

Chun Doo-hwan Administration's Diplomacy towards Japan: The Origin of the Draft Proposal for the ROK-Japan Security-Economic Cooperation

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Abstract | This article seeks to illustrate South Korea's diplomatic strategy towards Japan, ROK-Japan relations, and the mutual perceptions South Korea and Japan had toward each other during the Fifth Republic (1981-88). Through process-tracing the case of the early drafting process of the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation (1981-83) proposal, implemented during the Chun Doo-hwan regime, this article argues that the idea of ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation originates from former Japanese prime minister Tanaka Kakuei by using accumulated primary materials and interviews with major individuals involved. As this article finds, Tanaka's remarks that Japan should contribute at least the "operating costs of stationing two military divisions" became the foundation for the South Korean government to draft a proposal requesting a Japanese contribution worth "ten billion US dollars" for ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation. Tanaka's proposal was unique in the sense that for the first time, Japan approached South Korean security issues through economic means. At the same time, Tanaka's idea indicates a continuity with the traditional perspective of Japanese conservatives, which emphasized that the security of the Korean Peninsula was closely interconnected to Japan's own defense. On the part of South Korea, their motivation stemmed from the new military government's drive to fix the deep-seated structural asymmetry between South Korea and Japan that persisted despite Korea-Japan normalization in 1965. Although South Korea's proposal for ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation clearly reflected the Chun administration's new strategic thinking and diplomatic approach to Japan, the collusive linkages that largely existed between South Korea's authoritarian and Japan's conservative leadership continued. In this context, the Fifth Republic's diplomacy towards Japan can be depicted as both continuity and change of the so-called "1965 system of Korea-Japan relations," which for the first time placed security and economic interests before the historical problems to break away from the political impasse in the bilateral relations between South Korea and Japan.

Keywords | ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation, Fifth Republic of Korea, diplomacy toward Japan, Tanaka Kakuei, Chun Doo-hwan, *Seikanron* (Debate to Invade Korea)

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Introduction

1. Research Questions

This article aims to explore South Korea's diplomatic strategy towards Japan, ROK-Japan relations, and the mutual perceptions South Korea and Japan had toward each other during the early Fifth Republic (1981-88) by focusing on the initial drafting process of the proposal for the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation (1981-83), implemented during the Chun Doo-hwan regime.

The essence of South Korea's diplomacy during the Cold War era lay in securing its survival and economic prosperity through close cooperation with the US and Japan. The ROK-Japan talks in the 1960s and the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation in the 1980s are thus typical cases in which South Korea pursued the strategic coalition of ROK-US-Japan relations as the major mechanism for its defense and economic growth. The top leaders, government ministries, politicians, and civilians of both South Korea and Japan were involved in the process, and the US administrations have provided close support for enhanced cooperation between South Korea and Japan. Indeed, these procedures and agreements have been pivotal in transforming the ROK-Japan relations from confrontation to cooperation, as well as in forging the anti-communist coalition among South Korea, US, and Japan.

Since the inauguration of the Fifth Republic, the major diplomatic task between South Korea and Japan had been the negotiations surrounding South Korea's request for ten billion US dollars of aid from Japan. In April 1981, the Chun Doo-hwan administration demanded this amount from Japan—six billion dollars in the form of Japan's Official Development Aid (ODAs), plus four billion dollars of private investments and loans—on the grounds that “the defense of the Korean Peninsula is of vital interest to the security of Japan, for which Japan should also bear some of the expense.” In face of such unprecedented, to Japan “preposterous,” demands from South Korea, the Japanese government remained largely bewildered by the proposal. Also, as the Suzuki Zenkō administration at the time maintained Japan's position that Japanese ODAs cannot be granted for any military-related purposes, as well as the view that South Korea's demands were way too excessive for Japan to accept, the negotiations between South Korea and Japan on security-economic cooperation could not but falter. The succeeding Nakasone Yasuhiro cabinet finally came to an agreement to provide an aid of four billion dollars for development and stabilization of South Korean economy during the Korea-Japan summit held in January 1983. The political deadlock between South Korea and Japan that had

set in since the assassination of Park Chung-hee on October 26, 1979 and the military coup d'état by Chun Doo-hwan on December 12, 1979 (hereafter December 12 coup), could finally be abated upon the agreement and lasted until the end of the Fifth Republic.¹ The two years of negotiations between South Korea and Japan, from the establishment of the Fifth Republic to the finalization of the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation, reflect the varying perceptions and interests held by South Korea, US, and Japan in the Cold War context. These cases can also serve as an empirical microcosm of South Korea's diplomacy towards Japan and overall ROK-Japan relations during the Fifth Republic.

Presumably, the stability in South Korea's diplomatic relations with the US and Japan were indispensable for the new military government to legitimize its rule as it came to power upon the controversial December 12 Coup and the Kwangju Uprising, a mass protest against military rule which took place in Kwangju, the provincial capital of South Chölla Province, between May 18 and 27, 1980, after the assassination of Park Chung-hee. Then why did the South Korean government turn to coercive demands for massive economic assistance from Japan at the start of the Fifth Republic? What or where is the origin of South Korea's "preposterous" rationale in demanding that Japan share the security burdens? On what grounds did the South Korea government initially come up with the sum of ten billion dollars? Why did the Japanese government, despite disagreement, continue to participate in negotiations with South Korea? If the US did, in fact, exert its own influence on the ROK-Japan agreement, what were the actual demands or rationale of the US? As elaborated, the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation remains largely under veil, in need of further clarification and analysis.

2. Literature Review

While both ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation and ROK-Japan talks are often studied to analyze South Korea's diplomacy towards Japan during the Cold War era, there is an intriguing dearth of literature that specifically focuses on the analysis of the negotiation process of the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation (Okonogi 2002; Yi Chöng-sik 1989; Son Kisup 2009; Komoda 2013; Ogura 2013).

Okonogi argues that the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation provided the momentum for strategic cooperation among South Korea, US, and Japan in

1. While it is a general consensus to depict the ROK-Japan relations as friendly and cooperative during the Fifth Republic, some scholars like Victor Cha (2000) have also interpreted the period as an era of "instability."

East Asia, during which the political leadership of Nakasone proved to be the determining factor behind the settlement of the deal. Yi Chŏng-sik elaborates on the perceptual gap that existed between South Korea and Japan in explaining the slow negotiation process during the Suzuki Cabinet. Son Kisup conducts a comparative analysis on the decision-making process of the Suzuki (bureaucratic decision-making model) and Nakasone (cabinet-led decision-making model) cabinets, and focuses on the role of “informal” diplomatic channels and leadership of Prime Minister Nakasone.

Recently, however, with the release of declassified 1980s diplomatic documents of South Korea, several studies have further analyzed the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation (Pak Chŏng-jin 2011; Chŏe Hŭi-sik 2014). Komoda’s (2013) research, for instance, criticizes the conventional view that US pressure for reconciliation played the determining role in the agreement. Instead, Komoda emphasized the leadership of the South Korean government and transformation of the perception South Korea and Japan had toward each other as the key factors to the settlement of the deal. Ogura Kazuo (2013), then director of Northeast Asia Division of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provides a vivid portrayal of how the security-economic cooperation’s budget size and context transformed throughout the negotiation process, referring to his analysis on the testimonies of Japanese officials and diplomatic documents. Also, a compilation of the negotiation process documented by one of the officials of the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also discovered, providing further insights into the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation (Kong Ro-myŏng and Im Sŏng-jun 1983). Therefore, an empirical analysis of the overall negotiation process has become quite feasible.

