, it means when Korea equips all the systems to the level Korea had with the U.S. together. Thus,

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<sup>253</sup> Interview held on July 16, 2015.

this 'readiness' part is opened to criticism that is an abstract term justifying the senior military elites argument.

A former colonel said in the interview "I think the Korean people might flee away aboard if we had transferred the wartime OPCON when President Roh raised it. The level of security anxiety was very high."<sup>254</sup> Interesting point that came out in follow up questions and through interview with a journalist specialize in security issues and have covered the military dynamics closely as the defense ministry correspondent and a senior journalist in the field. The security expert journalist said that in her observation, Korean people are not ready either. Though Korean people became numb to 'war' issues, Korean people do not welcome any factors that cause anxiety or fear if not direct, even indirectly through the stock market volatility. Thus, military readiness, though it refers to the military capability readiness over North Korea, an understanding of the inner implication which is the emotional readiness of the Korean people is also needed. She points out that there is definitely a tragic consequence of being a divided nation, and the military is shouldering the entire burden.<sup>255</sup> She also adds on that the Korean people always needed a scapegoat when mishaps happen in the society, and the military has been the easiest one to tackle. The disrespect towards the military resulted from the military's corruption and

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<sup>254</sup> Interview held on July 6, 2015.

<sup>255</sup> Interview held on August 4, 2015.

illegitimate ruling in the past, however, the Korean people should also try to give proper respect towards the military. Such might give a big encouragement and change to the military.<sup>256</sup>

### ***Inter-Service Rivalries***

While the three senior military elites who think the wartime OPCON transfer should be executed now answered inter-service rivalries as the primary reason for it, there were other elites mentioning this factor. The three senior military elites commonly suggested that when leaders focus on their interest instead of the value they should be considering, it loosens military desperateness. They think the Korean military is currently lacking such desperateness and not having OPCON is acerbating it. Such interest matters make the officials to focus on their branch and not on what is needed for the nation. It is also linked with leaders' perception on their organizational morale. Leaders do not want to contract the size of their organization

During the past 10 years since the wartime OPCON issue was first raised, there was a very minor change in number of generals in Korea.<sup>257</sup> Interview with former lieutenant colonel, who has supported the senior military elites closely being in charge of organizational matters, shared the above

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<sup>256</sup> Interview held on August 4, 2015.

<sup>257</sup> *Yonhap News*, October 29, 2015.

discussion. According to the officer, generals usually have their forces (army, navy, air force) people sit in important positions, and the common criticism of protectionism over their own services is true. Having one's subordinate succeed the powerful posts may guarantee to overshadow any mishaps or mistakes if discovered after they leave their post. Also the continuation of people from the same school, same region, or same family root to be in leading positions will boost their pride and identification.<sup>258</sup> This will naturally make organizations try to maintain the organization morale through making a homogeneous group of career officials.

In accordance with the criticism on protectionism or collectivism among the branches of the military among army, navy, and air force, former lieutenant colonel acknowledged the commonly perceived conflict within the military.<sup>259</sup> The army, and among the army, the Korean Military Academy, are the elitist course and they are the establishment. The army has held the power until now and it is true that they will continue to strive to preserve such as power but it happens in all organizations. Another lieutenant colonel from the Navy has analyzed the problem of army establishment and their privilege being a problem over the wartime OPCON transfer debate.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Interview conducted 3 times from July 28, 2015 to August 27, 2015.

<sup>259</sup> Interview held on July 22, 2015 and interview conducted on August 27, 2015.

<sup>260</sup> Interview held of July 10, 2015.

Table 5 shows the proportion of each service in the Korean military. The Army takes a large portion in terms of size and number of generals.

**Table 5. Proportions of Army, Navy, Air Force in Korean Army**

	Number of Generals	Total Size
Army	316	495,000
Navy	65 (include 15 from Marine Forces)	70,000 (including 29,000 Marine Forces)
Air Force	60	65,000
Total	441	630,000

Source: ROK Ministry of Defense 2015.

Among the 39 former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, 37 were from the Army, one was from the Navy, and one was from the Air Force. Among of the 37 Army generals, the current Chairman is the first to be a non Korean Military Academy graduate. He is a graduate of Korea Army Academy at *Yeong-Cheon*.<sup>261</sup> The media and even within the military have evaluated such appointment as a great development.

A former Air Force Officer and program analyst at the U.S. Department of Defense argued that problem of inter-service rivalry stems from the idea that military leaders think that “they’re in a zero-sum game. They think that if they

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<sup>261</sup> “New Head of Joint Chiefs of Staff Appointed,” *The Korea Times*, September 14, 2015; *Donga Ilbo*, September 15, 2015

cancel something like the F-22, some other service...will take that money.”<sup>262</sup> In the same context, a staff from the military shared that the military generals may say that the military is weak to gain a larger portion in budget allocation.<sup>263</sup>

In a nutshell, those who are critical over inter-service rivalries and its consequences, are critical over the leading figures of the Army behavior. Army is the most dominating source of military due to the geographical situation of Korea where fight on the land will be more frequent than on seas or up in the air. Those outside the Army presume that the Army is worried that their military size will be reduced if the wartime OPCON transfer happens. However, this still leaves room for another question because thinking the other way around, this may mean that the Army generals will have a 5 star power as they replace the CFC commandership. The most powerful general can come from the Army if the transfer is done. So the basic argument on inter-service rivalry connects with the organization resistance for change. The army who takes the dominant part in the military, does not want any change to happen because it will create changes that may cause loss for its own military service.

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<sup>262</sup> James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. (2000) : 184.

<sup>263</sup> Interview held on August 26, 2015

### *Military Willingness*

Military willingness is the willingness of the military to fight. If the organization has inertia, there is no willingness for change or development and wants to stick to the current situation. The former brigadier general is someone who has quietly agreed to the OPCON transfer. He does not want his name to be disclosed, especially when all of his colleagues and seniors of his are against the transfer. He first made it sure that his opinions are not political. He is not a fan of President Roh and his administration. He said he is not agreeing with the transfer because he is a progressive. He said he thought about what can be called as 'wartime OPCON paradox.' Wartime OPCON has protected the Korean nation strongly, but because of such protection, Korean military grew abnormally. Such protection has weakened the capability of the South Korean military to stand on their own.

Wartime OPCON protected the Korean nation in a strong way with advanced systems and training but paradoxically; the wartime OPCON has loosened the Korean army. The Korean army was not pushed to the edge to stand alone, that is, it was not desperate to build a stronger independent army. There are so many political generals who would try their best to line up to the politicians so that they can take a step closer to promotion. Because the U.S. is there, the senior military elites are somewhat relieved in terms of defense.

Looking into history, winners of wars are not necessarily who are stronger in capability, but the nations who have those willingness to fight.<sup>264</sup>

### *Strategic Culture*

Interesting results from the interview on strategic culture is that it refutes the criticism that the Korean army idolizes the US army and for them the ROK-US alliance is perceived as a belief and a sacred gift. However, it is true that the Korean army leaders understand that there are many points they can learn from the US army and its culture.

First, 20 senior military elites who said that they think transfer is inappropriate and that it should be delayed, all made it clear that, though they know and value the special relationship Korea has with the US, they clearly understand that the relationship is fully based on national interest. Thus, if the relationship does not go well, they know the relationship may be broken. This refutes the arguments of one of the senior policy advisors of President Roh Moo-hyun, and a security expert, who argued that he was the first person to suggest the term ‘self-reliant defense’ to President Roh. He criticized the

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<sup>264</sup> Interview held on August 6, 2015.

Korean army has a path dependent tendency and that the military leaders have idolized the U.S. army like a religion.<sup>265</sup>

Former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff said that it is evident that US moves by its national interest. It is not like that we do not have any countermeasures towards the changing international dynamics says the Chairman. What we can do is to make our army needed by other countries. Countries want other nations' help only when it is beneficial for their national interest. If the Korean army is not as strong and strategically not needed, there is no way the US will keep its troops here in South Korea. What may be additionally required is to have a good people-to-people relationship. Though we, the army, move by national interests, but it's the people who run the organization. Continued relationship with the US is vital for the Korean army.<sup>266</sup> Former defense minister has also emphasized the importance of the relationship with the US. Defense is closely related to diplomacy because no single country can survive by its own. It is important to maintain the relationship with the US as it is essential for our interest and also for that of the US.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Interview held on July 22, 2015.

<sup>266</sup> Interview held on August 10, 2015.

<sup>267</sup> Interview held on July 6, 2015.

Second, the Korean army does understand cooperation with the US as a fortunate opportunity, and there are learning points. Again, there is no other country than the U.S. who has sufficient war experience and has gone through trial and errors on weapons system until recently. One former brigadier general points out that the Korean army should learn from the advanced systems and trainings of the US. In his experience of doing the joint military actions, US have an established training methods that manage the soldiers very well. For instance, when section A is under training, then section B totally rests and shifts. On the other hand, he carefully criticized that the Korean soldiers all do it so eagerly at the beginning but later get a bit tired. He commented on the quick-tempered characteristics culture of Koreans. However, he did not forget to mention that it could have changed in the past few years after he retired. He felt bad for criticizing his own army.<sup>268</sup> Former defense minister mentioned the respect from the society comes from ‘sacrifice.’ The US has been continuously battling in war and the citizens have shown respect for such sacrifices. What Korea should learn is such a spirit of sacrifice and fighting spirit and will.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Interview held on July 31, 2015.

<sup>269</sup> Interview held on July 6, 2015.

However, there are some other generals who criticized that Korea follows the U.S. patterns indiscriminately. One brigadier general criticized the Korean army has even followed to use beret which is so uncomfortable.<sup>270</sup>

Another interesting point is from one of the major general who has worked at the CFC and was even praised by the critics to the military that he has outstanding diplomatic negotiating power dealing with the U.S. The general said that he is against those who take the relationship with the US emotionally.<sup>271</sup> In his experience as a CFC general, those who have anti-American sense among the generals and senior military elites are those who actually do not stand against the US military people when one has an opposing opinion. They had enough opportunities to sit through with the US counterparts but not say much in front but then at the back speak ill of the Americans being too dominating. This also applies to those politicians who are against the U.S. and had the anti-U.S. sentiment and bias towards the military that it is subordinate to the U.S.. He asks do they express their opinions firmly and properly when they are in official diplomatic settings with the U.S.? According to this general, many anti-U.S., 386 generations of the President Roh Moo-hyun administration were not like that. In his view, the U.S. military and their generals have proper respect towards the Korean army as it has become much

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<sup>270</sup> Interview held on August 6, 2015.

<sup>271</sup> Interview held on August 27, 2015.

stronger than before, and they are willing to hear from Korea in the discussions table and have the Korean opinion be reflected. As a Korean general, his pride could not accept decision-makings that seem unfair or unilateral. The general says that “if we raise our voice, it is heard and that is what those in decision-making positions should do. That is diplomacy and negotiation.”

Another interview with a brigadier general revealed how the politicians also affect the military, especially those who are very closely linked with the President as such influence could directly affect their promotion.<sup>272</sup> He criticized the politicized military generals who would once line up at the most influential politician’s office using connections either from hometown, school, or family. This general who is pro-transfer criticized the Roh Moo-hyun administration. Roh administration officially stated that it is reforming the military and acted as if it was the cleanest administration, however, it was well known that there was a long line, lining up under a powerful staff of President Roh to introduce oneself or get a favorable position in promotion. The powerful staff was President Roh’s staff from the years when he was an assemblyman. Later this staff member became a governor of one region.<sup>273</sup> Adding up this interview, a general who was against-transfer, also discussed how President Roh’s staff was disrespectful to the generals. In his words, those young rather

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<sup>272</sup> Interview held on August 6, 2015.

<sup>273</sup> Interview held on August 6, 2015.

new to the politics people, staff of the Office of the President, bossed around with the generals who are almost 10 years older. They would call the generals into the office often.<sup>274</sup> Influence of politics into the military, and at that time, the disrespect and distrust from each side was detected.

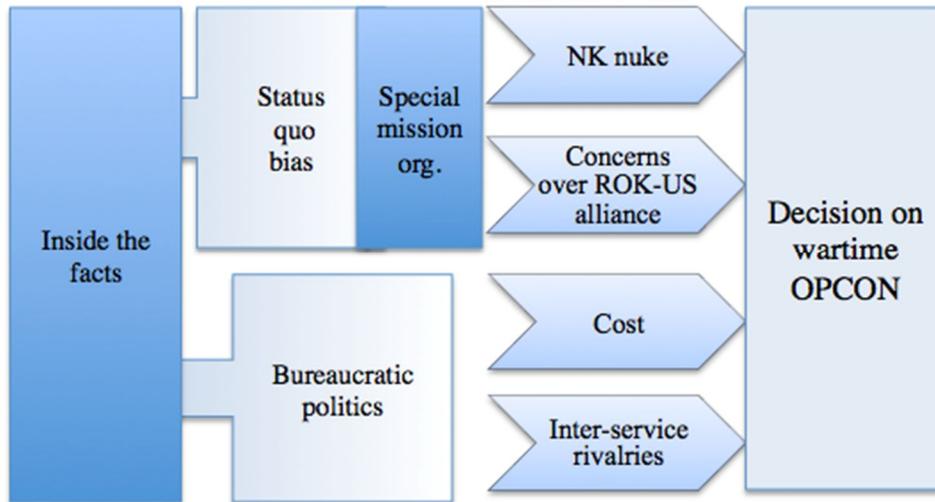
### ***Summary***

Recapitulating the interview results, the military leaders will go through organizational resistance in making change because of the military organization's characteristics to win the war and bureaucratic features. Figure 9 shows the four core factors that cause organizational change resistance in the military: North Korean Nuclear Weapons, Concerns over ROK-US alliance, Cost, and Inter-Service Rivalries.

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<sup>274</sup> Interview held on July 31, 2015.

**Figure 9. Senior Military Elites Decision Making**



These four factors encompass the other three factors, military readiness, military willingness, and strategic culture. North Korean nuke is the core problem that magnifies the importance of ROK-US alliance, and cost problems, and allows the inter-service rivalries to continue. Because the North Korea threat exists and the military's mission is to have an effective deterrence, the military leaders will stick to ROK-US alliance and to keep up with the current weapons system that results in the cost factor.

The interview results have proved that the military leaders go through a status quo bias that comes from psychological commitment, loss aversion, and anchoring effect. But an interesting point that backs up the status quo bias of

the military is that the sticking to the current option (status quo) does not mean lagging behind. Cooperating with the U.S. means being up to date in terms of war weapons and skills as U.S. has fought in battles until recently. It is the U.S. who have the most war experience until recently and have actually tested and tried the new weapons and strategies. Under the pressure to deal with uncertainty and risk, the military will naturally stick to the reference point, which is the current condition of the U.S. having the wartime OPCON. This organizational characteristic of the military to deal with uncertainty and win wars justifies reasons, such as North Korean Nuke, ROK-US alliance, and cost. In addition to that, the inter-service rivalries create the military to stick to the current situation, as the military leaders will not desire to lose the establishment they have or contraction of size.

While organizational resistance was clearly there and status quo bias existed, it was clear that the military officials are not idolizing the U.S. but view the U.S. as the most effective partner to cooperate with. Another interesting finding was that all 23 senior military elites agree that eventually the transfer has to be done and acknowledge the value of it.

## **2. Reaction to the Senior Military Elites Group**

This section deals with the reaction of the policy advisor group who argue that they cannot understand the senior military elites opinion and insistence on not transferring the wartime OPCON. Three critics, also the core staff group of President Roh Moo-hyun administration, gave the clearest picture of their understanding and complaints towards the senior military elites.

Former Member of the Presidential Transition Committee of President Roh Moo-hyun who is a progressive security commentator says that the senior military generals are still ridden with the Korean War trauma. He also criticized the generals that they have not done their job correctly of building a strong military with sufficient capability. In addition to that, the generals have been too protective to maintain the status quo. While the Army is the strongest force in Korea in comparison with the Navy and the Air Force, those in the Army are being protective to keep their power and organization. In a nutshell, the conflicts among services were severe and among them, the strongest one, which is the Army raised its voice against the transfer.<sup>275</sup> Another critical expert on the wartime OPCON transfer delay says that the older generations would want to keep the current situation because discarding the system would mean what they had done is wrong. Moreover, the expert argues that he understands that the

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<sup>275</sup> Interview held on July 22, 2015.

military generals are obsessed with postponing the wartime OPCON transfer because there is no other clear proof or binding to keep the ROK-U.S. alliance strong.<sup>276</sup>

Former Foreign Minister during Roh administration said, while it is the Korean soldiers who will be shedding blood and actually getting involved when war occurs, why would the generals not want to take the wartime OPCON back. He also added that worrying about ROK-U.S. alliance is being overly sensitive and wartime OPCON transfer will not cause harm to the alliance. He asked the researcher to investigate deeply into the interests of the decision makers. Here the interest included personal interest, which can be extended to corruption, and to organizational interest.<sup>277</sup> The distrust over the military organization was visible.

The researchers' interview with President Roh's three policy advisors verified the arguments, of those disagree with the delay, depicted in the media and reports collected through literatures. President Roh's team had distrust toward the military. In their estimation, the military have not done their job correctly so far, and due to that they do not have the proper countermeasures when situations like the transfer came up. However, their arguments and approaches do not provide room to understand the concerns over North Korean

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<sup>276</sup> Interview held on July 22, 2015.

<sup>277</sup> Interview held on June 30, 2015.

nuclear weapons, and the ROK-US alliance. It has to be noted that while the Roh administration pursued peace with the North, the military was always in 'war' calculation with the war.

### **3. Lessons from the Research**

First, considering the military as an organization, opposition toward the wartime OPCON transfer opposition seems to be a reasonable answer. The military is an organization that has a mission to win the war, and will build strategies in military terms under such a goal. While South Korea faces a threat by the enemy, North Korea, the best deterrence is to have the U.S. on South Korea's side. The military is also an organization that is large and bureaucratic. Changing a system that has been deeply rooted in its own ways for 60 years will not be easy, and it will be overwhelming for the organization to bear the burdens of change. The senior military elites, who have to retain the organization's influence and presence as much as possible, will desire to justify what they have done in the past, and may wish to finish well in the office instead of creating risks. In regards to the ROK-U.S. military alliance, those in the elite positions who have to deal with the U.S. would not want to risk or harm the ROK-U.S. relations. Former colonel who worked at the CFC shared

that when President Roh raised the issue, the working ambiance in the CFC office was not as amicable as before. It is natural, he says. It is a relationship, and when the relationship is known to be terminated, how can it be the same as before?<sup>278</sup>

Second, there is the matter related to baggage from the past. President Roh Moo-hyun's speech to the 50th meeting of the Standing Committee of National Unification Advisory Council included words as "if you tell me we are weaker than North Korea in defense capability,"... "our former defense ministers should be charged with negligence of duty." Such strong comments can be related to the corruptions of the previous governments, which had repressed the democracy movements, such as the *Gwangju democratic movement*.<sup>279</sup> An interview with a former brigadier general discussed how the corrupted military officers like President Chun Doo-hwan, and President Roh Tae-woo became Presidents, have decreased the organizational morale and dignity and lowered the citizen's respect for the military.<sup>280</sup> Recent military weapons corruption reports have worsened the organization morale and trust level from the citizens.<sup>281</sup> Interview with a lieutenant commander in office, says that he does not think that the current 2015 military budget is small. If the

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<sup>278</sup> Interview held on July 6, 2015.

