Theoretical Approaches to Alliance: Implications on the R.O.K.-U.S. Alliance

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The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance since its conclusion in 1953 has undergone profound changes from the 1980s. At the global and regional level, we have witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union, military dominance of the United States at the global level, establishment of diplomatic and economic relationship among South Korea, Russia, and China. With the transformation of the bipolar structure, the need to contain the former communist threat lessened as well as in need for the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. In inter-Korean relations, notable changes have taken place. In the 1990s, we witnessed the establishment of the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between South and North Korea (1991), North Korean withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and the historic Summit Meeting of June, 2000. The joint Declaration after the Summit and subsequent changes especially ignited sharp debates concerning various security issues such as the conceptualization of "main enemy," the possibility of future inter-Korean war, the fundamental need and the size of US military presence, and the need to maintain R.O.K.-U.S. joint military training, for example.

Considering the fundamental changes that the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance confronts now, it is important to think about the continuity and change of the alliance. It is true that most of the research on the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance has focused on the historical development and the changing environments regarding the alliance. The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance received only scant attention by alliance theorists, missing many promising analyses and predictions. Considering the merits of theoretical approaches that clarify various aspects of alliances, provide comparative perspectives, and suggest possible solutions to different problems, the current situation is not satisfactory.

This article attempts to fill the gap by reviewing major alliance theories and to conceive of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance from a theoretical perspective. It deals with major issues in alliance such as the concept, function, merits and costs of alliance, balancing vs. bandwagoning behavior in alliance formation, the effect of overall international systemic structure, identity issue, security vs. autonomy trade-offs, and problems arising from the alliance maintenance such as the dilemma of entrapment/abandonment and burden sharing. With this conceptual and theoretical frameworks, this article deals with the various aspects of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance and attempts to find out major issues of the alliance. This might give us new insights on past, present, and future aspects of the alliance, especially ones that can be contrasted with the more prevalent historical approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

For South Korea, the military alliance with the United States has been central to its national security for defense and deterrence since 1953. U.S. participation in the Korean War, subsequent military presence in South Korea, and military assistance through various means including Military Assistance Program (MAP), Foreign Military Financing Program (FMFP), and International Military Education and Training (IMET), have been indispensable to South Korean security and peninsular stability.

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the global and regional level, we have witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union, military dominance of the United States at the global level, establishment of diplomatic and economic relationship among South Korea, Russia, and China. With the transformation of the bipolar structure, the need to contain the former communist threat lessened as well as in need for the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. In inter-Korean relations, notable changes have taken place. In the 1990s, we witnessed the establishment of the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between South and North Korea (1991), North Korean withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and the historic Summit Meeting of June, 2000. The joint Declaration after the Summit and subsequent changes especially ignited sharp debates concerning various security issues such as the conceptualization of "main enemy," the possibility of future inter-Korean war, the fundamental need and the size of US military presence, and the need to maintain R.O.K.-U.S. joint military training, for example.

Also in both South Korean and US domestic politics, the difference of public opinion arose sharply regarding the future role and function of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. South Korean critics of the alliance raised issues with regard to the effect of the alliance in aggravating the security-dilemma between the two Koreas, the command structure in the alliance including wartime operational control, burden-sharing, and the SOFA. Also in the US, the trend to reorient the alliance by lessening or withdrawing the USFK (United States Force, Korea), promoting more aggressive burden-sharing, and transforming the basic nature of the USFK, is not absent.

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2. CONCEPTS

2. 1. Alliance, Alignment, Adversarial Game and Alliance Game

A state, for its national security, can decide either to independently build arms (internal balancing) or to create a formal alliance. Each option has relative benefits and costs. Based on a rational calculation directed towards most cost-effective alternative, a state determines the best option.

Ever since Korea had been integrated into the modern states system in the late 1870s, the alternative of independent arms building was not so impressive. Without committed allies at the end of the 19th century, Korea became a Japanese colony. In the aftermath of independence in 1945, Korea tried to have an independent defense. However South Korea experienced the Korean War just after the withdrawal of U.S. troops which was completed in

1949. Historical experience of national insecurity when lacking formidable allies prompted South Korea to urgently seek an alliance partner, which was achieved by the Mutual Defense Treaty Between South Korea and the U.S. in 1953.

Alliances are formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, intended for either the security or the aggrandizement of their members, against specific states, whether or not these others are explicitly identified. Alliances, however, are only the formal subset of a broader and more basic phenomenon, which is distinguished from "alignment." Alignment amounts to a set of mutual expectations between two or more states that they will have each other's support in disputes or wars with particular other states. Such expectations arise chiefly from perceived common interests and they may be strong or weak, depending perhaps on the parties' relative degree of conflict with a common adversary. Formal alliances strengthen existing alignments, or perhaps create new ones, by their solemnity, specificity, legal and normative obligations and (in modern times) their public visibility (Snyder 1990: 104-5)[1].

An alliance relationship encompasses these parts: 1) a strategic concept, or objective, that defines the shared obligations of alliance partners; 2) a common defense strategy through which roles, mission, and responsibilities are specified; 3) an agreement on the types and levels of forces required to implement a common defense strategy; 4) a range of more-specialized agreements on command relations, base arrangements, and burden-sharing (Pollack and Cha 1995: 11).

The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance has these components; The Mutual Defense Treaty in 1953, Status of Force Agreement in 1966, Security Consultative Meeting from 1968, Combined Forces Command since 1978, and Wartime Host Nation Support concluded in 1991. All these treaties and organizations comprise the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance, and they have undergone crucial changes as the security environments change over time.