However, one of the main limitations of the existing literature is that the studies, without exceptions, have relied on the analysis of declassified diplomatic documents in interpreting the negotiation process. The previous studies therefore halt at exploring the overall process, without delving into the question of where the initial idea for the cooperation originated from in the first place. To rephrase, it remains especially unclear from whom and how the idea of security-economic cooperation between South Korea and Japan emerged and became established in South Korean government.

There are three existing explanations on the origin of the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation. First, by extension of the dominant perspectives in interpreting East Asia of the postwar era, a significant portion of the literature implies the possibility of US involvement in the negotiation process, wherein the new military government in South Korea adopted the US’ original “burden-sharing” rationale that demanded Japanese contributions to the

security of the Asia Pacific region. Focusing on how the Reagan administration pressured Japan to expand its role in regional security as part of the US' containment strategy towards the Soviet Union, these studies have interpreted the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation as part of the US' grand strategy in the Asia-Pacific region (Yi Chŏng-sik 1989). Nonetheless, halting at mere implications, these studies do not specifically mention or delve further into the role of the US, nor its involvement in the drafting and negotiation process of the deal.

The second major strand of existing literature has stressed the role of the South Korean government, claiming that the negotiation began upon the initiative and decision of President Chun Doo-hwan (Komoda 2013). According to these studies, the new South Korean government's rationale that Japan had been "free-riding" on defense in the region has been an endogenous outcome of the new military government's interpretation of the security imperatives of the time. This literature focuses on the leadership of South Korea, especially the key personnel of the new military government, which also came with new perceptions of Japan that varied from the old generations of politicians and bureaucrats who dominated the previous administration. These studies, however, do not explain from whom or where the idea of security-economic cooperation originated.

Lastly, several studies have contended that Japan was the origin of the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation. Cho Kap-che (1990) argues that Sejima Ryūzō, an influential postwar figure in Japanese political and economic circles, first proposed and led the ROK-Japan economic cooperation. In specific, Cho affirms that Sejima, in meeting with President Chun Doo-hwan in 1980, proposed the idea first, along with the discussion of hosting Olympic Games. And when Sejima later visited as special envoy of Prime Minister Nakasone, Cho argues that Sejima concluded the major framework of the deal in meeting with Kwon Ik-hyun, former secretary general of Democratic Republican Party and close aide of President Chun. Although Cho Kap-che's article is less of an academic study, the detailed portrayal of the people involved in the negotiation process necessitates further empirical scrutinization of the findings.

3. Main Implications

The most fundamental question in understanding the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation in the overall context of South Korean diplomacy towards Japan and ROK-Japan relations of the Fifth Republic is the following: Who, and with what purpose, proposed the ROK-Japan security-economic

cooperation? Depending on the agent(s) and the intentions of the proposal, the meaning and evaluation of the negotiations will vary significantly. Nonetheless, given the limitation of available resources for analysis, no previous studies have so far focused on the early drafting process of the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation.

As aforementioned, the existing studies, without concrete evidence, similarly assume that the cooperation was proposed by either the administration and/or leaders of South Korea, US, and/or Japan. While general consensus is established in viewing South Korea and/or the US as the originators of the idea, the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation should be newly evaluated if Japan (specifically Sejima) was the originator of the negotiation, as Cho Kap-che alleged. The question of why an influential figure of Japan would propose such idea to the new powers of South Korean regime must be addressed.

With this background, this article seeks establish how both South Korea and Japan played critical roles in the drafting of the initial proposal for the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation. With empirical elaboration into how the original idea of the negotiation traces back to former Japanese prime minister Tanaka Kakuei, and how South Korea's new military government adopted and developed the idea, this article aims to illustrate how South Korea came to propose the security-economic cooperation to Japan, which became the bedrock of South Korea's diplomacy towards Japan during the Fifth Republic. Also, while the existing literature assumes unilateral involvement of either South Korea, Japan, or the US in the making of the proposal for security-economic cooperation, this article aims to challenge such views by analyzing the varying perspectives and roles of the agents of the three countries. Overall, this is an empirical attempt to portray South Korea's Japanese diplomacy and ROK-Japan relations of the early Fifth Republic.

The Origin of South Korea's Proposal for the ROK-Japan Security-Economic Cooperation

1. South Korea's Diplomatic Relations in the Early Fifth Republic

The Fifth Republic emerged upon the new government's struggle for legitimacy, for which political and economic stability at home and international recognition proved indispensable (Kong Ro-myŏng and Im Sŏng-jun 1983, 4). Coming to power after the assassination of Park Chung-hee, followed by the controversial December 12 coup and Kwangju Uprising, the Chun Doo-hwan regime could

not but be highly receptive to the legitimacy question. Also, the new regime was confronted with dire economic conditions, plagued with high levels of unemployment and inflation, as well as low growth, as a result of the Second Oil Crisis.

The primary diplomatic task pursued by the Chun administration was the restoration of partnership with their traditional ally, the US, as well as Japan. ROK-US relations during the Park Chung-hee regime faltered throughout the 1970s as the international system became more multi-polar upon the US-China détente. As evident in Jimmy Carter's administration, ROK-US ties were embroiled in series of conflicts including the Park Tongsun incident (Koreagate Scandal), the emergence of South Korea's human rights violations, and the potential US troop withdrawal from South Korea. The Chun administration sentencing Kim Dae-jung to death after the assassination of Park further threatened ROK-US relations. The brittle relations South Korea had with its most important ally had profound adverse effects, directly and indirectly, on South Korea's security and international status. In this backdrop, General Chun Doo-hwan, elected as the eleventh president of South Korea on August 27, 1980, through the so-called "Chang C'hung Gymnasium election," pursued readjustment and improvement of ROK-US relations as soon as he came into office on September 1 (Kim Yŏng-sik 1994, 425-26).

The Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan, who criticized the Carter administration's human rights and troop withdrawal policies towards South Korea, was elected president in 1980. With access to Richard Allan, foreign affairs adviser of president-elect Reagan, the South Korean government proposed a US visit to South Korea, and negotiations between South Korea and the US continued from December 1980 to Reagan's inaugural ceremony on January 18, 1981. South Korea's consent to the US' strident request to commute Kim Dae-jung's death sentence led to rapid improvements in relations. President Chun was the first foreign guest to be invited to the US on the very next day following the inaugural ceremony, and the ROK-US summit was hosted in Washington on February 2. With the summit, bilateral relations were finally restored, resolving the overall tension that loomed since the Koreagate scandal (Oberdorfer and Carlin 2013, ch. 5; Gregg 2014, ch. 17; Lee 2006, 102-29).

Meanwhile, from the ROK-Japan normalization in 1965 to the 1980s, both countries had become the major centerpieces of the US hub-and-spokes system in East Asia, serving as the key allies in the US Cold War containment strategy. Yet, with the emergence of détente since the 1970s, the security ties between South Korea and Japan began to weaken considerably. The abduction of Kim Dae-jung under the *Yushin* regime in South Korea, as well as the Moon

Se-kwang incident, deteriorated ROK-Japan relations, leading to frequent anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea. Japan's North Korea policy was also seen as opportunistic from South Korea's perspective. While the 1975 communization of Indochina provided momentum for South Korea and Japan to reinforce the common bulwark against communism, ROK-Japan relations again began to waver since the outbreak of the assassination of Park Chung-hee.

Although the Chun administration sought to restore and elevate ROK-Japan relations to a "new level of ROK-Japan partnership," since the inauguration of the Fifth Republic, the restoration of relations took longer than ROK-US relations (Yi Chöng-sik 1989, ch. 5). The ROK-Japan ministerial meeting was suspended following the Chun administration's sentencing of Kim Dae-jung in September 1980.