<sup>279</sup> Interview held on July 31, 2015.

<sup>280</sup> *Yonhap News*, April 25, 2014.

<sup>281</sup> *AP News*, July 15, 2015.

money lost by corruption was effectively managed, and the military budget was effectively used, military budget could have been enough. He urged the seniors and the generals in position to have integrity.<sup>282</sup>

The military would have gained trust from the people and have had their military's strategic position to delay the transfer more understood if the military had done their job well; if there were no political military people who wrongly intervened in the democratic movements or used the military force to achieve their one's own desire for power; if the military official were not corrupted and were examples of man of integrity and dignity, if the military has continuously strengthen their military capability despite the structured difficulties in building our own informational technical strategies,<sup>283</sup> if the political leaders such as the president have given continuous support to strengthen our own military capability; and if the senior military officers came across to always be alert and sensitive in defending the nation.

The interview with the former brigadier general shared in the researcher's interview that the Korean military would have been stronger if President Park Chung-hee had not passed away. President Park Chung-hee developed Korea's own military defense program, *Tae-guk 72 plan* and later *Yulgok* defense improvement plan. It is also known that President Park had tried

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<sup>282</sup> Interview held on September 16, 2015.

<sup>283</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, January 29, 2015.

to develop Korea's own nuclear weapons system. But when President Chun came into office, he gave up all military documents to earn the U.S. favor and to conceal his illegitimate way of achieving the presidential position.<sup>284</sup> This interview implied how the generals longed for a powerful nation with great military power but how it became limited because of the previous leaders of our nation. With this, the general who is also a security lecturer at many conservative organizations concluded that for this moment, it is better to not have the wartime OPCON transferred which is what the North is longing for. He also honestly told me how he was against the wartime OPCON transfer issue when it was first raised by President Roh but could not say it outloud of his position because honestly speaking he was still in office and did not want to be fired but promoted.<sup>285</sup>

Third, it is important to listen to the different voices that come from the military. In an organization, there cannot be one voice and not all criticisms are valid but it is worth listening to the different voices.<sup>286</sup> The officers within the military have condemned the lack of military willingness to fight.

The military is very critical of those who bring up a different voice. According to a staff that worked deeply with retired generals, said that the

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<sup>284</sup> Interview held on July 29, 2015.

<sup>285</sup> Interview held on July 29, 2015; interviewer was extremely thankful for the candidacy of the interviewee, which could not have been easy to share.

<sup>286</sup> Some may argue that it is usually those who failed from promotion criticize the military organization, but it is worth listening to the arguments. They would be able to see what those in position cannot see.

defense minister who took the lead to do wartime OPCON transfer during President Roh's time is not active with his peers. He is not welcomed after expressing a different voice.<sup>287</sup>

Another interview with a lieutenant general who held executive positions in The Korea Retired Generals and Admirals told that during President Roh's time, the association's role was to increase its voice as retired generals to delay the wartime OPCON transfer. According to the general, those who are still in active duty may not be able to raise their own voice because they have to follow the president; therefore, it is the role of the retired people and seniors to stand on the truth instead of being political military officers who just follow the president to get a promotion.<sup>288</sup>

Here to clarify, those who insist on delaying the transfer or urging the transfer, clearly know that it is not the U.S. who will fight for us, but rather its advanced military systems, information and intelligence technology and know-hows that will aid us. Unlike Korea that has not experienced a big war for the past 65 years, the US had chances to continue to sharpen its capability as it had more chances to be in a war.

A former Air Force colonel said in his interview with *Hankyoreh Shinmun* that to have Kill Chain system ready - a condition that Korea has to

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<sup>287</sup> Interview held on August 27, 2015.

<sup>288</sup> Interview held on July 19, 2015.

meet to get the wartime OPCON transferred - an overall change is needed. The core of the Kill Chain is joint command control among the army, navy, and air force and building joint military capability with a focus on the air force. However, to do all this on our own without depending on the U.S., we need to transfer wartime OPCON and build plans and strategies on our own from now on.<sup>289</sup>

Former vice defense minister stood on the position against the transfer. He candidly shared his grave concern over the Korean military. He felt pitiful that the Korean army is confronting a situation that has to delay the transfer. Though delay was necessary because Korea was not ready and the dissolution of the CFC and harming the ROK-U.S. alliance are not strategic for Korea, it would have been different if the Korean army had built up much stronger military capability. It is true that the military depended a lot on the U.S. umbrella, and possibly gotten used to the pattern and fallen into mannerism says the general.<sup>290</sup> The U.S. taking the OPCON in 1953 was a blessing to Korea. Holding SCM, MC yearly is an unprecedentedly special relationship. The general advised the military to at least from now on strengthen its own military capability while Korea has this institution of U.S. support, which we are not getting for free. He said that President Park Chung-hee time is a

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<sup>289</sup> *The Hankyoreh*, November 3, 2014.

<sup>290</sup> Interview held on June 19, 2015.

desirable model which has consistently strengthened the military capability and at the same time pushed the national economic development. The strong will of President Park is missed. This retired general appeals sincerely that Korea as a nation should firmly express its own will to protect the nation, and economically and militarily make a rich and strong nation. Korean army has to show that it is willing to make a strong army, and the President should also show his/her will to make a strong army especially through raising the military budget or even collecting ‘defense tax.’<sup>291</sup>

Fourth, it is important to remember that the criticisms should not lead to a generalization of the senior military elites nor those who have pursued the transfer. It is only some military leaders in the past Korean history who were corrupted, and few military leaders in the past who were only concerned with their vested interest. However, that should not make the whole military look bad. Korea would not have developed this much if it were not for the security of the nation. General Walter Sharp in his memo about wartime OPCON transition in Korea shares that “Korea has this capability being the 12th richest country in the world with an outstanding military.”<sup>292</sup> We were able to build an outstanding military because the senior military elites and generals have defended the nation for the past 65 years. Also, it does not mean that those who

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<sup>291</sup> Interview held on June 19, 2015.

<sup>292</sup> Walter Sharp, "OPCON Transition in Korea" : 23-27.

are against the transfer are all against President Roh's thoughts. Many interviewees have shared that they agree with President Roh's ideal thoughts and his attempt to strengthen the military. And President Roh has practically spent more budget to the military. President Roh "thinks the U.S. forces should be stationed in Korea, however, the U.S. forces should not be a political issue domestically nor a political card the U.S. uses." And a prerequisite for that is "Korea to have a military capability that can provide security to the Korean people without U.S. forces in Korea. What we need is self-confidence that we can do it by ourselves and a strong attitude towards self-reliant defense."<sup>293</sup> As a Korean national, and especially a uniformed officer, such ideal thoughts are something none can deny. It is true that President Roh's 'bold approach of new thinking' for more autonomy from the U.S. left a lesson for the military and people.<sup>294</sup>

### ***Summary***

This section answered the question why the senior military elite group was against the wartime OPCON transfer. While previous literatures analyze the situations related to the issue, this research introduced a new approach

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<sup>293</sup> *The Hankyoreh*, May 28, 2003. Translation was done for this research.

<sup>294</sup> Seongho Sheen, "South Korea, a Northeast Asian Balancer?" In *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond*. edited by Kevin J. Cooney, and Yoichiro Sato (Oxford: Routledge, 2008) : 155-156

combining theories from organization, decision-making, psychology, economics, and security studies.

From an organizational perspective, as the military is a large and bureaucratic organization, making changes will be difficult. Status quo bias prevails in the decision makers. Moreover, military has a unique culture and role. The military's goal is to win the war and view national interest in military terms, thus, makes the best efforts to choose a military strategy that will be beneficial in winning the war against North Korea. The four factors, NK Nuke, ROK-US alliance, cost, inter-service rivalries, are such resulted from the organizational characteristics of the military. Considering the above factors, for the short-term, at least, the senior military elites' decision to oppose the wartime OPCON will continue.

## **CHAPTER V. THE PRESIDENT AND THE WARTIME OPCON TRANSFER DELAY**

This chapter moves to the second research question of this dissertation why the Presidents were not able to override the military's opposition. When President Roh said he will conclude the issues on the wartime OPCON transfer within the year 2006, the severe opposition from the military jump-started.<sup>295</sup> The senior military group augmented its opposition with the 10 million signatures collection on September 29, 2006 in President Roh Moo-hyun's administration, and ended in May 28, 2010 in President Lee Myung-bak administration with 10,070,000 signatures.<sup>296</sup> 10 million signatures are quite large. President Roh Moo-hyun was elected as the 16<sup>th</sup> President of Republic of Korea with 12,014,277 votes, just 2 million more than the collected 10 million signatures. Was the military's opposition so burdensome for the Presidents to override? Or are there other reasons?

Chapter IV proved that at least for the short term, the military will not agree with the transfer because of its organizational reasons such as being a

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<sup>295</sup> President Roh Moo-hyun's New Year's Speech January 2006.

<sup>296</sup> 10 million signatures White Paper against the dissolution of CFC.  
<http://www.konas.net/article/article.asp?idx=24064>(Accessed on July 22, 2015).

large, bureaucratic, and special missions-oriented entity. In Chapter V, presidential decision-making is examined.

## **1. Recapping the Question**

From the beginning with President Roh Moo-hyun who raised the wartime OPCON transfer issue, and the first delay from President Lee Myung-bak, to the second delay from President Park Geun-hye, all three presidents have given somewhat a ‘rational’ reason for the push. However, as examined in the earlier chapters, in decision-making, such official rational statement may not be the real sole reason for such decision. It is more complicated than the addressed reasons. This section conducts a deeper investigation in each President’s decision making. By using the framework, a more systematic approach and view is taken to analyze the President’s decisions.

President Roh Moo-hyun initially asked the military to have the transfer done by 2009 or earlier but eventually accepted the military’s opinion that it needs more time of preparation, thus setting it to take place in 2012.<sup>297</sup> President Roh could have thought that the transfer will be executed even though he leaves the office as it did for President Roh Tae-woo to President Kim Young-sam, and thought that the agreement made by two countries cannot be

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<sup>297</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2014.

changed. Or he could have just imposed meanings in raising the issue and be the president who emphasized ‘self-reliant’ defense. For President Lee Myung-bak, he said that he will be reviewing the wartime OPCON transfer decision when he becomes president. According to President Lee Myung-bak’s memoirs, it shows that he wanted to delay the transfer and not complete it in his term.<sup>298</sup>

President Lee shared in his memoirs that on April 13, 2010, President Obama was positioned to sit next to him at the Nuclear Security Summit. President Lee said that he first spoke to President Obama to review delay of the wartime OPCON, and said that 2012 seems to be a bit overwhelming for both the U.S. and Korea. North Korea’s nuclear weapons development and the *Cheonan warship attack* were worsening the security worries of the Korean Peninsula. President Obama replied that his security team had reported to him that the U.S. is discussing the matter with Korea, and he agrees with President Lee. President Obama said that it will be the best to review it through the 2+2 channel.<sup>299</sup> President Lee recalls that President Obama seemed to agree with the wartime OPCON transfer delay. However, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert

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<sup>298</sup> Myung-bak Lee, *President’s Time: 2008-2013* (Seoul: RH Korea, 2015). Memoirs and biographies are oftentimes not recommended for fact checking but for this particular study, it is one of the most meaningful resources because there is no other resource than to express what the person really wants or how the person wants to be perceived by others.

<sup>299</sup> 2+2 channel refers to the meeting of foreign minister and defense minister from each side, Korea and US.

Gates was extremely against the transfer delay.<sup>300</sup> Korean Defense Ministers were a bit negative about the delay as well. According to President Lee, first Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee and Defense Minister Kim Tae-young in 2010 both seemed to be reluctant to delaying because the deal was already set to be 2012 and several negotiation tables were already held several times.<sup>301</sup> On June 26 at the 4<sup>th</sup> G20 Summit, President Lee concluded to delay the transfer to December 1, 2015. In his memoir, President Lee emphasized his efforts to make the delay happen. Also in the memoir, President Lee mentioned how the trust between President Obama and himself have made a huge improvement in forming the need for a new missile system that could respond to the North Korean threat with deploying 800 km-range ballistic missile which was initially faced with opposition from the U.S. Department of Defense.<sup>302</sup>

President Park Geun-hye during her presidential campaign said that she will have the transfer done by 2015 as scheduled. But after inauguration, the Park administration quietly planned the transfer delay and as a result has delayed the transfer. The two delays of President Lee and Park obtained less attention than when President Roh Moo-hyun raised the topic. North Korea's

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<sup>300</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2012, p. 70.

<sup>301</sup> While these two defense minister and later expressed their evaluation over the transfer of wartime OPCON is dangerous, it is assumed that since these people were at the forefront of negotiation meeting the US counterparts to have the transfer done by 2012, it would had not been easy to just delay the plans when they have actually worked on and insisted on doing.

<sup>302</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2012.

obvious signs of provocations and potential threats captured more attention than the transfer topic itself.

So, was the North Korean threat the main reason for delaying an agreement officially made by two countries? Or was senior military elite group's opposition that made the two following Presidents to delay the transfer agreement?

## **2. Framework for the Presidential Decision Making**

Before introducing the frame, one thing has to be clear. The wartime OPCON transfer is a matter that can be decided by the president, just like how the presidents decide the use of military forces. Such legal background will be from Article 60 and 74 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea.<sup>303</sup>

### Article 60

(1) The National Assembly shall have the right to consent to the conclusion and ratification of treaties pertaining to mutual assistance or mutual security; treaties concerning important international organizations; treaties of friendship, trade and navigation; treaties pertaining to any restriction in sovereignty; peace treaties; treaties which will burden the State or people with an important financial obligation; or treaties related to legislative matters.

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<sup>303</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Korea,  
<http://www.law.go.kr/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=61603&urlMode=engLsInfoR&viewCls=engLsInfoR#0000>  
(Accessed March 20, 2015)

Article 74

- (1) The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Force under the conditions as prescribed by the Constitution and Act.
- (2) The organization and formation of the Armed Forces shall be determined by Act.

As wartime OPCON transfer is a presidential decision-making matter, if any problem occurs, it will be between the bureaucratic body (the military) and the President, not between the National Assembly and the President.<sup>304</sup> It was achieved by the President when President Roh Tae-woo transferred the peacetime OPCON control, and in the same context, President Roh Moo-hyun brought it up to be done as early as possible.<sup>305</sup>

Many foreign policy analysis and presidential decision-making point domestic factors, international factors, and personality factors to be the decisive decision-making factors. However the particular nature of this dissertation's question is how the President faced difficulty in dealing with immense opposition of the military. As found from the first research question of this study, the military, because of their organizational goals, traits and nature, they will be against the transfer for the short time. Whether or not, to override the strong opposition of the military is the President's decision. But eventually, the three governments were not able to transfer the deal within its tenure. Wartime

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<sup>304</sup> The Korean Defense Ministry does not interpret wartime OPCON transfer matter to be a problem that burden people with an important financial obligation.

<sup>305</sup> President Roh Tae-woo initially raised peacetime OPCON transfer in 1990, and in 1991, Korea and US agreed on the timeline to be between 1993 to 1995. In 1994, the peacetime OPCON was transferred.

OPCON transfer issue is not a simple matter, but rather is a complex one that requires a perspective from a whole range. The three roles that may encompass this chapter: Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and Political Leader.

Charles Ostrom and Brian Job in 1986 analyzed the president's decision making regarding political uses of major force, and viewed the president within three capacities operating as Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and Political Leader. The president operates with a goal to effectively manage and balance their interests in the international, domestic, and political arena.<sup>306</sup>

“The president is faced with the need to monitor these various fronts, with a good deal of uncertainty about the effects of chosen forceful actions. In seizing certain opportunities to use force but rejecting others, the president clearly operates in a political fashion. He assesses a range of actors, not only in the international context, but also in the American domestic context and in the context of his political leadership. The president will for instance consider his domestic political standing, his relations with Congress, the public's attention to foreign policy matters, the public's dissatisfaction with the progress of the economy etc. Also, whether an election is forthcoming and whether the president has a strong resource base of popular support may well be important in presidential calculations about acting in the international arena. In short, the set of variables monitored by the president, in the context of a decision on the major use of force is likely to come from international domestic and political sources.”<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Charles W. Ostrom and Brian L. Job, “The President and the Political Use of Force,” 542.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid. pp. 542-543.

As noted above, the three roles of the president are mixed together and the president will not specify or categorize his/her decision unless legislative proof for his/her decision had to be found.

### **3. Three Roles of the President**

The role of the Commander-in-Chief and the Executive Head are pretty straightforward, as these positions had a given set of responsibilities within the governmental system. Role of Political Leader does not have such responsibilities, but it is not a new concept either.

#### **(1) Commander-in-Chief**

The Commander-in-Chief is one of the rights the South Korean President has as being the Executive Head. The President will be the Commander-in-Chief to command the Armed Forces.<sup>308</sup> As the Commander-in-Chief, the President will have to confront many decision-making related to the use of force and employment of the armed forces as a source of national power.<sup>309</sup> Usually, the presidents will discuss the matter with their closest advisors and thoroughly examine the political and operational risks before

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<sup>308</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Korea, Article 74.

<sup>309</sup> Anthony R. Hale, "Dimensions of Uncertainty in Presidential Decision-Making Involving the Use of Force," USAWC Civilian Research Project, 2012.

concluding the decision. According to Boettcher, the “persistent conflict” we see in the world reflects how we “operate in a complex and uncertain world where they (decision makers) are forced to anticipate and respond to the actions of enemies and allies.”<sup>310</sup> Hale says that a common word in the military is that “the enemy always has a vote.” This demonstrate the numerous factors the decision makers need to consider such as planned actions, alternative actions in response to the enemy reaction, and different courses of action.<sup>311</sup> The particular characteristic of the military decision-making is that it is related to risk and uncertainty. The U.S. Army refers to decision-making as both science and art. Decision-making decides first whether to decide, then when and what to decide.<sup>312</sup> The science of war will be the aspects that are quantifiable in decision-making, and the art of war will be the other aspects such as leadership factor, the President, and the complexity and uncertainty in decision-making. Mintz and DeRouen mentioned “foreign policy decisions are typically characterized by high stakes, enormous uncertainty, and substantial risk.”<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> William A. Boettcher. III. *Presidential Risk Behavior in Foreign Policy, Prudence or Peril?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), 3.

<sup>311</sup> Anthony R. Hale, "Dimensions of Uncertainty in Presidential Decision-Making Involving the Use of Force," USAWC Civilian Research Project, 2012.

<sup>312</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Staff Organizations and Operations, Army Regulation 101-5 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 1984), 5.