In addition, ROK-Japan negotiations continued to falter as the Chun administration officially requested the Japanese government to participate in the security-economic cooperation in April 1981. Also, in the struggle to legitimize their rule, the new military regime under Chun Doo-hwan sought the political purge of the old collusive ties that had formed between the leadership of South Korea and Japan. This was the Chun administration's strategic departure from Park Chung-hee's approach to ROK-Japan relations. While the 1982 Japanese textbook controversy soon settled down, it provided the momentum for a nationalist transformation in South Korea's approach to Japan, translating into the Chun administration's emphasis on the education of history and construction of Independence Hall of Korea. The political and economic circles in Japan became deeply concerned with South Korea's growing anti-Japanese sentiments and domestic turmoil. The stabilization of ROK-Japan relations only came when South Korea and Japan arrived at the final agreement on the security-economic cooperation in January 1983.

2. The Origin of the ROK-Japan Security-Economic Cooperation: Chung Ho-yong-Tanaka Talks

President Chun, inaugurated in September 1980, dispatched military-led missions to major countries to secure international support for the new Korean government (author's interview with Kong Ro-myöng). The president's closest adviser, General Chung Ho-yong, was dispatched to the US. At the time, the US Pacific Command hosted annual meetings of special operations commanders from the Asia-Pacific region in Hawaii, to which the South Korean Ministry of Defense regularly dispatched its special operations commanders. As General Chung Ho-yong was expected to participate in the meeting scheduled in

December 1980, South Korea's new military regime sought to use the opportunity to get in close contact with the key personnel of the new Reagan administration.

In advance of Chung Ho-yong's dispatch to Hawaii, President Chun issued two major orders (author's interview with Chung Ho-yong). First was for Chung Ho-yong to confirm the specific dates for the ROK-US summit during his visit by meeting with the major personnel of Reagan's transition team. The Chun administration strived to launch the ROK-US summit at an early date. Given the strong opposition within the US against the sentencing of Kim Dae-jung to death, the ROK-US summit inevitably depended on the issue of revising the sentence. The US thereby requested the South Korean government to dispatch persons with full authority on the Kim Dae-jung issue, and President Chun responded by sending General Chung Ho-yong.²

The second task for General Chung was to meet with former Japanese prime minister Tanaka Kakuei to request Japan's cooperation on the problem of importing Japanese rice. With a bad year of harvest in 1980, South Korean government at the time expected to run short of a total of 1.78 million tons of rice in the next year ("81 oemi toip," 1980). The Chun regime, in addition to 0.7 million tons, sought to acquire an additional one million tons of rice from Japan ("Ilbon-mi toip," 1980). With the ROK-Japan negotiations already underway since December 1980, the Chun administration aimed to strike the deal, "*nemawashi*," by settling with the most influential political figure in Japan, former prime minister Tanaka.³

Following President Chun's directives, General Chung, upon his return from the US at the end of December, visited Tokyo to meet with Tanaka. During three hours of conversation at Tanaka's home, Tanaka spoke on various topics, including his own experiences in Korea during Japanese occupation, impressions on Korean politics and President Chun, as well as international affairs, including the ROK-Japan relations. As General Chung opened the issue of rice imports by requesting "two million tons" of rice from Japan, Tanaka eventually conceded "0.8 million

2. General Chung in pursuit of President Chun's orders met with the newly appointed security adviser Richard Allan and bargained for the dates and context of President Chun's visit to the US as well as the ROK-US summit, in exchange for reducing Kim Dae-jung's death sentence (Oberdorfer 2013, ch. 5).

3. Although Tanaka resigned at the end of 1974 due to the Lockheed Scandal, he served as the sixty-seventh to sixty-ninth prime minister of Japan beginning in 1972. While Tanaka remained convicted, he even managed to win the parallel Upper and Lower House elections in October 1980, placing over 230 of Tanaka's factional members in the diet. As the leader of the largest faction in the LDP, Tanaka was essentially the "King Maker" in Japanese politics, having promoted Ohira, Suzuki, Nakasone and other major Japanese cabinets. (Oshita 2016, chs. 11-13).

tons.”⁴ Tanaka expressed his sympathy for South Korea’s situation and conveyed Japan’s responsibility in assisting South Korea:

Tanaka told me that when he was serving as prime minister, he thought that the lives of the Korean people sacrificed during the Korean War and the millions of people who lost their homes and fled should be compensated. But he had to resign before having chance to implement this plan. ... Then he said the following, as I asked him “to what extent/amount did you think for the compensation?”... He said that Japan should pay “*at least the costs of stationing two military divisions in South Korea.*” During my briefing to President Chun, I underlined this part in the report, because it was important. I made a red underline of this. (Author’s interview with Chung Ho-yong, emphasis added)⁵

As stated, Tanaka, in his meeting with Chung Ho-yong, introduced the idea that Japan should contribute to South Korea’s defense by providing “at least the costs of stationing two military divisions in South Korea.” Considering that Japan during the colonial period stationed two military divisions, one in Seoul (Yongsan) and the other in North Hamgyŏng Province (Nanam), and the US also stationed two divisions in South Korea since 1950s, Tanaka’s rationale for the contribution lay in this context. General Chung paid attention to this particular remark and emphasized the point during his report to President Chun.⁶

Hearing General Chung’s briefing, President Chun decided on the spot “to make use of the statement” and began calculation for the sum of reparations. While Tanaka’s statement did not specify the size of the budget, President Chun himself set the operation cost of one military division at one billion, and calculated a total of ten billion dollars for “operating expenses of two military divisions for five years” (Author’s interview with Chung Ho-yong).

As will be elaborated shortly, the economic imperatives of the early Chun regime stemmed from dire conditions. Also, as the Chun administration faced the pressure of having been inaugurated through non-democratic procedures, President Chun found the resolution of economic problems as the regime’s

4. Although the South Korean government requested a total of “one million tons” of rice during the ROK-Japan negotiation held during December 1981, the deal was finalized to a total of “0.7 million tons.” While the South Korean government had to meet the provisions of the US-Japan agriculture treaty to import rice from Japan, the bilateral negotiations between South Korea-US and US-Japan resolved the issue.

5. The quoted statements are direct dictation of the interviewee’s comments by the author.

6. While the submitted report by General Chung Ho-yong remains classified, the existence of the report has been confirmed by Kong Ro-myŏng (foreign vice minister at the time) who read the document.

primary task for securing legitimacy. The Chun administration strived for effective measures to secure sizable funds from abroad, which seemed indispensable to reinvigorate South Korea's lagging economy. As President Chun received Chung Ho-yong's report in this context and founded the rationale of Japan's defense "free-riding" from Tanaka's statements, it seems highly probable that President Chun came to draft the government's new plan to request a sum of ten billion dollars from Japan for security in the region.

The sum of ten billion dollars was a target figure President Chun set himself. Questions like "the exact operating costs of one military division" and "why the duration is set for five years" were of little significance. The important finding here is that President Chun perceived Japan to be "free-riding" on South Korea's defense, for which he requested the money for compensation. In the mind of President Chun, ten billion was the amount he could demand from Japan, and detailed calculations were of lesser concern to him.

3. Discussion on the ROK-Japan Security-Economic Cooperation during the ROK-US Summit

As aforementioned, President Chun visited the US at the end of January 1981 and met with President Reagan at the White House for the ROK-US summit held on February 2. During the summit, the US confirmed that there would be no force withdrawal from South Korea and approved the sale of F-14s to fulfill the US' defense commitments. They also pledged to resume their bilateral dialogues. The US expressed their support for South Korea's North Korea policy, and agreed to oppose any DPRK-US negotiations that excluded South Korea. Furthermore, the US conveyed their satisfaction for the resolution of Kim Dae-jung's sentencing and declared, although informally, that the US will no longer exert any influence on the internal problems of South Korea ("Han-Mi Tandok," 1981).

The greatest achievement of President Chun's visit to the US was the all-out restoration of ROK-US relations (Oemubu 1990, 139). The twelve-year absence of presidential visits to the US since President Park Chung-hee's visit in 1969, clearly illustrates the troubled ROK-US relations in the 1970s. With the ROK-US summit in 1981, both governments agreed to restore their alliances. From the perspective of the South Korean government, President Chun's visit to the US and the ROK-US summit proved significant in overcoming the Fifth Republic's shortcomings in security and legitimacy issues.

In relation to ROK-Japan economic cooperation, the following was discussed during the ROK-US summit:

President Chun said that he is grateful for the US' substantial contribution and support for South Korea's economic development and that he hopes for Japan to play more significant role in the security of Northeast Asia, which will be indispensable for continuous development in the region. As Japanese prosperity was premised on South Korea and the US serving as the buffer zone against the Communist bloc, President Chun found that *Japan is obliged to provide South Korea the budget amount required for stationing two US military divisions in South Korea*, and that he hoped for the US to persuade Japan on this point. Also, *while President Chun did not mention specific names, he said that there are a few Japanese leaders already aware of the idea*. President Chun further pointed out that while South Korea spends six percent of GNP, about sixty billion dollars, for defense, Japan only spends 0.6 percent [as written on the original document],⁷ of its GNP of 1.16 trillion dollars ... President Reagan showed no disagreement with the view. ("Han-Mi Chöngsang," 1981, emphasis added)

Stressing how South Korea and US provision of security in the region were indispensable to Japan's economic growth, President Chun called for US assistance in persuading Japan to provide economic assistance equal to operating "two military divisions" in South Korea.⁸ As for the response from the US, President Chun was able to draw "no disagreement" from President Reagan. President Chun's remark that "a few Japanese leaders" were aware of such an argument can be interpreted as his efforts to convince the US that such allegations were not merely unilateral arguments of the South Korean government, but rational and sympathetic to the Japanese leadership as well. In this respect, it is easy to understand why President Chun did not specify the name of former Prime Minister Tanaka.

President Chun repeated his remarks during the meeting at the State Department held in the afternoon. Secretary of State Alexander Haig replied as follows⁹:

The US is willing to negotiate with Japan on President Chun's remarks that Japan

7. The "0.6 percent" seems to be misprint of 0.9 percent. Relevant South Korean and US documents use "0.9 percent" (Memorandum of Conversation 1981).

8. According to US documents, it is written as "President Chun suggested that the Japanese be encouraged to extend economic support to the ROK in an amount equivalent to the costs of two military divisions. ... President Chun urged that the US and ROK work together to get the Japanese to do more in terms of spending for defense and to realize that US and ROK forces are also protecting Japan."

9. President Chun and Minister Haig were the representatives of the meeting ("Myöndam yorok," 1981). Meanwhile, then-foreign minister Lho Shin-yong, in a meeting with John Holdridge on February 3, agreed to the request for economic cooperation from Japan (Kong Ro-myöng and Im Söng-jun 1983, 6).

should provide the operating expenses of stationing two military divisions in South Korea, and thereby bring not only the US but also Japan to contribute in the security of the Korean Peninsula ...

As illustrated, President Chun formally proposed his initiative for ROK-Japan economic cooperation during his first summit meeting with President Reagan. Not only did the US agree that Japan should duly contribute as a member of the Western bloc and second largest economic power in the liberal world order, the US government also promised to further support the initiative.

President Chun did not discuss the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation with other government officials before the ROK-US summit. It seems that President Chun himself was not sure about the feasibility of the deal, and thereby first tried to observe and inquire into US opinions at the summit. Therefore, US support for the initiative, as stated above, provided tremendous assurance and confidence to the Chun administration. There was hope that the government's new rationale for ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation could also work on the Japanese side as well.

4. The Drafting of the Initial Proposal for Security-Economic Cooperation

The planning process for the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation is especially notable for the vast perceptual gap that existed among the economic bureaucrats, diplomats, and President Chun.¹⁰ As mentioned above, President Chun first invented the logic of security-economic cooperation upon Chung Ho-yong's report on Tanaka's statements. He then allegedly ordered his aides and staff to draft a specific plan for economic assistance worth twenty billion dollars (author's interview with Kong Ro-myŏng). The main rationale here was that South Korea would need to call for twenty billion first, in order to bargain for the target sum of ten billion dollars from Japan.¹¹

February 7, 1981 was the first date on which President Chun ordered the

10. According to Chung Ho-yong, President Chun expressed his concerns that the bureaucrats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant ministries would not respond positively to the idea generated by the president himself. Therefore, President Chun ordered the Ministry of Defense to draft a proposal via General Chung Ho-yong, leading to a proposal for six billion US dollars, drafted under the leadership of General Choi Youn-sik of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The draft was later circulated among the Economic Planning Board and other relevant ministries for reference.

11. According to author's interview with General Chung Ho-yong, President Chun personally coached General Chung to request two million tons of rice—twice the amount of the target sum of one million tons—during his meeting with former prime minister Tanaka.

relevant ministries to draft the proposal for ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation. In his return flight from the ROK-US summit, President Chun directed Deputy Prime Minister Shin Byung-hyun and Foreign Minister Lho Shin-yong to embark on the negotiation process with Japan (Kong Ro-myŏng and Im Sŏng-jun 1983, 6-7). Accordingly, the task force of the Economic Planning Board, led by Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs Choi Chang Rak, drafted a proposal for the following three weeks detailing the size and contents of the ROK-Japan economic cooperation (Lho Shin-yong 2000, 279-81). The proposal included receiving four billion dollars from Japan's ODA program, plus one billion dollars in the form of loans from Japanese financial institutions over the next five years. Assuming Japan's ODA would double to 21.4 billion dollars during the same timeframe, the idea was to receive about twenty percent of the increase, or 800 million dollars per year.¹²

The proposal drafted by the Economic Planning Board was briefed to President Chun at the end of February. Deputy Prime Minister Shin Byung-hyun, Foreign Minister Lho Shin-yong, and chief economic advisor Kim Jae-ik were also present at the briefing. President Chun rejected the draft on the spot on the grounds that the five billion dollars proposed was too small, and ordered them to redraft the proposal for ten billion dollars (Lho Shin-yong 2000, 280). Ten billion was not an easy number for President Chun to forego at the time. As result, in collaboration with Foreign Ministry, a new proposal was drafted, comprised of receiving six billion dollars—about thirty percent of Japan's total ODA of 21.4 billion dollars—plus four billion in loans from Japan's Export-Import Bank. The drafted proposal was adopted by the government on April 17.