<sup>313</sup> Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen, Jr., *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

## **(2) Executive Head**

The role of the South Korean Head of State includes being the Head of the State and the Executive Body. The notable rights that may be related to the topic are:<sup>314</sup> (1) The President can appoint many positions without the consent of the National Assembly. The top positions of the Prosecutor's Office and other high level official positions are for the President to decide. (2) Unlike some countries, Korea's Executive Body has the 'Power of the Purse' to allocate. This becomes an important tool for the President to control the assembly members who want to get more budget for his/her district. (3) In Korea, assembly members can also take positions in the executive body. Because of this, the President can have more assemblymen backing him/her up. President's powerful position in the Executive Head gives power over the assembly in Korea and implicitly this reflects that bureaucracy is an hierarchically sub organization of the president. If they do not follow, their career will be affected. But they also have to win the bureaucracy to expedite the execution of the detailed policies that the president and the team want to accomplish to make the president a successful one. The success of the president and the president's influence impact in national policy process will increase as

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<sup>314</sup> Woo-jin Moon, "Presidential Powers, Executive Agenda Setting, and Legislative Outcomes in South Korea: Veto Player Theory," *The Korean Political Science Association* 47, no. 1 (2013).

the president can influence the congress, media, and public attention to the proposed issue.<sup>315</sup>

One factor that is particular in applying the wartime OPCON transfer issue is the president-bureaucratic clash. Kaufman argues that, for matters of doctrine or strategy, political leaders will not go against their own generals unless they have the political support or bureaucratic tools.<sup>316</sup> The bureaucratic tool refers to a policy handle known to be “a way to redefine the nature of a policy decision and force change on a subordinate organization by removing the policy decision from the organization’s exclusive area of expertise”.<sup>317</sup> The relationship between the president and the military as a bureaucratic organization should be noted while analyzing the issue throughout the section.

### **(3) Political Leader**

Though the word ‘political’ became so tainted because of the corruptions and distrustful acts of previous politicians, the word politics is a very honorable one. Politics *JeongChi* (政治) in Korean literally means governing the state. Thus, a political leader’s role covers the role of the

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<sup>315</sup> Jeffrey S. Peake, "Presidential Agenda Setting in Foreign Policy," *Political Research Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2001).

<sup>316</sup> Stuart J. Kaufman, "Organizational Politics and Change in Soviet Military Policy," *World Politics* 46, no. 3 (1994) : 361.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

Commander-in-Chief and Executive Head but to specify political leader as a role demonstrates how the political calculation the president takes in making national security decisions.

South Korea's wartime OPCON transfer topic has become more than a military or policy decision. It requires a political decision that needs to consider the domestic situation and political judgments in dealing with massive ideological division.

Political Leader is also sensitive to the public polls. In principles, the Commander-in-Chief, and Executive Head should be making non-partisan decisions and put national interest and public affairs before private obligations, and be less sensitive to the public polls. But political leaders naturally care about the general public's attitude because he/she has to gain approval from the people for the next political career and achievement.

The political leader role may encompass what the president has decided as his/her main theme or so-called the president's brand. Hong-kook Kim (2010) argues that presidents would want to materialize the values and philosophy that has penetrated into their political career. For instance, President Kim Young-sam planned of building a great new Korea cutting off the past corrupted alliance between government and business, and the legacy of the military authoritarian ruling, and joining the international organizations. President Kim

Dae-jung executed *the Sunshine Policy*. President Roh Moo-hyun's life as non-mainstreamer was reflected on his grand political reform plans, decentralization, and finding measure to overcome the social polarization.<sup>318</sup> President Roh Moo-hyun's grand political reforms included mainly dismantling the existing prestige and power of vested interests. President Lee Myung-bak restored the *Cheongye* stream and planned *Pan Korea Grand Waterway* project.<sup>319</sup> Many presidents are interested in leaving a presidential achievement that can be remembered for a long time and history. They plan policies and national agenda considering the historical meaning it will have and impart value on the potential presidential achievements.<sup>320</sup> Politicians are usually known to give more attention to their political constituency, thus, even for military policies, civilian leader will consider the political calculation first before examining what is the best military policy.

Another factor to note is about risk.<sup>321</sup> Vertzberger notes that decisions related to risk in politics are different from similar decisions in business.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Hong-kook Kim, "Study on President's National Agenda Setting and Policy formulation After Democratization: Focus on Paul Light's Political Resources" (PhD diss., Gyeonggi University, 2010): 58; Hong-kook Kim, "President's Leadership and Communication Ability: From A Negotiation Studies Perspective" *Negotiations Studies* 17, no. 2 (2014).

<sup>319</sup> Hong-kook Kim, "Study on President's National Agenda Setting and Policy formulation After Democratization: Focus on Paul Light's Political Resources" (PhD diss., Gyeonggi University, 2010): 58.

<sup>320</sup> Paul C. Light, *The President's Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Clinton* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

<sup>321</sup> See the following works to learn how risk operates in decision-making: Jack S. Levy, "Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems," In *Avoiding Losses/Taking Risks: Prospect Theory and International Conflict* edited by Barbara Farnham (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994); Rose McDermott, *Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in*

Political decision makers and foreign policy decision makers do not systematically examine the acceptable risk before making a decision. This is different from how stock market investors examine the acceptable risk of the investment.<sup>323</sup> Since the leaders cannot fully estimate all the risks ahead, leaders, they understand the risk by their perception of the relative riskiness of the options.<sup>324</sup>

#### **4. Analysis on the Three Governments**

Presidents consider a wide range of topics and decision-making elections. Top-notch advisors will be giving various opinions based on their thoughts and ideological spectrum. Most advices will be based on international and domestic circumstances, national agenda of the administration, political determination and will of the president.<sup>325</sup> Hidden factors that affect the decision making process will be the personal background of the decision

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*American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998); Jonathan Mercer, "Prospect Theory and Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 8, (2005).

<sup>322</sup> Yaacov YI. Vertzberger "Rethinking and Reconceptualizing Risk in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Sociocognitive Approach." *Political Psychology* 16, no. 2 (1995) : 347.

<sup>323</sup> McDermott (2001) defines risk as a "fear of losing an important value or failing or obtain some desired goal."; Taliaferro (2004) simply defines "situations where any action or lack of action may result in serious losses."; Pratt (1964); Arrow(1965), the classical decision theories note risk as variation in the distribution of possible outcomes, likelihoods, and values.

<sup>324</sup> Jihwan Hwang, "Weaker States, Risk-Taking and Foreign Policy: Rethinking North Korea's Nuclear Policy, 1989-2005" (PhD diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2005).

<sup>325</sup> See more from Waltz (1959), Putnam (1998) on international and domestic factors, and more from Light (1999) on national agenda.

maker.<sup>326</sup> President also faces uncertainty and risk and the President would try to avoid it.<sup>327</sup> Since uncertainty is related to unpredictable outcomes, the president will try to avoid risks particularly if the matter is related to national security matters. President can take political risks in making decisions, but as the person in charge to protect the people of the nation, the president will try to avoid security risks. Of course, that premise applies to democratic nations where leaders are at least legally obligated to protect the people.

There are so many ways of approaching the decision making process, but, it is really hard to embrace all of the discussed factors which directly or indirectly impact the presidential decision. First of all, it is hard to know all the possible decision factors. Second, honestly, still nobody will know what were the real factors unless the person goes into the mind of the decision maker. Third, as some studies have noted in decision-making, only a limited number of factors impact the decision maker.

Covering all the above factors with the frame the research has suggested are concluded into three parts: Commander-in-Chief, Head of State (Executive Head), and Political Leader. These three factors may align with Richard

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<sup>326</sup> See Alexander L. George, and Juliette L. George, *Presidential Personality and Performance* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998) for more information on personality's affect on presidential decision making. This classical book, explains how personal factors such as presidential character, worldview, and political style affect the decision making process.

<sup>327</sup> Levy, "Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems,"; Vertzberger, "Rethinking and Reconceptualizing Risk in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Sociocognitive Approach."

Neustadt’s view on the president that president must have three traits: power to persuade, presidential professional reputation, and public prestige.<sup>328</sup>

For this study’s question why the president was not able to carry on the wartime OPCON transfer within their presidential tenure will be answered through the president’s role in three capacities: Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head (head of state), and Political Leader. Table 6 gives a summary of each category and the core elements.

**Table 6. Analysis Frame:  
President’s Three Roles and Decision Criteria**

Commander-in-Chief (Civil-Military)	Executive Head (Domestic Security)	Political Leader (Personality)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureaucratic politics</li> <li>• Military reform &amp; Defense budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National security</li> <li>• NK factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public’s attitude toward NK factor</li> <li>• Public opinion on security matters</li> <li>• Personal political resources and background</li> <li>• Presidential agenda – to remain as a successful president</li> </ul>

Source: Author’s categorization after Ostrom and Job (1986)’s category is changed to appropriately fit into the Korean case.

<sup>328</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (1960); *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (1991). Allison frequently quotes Richard Neustadt’s works, especially *Presidential Power*; and evaluates them to be the one that give clear distinction between power on paper and power in practices.

First, the Commander-in-Chief, this part covers the civil-military relations literatures and bureaucratic politics literatures. For the matter of wartime OPCON transfer, the head and the main leadership is the Commander-in-Chief. President Rhee Syng-man assigned the OPCON to the UN Commander, and it was President Roh Tae-woo who suggested to have the peacetime OPCON transfer and President Kim Young-sam who had the transfer done. Here, President Roh Tae-woo had wanted it to be done by 1992. But the conflict over the internal opposition led the transfer to be executed in the following Kim Young-sam administration.<sup>329</sup> Then President Roh Moo-hyun raised the issue and President Lee Myung-bak postponed it. President Lee even notes in his memoir that it was himself who have pushed this delay despite the existing oppositions. President Park Geun-hye did not stay upfront like President Roh or President Lee about the transfer or delay matter but have pushed forward the transfer date.

Commander-in-Chief is the top leader of the military organization and the one who decides on the use of force. The role of the President to command the military has two parts. In a broad context, the President, as the Head of State, has the ability to administrate the military (military administration) and

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<sup>329</sup> See Chapter III and Young-geun Kwon's online blog. Kwon is the author of *President Kim Dae-jung and Military Reform* (Yonsei University Press, 2015) runs an online blog and writes columns at the Korean Military Reform Center. Kwon argues that President Roh Tae-woo wanted to have the transfer done within his tenure but US opposed it. <http://blog.naver.com/ygk555> A(ccessed February 10, 2010.)

use this ability to have the power to do military command. In a narrow sense, the President, as Commander-in-Chief, has the rights to command the armed forces.

Defense budget is also a factor that the Commander-in-Chief will consider. While military is sensitive to defense budget and has been arguing for increase in defense budget, this factor will be a tool to see the civil-military relations during administration as well.<sup>330</sup>

As Executive Head, and the President of Korea, the President has to ensure the security of the people. Many ministries from military, foreign affairs, unification, to the finance ministries, many are related to the decision for wartime OPCON transfer. The biggest national security threat is North Korea. Korea as a divided nation and its greatest obstacle to obtaining peace on the Korean peninsula is existential threat from North Korea. The responsibility to allow the people to feel safe and protected, and the importance of people's understanding of the security environment will be other factors to be considered.

The final factor is political leader. As political leader, the leadership as politician will be discussed. The president's political constituency, president's political agenda, president's political calculation, political ambition, and above all the public opinion will be considered. This includes, the president's personal

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<sup>330</sup> Looking into the Defense White Papers published by the Ministry of Defense, a common section included in every volume is increase of defense budget and support from the people.

resource base, overall political success, and position on the electoral calendar.<sup>331</sup>

**(1) President Roh Moo-hyun (President from 2003-2008)**

***President Roh Moo-hyun as Commander-in-Chief***

**Wartime OPCON transfer plan clashes with the military**

President Roh Moo-hyun had placed emphasis on self-reliant defense even before his inauguration. The selected speeches in Chapter III of President Roh say that he looked up what he can do in case of war. He mentioned that he only has half the rights to command his nation's military, and said that it is exercising only half of the national sovereignty or is an infringement upon his right to exercise of national sovereignty and damage to the national pride.

He raised the wartime OPCON transfer issue and faced difficulties from the military organization after his announcement on self-reliant defense and wartime OPCON transfer. President as the top leader of the military was not gaining support from the organization. President Roh's position on the self-reliant defense stems from various roots such as his personal background, thoughts of the advisor group, and his national agenda and personal goal as a political leader. All of these went altogether for his goal to break down the

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<sup>331</sup> Ostrom and Job, "The President and the Political Use of Force" (1986) : 548.

existing vested interests and prestige group. The Commander-in-Chief directly orders the military in case of operations. President Roh's distrust over the previous military governments and their disrespectful and distrustful acts made him consider the military his first reform target. The tragic event of the *Gwangju democratic movement* was a symbol of the unhealthy military involvement to the government that left scars to these democracy movement leaders such as President Roh Moo-hyun.<sup>332</sup>

Just like how President Roh Tae-woo used the OPCON transfer proposal as a gesture of making radical reform, President Roh Moo-hyun

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<sup>332</sup> Young-gap Cho. *Civil-Military Relations and National Security* (Seoul: Book Korea, 2005). Brief summary of civil-military relations during the military turned Presidents administration will give understanding of the accumulated distrust and hatred people have over the military. President Chun Doo-hwan achieved his goal to become president by breaking out the 12.12 Coup d'etat in 1979 and launched the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic in September 1980. Major general Chun Doo-hwan lead a coup d'etat against general Chung Seung-hwa and then Choi Kyu-hah administration came in. President Choi Kyu-ha wasn't able to activate political development and attract political participation. On August 16, 1980, President Choi resigns, and on August 27, Chun Doo-hwan becomes the President of the 5th Republic of Korea. Though Chun Doo-hwan administration and Park Chung-hee administration had a commonality that they both taken the presidency through a coup, but the difference is that President Park Chung-hee's 5.16 military coup received public's support as people was tired of Jang Myeon administration and their inability. The Park regime had the military as his political foundation but focused on the national development, but the 5th Republic strengthen the military hegemony during the administration. (Cho, 2005:284). As the people have become smarter after Park Chung-hee administration's efforts to make the country wealthier and stronger, people were able to realize what was wrong and good. The most critical event during the 5th Republic is the Gwangju democratic movement occurred during May 18th, 1980 to May 27, 1980. This movement raised the anti-militarism strongly. While the 12.12 Coup occurred within the military that citizens were not involved, however, the Gwangju democratic movement was different. There were severe conflict between the demonstrating public and the forces dispatched by martial law commander. It caused much causality through the gunfights and this provided deciding division and crack in the civil-military relations. The 1980 Gwangju democratic movement left a big scar in Korean modern history and brought a big crack in the civil-military relations. This even gave negative image to the Korean military since its foundations until the 1970s. From the 6th Republic there were efforts to mend the crack in the civil-military relations. On the other hand in the 6th Republic, as it was built by the democratic movement, it tried its best to mend the civil-military relationship (Cho, 2005:285).

declared his position on the wartime OPCON transfer. President Roh Tae-woo used the OPCON transfer to be a complement to support his Northern policy.<sup>333</sup>

### **Administration's first defense minister against the President**

Roh Moo-hyun administration's first Defense Minister Cho Young-gil's contradictory positions during his time as defense minister and after he left the position reveal two points. Cho's initial position change to plan the wartime OPCON transfer task indicates how much value the military puts in having 'more defense budget' and his column after he left the post and his activities show the senior military elites opposition to President Roh Moo-hyun's decision.

Defense Minister Cho Young-gil became the first defense minister to start off the wartime OPCON transfer. Minister Cho was initially against the transfer. In the 'Self-Reliant Defense Discussion' held at the President's Office in April and June 2003, Cho was against the transfer. However, in 2004, he changed his position and reported the 'Wartime OPCON Transfer Plan' to President Roh Moo-hyun and worked on the plan until July 2004 when President Roh appointed a new Defense Minister, Yoon Kwang-ung. In

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<sup>333</sup> President Roh Tae-woo's Nordpolitik, Diplomacy toward North or Northern Policy is a diplomatic policy President Roh Tae-woo conducted towards the communist countries including China, Russia, Eastern Europe, and North Korea. Relationship normalization with China and Russia was pursued and through economic cooperation, President Roh planned to build a constructive relationship with these nations.

between minister Cho changed his mind when President Roh Moo-hyun assigned a special budget of 1.5 trillion KRW to defense budget instead of welfare, and the Self-reliant Defense Plan reported to the President by the defense minister.<sup>334</sup>

Cho again changed his mind. More accurately, returned to his initial position. The former Defense Minister Cho wrote to *Donga Ilbo* about his position on wartime OPCON.<sup>335</sup> His column was published in 2006 before Roh administration ended. Here is an excerpt from his article:<sup>336</sup>

I wonder how the US would have had felt when we told them “It is a sovereignty invasion by the US and it should be dissolved.” Treaties such as Mutual Defense Treaty or military protocols are contracts between sovereign nations and a written agreement. Making the contract and cancelling the contract are both sovereign actions. It is tragic that a complex matter is manipulated by an emotional and inflammatory word such as ‘self-reliance (*Jaju*)’

The minister emphasized that the wartime OPCON is a system to respond to North Korea’s ‘preemptive attack.’ Thus, it will not work when Korea goes into a conflict with a third country, or Korea or the U.S. attacks

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<sup>334</sup> Jong-dae Kim. *Roh Moo-hyun, Going Beyond the Era; Secret File: Generals in Crisis*.

<sup>335</sup> “From the First Defense Minister of the Current Administration” *Donga Ilbo*, September 4, 2006, <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20060904/8346875/1>(Accessed on May, 2015).

<sup>336</sup> As the article includes important points, I will take out some parts from the article and put it together. I will add my comments in a parenthesis in order to help understanding of the article.

North Korea first. The example is when the U.S. could not go further to attack North Korea in 1994. The U.S. forces, both the Army and the Navy, in Korea were increased. President Clinton even sent 5 aircraft carriers to the East Sea. But Korea, who is a co-player of the wartime OPCON, opposed the decision-making difficulties for the U.S. to make a unilateral attack.

Former Defense Minister Cho argues that the U.S. will gain ‘strategic flexibility of the U.S. Forces in Korea’ and ‘freedom in military actions toward North Korea’ while we gain ‘self-reliance.’ If the CFC is going to be dissolved anyway, Cho’s understanding of the U.S. is that it will do it quickly. Cho also argues against Roh Moo-hyun administration’s plans to maintain the ROK-US alliance.

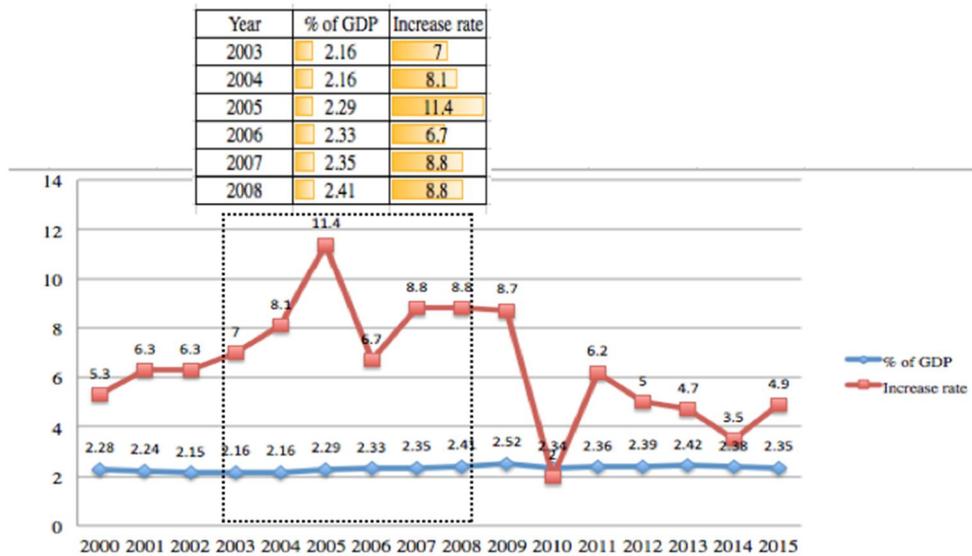
To those who say there stands the Korea-US Mutual Defense Treaty (so don’t worry they say), it is important to note that nation-to-nation agreement is not a claim-obligation relationship. It is a relationship based on trust. It is difficult to understand that people think US will come and help out Korea with its soldiers though we dissolve the CFC, do some anti-US demonstrations, stop the joint exercises, and damage US pride.