As illustrated, the final proposal was an outcome of the “ideal” draft of twenty billion dollars (presidential draft) and the more “realistic” total of five billion dollars (Economic Planning Board). The seventy days of planning, in essence, focused on a realistic materialization of the president-ordered sum of ten billion dollars into specific plans for financing and usage. It was especially challenging to find ways to secure the amount of funds within the given budget constraints of the Japanese government. Also, it was difficult to come up with

12. The proposal drafted by the Economic Planning Board assumed a prospective rise in Japan's ODA on the grounds that the Japanese government declared its plan to expand foreign aid. Although Japan's ODA began to lag in the mid-1970s due to the oil crisis at the time, the international expectations of Japan's ODA continued to grow as Japanese economic power and current balance projected continuous improvements. Also, while there were growing concerns on the prospective values and profitability of the ODA, as Japan's reparations for the war came to a close, the Fukuda cabinet in 1977 announced the plan to double the ODA in five years. http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hakusyoo/04_hakusho/ODA2004/html/honpen/hp102020000.htm (Accessed February 8, 2017). Inada (1985, 300-302).

ways to spend the amount on social overhead purposes only, without planning to spend on arms purchases or other military supplies. Other than the drafting process, the negotiation with Japan was also plagued with problems and conflicts. On the basis of the ten billion dollar draft proposal, Foreign Minister Lho Shin-yong formally requested Japan's economic cooperation in his meeting with Japanese Ambassador to South Korea Sunobe Ryōzō on April 22, marking the beginning of the ROK-Japan negotiations that lasted for the next twenty months.¹³ In other words, the entire ROK-Japan negotiation process remained under the direct leadership of President Chun, which many bureaucrats at the time found difficult to accept and implement.

The bureaucrats doubted the feasibility of negotiation itself. Although they understood the notion of Japan's "free-riding" in defense, they found it highly improbable for Japan to agree to the proposal and commit the huge sum to compensate the South Korean government (Yi Chae-ch'un 2011, 148-49). To the Japanese, South Korea's demand seemed largely unfounded in terms of both international norms and law. Also, as large-scale assistance from Japan was already concluded during the ROK-Japan talks and settlement agreement in the 1960s, many of the bureaucrats and officials in South Korean ministries thought it would be mandatory to abide by Japan's ODA system, should South Korea ask for additional assistance.

In terms of the proposed size of the budget, ten billion dollars seemed highly unrealistic to them as well (Yi Chae-ch'un 2011, 146-47). Considering the fact the total sum of Japan's grants and loans to South Korea over the previous sixteen years since ROK-Japan normalization totaled only 1.3 billion dollars, the very idea of receiving ten billion over the next five years could not but be seen as a delusive goal of the government. Although the bureaucrats did not express

13. Although the discussions on the overall negotiation process go beyond the scope of this article, the main contentions and unfolding of the debates can be surmised as the following: At the outset of the negotiation, the Japanese government initially found South Korea's rationale and size of the budget utterly "preposterous" and "astronomical." Yet, the Reagan administration's active and strategic evaluation of the proposal in the changing Cold War context gradually convinced the Japanese government to consider the proposal. Since then, South Korea and Japan contested over varying conceptualizations of aid, methods, and size of the budget. For South Korea, the aid was justifiable for security grounds, while the Japanese government refused to accept deals that associated economic cooperation with security issues. South Korea and Japan also diverged on how to deliver the aid. South Korea argued for a lump-sum approach whereby the two countries first agree on the total sum of the aid and specify the details of the programs afterwards. Japan, however, sought to use their existing approach, which accumulated the sum of expenses annually on a project basis. Japan found the ten billion dollars excessive to accept. Through twenty months of negotiations, South Korea and Japan finally agreed on a lump sum-based economic cooperation of four billion dollars.

their opinions aloud, they nonetheless remained highly dubious of the directives of the military government to draft a proposal for such an astronomical sum.

As shown, the ROK-Japan negotiation process emerged upon the internal divisions among ministries within South Korea. President Chun set the target figure, which conflicted with the economic bureaucrats who tried to draft a more realistic budget, while the diplomats who tried to adjust the gaps also approached the deal with their own conceptions. With the leadership becoming the determining factor in the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation, the findings above also confirm the existing studies that placed emphasis on the role of informal channels of communications—special envoys—in striking the final budget for the agreement (Son Kisup 2009).

Critical Review of Counter-arguments /Debatable Issues

1. Tanaka's Proposal and Japanese Conservatives' Perception of the Korean Peninsula

As stated above, this article confirms that the “originator” of the security-economic cooperation was Prime Minister Tanaka. It would be an exaggeration to argue that the idea originated from Sejima, as according to his memoirs, Sejima's role in the negotiation process remained restricted to his involvement as a “special envoy,” without elaborating on his role in the initial drafting process of the proposal.¹⁴

Then why, and on what grounds, did Prime Minister Tanaka provide the rationale for security-economic cooperation to South Korea? The answer, as this article finds, seems to lie in Tanaka's Cold War framework of logic. Tanaka's remarks as delivered by General Chung Ho-yong are the following:

We remain under the continuing threat of communism. ... The communists' plans to invade South Korea and the Korean War of June 25, 1950 are the outright examples. ... The division of Korean Peninsula at the end of the Second World War was, in essence, communist tactics to spread communism to the South, as China also fell to communism. If it was not for South Korea, Japan would have

14. Although Sejima met with General Chun Doo-hwan twice in 1980 (June and August), there were no discussions on the security-economic cooperation between South Korea and Japan. Also, President Chun's own statement during his meeting with Sejima in January 1982, that the idea of ROK-Japan economic cooperation was proposed by himself and that he later directed the foreign minister to work on the proposal, disproves the previous studies that argued Sejima as the originator of the idea (Sejima 1995).

also become communist. (Author's interview with Chung Ho-yong)

In other words, Tanaka found that Japan should support South Korea in order to prevent communization of the Korean Peninsula. The logic was grounded on the communist threat, wherein the stability of South Korea was closely linked and indispensable to the security of Japan.

The originality of Tanaka's idea can be found in his economic approach to South Korea's security problems. For Tanaka, renowned for his pragmatism, it was quite apparent and typical for him to re-envision Japan's economic assistance as the means for Japan's contribution to South Korean security. Japan should assist South Korea's economic development in order for them to become self-reliant and competitive against the communist forces. Also, in extension of Tanaka's liberalist conceptualization of Japan as a large production base, Tanaka is most likely to have assumed that the economic development of South Korea would also benefit the national interests of Japan.

Yet, this article's tracing of the original idea for ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation to Tanaka may be challenged, especially when we take into account his overall ideological inclinations and experiences. Above all, he was very active in improving Japan's relations with China and first implemented the 1972 Sino-Japanese normalization when he came into office (Mikuriya 2001). It may therefore seem questionable to assume that Tanaka would espouse primarily anti-communist rhetoric. Yet, as this article finds, it is important to note that Tanaka construed Chinese communism as distinctive from the Marxist-laden ideologies of Soviet communism. Put differently, Tanaka's Sino-Japanese normalization was not an indication of Tanaka's pro-communist inclinations per se, but his pragmatic approach to securing new markets in China that were becoming increasingly accessible due to the US-China détente. Also, it is important to note that many conservative politicians of the LDP, including Nakasone Yasuhiro, became increasingly aware of the communist threat after the fall of Saigon and communization of Indochina in 1975, regardless of their earlier agreement for Sino-Japanese normalization in the early 1970s. While there may have been subtle differences, the majority of LDP politicians shared the anti-communist stance and found South Korean security of a vital interest to Japan.