Former Defense Minister Cho’s column reveals how the senior military elites group was against the administration’s decision. The opposition from the military was strong.

### Increase in defense budget

During President Roh Moo-hyun administration, the defense budget increased significantly compared to the previous years. See Figure 10. President Roh Moo-hyun decided to strengthen the military capability, and build a ‘self-reliant’ defense. He demonstrated his strong will with the increase in defense budget. While wartime OPCON transfer itself would not cost much, the preparation for the transfer required the government to ensure the budget to increase the core military capability building projects.<sup>337</sup>

**Figure 10. Defense Budget Increase Data**



Source: ROK Defense Budget Promotion Booklet, MND, 2015

<sup>337</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2006, ROK National Security and Defense Budget 2009.

During President Roh administration, the defense budget increased compared to the previous year. From 2003 to 2004, there was an 8.1% increase. From 2004 to 2005, the increase rate was 11.4%, the largest increase rate in 10 years. From 2005 to 2006, increase rate was 6.7%, and 8.8% from 2006 to 2007, and from 2007 to 2008. President Roh Moo-hyun and his team gives the numbers to prove President Roh Moo-hyun's will to build a strong army. They argue that President Roh was the one who actually have indicated the support to increase the defense budget. But one of the general said in an interview "though he raised so much defense budget, he mitigated it by damaging the ROK-US alliance."<sup>338</sup> The distance of conflict did not seem to narrow down.

### **Military Reform 2020**

Adding more information about the military reform driven by President Roh Moo-hyun, what President Roh wanted to have was a consistent reform based on a legal background. Also through the Military Reform 2020, he planned to break the vested interests that the army had accumulated. This reform plan revealed how President Roh wanted the public to share his idea about self-reliant defense. He emphasized this in various occasions:

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<sup>338</sup> Interview held on June 19, 2015

**Table 7. President Roh's Speeches on Wartime OPCON Transfer**

August 15, 2003	Independence Day Ceremony
March 8, 2005	Air Force commission ceremony
October 1, 2005	Armed Force Day Ceremony
January 25, 2006	Beginning of the Year Press Conference
August 15, 2006	Independence Day Ceremony
December 21, 2006	National Unification Advisory Council Conference

The gist of President Roh's cooperative self-reliant defense reform included: building independent deterrence system towards the North and reduce dependence on the U.S. forces in Korea. For early transfer of the wartime OPCON, he wished to negotiate this matter related to the US forces' reduction in Korea. The main point of military reform 2020 was planned on November 8, 2004, and was officially established and declared on September 13, 2005.<sup>339</sup> Such a comprehensive reform plan was established in 3 months as it incorporated strategies from the previous governments.

The plans to make effective and advanced defense forces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century includes the following: reduce of the U.S. forces in Korea, increase self-reliant defense capabilities, raise defense budget to be 3.2% of GDP by 2008, add democratic values, efficiency, and transparency to defense areas. This reform focused on quality advancement emphasizing that the previous

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<sup>339</sup> Advisory Board to the President. *Military Reform 2020*, Participatory Government Policy Report, 2008.

reforms were quantity advancement.<sup>340</sup> While the military forces focused on military strength, the defense at large will be more civilized having more civilian experts. President Roh became the next president after President Park Chung-hee who have emphasized on military strength so much. President Roh was willing to spend as much if it was for self-reliant defense.

President Roh emphasized the need for the military to have strong will and said:

“Military reform should be consistent and strongly pushed. There were attempts of military reform in the past but the substantial and structural reform has not been done. What is most important is the strong willingness of the military to reform. Professionalism of the military structure, civilization, will enhance effectiveness and rationality. This will make the military more informative and scientific making a technically strategic structure for futuristic wars. Also we need a system that is lead by the Korean military, that can operate the war, and exercise integrated military capability. I ask all to take opinions from various levels and make the reform consistent and strongly.”<sup>341</sup>

By 2020, the military will reduce the armed forces to 500,000. However, President Roh ordered not to reduce the size of the military elites. The military reform also covers structural changes to fit for modern day war forms, in terms of management, the reform included ways to have a low cost, high efficiency maintenance system, build a better military life that matches with the era. For

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> President Roh Moo-hyun’s speech on the 56<sup>th</sup> Armed Forces Day Ceremony October 1, 2004.

this the defense ministry will have 70% of the defense ministry be filled with civilians and have the armed forces reduced to 500,000. To bear the financial burden, defense budget will increase by 11% and increase striking capability by 1.7 to 1.8 times, and increase ISR (Information, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) and C4I capacities (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence).<sup>342</sup> Also change the purchase system and make the defense industry more efficiently. Increase R&D area 10% of defense budget and make export system for defense industry. To make such a long and secure plan, the administration planned to have these thoughts to legislation.

### **Reduction in size**

The problem for civil-military relations happened here. In addition to the wartime OPCON transfer issue, President Roh faced another issue with the military organization. There was immense opposition within the army against reduction of forces. Though the military themselves have agreed perfectly to have a strong military force by 2020, the army was strongly against reducing the number of forces. The military reform wanted to increase detecting capability, command control capability, and striking capability, while reducing the number of forces by decreasing absolute number and revising the unit

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<sup>342</sup> Advisory Board to the President. *Military Reform 2020*, Participatory Government Policy Report, 2008

structure. However, suggesting that to the army, who have been relying on the U.S. for a long time and grew abnormally, to change and modify the structure was a self-innovating act. In 2006, the military reform law was passed but those who were against such changes simply waited for a new government to come in.<sup>343</sup>

In summary, during President Roh Moo-hyun time, the civil-military relation had problems as wartime OPCON transfer issue came out and the military reform 2020 included parts that decrease the size and power of the largest military section, the army. Also looking into the interviews, the senior military elites not only had no trust towards President Roh but also felt humiliated by the criticism of the Roh Moo-hyun team. President Roh Moo-hyun administration is considered to be a unique case for many matters. Many changes have happened and many cases were rather radical compared to the past.

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<sup>343</sup> Jong-dae Kim's Security Blog: History of Military Reform Failures [http://plug.hani.co.kr/?mid=textyle&category=2461&vid=dndfocus&document\\_srl=18201](http://plug.hani.co.kr/?mid=textyle&category=2461&vid=dndfocus&document_srl=18201)(Accessed June 20, 2015).

## ***President Roh Moo-hyun as Executive Head***

### **President Roh's North Korean policy**

President Roh Moo-hyun's time is evaluated to be rather numb to the North Korean provocations. President Roh Moo-hyun, has taken the inter-Korean relations and North Korean nuclear issue separately. President Roh has perceived the North as a partner to achieve peace and cooperation. He succeeded the spirit of President Kim Dae-jung's *Sunshine Policy*.<sup>344</sup>

According to the top key advisor of President Roh Moo-hyun, President Roh administration's main theme was to first have peace with the North, respect their opinions, and secondly increase Korea's own military capability through military reform 2020.<sup>345</sup>

The main theme of President Roh's inter-Korean policy and North Korean policy was peace and prosperity. This was to have the inter-Korean relations at the center of Northeast Asia era vision. The title of the 2007 inter-Korean summit reflects such rationale: Declaration of Inter-Korean Development and Peace and Prosperity. Providing peace to the Korean peninsula was an important agenda for the Roh administration. Roh

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<sup>344</sup> Interview held on December 31, 2015; interview newspaper articles with former Foreign Minister Song Min-soon, Former Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun. See Minister Song's interview at the JoongAng Ilbo, November 12, 2014 <http://news.joins.com/article/16394927> and Jeong Se-hyun at The Hankyoreh on October 5, 2014 <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/opinion/column/658338.html>. (Accessed on December 10, 2015).

<sup>345</sup> Interview held on December 31, 2015.

administration pushed for a ‘virtuous cycle of North Korean nuclear problem and inter-Korean relations.’ The main themes were Security for peace, Security we stand on ourselves, Security that looks the future, quiet security, Security that considers economy.<sup>346</sup>

The main diplomatic national agenda for President Roh was balanced practical diplomacy, cooperative self-reliant defense, and trust and embracing North Korean policy.<sup>347</sup> The balanced practical diplomacy emphasized the balance between the allies. This implied a more balanced relationship between Korea and the U.S. Also it started that this policy meant exhibiting strategic flexibility in diplomatic policies. In terms of cooperative self-reliant defense, the Roh administration planned to build a future oriented ROK-US alliance. As Korea has developed and enhanced national power, the ROK-US alliance should become more reciprocal and cooperative a mature relationship.<sup>348</sup>

### **Major domestic security issues in President Roh Administration**

While President Roh pursued peace with the North and made efforts to do so, it did not stop North Korea’s provocations. Table 8 shows the major domestic security issues during the administration. The number of provocations

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<sup>346</sup> ROK Participatory Government Administration White Paper 2008, 88.

<sup>347</sup> ROK Participatory Government Administration White Paper 2008, 89.

<sup>348</sup> ROK Participatory Government Administration White Paper 2008, 90.

was less than other governments, but the abrupt actions of the North did affect South Korean people and the government's decisions.

**Table 8. Major Domestic Security Issues in President Roh Administration**

Date	Issues	
June 13, 2002	Two middle school students killed by US armored vehicle	From President Kim Dae-jung Administration
June 29, 2002	North Korean invasion over NLL. Second Battle of <i>Yeonpyeong</i>	From President Kim Dae-jung Administration
President Roh Moo-hyun Administration embarks in February 2003.		
Jan. 10, 2003	North Korea declares to leave NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty)	NK PROVOCATIONS
Oct. 30, 2003, July 14, 2004, Nov.1, 2005	North Korean patrol boat invasion over NLL.	NK PROVOCATIONS
Feb. 10, 2005	North Korea declares its Nuke Possession	
May 11, 2005	5 MW nuclear reactor in <i>Yongbyon</i> retrieval of 8000 spent nuclear fuel rods	
June 18, 2005	North restarts the 5 MW nuclear reactor in <i>Yongbyon</i>	NK PROVOCATION
Sept. 19, 2005	9.19 Agreed Framework	
July 5, 2006	<i>Daebodong</i> 2 Missile Launch (Failed)	NK PROVOCATIONS
Oct. 9, 2006	1 <sup>st</sup> Nuclear Test	NK PROVOCATIONS
Oct. 14, 2006	UN Resolution 1718 adopted	
Feb. 13, 2007	Agreed to close and disable the <i>Yongbyon</i> nuclear reactor facilities	
July 15, 2007	Close <i>Yongbon</i> nuclear reactor	
Oct. 3, 2007	Disablement of nuclear facilities at <i>Yongbyon</i> complex and provision of a list of North Korean nuclear activities	
Oct. 4, 2007	Inter-Korean Summit	

Source: Data collected by the author from Defense White Paper and news reports

### **North Korean Nuke (2<sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Crisis)**

Roh administration from its inauguration faced North Korean nuclear problems though it was not properly revealed due to Hyo-sun & Mi-seon tragedy (*Yangju* highway accident).

Hyo-sun & Mi-seon tragedy refers to a tragic accident of two middle school girls killed by a U.S. Army armored vehicle on the *Yangju* highway on the vehicles way to *Uijeongbu US army base*. This occurred on June 13, 2002 and resulted in the outburst of anti-American sentiment in South Korea when the court martial judged that the U.S. soldiers are not guilty.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> North Korean nuclear crisis actually occurred at the 5<sup>th</sup> year of President Kim Dae-jung, but it was President Roh Moo-hyun who had to deal with the problem. Though President Roh wanted to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem and pursue the Northeast Asia vision, it was not resolved as the President expected. The prolonged nuclear problem actually created problems in building peace and forming multilateral security in Northeast Asia.<sup>349</sup> President Roh also planned to have a comprehensive approach to resolving the North Korean nuclear problems as the six-parties talks restarted. That is, in order to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem and to tackle this core security problem, an approach that comprehensively deals with energy,

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<sup>349</sup> *Shindonga*, February 2008

economic assistant, normalization of North Korea- US relations, and North Korea-Japan relations, both economic and non- economic incentives to build peace system in the Korean Peninsula should be used. This is in line with the 9.19 joint statements. However, President Roh's North Korean nuclear policy was not able to overcome the problem going beyond the limits of economic and security exchange. The reason was that the incentives the South Korea can provide to North Korea was limited within the 9.19 framework as South Korea could not get involved in North Korea-US relations or North Korea-Japan relations. Eventually Korea just ended up giving 200,000 tons of oil to the North.<sup>350</sup>

### ***President Roh Moo-hyun as a Political Leader***

President Roh's main political constituency included young people, progressive and pro reform people. President Roh's leadership style is different from the commonly discussed charismatic or other typical leadership styles. President Roh remembers his leadership to be called 'Linux leadership' meaning that he opens up information and tries to let people participate in the discussion.<sup>351</sup> Previous staff of President Roh administration recalls him as a

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<sup>350</sup> *Shindonga*, February 2008

<sup>351</sup> Moo-hyun Roh, *Roh Moo-hyun's Leadership Story* (Seoul: Hyeonbokhan Chekilki. 2002)

visionary, who enjoys discussions, and exercises friendship leadership.<sup>352</sup> President Roh himself being a radical case, who broke the establishment to become the president and made big changes in the government. From recruiting the presidential staff, he decided to choose those from the non-typical profiles of elitism. He dreamed of reforms, breaking authoritarian styles, and suggesting visions, such as self-reliance and participatory society where civil organizations and people can participate freely. To do that, President Roh started by breaking the establishment. He evaluated that Korea's establishment is based on the military regime, the big companies, and those pro-U.S.. In academics, after President Roh administration, many studies on presidents came out.

For President Roh administration, it is hard to find a consistent approach. It is reviewed as an anomaly in many fields. In economics, during President Roh Moo-hyun time, the Korea-US FTA was implemented. It could have caused a strong opposition from the progressive if it was not President Roh but a conservative president who had pursued it. One of the most conservative economists was part of President Roh's staff.<sup>353</sup> The Roh administration was progressive but actually had made so many pro-U.S. policies. The advisor to President Roh and former Chairman of the National Defense Committee said that President Roh was one of the most pro-U.S. presidents that he had ever met.

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<sup>352</sup> Discussions with former presidential staff interviewed in July 2008.

<sup>353</sup> Interview held on March 20, 2016

He said that he does not understand why people say President Roh is anti-US.<sup>354</sup> But ironically, one of the foreign minister candidate during President Roh's time faced a strong opposition from President Roh's '386' staff because the candidate was too pro-US.<sup>355</sup>

President Roh as a political leader cannot be discussed without the 386 generation. President Roh Moo-hyun's approval rate was 75.1% when he inaugurated in March 2003, but it plummeted to 46.8% in four months. After 1 year, in February 2004, it went down to 37.7% and in 2006 after the provincial election, it again plummeted to the lowest in the 10%. President Roh's approval rate was on average 35% but compared to that of President Kim Young-sam's 52%, and President Kim Dae-jung's 58%, it was very low. The reasons behind the low approval rate were the corruption scandal of President Roh's elder brother in the administration earlier stage, various lobby and corruption scandals of President Roh's close staff, North Korea's nuclear test, and economic downturn. But the fundamental problem was President Roh's lack of political communications skills and the conflicts created from the policies President Roh had pushed for. President Roh's time seemed to have a goal to break the establishment but did not seem to have a clear vision or goal in

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<sup>354</sup> Interview held on July 28, 2015

<sup>355</sup> A behind story heard from one of the interviews.

policy formulation. Sometimes it seemed if President Roh really wanted to break the established vested interest and build a new one of his own.

**General public’s reaction to the wartime OPCON transfer debate**

In regards to President Roh and ROK-US alliance, a survey conducted in July 2005, indicates that 16.8% think the Korea-US relations is firm, but 57.4% considers it to be worrisome. 72.3% of the respondents said President Roh is conducting an amateur diplomacy.<sup>356</sup>

**Table 9. Public Polls on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate (Roh Administration)**

	YES: Transfer Wartime OPCON	NO: Don’t Transfer Wartime OPCON
August 2006 <sup>357</sup>	52.5%	40.3%
August 2006 <sup>358</sup>	Transfer depending on the security situation: 59.7% Transfer immediately: 14.1%	21.3%
September 2006 <sup>359</sup>	29.4%	66.3%
September 2006 <sup>360</sup>	32.5%	50.4%

Source: See the footnote for each source.

<sup>356</sup> “Monthly JoongAng Survey Research on ROK-US Alliance.” <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-5.htm> (Accessed on June 2015).

<sup>357</sup> *The Hankyoreh* \ (through Research Plus)

<sup>358</sup> *Matrix, Policy and Research*

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=102&oid=001&aid=0001382157> (Accessed on June 20, 2015).

<sup>359</sup> *The Chosun Ilbo* (through Korea Galup)

<http://www.gallup.co.kr/gallupdb/newsContent.asp?seqNo=1535> (Accessed on June 26, 2015).

<sup>360</sup> *CBS Radio* (through RealMeter) .

Another survey conducted in August 2006 says that 74% said they are worried about President Roh's way of dealing with ROK-US alliance.<sup>361</sup> Table 9 shows four surveys on the general public's opinion.

U.S. State Secretary Condoleezza Rice said in her biography that President Roh was someone whose real intentions were difficult to find. She said that he would oftentimes publicly make anti-US comments. He even went on to say that Korea has to be a balance between China and US relations. She said he was a maverick and a loose cannon. She criticized President Roh's amateurish diplomacy skills.<sup>362</sup>

Wartime OPCON transfer is an issue that needs government's strong political will and a national consensus. Policy shall be based on the people's need. In democracy, policies go to the direction, which the people want, but in matters with security, the most important is the government's will to understand the public opinion and execute a policy that ensures the security of the people.

Roh administration initially started with self-reliant defense, but mitigated the nuance to cooperative self-reliance defense, as the public opinions were a bit negative. With the criticism that Roh administration's directions were harming the ROK-US alliance, Roh administration made it clear that the South

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<sup>361</sup> "395 Experts' Perception on ROK-US alliance." EAI, August 2006. [http://blog.daum.net/eai\\_poll](http://blog.daum.net/eai_poll) (Accessed on June 20, 2015).

<sup>362</sup> Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*. (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2011), 528-530.

Korea's balancer role vision in Northeast Asia is based on firm ROK-US alliance.