Another point for contention may be that the Tanaka faction within the LDP has been traditionally active in matters involving Sino-Japanese relations, but relatively passive on the Korea problem. In this light, it appears aberrant to argue that Tanaka initiated the idea of security-economic cooperation first. The Kishi/Fukuda factions of the LDP, known for their pro-Korean stance, were

most enthusiastic on the issues regarding South Korea, while the Yoshida/Ikeda/Ōhira factions remained least active. Relatively speaking, the Tanaka faction assumed a neutral stance on Korea. Nonetheless, Tanaka's longtime personal experiences in Korea are noteworthy. He ran his own businesses in Taejŏn during the colonial period. Also, following the Kim Dae-jung and Moon Se-kwang incidents, ROK-Japan relations significantly deteriorated to the extent of severing diplomatic ties during his tenure as prime minister. Yet it was Tanaka himself who, against strong opposition within Japan, made the political decision to amend relations. Given the increasing domestic turmoil in South Korea after the assassination of Park Chung-hee, it is rather natural that Tanaka was concerned about the situation in South Korea and considered Japanese support important in ameliorating the situation.¹⁵

Indeed, Tanaka's political interests embedded in the ROK-Japan initiative should also be taken into account, as he hoped to use it as a means to build strategic ties with South Korea's new military government (Ogura 2013, 105). One of the main concerns within the Japanese political and economic circles at the time was that South Korea's new military government had anti-Japanese and reformist views and would sever the old personnel networks that had accumulated between the two countries (Yi Chŏng-sik 1989, ch. 5). As Kishi Nobusuke was able to secure various benefits by establishing cooperative relations during the Park Chung-hee administration, it is highly probable that Tanaka, on similar grounds, also sought to forge close ties with the new military government in South Korea via the proposal for economic assistance.

The last conceivable point for debate revolves around the question of whether former prime minister Tanaka could have possibly devised such a proposal that would place significant strains on the Japanese government. Bounded within the parameters of Japan's "Peace Constitution," ODA policy, and other institutional constraints, military assistance and lump-sum approaches were, in principle, impossible. Tanaka, of course, would have been well aware of these circumstances. Nevertheless, the answer to the question may be found in the varying rationality of bureaucrats and politicians. To elaborate, the bureaucrats are responsible for implementing the tasks determined by the politicians under given principles. The politicians, by contrast, as elected representatives of the people, shape and determine the larger framework of the state, i.e. national strategy (author's interview with Kong Ro-myŏng). In this sense, Japanese government officials insisted on project-based assistance to

15. Former prime minister Tanaka in his talks with General Chung Ho-yong expressed his admiration and sympathy for President Chun, who despite limited education, succeeded to assume the leadership of South Korea.

South Korea and opposed any security-economic cooperation of a military nature or offering special treatment to South Korea. Yet, the rationale behind Prime Minister Nakasone's decision to provide security-economic cooperation to South Korea stemmed from his mid- to long-term projection of Japan's national interests as a politician and chief executive of the state (Nakasone 2012, ch. 13).

Tanaka's geopolitical consideration of the Korean Peninsula, embedded in his political outlook, can be commonly found in the traditional conceptualization of the region by other Japanese conservatives. Indeed, Japan's strategic interests and pursuit of expanded influence in the Korean Peninsula have been a historical phenomenon. Japan's early debate over conquering Korea, known as *Seikanron* (Debate to Invade Korea), exemplifies this strategy by characterizing the "Korean Peninsula as a dagger into the heartland of Japan." It argued that Japan should either place the Korean Peninsula under Japanese influence or prevent the region from falling into the hands of any other third country. Yamagata Aritomo of the Meiji period considered the security of the Korean Peninsula as vital for the defense of the so-called "sovereignty line" (*shukensen*) or "interest line" (*riekisen*) of Japan (Han Sang-il 2000, 65; 2015, chs. 4 and 9). On the basis of the *Seikanron*, Yamagata argued that the Korean Peninsula under the influence of another power would be like a "dagger pointed at [Japan's] head." This provided the rationale for Japan's aggression against the Korean Peninsula and march into the Chinese mainland at the time. To this date, the ROK-Japan and DPRK-Japan relations continue to be at the forefront of Japanese diplomacy and often become contentious points for debate in Japanese politics (Green 2008, 178-80).

To rephrase, the defense policy of postwar Japan has consistently pursued a strategic balance in Northeast Asia in order to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula for the security of Japan (Sakata 2013). Tanaka's proposal for the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation was, in this regard, a reflection of the fear of communism and a belief in the domino theory, which was pervasive in Japanese society at the time. Indochina's fall to communism in the spring of 1975, a year after Tanaka's resignation, stimulated a paradigm shift in Japan's Korea policy (Yi Chŏng-sik 1989, ch. 4). The US and Japan were concerned about another outbreak of the Korean War in the region, and Japan thereby perceived the possibility of South Korea's communization as a significant threat to Japan's economy and security. A communized Korean Peninsula would heighten political and ideological bifurcations in Japan, wherein the political instability would result in significant economic turmoil and losses at home and abroad.

2. The New Military Government's Perception of Japan

In the early Fifth Republic, the Chun Doo-hwan administration prioritized economic assistance over amending and stabilizing ROK-Japan relations. As elaborated above, the new military government of Chun found security assurance and economic stability as essential for consolidating their power. Yet South Korea at the time faced a dire economic situation. The high growth rate of over ten percent that developed the South Korean economy in the 1960s could no longer be maintained, and a negative real growth rate of five percent was recorded by the year 1980. Other than low growth, high levels of inflation, unemployment, and a current account deficit placed the South Korean economy in turmoil, reinforced by the prospective shortage of grain from a poor harvest year (Komoda 2013, 49-56). During the presidential address to the National Assembly in January 1981, President Chun pledged the government's "utmost efforts for economic recovery and price stabilization." This was followed by his inaugural speech in March, announcing another pledge to free South Korea from war, poverty, and political oppression and abuse of power by the government.

When the new military government came to power in 1980, the South Korean economy was in a downswing, and the people's concern was narrowed down to the structural problems arising from the asymmetric economic relations between South Korea and Japan. The South Korean middle class—mostly in their forties—were largely skeptical of any accomplishments from the past fifteen years of ROK-Japan relations since normalization in 1965. This post-colonial generation, students at the time of the normalization, were also major opponents against the ROK-Japan talks at the time. South Korea's dependence on the Japanese economy was aggravated, and trade imbalance expanded annually. Loud complaints emerged, especially over the point that Japan's economic assistance had only amounted to 1.3 billion dollars, while the trade imbalance between South Korea and Japan had reached 20.5 billion dollars (accounting for seventy-one percent of South Korea's foreign deficit) over the fifteen years since normalization. The new military government shared this sense of economic crisis and the negative perception of Japan that pervaded South Korean society.

The aforementioned report by Chung Ho-yong was delivered to President Chun amid these controversies. At the time, South Korea spent approximately six percent of its GNP on defense (thirty-five percent of the national budget), which was comparable to its spending on national welfare. Likewise, President Chun considered Japan as obliged to make contributions that duly corresponded

to its national power, equaling the “operating expenses of two military divisions” at least. His rationale was laid out to Japan when the South Korean government formally requested ten billion dollars for economic assistance. Minister Lho Shin-yong, in a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Korea Sunobe in April 1981, conveyed the rationale of the economic cooperation as follows:

South Korea is experiencing a great deal of difficulty in its heavy spending for defense. The stability of the Korean Peninsula is maintained by such burdensome defense spending of the South Korean government, which in turn is also contributing to the security of Japan. Also, the trade imbalance has increased annually since ROK-Japan normalization, reaching an approximate total of 9.5 billion dollars in the past three years alone. In light of these points, Japan, as a major power, is requested to provide a different level of expanded economic cooperation to South Korea. (Kong Ro-myöng and Im Söng-jun 1983, 9-10)

Although the Chun administration increasingly pressured Japan for security-economic cooperation since its inauguration, the significance of ROK-Japan relations resided in the diplomatic agenda of the regime. Contrary to expectations, the Chun administration set “revitalization of friendly ROK-Japan relations and construction of reciprocal partnership” as the new diplomatic goal of the government, based on the assumption that Japan would positively respond to South Korea’s request for assistance (“Tae-Il chöngchäek panghyang,” 1981). Distancing itself from the Park Chung-hee administration, the new military government aspired for new levels of cooperation in ROK-Japan relations and establishing a “new partnership upon mutual trust and cooperation.” The Chun administration saw Japan as a traditional ally of Korea for cooperation rather than for confrontation. South Korea’s diplomatic pressure on Japan at the incipient phase of the Chun administration was therefore a strategic tactic of the government rather than a reflection of President Chun’s lack of emphasis on the significance of the ROK-Japan relations (*Kyöngnyang sinmun*, August 3, 1981).¹⁶

The Fifth Republic largely maintained the general policy stance of the previous Park Chung-hee administration, claiming that the historical problems in ROK-Japan relations should be duly managed for economic and security cooperation. The 1982 Japanese textbook controversy was thereby shortly

16. President Chun’s interview with *Jiji tsūshin* (*Jiji News*) on May 15, 1981, defined Korea and Japan as sharing “common fate,” and expressed his hope that Japan would also come to an appropriate recognition of the strategic value of the Korean Peninsula. In a press conference held on August 2, President Chun further pointed out that “as Korea and Japan are the closest neighbors, ROK-Japan relations are one of the most important diplomatic agendas of the government.” He also stated that he is “satisfied with the fact that Japan is recently converging to South Korea’s conception of the security of Korean Peninsula.”

settled by adding the “Neighboring Countries Clause” (*Kinrin shokoku jōkō*) (Yi Chōng-sik 1989, 204). Although the Emperor’s remark during President Chun’s visit to Japan in 1984 did not meet the original demands of the South Korean government, the security-economic cooperation settled in January of the previous year remained intact for the stable management of ROK-Japan relations (Pak Chin-u 2008, 68-70).

The increasing anti-Japanese movement and criticism of Japan’s colonial rule, as well as the government’s confrontational approach to Japan in the early phase of the Chun administration, allowed Korea to gain strategic leverage in negotiations with Japan. It was also a means for internal political maneuvering to address the public’s growing negative perceptions of Japan. The history problem was a double-edged sword to the authoritarian South Korean government. The hard-line policy against Japan endorsed in the media was, in many ways, directed by the new military government to legitimize their rule. On the other hand, an unwavering hard-line strategy without accomplishments in ROK-Japan relations would also weaken the government’s power. Therefore, the new military government had to strategically manage both hawkish diplomatic posturing towards Japan and the complicated history problems.

The Chun administration’s approach to Japan varied from the Park Chung-hee regime on several points (Yi Chōng-sik, 1989, 150-51, 251-52; Komoda 2013, 37-40). The key personnel of the Fifth Republic were of the post-colonial “*hangŭl*” (Korean alphabet) generation and had largely received a Korean education. This new generation of leaders aspired to restructure ROK-Japan relations, which were rampant with asymmetries, and they especially criticized the old generation’s “humiliating” or “defeatist” attitude toward Japan. They also condemned the collusive links the old generation forged with the Japanese government. In conjunction with the domestic reforms on government personnel and society that the Chun regime was administering, they sought to transform South Korea’s Japan policy. Rather than merely asking for assistance, they squarely requested that Japan compensate South Korea’s spending in defense. The ten billion dollar proposal for ROK-Japan relations was based upon this new strategic thinking of the military government.

Nonetheless, the political-economic asymmetry and collusive personnel linkages forged between the ROK and Japan could not be eradicated throughout the Fifth Republic. Although the settlement of the security-economic cooperation transformed and stabilized ROK-Japan relations, the new authoritarian South Korean government and conservative Japanese regime gradually assimilated under their stated pursuit for security and economic interests of their countries. Only the agents of ROK-Japan relations had

changed. In this lies the foundation for criticisms of President Chun's Japan policy—e.g. that South Korea only became the “weaker power again” in the relations and that “Chun Doo-hwan was a mere successor of Park Chung-hee” (Yi Tong-jun, 2015).

Regarding the ROK-Japan summit held in January 1983, and September 1984, evaluations diverge. On the one hand, it was seen as reflection of mutual trust and reciprocity newly forged in ROK-Japan relations (Oemubu 1990, 35-36), while the others have argued that the accomplishments of the summits did not exceed the realms of “personal diplomacy” between the leaders. This latter group argued that, while the two charismatic leaders, President Chun and Prime Minister Nakasone, succeeded in building an ameliorated atmosphere for cooperation, the discussions did not deal with the inherent problems that pervaded ROK-Japan relations in depth (Yi Chŏng-sik 1989, 230-31). In other words, their negotiations made no significant process in dealing with the aforementioned textbook controversy, treatment of Korean residents in Japan, trade and technology transfer issues, North Korea policy, or other cultural exchange matters (Cha 2000, ch. 6).

In reflection of South Korea's approach to Japan during the Fifth Republic, however, this article finds that the evaluation of the period cannot be confined to the implied dichotomous framework as described above—that the relationship was either newly constructed upon the strategic thinking of the government or that it was merely a continuity of existing structural ROK-Japan relations (only embellished with new agents). A more accurate depiction of the reality lies in the middle of change and continuity. Despite constraints in the new regime's efforts to reform, ROK-Japan relations underwent considerable changes (e.g. generation shift and new strategic thinking); yet at the same time, ROK-Japan relations of the Fifth Republic did not bring all-out change, as the Korean government remained constrained by the historical problems and structural gap in ROK-Japan relations.

3. The Role of the US

A general, yet implicit, consensus in academia was that South Korea's demand for economic assistance from Japan was “instigated by the US.” The main rationale was that, in reference to the Reagan administration's containment strategy in the 1980s, which brought South Korea and Japan into close cooperation (Reagan-Nakasone-Chun), the US would have pressured Japan to contribute to the security of South Korea (Yi Chŏng-sik 1989, 146). As for evidence, many studies have referred to the US-Japan Joint Communiqué

announced in May 1981, which stated that “to secure Japan’s defense and peace and stability in the Far East, an appropriate burden-sharing between US and Japan is desirable” (“Suzuki Zenkō sōri daijin,” 1981).

The US and Japan’s strategic conceptualization of South Korea (or the Korean Peninsula) shared the belief that the security of South Korea was vital to the security of Japan (Yun Dukmin 1991). In 1950, the US excluded South Korea from the Acheson line, and formal alliance relations had not formed between the two countries at the time. Nevertheless, with the outbreak of the Korean War, the US decided to join the war, as it saw the security of South Korea critical for the security interests of Japan and US-Japan relations at large. The US feared that South Korea’s fall to communism would become the “dagger” to the heartland of Japan, and the surging of North Korea would cause US-Japan relations to falter (Rusk 1990, ch. 9). The Korean War had a decisive impact on Japan’s early reinstatement and economic revival.

Zbigniew Brzezinski defined the “pivot states” as countries whose importance and role in the international stage derived not from their power but their geographical location that exerts determining influence on the power balance between major states. And Brzezinski pointed only to South Korea as a pivot state in the Far East (Brzezinski 1997, 47-48).¹⁷ If rephrased in terms of *Seikanron*, Brzezinski viewed the Korean Peninsula as the “interest line” for US-Japan relations.

Since the Eisenhower administration, the US has consistently demanded Japanese economic assistance to expand Japan’s role and contribution to the security of East Asia (Yi Chong-wŏn 1996). As observable in the 1969 US-Japan Joint Communique (Nixon-Satō), the statement included the so-called “Korean clause,” that “the security of South Korea is of vital interest to the security of Japan” (Satō Eisaku sōri,” 1969). Such a policy stance of the US administration persisted throughout the Carter administration, despite increasing discord in ROK-US relations at the time.¹⁸

Nevertheless, as this article finds, it is an exaggeration to extend the burden-sharing discourse between the US and Japan and argue that the US was the originator of the idea for the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation. On the

17. According to Brzezinski, the strategic value of the ROK-US alliance for the US lay in checking and balancing Japan’s remilitarization without massive military stationing in Japan. Should the Korean Peninsula unify, fall under the influence of China, or change in its international status, radical changes in the role of US and Japan in the region may be inevitable.