While Roh administration's '386' generations represented democratic movement towards the authoritarian powers, 386 generations intention was doubted many times by the conservative and the establishment group. At the same time, the Bush administration's neo conservative were a particular group who were known to support the US unilateral diplomacy.<sup>363</sup>

Roh administration's wartime OPCON transfer issue initially received support by the anti-US sentiment caused by Hyo-sun Mi-seon tragedy (*Yangu highway accident*) and candle light movement in December 2002. The public polls indicate that only 20.4% agrees with strengthening the ROK-US alliance. On the other hand, 28.1% supported autonomous diplomacy over the US.<sup>364</sup> In 2005, as President Roh emphasized self-reliant defense, those who supported autonomous diplomacy increased to 37.1% and strengthening ROK-US alliance was 30.4%. However, after the North Korean nuclear case in 2006, strengthening ROK-US alliance changed to 48.8%, and autonomous diplomacy was 28.9%.

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<sup>363</sup> Chang-jae Paik, "What is Neoconservatism?" *National Strategy* 9, no.3 (2003).

<sup>364</sup> EAI Korea-US Survey 2002-2004; National Identity Survey 2005; International Relations Perception Survey 2006.

The public poll was sensitive to the changes happening in the Korean Peninsula security dynamics but did not have a consistent pattern. Even those who are socially progressive are extremely conservative in security matters, and those who are socially conservative and are at times very progressive for the topic on autonomy in security matters. Many politically progressive people were careful in casting their thoughts over security, which is directly link to personal security.

## **(2) President Lee Myung-bak (President 2008 – 2013)**

### ***President Lee Myung-bak as Commander-in-Chief***

#### **Wartime OPCON transfer plan adjustments**

After the military and President Roh reached its peak conflict in 2006 in regards to wartime OPCON transfer, many from the conservative side and the conservative opposition party was waiting for a conservative President to come in. President Lee came in with a conservative focus and had a strong hard line stance toward North Korea. In terms of military issues, President Lee Myung-bak was already attempting to change what President Roh Moo-hyun has set up.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> *Shindonga* July, 2009.

After President Lee's election in 2007, the 17<sup>th</sup> President of Republic of Korea transition team reviewed renegotiation of the wartime OPCON transfer period. The team collected opinions from defense ministry and checked the public opinion. The opposition political party and conservative group were emphasizing the need for delay of the transfer.<sup>366</sup> However, on January 9, 2008, the defense ministry made it clear that they are not planning to reexamine the transfer period and the defense ministry and JCS will transfer it as planned.<sup>367</sup> When the defense ministry briefed President Lee on January 11, 2008 after his election, the defense ministry reported that if any delay happens, it will be a diplomatic disadvantage for South Korea, eventually Korea would have to pay more for it. This made President Lee stick to the original plan and not delay. The transition committee of President Lee published on March 24, 2008 notes that it will continue to examine the suitability of the transfer policy. On February 28, 2008 National Assembly confirmation hearing, and March 12, 2008 at the 3rd ROK field army command's first time defense ministry briefing, Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee reported that that the military will transfer the wartime OPCON by April 17, 2012 as decided.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> *Hankyoreh* January 29, 2008.

<sup>367</sup> *Yonhap News* January 9, 2008.

<sup>368</sup> *Kookbang Ilbo* March 13, 2008.

On March 13, 2008, U.S. Senator John Warner called Bell CFC commander to the US senate military committee and asked why the wartime OPCON is not transferred as fast as it should be done. He mentioned that he does not understand why Korea is not rushing to have the transfer and mentioned that this is a matter of national pride.<sup>369</sup> Bell responded that the stem of ROK-US alliance is based on the Mutual Defense Treaty between Korea and U.S not UN or CFC, and wartime OPCON transfer should be done without any delay.<sup>370</sup> However, the Korean conservative group made it clear that they are against the transfer. In October, 2008, wartime OPCON transfer propriety analysis was the 92th task among the 100 national tasks. It was to be examined in 2011.

In January 2009, President Obama inaugurated and on April 5, North Korea launched a long distance missile and had a nuclear test on May 25. Security dynamics were getting worse. In June 2009, Korean conservative groups were making movements announcing that North Korea should abolish its nuclear weapons, and that the CFC dissolution plan should be dropped. 10million signature movement was going on. The conservative group gave their opinion on delaying the wartime OPCON transfer decision, and the conservative party *Hannara* party, had also made a press release that the delay

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<sup>369</sup> *Yonhap News*. March 13, 2008.

<sup>370</sup> *American Forces Press Release*, April 14, 2008.

should be reviewed. However, the nation –to-nation decision cannot be dropped so easily. A media leak was release that both Korea and the U.S. thought it was better to push the transfer toward the next administration, and considering President Obama’s term, 2015 seemed to be a good time.<sup>371</sup>

On May 30, 2009, an official position of both nations was released that the wartime OPCON transfer is in implementation but both countries are sensitively reviewing North Korea’s move and threat. By June 2009, the Korean government did not show any signs of delay.<sup>372</sup> When Lee Hoe-chang, then one of the conservative political party leader asked President Lee why the President has not mentioned wartime OPCON transfer during his talk with the US President, President Lee replied that since it is a nation to nation agreement, it cannot be nullified, but both countries understood that the timeline can be changed. The US 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force Commander Jeffery Remington said that when Korea is ready, the U.S. is also ready to transfer the Air Force OPCON as well.<sup>373</sup> In August 2009, then Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee and Chairman of JCS Kim Tae-young invited the retired generals who were against the wartime OPCON transfer and shared its preparation for the transfer, and Korea’s IOC

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<sup>371</sup> *D&D Focus*, June 2009.

<sup>372</sup> *Yonhap News* June 16, 2009.

<sup>373</sup> *Yonhap News*, June 24, 2009.

(Initial Operating Capability).<sup>374</sup> In October 2009, Defense Minister Kim Tae-young said at the 41th SCM that wartime OPCON transfer is well prepared, and that U.S. will support until Korea gains needed ability for nuclear deterrence.<sup>375</sup> Meanwhile, former CFC vice commander announced that him and 20 former vice CFC commanders sent a mail to both Korea and U.S. presidents that they are against the dissolution of the CFC. At the same time the conservative groups continuously made rallies against the wartime OPCON transfer.<sup>376</sup>

### **Signs of wartime OPCON transfer delay**

A change in stance happened on January 20, 2010. Defense Minister Kim Tae-young said in a conference that as of now, it seems dangerous to have the wartime OPCON transfer done by 2012. Defense Minister Kim said that since transfer is a political engagement, it should be resolved in political terms. It may be a burden to the president, but the president will also give thoughts. He said that linking wartime OPCON transfer and the U.S. forces' withdrawal is a wrong perspective. They are two different issues. 28,500 U.S. forces will stay before and after the base relocation.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> IOC is the “first attainment of the capability to employ effectively a weapon, item of equipment, or system of approved specific characteristics that is manned or operated by an adequately trained, equipped, and supported military unit or force” (U.S Department of Defense Terminology)

<sup>375</sup> *Yonhap News*, October 22, 2009, Korea JCS Magazine January 8, 2010 (42), pp. 32-36.

<sup>376</sup> *Donga Ilbo*, December 10, 2009.

<sup>377</sup> *Joongang Ilbo*, January 21, 2010.

The U.S. Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) published on February 2010, notes that wartime OPCON transfer will be done as planned and Korea will lead in the combined defense system.<sup>378</sup> Though the political, military, conservative circles and the public polls mentioned the delay of wartime OPCON transfer, both nations did not publicize it. It is known that the one who reverses the decision would usually have to take all responsibility of the one providing the cause. In 1988, President Roh Tae-woo paid the price of moving the *Yongsan army base* because he raised it first, and President Roh Moo-hyun also had to pay quite amount of expenses when he raised the issue of base movement.<sup>379</sup>

The U.S. was against the delay. Michael Schiffer, the Assistant Deputy Secretary of U.S. Defense Department said the most important role of ROK-US alliance is providing security through deterrence over conflicts. It is just a strategic move to let Korea have the lead through wartime OPCON transfer.<sup>380</sup> CFC Commander Sharp said on July 2, 2010 to the Association of the Republic of Korea Army that since Korean military is capable, the U.S. tried to have the transfer done by 2012. It was delayed due to political reasons, not because Korea was not ready. General Sharp said that he understands the delay as

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<sup>378</sup> *KIDA's Analysis and Summary of QDR 2010*, 54. QDR is a research the US Defense Department conducts to analyze strategic objectives and military threats. The report describes the US military doctrine and is published every four years.

<sup>379</sup> *Munhaw Ilbo* March 25, 2010.

<sup>380</sup> *Donga Ilbo*, March 6, 2010.

improving the completeness level. He personally wanted the transfer to be done by 2012 as Gates wanted, and hoped the retired group tries to remove unnecessary misunderstandings and help the people to support the wartime OPCON transfer.<sup>381</sup> Though people, such as Michael Hamlon, mentioned how the collapse of unity of command can bring disaster, referring to the failure of Iran hostage rescue plan, the U.S. position seemed to be firm.<sup>382</sup>

### ***Cheonan warship sinking and wartime OPCON transfer delay***

After the *Cheonan warship sinking* attack happened on March 26, 2010, the public polls demonstrated that they prefer delay of the wartime OPCON transfer. According to polls from *Donga Ilbo*, delay or nullify the transfer hit over 50%. At the end of June, President Lee and President Obama, agreed to delay the transfer by December 1, 2015.

The Defense Minister Kim Kwan-gin was the Chairman of JCS in 2007 but in December 2010 when he attended the confirming hearing for the Defense Minister position during President Lee Myung-bak administration he seemed to be in a different position from how he expressed himself in 2007. Minister candidate Kim Kwan-jin said that there was a problem in the process of pursuing the wartime OPCON transfer decision. He also said “I proposed

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<sup>381</sup> *Yonhap News*, July 2, 2010.

<sup>382</sup> *Yonhap News*, March 8, 2010.

suggestions however, it was not accepted because of the Commander-in-Chief's firm order." And "April 17, 2012 was the lasted I could do." But regarding delaying again after 2015, he said "delaying more will be difficult." At the hearing, the then ruling party's assembly member and unification minister of President Roh Moo-hyun administration, Chung Dong-young asked, why minister Kim expressed firm conviction on self-reliant defense and pursued the wartime OPCON transfer plan during President Roh Moo-hyun time and now has changed his position to 'delaying' the wartime OPCON. To this, minister candidate Kim said "My conviction on 'self-reliant' defense has not changed and when the wartime OPCON transfer was discussed, me and the military thought it did not fit to the current security situation."<sup>383</sup>

The main cause of the President Lee administration's delay was first due to uncertainty and instability of the Korean Peninsula security situation, and second, because 2012 is a politically unstable year that holds many elections. Korea has the national assembly election in April and presidential election in December, the U.S. has the presidential election in November, Kim Jong-il of North Korea declared year 2012 will be a year of making a North Korea *a Strong and Prosperous State (Gangsungdaegook)*, China goes through leadership change of the communist party, and Russia has its presidential

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<sup>383</sup> *Newsis* December 3, 2010 (Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin's Confirming Hearing was held on December 3, 2010).

election in March. Lee administration judged that wartime OPCON transfer and CFC dissolution will worsen the security instability. Thirdly, by May 2010, the 10 million-signature movements by the conservative groups reached its goal and the public polls were against the transfer. Even though military preparation was assumed to be well,<sup>384</sup> the needed budget did not seem to be well allocated due to world economic downturn. *Pyeongtaek Land Partnership Plan (LLP)* and *Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP)* were getting delayed.<sup>385</sup> After the delay decision, Defense Minister Kim and President Lee Myung-bak made it clear that delay will not happen again and by 2015, Korea will make the war deterrence capability. However after the *Yeonpyeong missile attack* on November 23, 2010, wartime OPCON transfer received less attention from the people, and appeared less on news reports or was discussed among the experts. Wartime OPCON transfer seemed to settle down with the delay to 2015.

### **Decrease in defense budget**

In addition to that the defense budget seemed to go back to the times before President Roh Moo-hyun administration. See the downward slope in Figure 11. The 8.7 % increase plummeted to 2% increase from 2009 to 2010.

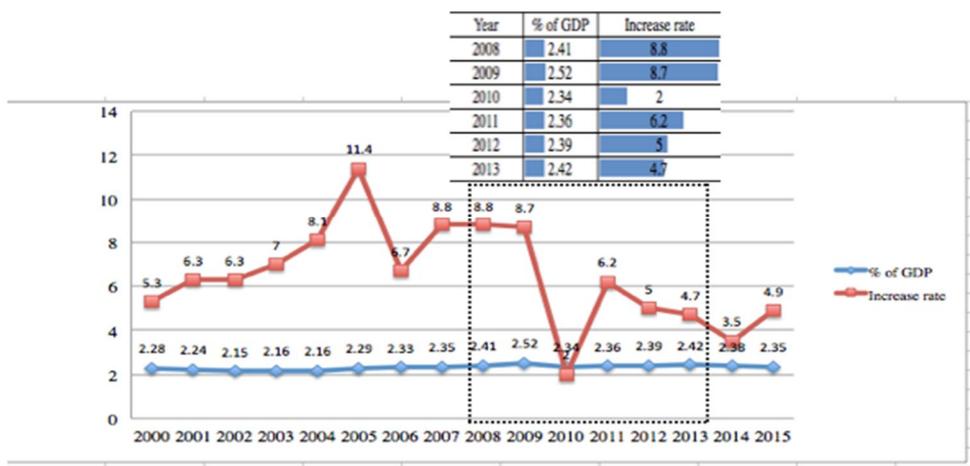
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<sup>384</sup> Defense ministry said that Korea is ready for the combined defense system and the delay is due to security situation changes not because Korean military is not ready. *Yonhap News*, June 28, 2010.

<sup>385</sup> Soon-hui Chang, "Transfer of Wartime Operational Control over ROK Armed Forces: Postponement and Re-postponement" (PhD diss., Kyungnam University, 2015), 96.

Then from 2010 to 2011, there was 6.2% increase. From 2011 to 2012, there was a 5 % increase and from 2012 to 2013, there was a 4.2% increase.

**Figure 11. Defense Budget Data (Lee)**



Source: ROK Defense Budget Promotion Booklet, MND, 2015

During President Lee Myung-bak administration, a decrease and efficient use of defense budget was required. Defense ministry pursued a plan to use the defense budget more effectively meaning the increase rate will be low. The plan started from September 2010.<sup>386</sup> This reflected how President Lee Myung-bak was managing the military’s request on defense budget. The downslope increase reflects how President Lee Myung-bak would like to focus

<sup>386</sup> ROK Defense Budget Promotion Booklet, Ministry of Defense, 2011.

more on spending on economics than on defense. The optimal choice for President Lee to effectively use the budget and ensure security from North Korea's provocations was to stay with the current system with the U.S. Change from the current system was a burden.

### ***President Lee Myung-bak as Executive Head***

#### **President Lee's North Korean policy**

President Lee Myung-bak as the Executive Head and State leader had a clear goal for managing the nation. It was 'economy first.' It was the national desire. Lee became President with a land-slide win over the ruling party by emphasizing his experience to boost the economy. Inter-Korean relations were not as a high priority as the previous governments. Also, the *Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness* policy clearly notes that the administration stands on a hard stance towards North Korea. If the North drops nuclear weapons and opens up, then the South will help the North people that have \$3000 earnings.

A controversial example often quoted for President Lee's priority on economics over security is the approval of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lotte world near Sunnam

Airport.<sup>387</sup> There were oppositions from the military officials. Lee also revised the military reform plan 2020 of President Roh and built military reform 307 and extended the time period of reform completion to be 2012 to 2020. This time span expansion reverses the economic burden from government budgets.

### **Major domestic security issues in President Lee Administration**

Start of the security issues caused by North Korea in Lee administration was the killing of tourist Park Wang-ja on July 11, 2008 during her *Geungang* Mt. tour. It continued with North Korea's all out fighting stance declaration in early 2009, long-distance missile launch in April, 2<sup>nd</sup> nuclear test in May, Battle of *Daechung* in November 2009, and totally deteriorating relationship after the *Cheonan* warship attack on March 26, 2010 and then *Yeonpyeong* attack in November.<sup>388</sup>

In terms of security policies, Lee administration understood the Roh administration's policies as a failure. The administration estimated the output to be low compared to the massive input. Lee as presidential candidate, after North Korea's nuclear test in October 2006, he referred the past 10 years of

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<sup>387</sup> *Korea Daily*, November 15, 2010. [http://www.koreadaily.com/news/read.asp?art\\_id=1114716](http://www.koreadaily.com/news/read.asp?art_id=1114716)

<sup>388</sup> *Yeonpyeong attack* refers to North Korea's attack with around 170 artillery shells and rockets at Yeonpyeong island on November 23, 2010 at 2:34 pm killing 16 soldiers and 2 civilians. Civilian casualty caused great rage among the people. This attack was the first direct attack on the South Korea's territory since 1953 when the Armistice Agreement was signed, and the first attack to indiscriminately target on civilian residence area.

government efforts as a failure. It was one of his presidential pledges to reexamine the North Korean policy.

President Lee's North Korean policy was global Korea and making a new structure for peace. The administration focused on solving North Korean nuclear problem, *Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness* policy, ROK-US strategic alliance, and humanitarian solution for inter-Korean relations. The gist of *Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness* policy is that if the North gives up nuclear weapons, and goes for opening up, South Korea will help North Korea to be GDP of \$3000 in 10 years. Lee administration made it clear that without drop of nuclear weapons, there will be no help. It was criticizing the previous administration, unlimited support and no return from the North. Lee administration's first unification minister Kim Ha-jung said on March 19, 2008, that without North Korea nuclear weapons problem solving, there will be no expansion in the *Gaesung Industrial Complex*. Such decision was getting national support. People did not want nuclear and economic problems to be separated.

Table 10 summarizes the major domestic security issues in President Lee administration. Major provocations deteriorated the inter-Korean relations.

**Table 10. Major Domestic Security Issues in President Lee Administration**

Date	Issues	
June 27, 2008	Explosion of <i>Yongbyon</i> Nuclear Reactor Cooling Tower	
July 11, 2008	Killing of tourist Park Wang-ja during Mt. <i>Geumgang</i> tour	
September 24, 2008	Removal of <i>Yongbyon</i> Nuclear Reactor Seal	
April 25, 2009	North Korea's launch of Eunha 2 satellite (Failed)	NK provocation
May 25, 2009	2 <sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Test	NK provocation
June 12, 2009	The UN Security Council's approval of Resolution 1874	
November 3, 2009	North Korea declares reprocessing of 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods has been completed	
November 10, 2009	North Korea's patrol boat invades over west NLL. Battle of <i>Daechung</i>	NK Provocation
March 26, 2010	North Korea's torpedo attack on South Korea's navy ship killing 40 sailors and 6 missing.	Major NK provocation
August 9, 2010	North Korea fires 10 artillery rounds near Paikryongdo and 100 artillery rounds near Yeonpyeong	
November 23, 2010	North Korea's <i>Yeonpyeong</i> attack firing 170 artillery shells and rockets at <i>Yeonpyeong</i> Island killing 4 South Korea (2 civilians) and injuring 19 soldiers.	Major NK provocation
April 13, 2012	Launch long range rocket Eunha 3 (Failed)	NK provocation
February 12, 2013	3 <sup>rd</sup> Nuclear Test	NK provocation
March 7, 2013	The UN Security Council adopts resolution 2094	

Source: Data collected by the author from ROK Defense White Paper and news reports

Beyond ideology and nationhood, the administration wanted to solve the inter-Korean relations based on Korea-US cooperation, national interest, and

diplomatic universality. In details, in terms of approaching economic cooperation with the North, four principles were proposed: progress in North Korea nuclear problems, economic benefit, financial capability and value, and national consensus.