18. In November 1980, the US defense minister in meeting with three former officials of Japanese Defense Agency stated that the US hoped for Japan’s provision of economic assistances for modernization of South Korea’s military forces.

contrary, as empirically addressed in this study, the first discussion between South Korea and the US on the issue took place during the ROK-US summit held in February 1981. It was the South Korean delegation who made the suggestion first, as President Chun, in mentioning the “operating expenses for two military divisions,” inquired about the US’ opinion on the proposal, to which the US responded in “agreement” and promised their “lateral support” for the initiative.

The Japanese diplomatic documents provide additional valid sources for this argument. For instance, the Japanese Foreign Ministry in May 1981, a month after South Korea’s official request for Japan’s economic assistance, asked the US State Department to find out about any US involvement in the proposal.¹⁹ The State Department responded that, while President Chun requested the US to exert influence on Japan to agree on the proposed deal during the ROK-US summit, the US made no demand on South Korea to seek economic assistance from Japan. Therefore, the conspiracy thesis that the US “pulled the strings” from behind the scenes is unfounded.

Then to what extent was the US involved in the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation after the ROK-US summit? Although the US administration aspired to achieve the deal, the given sensitivity of the issue made the US refrain from direct engagement in the process. The US feared that with the growing contentions between South Korea and Japan, the US’ outright involvement in the process would only trigger larger voices of opposition from Japan (Ogura 2013, 41-42).

The US did not maintain full neutrality, however. The US conveyed its support for the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation through unofficial and/or indirect means of communication. One exemplary case is the press interview by Michael Armacost, then assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs, during his visit to Japan in September 1981 for the Fifth US-Japan Shimoda Conference. Armacost mentioned that the US stationing its military forces and providing assistance for market opening contributed to stabilizing South Korea after the war, and the US hoped that Japan would also provide economic assistance to support South Korea (*Sankei shinbun*, September 4, 1981).²⁰

19. The referenced Foreign Ministry document by Ogura (2013, 41-42) is the following: “1981-nen 5-gatsu 1-nichi zuke gaimudaiji hatsu zai-Beikoku daishi ate denpō dai 20-gō” [On May 1, 1981, minister of foreign affairs telegraph to Ambassador of United States, No. 255]; “1981-nen 5-gatsu 19-nichi zuke zai-Kankoku daishi hatsu gaimudaijin ate tenpō dai 1184gō” [On May 19th, 1981, Ambassador to the Republic of Korea Visited the Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 1884, Telegraph].

20. An interview of Acting Assistant Secretary of State Michael Armacost, entitled “Economic

The US did play an indispensable role in the final settlement of the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation. It is hardly disputable that the implicit understanding of US support for South Korea's proposal heavily influenced Japan to come to an agreement with South Korea. Japan's concession for a lump-sum approach, which significantly veered away from Japan's original principles in aid, cannot but be understood as the outcome of Japan's strategic adjudication of US interests. Prime Minister Nakasone, who made the final decision regarding the cooperation, mentioned himself that the US emphasis on restoration of ROK-Japan relations had been the determining factor to Japan's agreement. In other words, it was Japan's strategic intention to strengthen the US-Japan alliance, more than mere cooperation with South Korea per se, when they agreed to provide economic assistance to South Korea in 1983 (Nakasone 2012, ch. 13).

Conclusion

South Korea's diplomacy in the Fifth Republic can be summarized as a revival of the anti-communist coalition among South Korea, US, and Japan, as well as the foundation for South Korea's economic growth. At the same time, the period prolonged authoritarian oppression and delayed democratization in South Korea (Kim Yōng-sik 1994, 100). The Chun administration restored the ROK-US and ROK-Japan relations that were alienated before, and thereby alleviated South Korea's heightened security concerns of the détente period during the 1970s. The restoration of economic relations with the US and Japan proved critical for restarting South Korea's rapid economic growth. Furthermore, the ameliorated relations provided the strategic leeway for South Korea to diversify its diplomatic relations with the third world and other non-hostile communist countries, which in turn became the foundation for the successive regime to pursue Nordpolitik.

The ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation launched at the beginning of the Fifth Republic provided the momentum for both confrontation and stabilization in ROK-Japan relations. Although the Chun administration pledged to restore relations with both its traditional ally, the US, and Japan upon inauguration, the regime gradually consolidated the "US-first and Japan-later" phased diplomatic strategy. On the basis of strengthened ROK-US relations, the new military government used US' lateral support as the leverage to pressure

Assistance to Korea as a Part of Japan's Security: A Strategic Position" featured in *Kyōdō tsūshin* (Kyōdō News).

Japan to engage in security-economic cooperation. As a result, the Chun regime was able to break through and consolidate stability in ROK-Japan relations.

South Korea's diplomacy towards Japan during the Fifth Republic can therefore be interpreted as both continuity and change from the "1965 system of ROK-Japan relations." This distinctive ROK-Japan relationship since normalization in 1965 had the two countries placing their shared interests in security and economics first, rather than remaining at the contentious impasse of historical problems. The backbone of South Korea's Cold War diplomacy lay in reinforcing the ROK-US-Japan anti-communist coalition to secure its own security and focus on economic development. The 1960s ROK-Japan talks and 1980s ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation have provided the decisive momentum for strengthening such ties among South Korea, US, and Japan. These two cases share similarities in that both were the strategic outcomes of US efforts to forge both South Korea (forward base) and Japan (rear base) as the centerpieces of the US containment strategy in East Asia. Also, both cases were set in the similar context of asymmetrical relations between South Korea and Japan. As stark contrasts between the two countries persisted in the form of "pluralist democratic society" (Japan) versus "authoritarian state" (Korea), or "economic powerhouse" (Japan) versus "developing state" (Korea), the asymmetry between South Korea and Japan was also critical in providing the condition for Japan to concede a considerable portion of South Korea's "excessive" demand.

Nonetheless, as observable from the initial drafting process for the security-economic cooperation proposal, the Fifth Republic's diplomacy towards Japan could be distinguished from the previous administration. At the forefront, the new military government's perception of Japan brought significant changes in South Korea's overall conception and diplomacy towards Japan. Such a shift was an outcome of the various way of thinking between the military and bureaucrats, as well as a reflection of the generational gap between the elites of the colonial era and the leaders of the post-colonial generation. The new figures of the Chun administration aspired to address the structural problems embedded in the political-economic relations between South Korea and Japan, and redefine them. They duly requested Japan for loans that could contribute to South Korea's defense. While limitations did remain in the Chun administration's efforts to eliminate previous structural ties between South Korea and Japan, the new strategic thinking of the Chun administration became a significant foundation to the framework of ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation.

The "free-rider," "reactive state," and other general portrayals of Japan during the Cold War have labeled it as a passive state, which in response to US pressure (*gaiatsu*) only seeks minimal contributions on the international stage. However,

as confirmed in this article, former prime minister Tanaka's strategic rationale for the ROK-Japan security-economic cooperation and his perception of the Korean Peninsula suggests that Japan took an active stance, which is not seen from its common, reactive portrayal. Put differently, transcendental strategic thinking can be found in the Japanese conservatives' perceptions of the Korean Peninsula. This active stance and strategic approach seem to be prevalent in Japan's twenty-first century strategic maneuvering to expand its role on the international stage as well.

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