If the circumstances allowed and North showed positive response, South will talk and try to solve inter-Korean relations, however, if the North continued to have their previous attitude, then the government will not be begging to have a relationship with the North. Also, Lee administration had taken the inter-Korean relations as an economic exchange rather than an ideological problem.<sup>389</sup> For the Lee administration, there was no rush to ameliorate the relationship with the North unless the North was willing to change. Such strong stances continued and even gain momentum after North Korea caused *Cheonan warship* sinking and the *Yeonpyeong bombardment*.

### ***President Lee Myung-bak as Political Leader***

President Lee being a former CEO of the Hyundai Construction Corporation is still evaluated to be a CEO leadership. He was a politician as well but his performance got the spotlight after he became the Seoul Mayor reconstructing the *Cheongye Stream* and redesigning the bus only lane. It had

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<sup>389</sup> Duk-min Yoon, *The New Government's Foreign Policy Direction*. Korea International Political Science Conference, 2008.

caused a lot of discomfort when it was under construction, but, later on, the two main policies were evaluated to be a big success, which made Mayor Lee a Presidential candidate.

There were opinions that President Lee preferred to make things visible because he had a construction base.<sup>390</sup> President Lee went for *the Pan Korea Great Canal project*. President Lee's national agenda and achievement plans targeted making Korea the world's best nation.<sup>391</sup> President Lee was business friendly and tried to loosen regulations for companies to work comfortably. President Lee was not a traditional politicians, rather a politician who considered himself to be more of a businessman, a mayor or someone fixing and remaking the nation by pursuing the non-Yeouido style politics (Korea's mainstream politics).

Lee wanted an advanced country that goes beyond industrialization and democratization. Lee's ideological background was a mix of neoliberalism and development orientation similar to President Park Chung-hee.<sup>392</sup> President Lee's leadership is work oriented and performance oriented. He emphasized tasks and priority and effectiveness. President Lee's political constituency was the conservative, Christians, *Yeongnam* area, and the white-color bracket. The

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<sup>390</sup> *Weekly Donga*, Jan. 16, 2008.

<sup>391</sup> President's The Beginning of the Year Speech, March 10, 2008.

<sup>392</sup> Geun Lee argues that President Lee Myung-bak's administration is an administration of neo-liberalism *Pressian* March 19, 2008.

core group of President Lee administration was pictured as a group of Korea University (school affiliation), Somang Church (religious affiliation), Yeongnam area (birthplace affiliation), and Gangnam area (residence affiliation) people.<sup>393</sup> President Lee did not announce that he was pro-U.S. but his actions, his thought process all reflected his pro-U.S. attitude.

President Lee Myung-bak's diplomacy and security vision is distinguished from that of President Roh Moo-hyun. The two have different leadership tendencies. One is more international than the other. While President Lee Myung-bak is an international oriented as living as an expat of Hyundai Construction Company and became the CEO of the group, president Roh Moo-hyun started as a local human-rights lawyer and later become a political guru who got attached to inter-Korean relations. Such personal background would have affected the policy focus difference.

### **General public's reaction to the wartime OPCON transfer debate**

Looking into the polls after the *Cheonan warship attack*, the public opinions shifted to delaying the transfer. Table 11 shows the poll change. After the North Korean provocation that continued in November 2010, the *Yeongpyeong Island attack*, there was not even many polls conducted to check

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<sup>393</sup> "Chilly Welcome," *The Economist*, February 28, 2008.

on the opinions over the wartime OPCON as delay decision fixed in 2010 was receiving fair enough support.

**Table 11. Public Polls on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate (Lee administration)**

	YES: Transfer as scheduled	NO: Delay Transfer
May 2009 <sup>394</sup>	47%	46.8%
Cheonan warship in March 2010		
May 2010 <sup>395</sup>	32.3%	42.1% (+9.3% drop plan to transfer = 51%)

### **(3) President Park Geun-hye (President 2013- Present)**

#### *President Park Geun-hye as Commander-in-Chief*

##### **Military-friendly administration**

President Park Geun-hye being the daughter of President Park Chung-hee, received massive support from the military and the military was with much expectation for President Park Geun-hye. President Park seemed to support the military as well. On the Armed Forces Day ceremony, President made the

<sup>394</sup> KIDA Survey reported through Yonhap News, April 29, 2010.  
<http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2010/04/29/0200000000AKR20100429058400043.HTML>  
 (Accessed on January 20, 2015)

<sup>395</sup> *Donga Ibo*, May 22, 2010.  
<http://news.donga.com/List/PoliticsPoll/3/70000000000042/20100522/28519300/1#> (Accessed on January 20, 2015)

biggest ceremony in 10 years.<sup>396</sup> Kill Chain to prevent North Korean nuclear weapons and missile attack, and Korean MD weapons were all exhibited in the ceremony. President Park just like President Lee, emphasized that the military should have a strong deterrence capability until North lays down their nuclear weapons. President and military relationship was good. President Park Geun-hye recruited half of the diplomacy and security team with army generals.<sup>397</sup>

During the interview for this research, it was evident that senior military elites missed the times of President Park Chung-hee. It was the time when the military officers were the most privileged people. At the time after the Korean War, most smart people would go to the military. Military was one of the most advanced institutions as the military received support and curriculums from the U.S.

The Park administration though seemed to prefer the military elites, Park administration made it clear that it did not mean it allowed corruption. Military corruption and eradication of such dishonorable actions were being severely published.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> *TV Chosun* reports on the Armed Forces Day Ceremony. October 2, 2013

[http://news.tvchosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/10/02/2013100290005.html](http://news.tvchosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/10/02/2013100290005.html)(Accessed on May 2, 2016).

<sup>397</sup> More than half of President Park Geun-hye administration's diplomacy and security senior staff are former generals. *AJU News*, March 3, 2013.

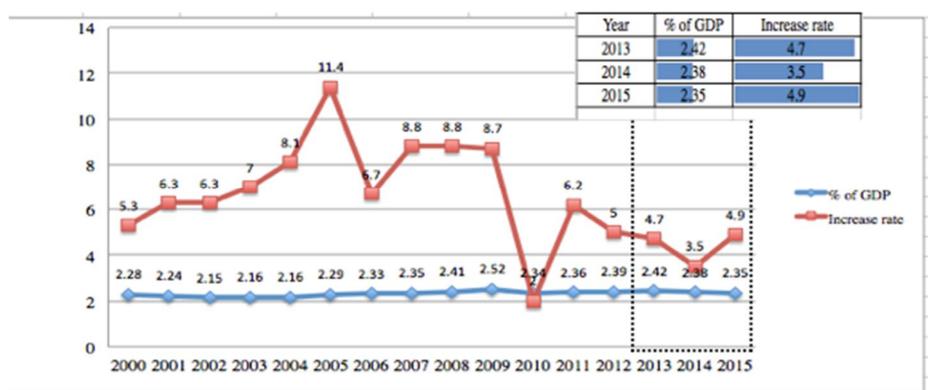
<http://www.ajunews.com/common/redirect.jsp?newsId=20130303000248>(Accessed on May 2, 2016).

<sup>398</sup> President's speech at the National Assembly October 29, 2014 on eradicating the military corruption.

### Defense budget decrease

President Park administration has lowered the increase rate as well. From 2013 to 2014 the increase rate was 3.5%, 2014 to 2015, 4.9%. Figure 12 shows the increase rate changed from that of Roh administration. The increase rate is increasing compared to Lee administration. The increase rate of 3% to 5 % is a contrast with the Defense Ministry’s Defense Budget Promotion Publications asking for 7.2% increase for defense budget for 2015 to 2019, and asking for 7.3% increase for defense budget for 2013 to 2017.<sup>399</sup>

**Figure 12. Defense Budget Decrease Data (Park)**



Source: ROK Defense Budget Promotion Booklet, MND, 2015

<sup>399</sup> ROK Defense Budget Promotion Booklet, Ministry of National Defense, 2013 and 2014.

The publications on defense budget from the defense ministry reflect such desires from the military as well. The senior military elites seemed to relieve after the delay of the transfer. In one interview, a former general said that “at least the transfer has changed to ‘condition’-based, so we have more time. It somehow could be trade off for not raising the defense budget.”<sup>400</sup>

### ***President Park Geun-hye as Executive Head***

President Park Geun-hye’s security policy theme is based on strong security circumstances and on the basis of *the Korean Peninsula Trust Process*. President Park Geun-hye administration embarked on February 25, 2013, wanting to have citizen’s individual happiness to be linked to the national development and new hope for the era.<sup>401</sup> President Park also expressed her will for unification with the *Unification Bonanza policy* and the *Dresden Declaration* in Germany on March 28, 2014.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Interview held on July 22, 2015

<sup>401</sup> *The Office of National Security: New Era of Hope*. (Seoul: Office of National Security, 2014), 13-15.

<sup>402</sup> President Park Geun-hye explained her unification policy at the New Year’s Press Conference in January 2014. Korean reads *Tongileun Daebak I da*. OR *Tongil Daepak*, which meaning is close to jackpot. President intended to have more attention to unification and wanted to raise awareness of the benefits of unification. With this wording *Daebak*, she emphasizes that how unification with North Korea will be beneficial to South Korea. Later the President’s Office unified this term to be “Unification is a Bonanza” in English. The Dresden Declaration is President Park Geun-hye’s proposal to North Korea on March 28, 2014. In order to build a foundation for peaceful unification, the President plans to build together three major inter-Korean corridors coinfrasturcture for co-prosperity, resolve humanitarian problems and restore brotherhood between South and North Korea.

### Major domestic security issues in President Park Administration

President Park emphasized trust politics. Based on trust, the two countries, South and North, will spread peace cooperation. While trust was emphasized, what was required for the South was to build strong and solid security preparedness. It was important not only because Korea is a divided nation facing existential threat but because of the abrupt provocations of that threat, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> nuclear test North Korea.

**Table 12. Major Domestic Security Issues in President Park Administration**

Date	Issues	
February 12, 2013	3 <sup>rd</sup> Nuclear Test	NK Provocation
March 14, 2013	North declared that they are ending the 1953 Armistice Agreement	NK Provocation
April 2, 2013	North Korea restarts Yongbyun nuclear reactor	NK Provocation
March 31, 2014	Fires 500 artillery rounds. ROK navy fires back.	NK Provocation
August 4, 2015	Two soldiers heavily injured due to mine explosion at the DMZ	NK Provocation
January 6, 2016	North Korea declares its first hydrogen bomb test success	NK Provocation
January 6, 2016	4 <sup>th</sup> Nuclear test	NK Provocation
February 7, 2016	Launch long range missile Gwangmyung 4	NK Provocation
February 10, 2016	Close Gaesung Industrial Complex	

Source: Data collected by the author from Defense White Paper and news reports.

**NK Provocations.** Ever since North Korea got out of NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty) in March 1993, North Korea would oftentimes periodically conduct nuclear and missile test and raise tension in the Korean Peninsula. Table 12 gives a summary of North Korean provocations during President Park Geun-hye time.

The inter-Korean relations continued to have a troubling nature since the 5.24 act after the *Cheonan warship* in March 26, 2010. North Korea first announced that they have nuclear weapons on February 10, 2005, and executed its first test on October 9, 2006. The second test was held on May 2009, and ever since then in April 2012, they revised their constitution to state that they are a nation that possesses nuke. North Korean nuclear weapons are closely related to long distance missile development. The long-term missiles launch on December 12, 2012 was a violation of the UN security resolution 1718 and 1874. After the third nuclear test on February 12, 2013, UN intensified its restrictions with North Korea.

The peace that the President Park administration pursued was based on trust but pushing changes in North Korea to normalize the inter-Korean relations and eventually promote peace in the Korean Peninsula. Trust comes from keeping promises, and doors for dialogues will be opened but keeping

promises have to become a culture that has to be done.<sup>403</sup> On February 28, 2012, President Park said that North should now cut off the vicious cycle of distrust and come out to have dialogues and exchanges.<sup>404</sup> Keeping promises meant 7.4.Statement, 6.15 Statement, and 10.4. Statement.<sup>405</sup> President Park will keep the humanitarian support open and when trust progresses, various economic cooperation and support for North Korea's infrastructure will be provided. However, when North Korea conducted its 4<sup>th</sup> nuclear test (hydrogen bomb), President Park administration declared that the government had enough and will shut down the *Gaesung Industrial Complex*, which was a big source of income for the *Gaesung* area and at large for North Korea.

**Military Reform.** President Roh's military reform 2020 plan was slightly expanded to from President Lee's plan 307 that will be applied between 2012 and 2020. While President Lee administration's focus was on *Cheonan* and *Yeonpyeong* bombardment, President Park administration focused on asymmetrical threats and local provocation and total war. The defense focus was on proactive deterrence and active deterrence and offense defense.<sup>406</sup> Also to detect signs of North Korea's preemptive attack, South Korea needed information and intelligence capacity. President Park's understanding of

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<sup>403</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>404</sup> Keynote Speech at the Nuclear Summit International Academic Conference February 28, 2012.

<sup>405</sup> South-North Joint Declaration on July 4, 1972, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2000, and October 4, 2007

<sup>406</sup> ROK Defense White Paper 2014

security is ‘protection over the nation and people to be first priority.’ In August 2006, she mentioned that it is not a matter of whether two or one nation exercises the wartime OPCON, it is what is better for the nation.<sup>407</sup>

Chang notes that the delay of the wartime OPCON transfer policy is because of the incomplete military reform, and materialization of North Korea’s threat. After the long-distance missile launch in April 2012, North Korea continued to conduct nuclear tests in February 2013. Korean army had to strengthen military capability even stronger. Kill Chain and KAMD seemed to be ever more important. North Korea also announced that they would have 2015 as a year of unification. According to Park administration, the Korean army did not want to give a wrong signal to the North with the expected transfer period on December 1, 2015.<sup>408</sup> President Park, officially proposed to reexamine wartime OPCON transfer delay. From October 2013, a task force was formed and eventually on October 23, 2014. It was again delayed to be sometime in 2020s.

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<sup>407</sup> President Park’s comments at the Hannara Party Workshop August 31, 2006.

<sup>408</sup> Soon-hui Chang, “Transfer of Wartime Operational Control over ROK Armed Forces: Postponement and Re-postponement,” 136.

### ***President Park Geun-hye as Political Leader***

President Park's political constituency is the so called the 'concrete' support group: older than 50s and 60s, *Taegu* and *Gyeongbuk* area, conservative.<sup>409</sup> Some people even thought President Park being single, she will be free from temptation of corruption. President Roh the progressive president has eventually received black money from Park Yeon-cha and was prosecuted.<sup>410</sup> President Park with a very careful attitude takes the security matter seriously. She does not do propaganda but with her way of promoting the nation's security, takes lead in that.<sup>411</sup> Her baggage is her father who ruled the authoritarian government for 17 years.

After the wartime OPCON transfer became an issue, the opposition *Hanara* Party presidential candidates strongly expressed their negative opinions over President Roh administration's decision. Goh Geon, the first Prime Minister of President Roh Moo-hyun administration said in an interview that the wartime OPCON transfer should be later than 2012, the scheduled time set from the Roh administration.<sup>412</sup> Presidential candidate Park Geun-hye emphasized diplomacy and security with focus on strong and solid security. She said that strong and solid security is first than economy. She referred to

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<sup>409</sup> Concrete support refers to a support group firm and stable as concrete.

<sup>410</sup> *Newsis* December 20, 2012.

<sup>411</sup> *Segye Ilbo*, December 4, 2012.

<sup>412</sup> *Dailian* August 14, 2006.

Germany's unification: economic capability and strong war deterrence capability, policies with principle that made East Germany change, and diplomatic capability receiving trust and cooperation from the international community.<sup>413</sup>

In conclusion, short term politics and long term principles are crucial. The conservative Presidents were reluctant to take risks. The military and the public polls drove the President's decision. According to Richard Neustadt and also Paul Light, public's support lets the president to push forward policies, and also is an important resource to persuade the assembly (legislative body).<sup>414</sup>

#### **General public's reaction to the wartime OPCON transfer debate**

Public opinion during President Park Geun-hye administration was not favorable for the transfer either. North Korea's nuclear test in 2013 and aggressive approaches affected the public polls.

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<sup>413</sup> *The Office of National Security: New Era of Hope*. (Seoul: Office of National Security, 2014)

<sup>414</sup> Neustadt, 1960; Light 1999.

**Table 13. Public polls on the Wartime OPCON Transfer Debate  
(Park Administration)**

	YES: Transfer as scheduled	NO: Delay Transfer
October 2013 <sup>415</sup>	45.2%	45.1%
October 2014 <sup>416</sup>	32%	51%
October 2014 <sup>417</sup>	36.4%	55.2%

Table 13 shows how the public supported the delay. While the progressive politicians strongly argue for the wartime OPCON transfer and disdain the delay, the public polls does not seem to react to such rage over the delay.

***Summary***

Looking into the three roles of each government, civil-military dynamics, defense budget, NK provocations, and public polls, all the factors affected altogether for the President to decide upon delaying the wartime OPCON twice.

This proves that the presidential decision to push the transfer or delay the transfer was not a simply matter judged by one factor but a complicated matter that has to be dealt in a comprehensive picture. The unbending opposition from the senior military elites was one of the biggest influencer in

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<sup>415</sup> Union Research (suggested by Assemblyman Kim Jae-yoon on October 15, 2013).

<sup>416</sup> Korea Galup.

<sup>417</sup> *Munhwa Ilbo*.

decision-making. Such severe opposition becomes more persuasive as the president has to deal with limited defense budget, North Korea provokes inconsistently, and the general public shows sign of fear and anxiety when North Korea makes unwelcoming actions. Table 14 demonstrates the factors discussed in this Chapter and summarizes the main factors for each role.

**Table 14. Three Governments in a Glance**

President Roh Moo-hyun	
Commander-in-Chief (Military-President relations)	BAD Organizational theories that the civilian leaders initiate military organization change. Posen (1984), Allison (1971) * North Korea's provocations in 2005, 2006 worsen the military leader's opposition towards President Roh's policy.
Executive Head (Domestic Security)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reliant defense, balanced diplomacy</li> <li>• Peace and Prosperity with North Korea</li> <li>• North Korean nuclear issue and North Korean policy separately, thus, peace pursuing continues despite NK provocations</li> </ul>
Political Leader (Main constituency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressive</li> <li>• Anti-US sentiment of political circumstances matched well with President Roh and '386' generation anti-US sentiment</li> </ul>
President Lee Myung-bak	
Commander-in-Chief (Military-President relations)	Good President Lee accepts the opinions of the senior military elites. Military change theories that argue military change cannot happen without the military being the main actor of change. Rosen (1991). Military officials opinions are taken as national security professionals. (Zisk, 1993)
Executive Head (Domestic Security)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economy priority</li> <li>• NK nuclear issue and NK policy are not separated.</li> <li>• Vision 3000 through Denuclearization and Openness Policy: Only through NK's change, support is provided.</li> <li>• Accept public opinion on security fear (practical approach)</li> </ul>
Political Leader (Main constituency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservative</li> <li>• Resist to anti-US sentiment, practical approach</li> </ul>
President Park Geun-hye	
Commander-in-Chief (Military-President relations)	Very good Just like President Lee, accepts the opinions of the senior military elites. Hired generals to high-level positions emphasizing security priority of the government
Executive Head (Domestic Security)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diplomacy and trust priority</li> <li>• NK nuclear issue and NK policy are not separated.</li> <li>• Korean Peninsula Trust Process: Make efforts to build trust and change to virtuous cycle first then support is provided.</li> <li>• Accept public opinion on security fear (practical approach)</li> </ul>
Political Leader (Main constituency)	Conservative

# **CHAPTER VI.**

## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **1. Findings of the Research**

This research asked why the senior military elites were against the transfer, and answered to that question with an organizational perspective. A military organization, which has features of large, bureaucratic, and special missions, will not be able to make change and show change resistance, at least for the short-term.

The study covered three administrations, and throughout the three administrations, the senior military elites have demonstrated unbending oppositions to the transfer decision initially raised by President Roh. President Roh Moo-hyun with his vision and goal to pursue peace with the North, and strengthen military, initiated the wartime OPCON transfer and have set a date for the transfer. Meanwhile, the civil-military relations were deteriorated. The deteriorated relations were reflected in the implementation speed. Then a new administration came in. With North Korea's heavy attacks that shocked the South Koreans, worsened public polls affected President Lee Myung-bak to delay the transfer. While President Lee Myung-bak initially said he will keep the promise, the continuous opposition from the conservatives and military,

coupled with North Korea's provocations, and worsening public polls, President Lee could not but delay the transfer. For President Park Geun-hye's case, the delay happened in a similar situation, with North Korea's nuclear test and worsening public polls, and underneath that an ongoing opposition from the military. Military's request for more defense budget is a big burden for the President when he/she has plans to use the budget for his/her political goals. Interestingly, all three Presidents agreed with the general idea that transfer has to be done, but when all confronted with pressure to make change immediately, policy changes did not occur.

This leads to a conclusion that for the short-term, the military and the president will not be able to execute the transfer.

### **(1) Senior Military Elites' Opposition**

To the question, why the generals were against the transfer decision was answered from an organizational perspective. The military organization that is large, bureaucratic, and has a special mission to win in wars, is resistant to change. The empirical research, through interviews with 23 senior military elites and 10 policy advisors and security experts, has indicated that four reasons had affected their decision: North Korean nuke, ROK-US alliance, cost, and inter-service rivalries. These factors are derived from the special

nature of the military that its highest goal is to win the war, and from the bureaucratic characteristics that instigate inter-service rivalries. Thus, the senior military elites' going against the transfer decision arises from many unique aspects of the military organization. The military organization's structure, goal, and culture make it difficult to make changes. Indeed, the Korean military's behavior can be explained by Posen's argument that the military structurally has organizational inertia. As a large bureaucratic and a special missions organization, it will have a tendency to have psychological barriers in decision making, such as status quo bias, loss aversion, sunk cost effect, and regret aversion.<sup>418</sup> As an organization that has a mission to win the war against North Korea, which also views North Korea as an enemy, the South Korean military cannot afford to create a new risk factor. As a result, the military will not experiment with a new change but prefer the "tested and tried" solution. Basically, the military organization's leader will make a decision based on what they consider to be important, so he or she is susceptible to organizational bias and interests.

Living on a divided peninsula that has existential threats, the South Korean people express fear when the security conditions seemed to deteriorate. When President Roh first raised the issue, the people were initially supportive

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<sup>418</sup> Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

of his values and the military was stimulated to reflect upon their performance. However, later on as the debate heated up and North Korea's provocation increased in frequency and intensity, the general public started to disapprove of the transfer. Although the leaders and people agree with the value and vision to have peace with North Korea, to have the wartime OPCON transferred in face of immediate security threats was a different story. President Roh's values were persuasive in the long run, but direct consequences and loss calculations became the priority criteria when the implementation had to happen.

As South Korea borders on a hostile neighbor, the civilian government tends to depend on the military. Even though we limited the power of the military, the influence of the military will naturally surge during wartime.<sup>419</sup> The necessity of military advice is evident from the following quote by Clausewitz: "If war is to be fully consonant with political objectives, and policy suited to the means available for war, then unless statesman and soldier are combined in one person, the only sound expedient is to make the Commander-in-Chief a member of the cabinet, so that the cabinet can share in the major aspects of his activities."<sup>420</sup> So if the military argues that they are

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<sup>419</sup> Young-gap Cho. *Civil-Military Relations and National Security* (Seoul: Book Korea, 2005), 101.

<sup>420</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 608.

not ready for the transfer and that the transfer does not seem to be strategic at the moment, it will be difficult for the President to take the risk unless he or she is radical.

As a result, the military gained a chance to relieve in some way and slack off, under the institutional umbrella under the U.S. The popular U.S. Republican Presidential candidate who is running at the first place in U.S. presidential election as of March 2016, argued that South Korea is having a defense support from the U.S. for nothing.<sup>421</sup> South Korea has paid enough of its share. Besides, in the past, there were some negative consequences of the strong U.S. power being wielded in Korea, even letting Korean politicians to exploit the anti-US sentiment. However, the Korean army should have been always prepared enough for the time to stand alone when needed or asked. If it had made the most of the institutional framework of CFC and the U.S. support earlier for military readiness regardless of the political decisions on transfer, the Koreans, and the Korean military would not have had to be mentioned as a sensitive topic, whether it is correct or not.

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<sup>421</sup> Trump, "How long will we go on defending South Korea from North Korea without payment? South Korea is a very very rich country. They're rich because of us. They sell us televisions, they sell us cars. They sell us everything. They are making a fortune. We have a huge deficit with South Korea. They're friends of mine. I do deals with them. I've been partners with them, no problem. But they think we're stupid. They can't believe it. We are defending them against North Korea, we're doing it for nothing. We're not in that position. When will they start to pay us for this defense? Isn't it really ridiculous when you think of it? They make a fortune on the United States and then they got some problems, and what happens? They call the United States to defend them and we get nothing?" April 11, 2013. (Check youtube.com on Trump on Korea)

While the divided situation living under security instability is something we cannot control, we could have managed our defense situation better with effective leaders. However, for example, President Chun Doo-hwan made the Korean army drop President Park Chung-hee's plan of independent defense system for his own benefit, and Chun's oppression on democracy and his corruption molded how people perceived the military as an establishment of those mostly from the *Yeongnam* area and who has money and power.<sup>422</sup>

### ***Summary***

In conclusion, the senior military elites' decision to go against the transfer is a 'security' issue and may be the best strategy for South Korea's defense as they argue. But this research has given a perspective that even the 'security' argument is part of the organizational feature of the military and because of the organizational resistance to change, the military concluded to go against the transfer. The senior military's opposition to the transfer is not being irrational as some others argue, but it was because in the senior military elites best choice from their organizational perspective, the military is against the transfer.

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<sup>422</sup> See the National Foreign Assessment Center's South Korea Nuclear Development and Strategic Decision making 1978/06/00 00265 (approved for release on Oct 2005).

## **(2) President's Decision on the Delay**

Why did the presidents not have the transfer done within their term? President Roh first raised the issue, which became a national debate that further expanded into an ideological and political one, exaggerating the expected consequences of the wartime OPCON transfer. The transfer period was eventually fixed to be in 2012, though the political strife surrounding the transfer raised much doubt on whether the plan will be properly executed on time. Throughout the research, the main agent who raised the transfer issue seemed to matter more than the issue itself to the conservative who opposes the transfer.

As for President Lee Myung-bak, his top priority was the economy, in which he was so eager to make a difference. He held steadfast to his belief that maintaining a close ROK-US relationship was a requisite to achieving his goal, and announced that delaying the wartime OPCON transfer was a conspicuous achievement. Such a measure mitigated the conservatives' concerns. The general public was supportive to President Lee's action as well.

The cautious President Park Geun-hye also made the conservatives content by making a choice that respected the military officials' opinions and prioritized a strong alliance with the U.S. to countervail the threats from North Korea's provocations, missile tests, and nuclear tests.

President Roh Moo-hyun was different from the other two Presidents in that he was a progressive political leader who had a priority agenda of ameliorating relations with North Korea. However, his peacemaking agenda was controversial due to his military building efforts' emphasis on self-reliance to achieve independence from the U.S. than on readiness to counterattack the volatile North Korea. Even though they also viewed the North as a brother nation and was open to providing humanitarian assistance to it, the conservative Presidents placed a higher value on the partnership with the U.S. and an accurate evaluation of the threat from North Korea. They argued that it is a prerequisite for North Korea to make a difference first if it wants help from South Korea. President Lee's tone of his *Vision 3000 of Denuclearization and Openness policy* reflects such an idea of no change no free food. The essence of President Park's *Korean Peninsula Trust Process* also lies in this kind of prerequisite. Ultimately, both President Lee and President Park was determined to maintain a strong stance towards North Korea if it showed no changes. Such an inclination of these two Presidents reveals a stark contrast with that of President Roh and President Kim Dae-jung, the past two progressive presidents who insisted on taking an open stance towards North Korea and establishing a peaceful relationship with it, even if that meant providing support with fewer conditions. Consequently, the conservative Presidents had a much better

chemistry with the military officers and generals when it came to the wartime transfer issue.

President Roh took a radical measure toward transferring the wartime OPCON, but was met with stiff opposition by the military. Applying the military change and organization theories from Allison and Posen to South Korea's situation, President Roh Moo-hyun, a civilian politician, first triggered the whole wartime OPCON transfer process, since the military will not initiate it. Despite noncooperation from the military elites, he somehow pushed on with his belief, making an agreement to have the transfer completed in 2012. During President Roh's term, there was a common saying that whoever ran for the next presidential election from the conservative party will win. That was the extent to which President Roh was facing unpopularity. Then was it not reasonable for him to execute the transfer within his term? He raised the issue, but left the administration before it was thoroughly resolved. According to the change theories of Rosen and Zisk, if the military does not support and make changes within, changes at a higher level cannot happen.<sup>423</sup> In this case, the preparation for the change was slow, possibly expecting the new administration to act differently. As Nielsen and others have noted, military changes cannot be

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<sup>423</sup> Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and Modern Military* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

consistent, because presidential terms are too short to carry out military changes that require a long-term plan. In fact, President Roh attempted in vain to override the systematic opposition from the senior military elites, which became stronger when the security conditions worsened through North Korean provocations in 2006.

Moving on to President Lee Myung-bak and President Park Geun-hye, these two accepted the military officials, conservative groups and diplomatic advisors' opinion. As Nielsen notes, presidents actually do not have enough incentives or knowledge to make a seminal military decision. Because the wartime OPCON transfer decision is not a decision that controls the fate of the country upon imminent crisis (e.g., the use of force), the president will usually follow the military leaders' advice in such similar matters, unless he or she has a strong conviction like President Roh. Accepting the military leaders' opinion implies that the president does not want to take a risk, because there are so many presidential decisions that anything of low priority will be pushed to the lower list of the agenda listing.

### ***Summary***

In conclusion, for the Presidents, transfer decision and its delaying decision was no simple matter either. The President as Commander-in-Chief, had to deal with the constant opposition from the military that is the main force to execute the transfer plan. Looking deeper into the tension with the military, the president also gets pressure to raise defense budget, which was the military's constant request, but budget matter is not an easy one. The presidents need to allocate the budget for other agendas for the administration. As Executive Head, the president deals with constant provocation from North Korea and such security circumstances go against providing secure environment for the people. As political leader, the presidents will pursue their visions, however, they will have to manage the general public's attitude. So far, the general public's attitude towards the transfer was not favorable to the transfer, which eventually lead to the delay decision.

## **2. Implication on Civil-Military Relations and Leadership**

This research examined the complexity of decision-making for the military and the president. Organizational and structural features affect the decision making of the military and that of the presidents. Also, the decision is

not absurd or irrational as some argue but was based on their decision calculation and were their optimal decisions.

The findings of this research give an implication to review the Korean civil-military relations, political leadership of the president, and recovery of military spirit. Another implication is that the wartime OPCON transfer debate was a military matter but also a political and social matter that revealed the embedded problems of the Korean society as a divided nation.

### **(1) Cooperation between the Military and the President**

South Korean Senior military elites group's opposition and the clash with the President's will is a not picture of cooperation. Through the research, I wondered if both have made efforts to cooperate or have ever thought about the relationship as a cooperative one.

As many civil-military relations studies and military change literatures explained, the direction seems to go one direction, either from the civilian leader or from the military leader, but to make a crucial military decision, cooperation is crucial. Cohen says that because the dialogues the senior political and military leaders have are 'unequal dialogues' because it is the

senior political leaders who have the final say and decision authority.<sup>424</sup> But he argues that ‘dialogues are functionally and morally equal.’ Functionally, both political and military perspectives are needed in assuring that the final decision that will be the best one that has successful outcomes, which reflects the aims, strategies, and policies of the decision. At the same time, both leaders have morally equal responsibility because their decisions are directly linked to the risk to lives that are used in the war execution decisions.<sup>425</sup> Without mutual respect, trust and understanding between the two, the probability of success will be reduced and the lives of soldiers and civilians are at stake, because decisions related to war are delicate matters that deal with uncertainties and ambiguities.<sup>426</sup> James Dubik’s cry out for a moral obligation for both the military and the civilian leadership in making decisions related to war indicates the need for such mutual cooperation.<sup>427</sup>

Since the President is the Commander-in-Chief, would not the military have to follow faithfully of its commander’s command? Because the president holds all appointing power, the generals will listen to the commander, but whether they do it proactively or slack off until the next president comes in is a

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<sup>424</sup>Eliot A. Cohen. "The Unequal Dialogue: The Theory and Reality of Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force." In *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* by Peter Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge : MIT Press, 2001), 429-458.

<sup>425</sup> Civilian and Military Both Morally Obligated to Make War Work - See more at: <http://www.armymagazine.org/2015/10/19/civilian-military-both-morally-obliged-to-make-war-work/#sthash.DWKRYdYe.dpuf>.(Accessed on May 2, 2015).

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

different matter. Or does it mean that the Korean society became so democratic that the military cannot even raise their voice? Did the military have enough respect towards the presidents in the first place? The Korean military once became an establishment party itself. And military officers have always seemed to have their expertise knowledge and strength due to North Korea and its threats. Without North Korea, the military will not be as powerful or needed like it is now, and would have been a volunteer system.

## **(2) Significance of Presidential Leadership and Military Morale**

As for the relationship between the Commander-in-Chief and the military, the military should follow the commander-in-chief by law, hierarchical order, and power. In fact, for successful promotion, the military officials will actually follow the commander-in-chief's idea and strategy, and cope with them. Criticisms on such an aspect was raised when those who are members of the actual working team of wartime OPCON transfer, changed their voice after the promotion to higher positions and adjusted to the conservative president's taste. What the retired senior military elite group is saying is that since those who are on duty cannot bravely raise their voice, they themselves are increasing their voice instead for those who cannot do so.

As theories from the past have discovered and this research has proven,

the military organization—especially that of South Korea’s as far as it is confronted by North Korea—will have a tendency of resistance to change, particularly those related to war.

The conflict caused during President Roh Moo-hyun administration gives a lesson. Whether it is during wartime or peacetime, a national defense policy should be proceeded with the government’s firm will and the citizens’ voluntary support by a united sense of national defense.

The importance of getting the people’s support cannot be emphasized enough. If citizens are generally against it, even the military people cannot stick to protecting their own group’s interests. When depolitization of the military was executed during President Kim Young-sam’s reign, many generals went against the forceful discharging from the military.<sup>428</sup> They even went forward to file a suit against the defense minister<sup>429</sup> and joining the opposing party as a gesture of their complaints, but the depolitization continued on in spite of such an organizational opposition of the military because of the sense of united support from the people to the non ex-military President.<sup>430</sup>

Also since the military reform changes every time the president changes, it is losing consistency and makes the tone of the previous military reform

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<sup>428</sup> *Monthly Chosun*, May 1995.

<sup>429</sup> *Shindonga*, July 1995.

<sup>430</sup> Deuk-pyo Hong, "Depolitization of the Korean Military," *Korea Political Science Journal* 29, no. 2 (1995), 270.

remembered as an unsuccessful one. Since the establishment of the Republic of Korea, most military reforms driven by the governments were not properly completed.<sup>431</sup>

Most military experts evaluate that the military reforms did not succeed due to the short term of the defense minister. The short term was not able to give consistency to the policies and form a social consensus. Moreover, the chance of successfully carrying out military reforms was slim due to a mixture of various other elements, such as, the leadership's lack of will to execute the reforms, conflict of interest among military branches and lack of institutional systems, limited budget, the North Korean threat, and the role of the U.S.<sup>432</sup>

Chang analyzes that the military reforms were not successful because of five reasons.<sup>433</sup> First is the political influence of the military reform. Even the defense areas get politically affected, since the political agenda and political leaders' attention and support are essential to the reform's success. But once the military reform focuses too much on the political agendas, only the issues that received political attention or ones that can be easily connected with the people are discussed. In the process, many issues regarding the fundamental war

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<sup>431</sup> Chul-ki Lee, *Defense Reform and its Relations to Inter-Korean Relations*. Korea International Political Science Association Security Conference (2006), 25.

<sup>432</sup> Yong-won Yu, *BEMIL Security Military Stories* (Seoul: Planet Media, 2009), 260-261.

<sup>433</sup> Sun-hwi Chang, *Transfer of Wartime Operational Control over ROK Armed Forces: Postponement and Re-postponement.* (PhD diss., Kyungnam University, 2015), 111

operation or other substantial defense areas are left out. Second is the military leadership's lack of will and driving force. Third is the lack of sense of consensus from the people. Fourth is the possibility that organizational integration and restructuring may not increase the fighting capability of the military, and fifth is the limited budget.

Experts and research results from this research indicate that political and military leadership and their will were also problems. The president has a limited term, and the bureaucracy will not speedily follow the president when he or she experiences lame duck period or end of the term. The military leadership also will not go for a radical change but rather prefer to just stay still without stirring up problems. Under these circumstances, a drive toward innovation will always be branded as reactionary.

The importance of will and morale of the military has been emphasized from a long time ago. And isn't it the will when it really matters beyond the systems and weapons. The danger of the terrorist groups is that they act like they have nothing to lose. They will invade into a nation and use a suicide bomb to kill the innocent. There will be nothing more tragic than to see the innocent be killed.

### ***Importance of Military Morale***

Emphasizing the military morale and its importance is in many ways a commonsense but institutions and weapons often dismiss it. Even the infamous Joseph Goebbels from Hitler's time emphasized morale. Clausewitz stressed how essentially important morale and will is for both the soldiers and the commander. A soldier requires first having moral and physical courage to survive in the war and making it his or her best to 'fight at the right place and the right time.'<sup>434</sup> Also for the commander to make the right judgment during the "psychological fog" of war, the commander needs an intuition "instinct, a sense of truth" stemming from experience and a sober calculation foreseeing the results.<sup>435</sup> Clausewitz a military genius would be "the inquiring rather than the creative mind, the comprehensive rather than the specialized approach, the calm rather than the excitable head to which in war we would choose to entrust the fate of our brothers and children, and the safety and honor of our country."<sup>436</sup>

Clausewitz stressed the how the moral forces are vital to war. He said "moral factors are the precious metal, the real weapon, the finely-honed

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<sup>434</sup> The end for which a soldier is recruited, clothed, armed and trained, the whole object of his sleeping, eating, drinking, and marching is simply that he should fight at the right place and the right time." – *Clausewitz* ; Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 95.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, p.108.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, p.112.

blade."<sup>437</sup> This links with "killing...the enemy's spirit [rather] than ...his men."<sup>438</sup> And again links with the political will of the civilian leaders, as "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish...the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."<sup>439</sup>

### ***Presidential Power to Persuade***

War is an extension of politics, but at the same time, a tool for it. Thus, the danger of war lies more on the political intention than the imbalance of military capability. This leads into how it is a matter of political will and leadership to actually transfer the wartime OPCON.

President Roh has raised the issue but was confronted with opposition from the military. This is where Richard Neustadt's five presidential power should be referred to: separated institutions sharing power, the power to persuade, bargaining according to the processes, power equals impact on outcome, and intra-national and international relations.<sup>440</sup> Among the five

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid., p.185.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., p.259.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., pp.88-89.

<sup>440</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, 3.

power, the power to persuade indicates how the president also needs the power to have the congress, department heads, and the people to get on his/her side to actually start the policy agenda that the president is aiming for.<sup>441</sup> Applying to the wartime OPCON transfer debate, President Roh Moo-hyun could have approached differently to the military despite his accumulated distrust over the military. Because the president is in status and in formal powers, the chief, the military will at least superficially listen to him, but how much they really materialize the will is a different issue.

President Roh failed to be persuasive with the military or senior military elites even though he raised the defense budget which the senior military elites have emphasized for so long. Even with the general public, the general public demonstrated a security fear over the wartime OPCON transfer. Why?

This can be also linked to the fifth power that Neustadt mentioned. The intra-national and international relations stresses how each government is involved in a complex setting of bargaining among the bureaucratic elements and highlights the importance of managing the relationships between the allies.

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Alliance with the U.S. is also a relationship. It's a diplomatic and military one. Many of whom were involved with the CFC and who have dealt

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<sup>441</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, "Whitehouse and Whitehall," 64.

<sup>442</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power*.

with the U.S. during President Roh's OPCON transfer debate period have detected signs of cracks in the ROK-US relations.<sup>443</sup> Making a bold new approach like the Roh government did to seek more autonomy from the US requires responsibility and creativity in thorough assessment of how to achieve the specific goal with limited resources. Autonomy may risk money and quality of defense.<sup>444</sup>

What's needed is 'high-class' or 'sophisticated' diplomacy that can effectively deal with this sensitive issue and channel out our opinions. Former Chairman of the National Assembly Defense Committee Yoo Jae-Gun thinks that such diplomacy was also needed in dealing with the OPCON transfer debate. Alliance with the U.S. is critical for Korea, but OPCON transfer does not mean abandonment of the alliance. Clear and well-done communication is needed to avoid misunderstandings. OPCON transfer should not project a distorted image of a crumbling alliance, and it actually is not. As an organization, the military would benefit by recruiting and building elites who are from outside the military that could enable a broader view. And these outside experts should gain respect from within the organization to raise their voice when needed. That is the art of management. The art of management will be essential for presidential success and power, because if the president can

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<sup>443</sup> Interview held on July 6, 2015.

<sup>444</sup> Interview held on July 28, 2015.

influence the congress, media, and public attention to the issue, the likelihood of the policy's success increases.<sup>445</sup>

Also, based on Clausewitz's advice for the politician to provide a clear aim, the commander-in-chief's focusing on 'self-reliance' and 'bringing peace with North Korea' did not provide a clear goal that could win over the military leadership.

One of the core members who worked on the transfer process—and also eventually revealed that he considers his position on delay the most proper decision—shared how he dealt with the transfer process. He acknowledged that the relationship between the President and the military leadership was not as smooth as before since President Roh raised issue of wartime OPCON transfer with connotations of anti U.S. sentiment and self-reliant defense. He said that his main role was to restore the broken ROK-US relations. He would say that the US-Korea proportion of 51% and 49% is changing to a 49% and 51% and it will work smoothly. He admitted that the military's role is to assist government officials to help the President manage a successful government. However, the President made an emotional issue out of the wartime OPCON debate, and the military could not put up with such a development. Had the President started opened up with professional and diplomatic comments, the military and the

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<sup>445</sup> Jeffrey S. Peake, "Presidential Agenda Setting in Foreign Policy," *Political Research Quarterly* 54, no.1 (2001).

people could have taken a different stance. The President could have clarified that he will assure the maintenance of the ROK-US alliance and that his peacemaking efforts with North Korea does not mean neglecting readiness to counterattack upon North Korean provocations.

On the other hand, President Lee and President Park were not determinate about the wartime OPCON transfer, so the political calculation and decision to push it forward to the next term was possible.

### ***Non-military Factors Review***

As noted, this study discovered how the non-military factors affected the wartime OPCON transfer debate which could be summarized as the baggage from the past leadership. Despite his long term authoritarian regime, President Park Chung-hee received the people's support when making the military coup and until this day is recognized for his achievement of South Korea's rapid economic development<sup>446</sup> Meanwhile, President Chun Doo-whan took the leadership position illegally without satisfying the people's desires or need. Rather he violently oppressed the people who struggled for a long-term democracy. This resulted in the *Gwangju democratic movement*. While

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<sup>446</sup> There are different evaluations on merits and demerits or developments or side-effects of rapid economic development, authoritarian military regime of President Park Chung-hee, however, most agree that the development President Park Chung-hee made was fundamentally needed and a successful case.

President Park Chung-hee had incidents of standing up to the U.S. for his country despite its weak status, President Chun was busy covering up his own weakness of illegal take over and illegitimacy.

Collected from the interviews and supported by literatures, media reports, and personal interviews, the Korean people's thoughts on President Chun formed a consensus that he illegally took the position of presidency, collected black money from corporations, ended up in jail as a former president for his corruptions and atrocities, and relegated the military to a disgraceful organization. While President Park Chung-hee strived to build Korea's own weapons system, President Chun was busy taking care of the domestic politics to be fully in control. Chun's rule made the military as a more privileged but corrupted group. The review of Chun administration is another huge topic of extensive research. Through those researches, this research found the legacy of Chun administration was one of the biggest causes for losing momentum in building Korea's own weapons system, making the military a privileged group, and creating distrust in the people. Indeed, President Roh Moo-hyun's reaction to the military and the U.S. action has its origin in how President Chun harmed the country in many ways. The established authority group built through the Chun administration and his connections may be the ruling people who proved the sad sayings in Korean that "all mighty is the dollar" or "one law for the rich

and another for the poor.”<sup>447</sup> Furthermore, the Korean people who grew up in the 1970s to 1980s heard that “you would have done better if you stayed quiet” or “don’t draw people attraction but stay quiet.” These were the advice from the elders who lived a life that if one’s action draws too much attention, then he or she may get attention from the government and be subjected to some investigation or accusation. In addition to this, Chun’s attempts to kill Kim Dae-jung and bias toward the *Jeolla* area—when it was him who pushed ahead with the killing and uprising—engendered a new regionalism in Korea. All these vicious cycles became sources of distrust toward the military and the U.S. involvement, and the ideological polarization, which burst out in the wake of the wartime OPCON, transfer debate. During President Roh Moo-hyun’s reign, the people could freely raise their voice and criticize the past corrupted governments whose leaders made the military dishonorable. Such a dishonorable vicious cycle persisted on with continuous corruptions of the military men.

Schein notes how an organization’s culture is affected by the beliefs, values, and assumptions of the organization’s founders and leaders. The founder will lay the foundation of the organization’s culture, as he or she shapes and forms the goal and purpose, and chooses the basic mission and the

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<sup>447</sup> *Yujeonmujoe Mujeonyujoe*

environmental context.<sup>448</sup> Thus, the organization and team under Chun will also share a spirit similar to that of Chun.

Having a disgraceful leader in the past left an onerous baggage for the military predecessors, the conservatives, and the establishment. While there were truly honorable people among them, the distrust and disrespect created under Chun were left as a baggage. As Cronin and Genovese said, a presidential leadership can characterize a nation in multiple ways: amazingly developed, devastated, respectful, or disrespectful.<sup>449</sup>

The content above builds up to the importance of leadership. Learning from President Roh's case, a president shall have the ability to freely exercise the art of management, juggling well the bureaucratic elements, the general public, the media, and the congress. Lessons from the military's organizational inertia, and previous authoritarian ruling and disrespectful leaders teach us that the leader's vision and integrity are very important.

### ***Recovery of Military Spirit***

Also for the Korean military to regain respect from the society to enhance its military capability, it should go back to the true mentality of being a

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<sup>448</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 211-212.

<sup>449</sup> Thomas E. Cronin, and Michael A. Genovese. *The paradoxes of the American presidency*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

group of national security professionals and soldiers. When asked for a desirable future direction, the interviewed generals suggested that restoring the military spirit is necessary.

In fact, in Lebow's study on the Peloponnesian War, he finds how the soldiers were judged by their bravery, courage, honor, and personal attributes, such as wisdom and self-control.<sup>450</sup> Lebow stresses how spirit is the fundamental drive for a human, though it is out of the philosophical and political lexicon due to its strong connection to self-esteem. Spirit also "makes us admire and emulate the skills, character and achievements of people considered praiseworthy by our society."<sup>451</sup> Also in the studies on World War I, he argued that military officers have put personal and national honor above material interests and survival<sup>452</sup>

What is needed at the moment for the military is to be totally equipped with the honor, wisdom, spirit, will, and fighting power to deal with any circumstances. Though the organizational inertia does exist, it is studied that once the military moves on and once there is a decision to use force, the

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<sup>450</sup> Richard N. Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>451</sup> Richard N. Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 15

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 417-418.

military is willing to move forward.<sup>453</sup> Through such means, the military will gain respect from the society, the government, and politicians, and thus will be able to have the morale to fight and prepare for ourselves.

### **3. Limitations and Future Studies**

This research contributes to the literatures of wartime OPCON transfer debate by providing a theoretical perspective to analyzing the issue. It also provides a comprehensive overview of the debate to reach out to the readers outside of Korea, and provides policy recommendations and implications for the political will and leadership. This research provides a foundation for further studies in for example, development in bureaucratic politics, military change, civil-military relations, and leadership studies.

However, though this study has conducted rigorous interviews and research to introduce a theoretical perspective in analyzing the wartime OPCON debate, it still has limitations. More interviews with policy advisors would have had strengthened the presidential decision-making section. However, it was difficult to interview a policy advisor of the current administration considering the sensitivity of the topic. Also, because of the nature of military defense, there was information that the researcher was not

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<sup>453</sup> Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers Statemen and Cold War Crises* 2nd Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

able to access to fully convey the detailed incidents and documents of the related matter. In addition to that, while the wartime OPCON reflected not only the military aspects of Korea, but it also mirrored the historical, social, and ideological split and other relevant issues. Nevertheless, this dissertation had to limit its scope to the military and politics, though it may not be the sole reason for such a debate.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This research analyzed the senior military elites' decision making and president's decision making for wartime OPCON transfer.

Senior military elites decision was examined by an organizational approach. From the organizational perspective, military is a large bureaucratic organization, which has a special mission to win in wars. As it is a large organization and has a goal to win in wars, the military decision makers will go through status quo bias, loss aversion, sunk cost effect, and regret aversion which cause the organization to resist change. As a bureaucratic organization, it will deal with organizational morale, budget concerns, and inter-service rivalries. These factors refrain the military to prefer change. The four factors found as reasons for the senior military elites opposition, NK Nuke, Concerns over ROK-US alliance, cost, and inter-service rivalries are factors driven by the

organizational features of the military. The military's decision making is done in a careful manner, since it deals with violence and possible casualties. Also the military leaders definitely reject doing what North Korea wants South Korea to do. The decision will be concentrated on the best way to win the war and secure the nation, and at this moment, continuing on with the current structure and reinforcing military capability until Korea is ready best fits such concerns.

The President's three roles as the Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and Political Leader, and the relevant factors based on each role affected the decision. For President Roh, the political factor heavily affected his decision on the transfer, but the security conditions caused by North Korean provocations and the military's strong opposition slowed down the execution of his plan. For President Lee and Park, their duty to provide security to the citizens as the executive head was prioritized, resulting in delays of the transfer. Factors such as limited budget for defense, North Korea's ongoing provocations, and the public polls on the wartime OPCON transfer topic worked altogether for the president to stay with the status quo of wartime OPCON. Eventually, even if the president argues that in principle the transfer should be done, he or she cannot override the military's opposition in the short term.

Such a phenomenon also supports the military change theory that the military professionals themselves should be the main experts who rigorously work for military changes. Otherwise, the reform efforts will be impeded. In a situation like that of Korea where existential threat exists, the voice of the senior military elites demonstrated that their standing as the national security experts was immensely influential to nation's security plans. President Roh had a plan to build peace with the North and viewed the North as a partner rather than an object, which needs change. However, Roh's plan was ultimately thwarted, since his ideas directly conflicted with that of the military, which considered the North an enemy to defeat. President Lee and President Park both maintained that the North should make the necessary changes first if it were to receive help from South Korea. Their firm stance against North Korea allowed the conservatives to cooperate more with the U.S. in terms of security to pressure North Korea to drop its nuclear weapons project. Priorities and goals of the government exert a strong influence on decision-making. So with such clear goals, the two presidents were sensitive to the situational dynamics and North Korea's moves, and found a rationale to delay the issue. For these two presidents, the wartime OPCON transfer was not a priority issue.

North Korea's abrupt actions of provocations cause the general public to agree with the transfer delay. Such situations reinforce the arguments of the military, and eventually help the military to stick with their status quo decision.

Lessons for the leadership of the president can be derived from the conflict between President Roh and the senior military elite group. President Roh could have exercised a 'power to persuade' toward the senior military elites, exercised the art of managing to assure the people that the alliance with the U.S. will be not be harmed, and pursued his goal of making Korea a self-reliant defense nation by having the wartime OPCON transferred.

Lessons for the senior military elites are that they are not free from what they have done under such an institutional system. The military should take the advice to be a strong military itself by having a strong fighting will and desperateness for preparation. The values, such as honor, courage, wisdom, and integrity, should represent the military and restore their respect from the society.

In conclusion, from an organizational perspective, the military decision makers will conclude not to transfer the wartime OPCON deal. The president, facing unbending opposition from the military, it will be difficult to override the military because of the factors that the president has to consider as Commander-in-Chief, Executive Head, and Political Leader. In addition to the findings of

the research, and lessons from the study, give implication to political leadership and military spirit.

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## ABSTRACT IN KOREAN

### 한국의 전시작전통제권 전환 논의: 조직적 관점에서 본 군과 대통령

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이 논문은 노무현대통령이 자주국방, 국가적자존심, 그리고 주권을 강조하면서 제기한 전시작전통제권(이후 전작권) 전환에 대한 논의에서 출발한다. 군 및 정치권에서 강한 반대가 있었지만, 노무현대통령은 전작권 환수를 추진했고, 2012년 4월 17일 기준으로 한국이 미국으로부터 전작권을 이양받기로 미국의 부시대통령과 합의하였다. 그러나 이후 이명박대통령과 박근혜대통령으로 정권이 이어지면서 전작권 전환 시기가 2차례나 연기되었다. 2010년 천안함피격사건과 연평도 포격사건 등 북한이 잇달아 도발하면서 전작권 전환 시기가 2015년 12월 1일로 1차례 연기되었다. 이후에도 북한이 3차 핵실험을 포함해 군사적 도발을 지속하면서 북한의 위협 수준이 높아졌고, 결국 한-미 정부는 2020년경 한국군이 미사일방어시스템과 킬체인 등 북한의 도발에 대응할 수 있는 자체적인 준비가 완료될 때 전작권을 이양받기로 재 합의했다.

본 논문은 이러한 상황적 변화속에서 군(軍)의 움직임과 대통령의 정책결정 과정에 주목하고 있다. 일반적으로 군은 명령에 따르는 집단이기 때문에 대통령의 정책을 적극적으로 수행할 것으로 예상할 수 있다. 그러나 군은 전작권 전환에 대해 매우 소극적인 입장을 유지했을 뿐 아니라 오히려 전작권 전환을 적극 반대하는 입장을 고수했다. 왜 군은 대통령의 전작권 전환 정책을 적극적으로 추진하지 않았던 것일까? 이러한 논의를 확대하면 노무현대통령이 그렇게 주도적으로 추진을 했지만 왜 임기내에 전작권 전환을 완료하지 못했는가? 이명박대통령과 박근혜대통령도 대통령 후보 시절에는 기존 일정대로 전환을

추진하겠다고 하며 국가 간 합의 준수를 강조했지만 각각 임기내에 전작권 전환을 완료하지 못했는가? 등에 대한 질문을 던진다.

본 논문은 본문에서 전작권 전환 논의에서 드러난 군조직의 반대, 그리고 대통령의 전작권 전환 불발 및 연기에 대한 답을 조직이론과 의사결정이론에 기초해서 정리했다. 여기에 더해 보수적이고 폐쇄적인 군조직에 대한 연구에 보다 실질적이고 생생한 조사를 위해 고위 군인사(군엘리트) 23 명과 군 전문가 및 정책조언자 10 명을 대상으로 설문조사 및 심층적인 인터뷰를 가졌다.

군 조직은 지나치게 방대하고, 관료제적이면서 전쟁에서 승리하기 위한 특별한 목표와 임무수행을 하는 독특한 조직이다. 이러한 특성때문에 군 조직은 보수적이고 내·외부의 변화에 민감하고 변화에 소극적일 수 밖에 없고 조직 리더들은 현상유지편향적이고 종종 위험기피 경향을 보이는 것으로 나타났다. 이러한 해석으로 보면 단기적으로 군 조직이 전작권 전환 반대의 입장을 나타내는 것은 조직의 특성상 내린 합리적인 결정으로 볼 수 있을 것이다. 한편 안보 문제에 관해서는 대통령 또한 단기적으로 급격한 변화를 주도하는 것이 쉽지 않다는 것을 확인할 수 있었다. 대통령의 역할을 국군통수권자, 행정부 수반, 정치지도자로 구분하고 주요 역할에 대한 분석을 통해 이를 밝혔다. 군의 반대가 지속되는 가운데 대통령은 국방비, 북한의 도발에 따른 안보 위협, 그리고 전작권 전환에 대한 여론 등 복합적인 상황판단을 해야하는 부담을 갖는다. 대통령은 전쟁 관련된 변화에 소극적으로 임하게 되고, 북한의 도발 등은 궁극적으로 군의 현상유지편향을 돕는 형국이 된다. 결론적으로 대한민국처럼 휴전이라는 전쟁 중인 상황에서는 군의 전문성이 존중되고 그의 결정에 의지하게 되는 형태를 보일 가능성이 높다는 것이 실증적으로 확인되었다. 또한 연구의 결과들은 한국의 민군관계와 대통령과 군의 리더십에 대해서도 필요한 함의를 찾을 수 있을 것이다.

주제어: 전시작전통제권(전작권), 군조직, 의사결정, 대통령, 민군관계, 리더십