Also it is analytically useful to postulate separate alliance and adversary games, despite their entanglement in reality. Snyder argues that each of these games is played on three policy levels: armament, action, and declaration[2]. The armament level in the adversary game is "arms racing," whereas in the alliance game, "burden sharing." The acts on the armament level between adversaries is about whether to attack or to resist attack, whereas in the alliance game decisions to aid or not to aid a victim of attack, or more broadly, whether or not to intervene in the ongoing war are central. Snyder argues that decisions to act cannot be exclusively identified with either the adversary or alliance game for they are likely to have effects, or to be motivated by goals, in both games. Thus a decision to defend another state that is under attack may be motivated partly to prevent the attacker from gaining power resources (adversary game) and partly to keep the victim's resources available to defend oneself (alliance game)(Snyder 1990: 106).

Snyder also explains that declaratory interaction in both games is the use of communication to manipulate others' and expectations of one's future behavior. It includes both unilateral declarations and bargaining. Between adversaries, communication is coercive, intended to intimidate or deter, or it could be also accommodative, signaling concession or capitulation. In an alliance game, agreement is essentially a joint declaration, a mutual promise to act in a specified way in specified future contingencies. Declaratory interaction in

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[1] For the concept of alliance, see also Friedman (1970) and Morrow (1993).

[2] Snyder (1990) provides a useful conceptualization regarding the forms, functions of alliance, and the relationship between alliance in particular and international structure in general, from a Waltzian neorealist perspective. With more formal theoretical frameworks and empirical case studies, he also shows a more detailed alliance theory. See Snyder (1991).

alliance game is supposed to be similar in that it creates or changes expectations about the parties' future behavior. Various lesser declarations between allies, such as assurances of support on particular issues or warnings of non-support, are analogous to the threats, warnings and commitments that are exchanged between adversaries in a crisis (Snyder 1990: 106-7).

The adversary game at the arms level in the case of R.O.K.-U.S. alliance has occurred in the Korean Peninsula between two Koreas and their allies. Two Koreas have been continuously involved in conventional arms race with intensive confrontation regarding nuclear weapons. And the North Korean nuclear and missile issue from 1993 gives an alliance a new dimension in which the U.S. conceives North Korea as a rogue state threatening the America's own territory. The end of the Cold War, however, put North Korea in different security environments, creating a need for renewed strategic concepts. These complicated trends in inter-Korean relations pose a new challenge to the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. Action-level adversarial game included a series of North Korea's covert operations in South Korea, border clashes both in the DMZ and at sea, and terrorist aggression in various places. Declaration-level adversarial game also continued at international, regional, and inter-Korean level.

The alliance game between South Korea and the U.S. is not absent. As will be discussed later, arms-level issues of cost-, burden-, and responsibility sharing become more complex and serious in the game. Actions-level game touches upon critical issues such as command structure, alliance security dilemma of entanglement and abandonment, and administration/jurisdiction of the DMZ, for example. Declaratory interaction is more subtle but influential. The possible tension between South Korea and the US just after the Summit was an example of showing the importance of communication between allies before a partner makes an important move. Troubled negotiations and interactions on the SOFA issue are also significant problems that should be solved to continue the basic military function of the alliance.

2. 2. Balancing versus Bandwagoning

States form alliances to counterbalance against the security threat. However, bandwagoning with the source of the threat to evade the attack (defensive bandwagoning) or to share the booty of the powerful (aggressive bandwagoning) is not absent in the historical record. That is, when choosing an alliance partner, states may either balance or bandwagon. Especially weak states facing an external threat tend to ally with the most threatening power, as discussed in the power transition theory[3].

It is generally argued that the greater an adversary state's aggregated capabilities, the greater the tendency for others to align with it (Walt 1987: 32). However, Walt, criticizing the bandwagoning thesis, suggests a balance of threat theory, which is a refinement of traditional balance of power theory. States balance against the pure power of states that pose the greatest threat. However, just as national power is produced by several different components (e.g., military and economic capability, natural resources, and population), the level of threat that a state poses to others should be considered as the product of several interrelated components. Whereas balance of power theory predicts that states will react to

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[3] Bandwagoning seems to be more frequent especially for weak states from the perspective of power transition theory. For the theoretical link between power transition theory and the persistence of alliances, see Hwang (1995).

imbalances of power, balance of threat theory predicts that when there is an imbalance of threat (i.e., when one state or coalition appears especially dangerous), states will form alliances or increase their internal efforts in order to reduce their vulnerability. With this in mind, a state's seemingly bandwagoning behavior might be proved to be a balancing behavior to counterbalance against the threat, not against the objective national capability.

Walt maintains that balance of threat theory improves on balance of power theory by providing greater explanatory power with equal parsimony. By using balance of threat theory, we can understand a number of events that we cannot explain by focusing solely on the distribution of aggregate capabilities.

Another merit of balance of threat theory is that it can also explain alliance choices when a state's potential allies are roughly equal in power. In such a circumstance, a state is likely to ally with the side it believes is least dangerous. In this sense, balance of threat theory seems to subsume balance of power theory. Aggregate power is an important component of threat, but not the only one. By conceiving of alliances as responses to imbalances of threat (not just imbalances of power), we gain a more complete and accurate picture of behavior in the international political realm. Focusing on threats rather than power alone also helps account for several apparent anomalies in the evidence (Walt 1987: 263-5).

After the collapse of the USSR, and the weakening of the so-called the "North Triangle" composed of the USSR, China, and North Korea, some people began to problematize the continuation of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. As the level of the security threat is seriously decreased, it is argued that South Korea should search for a different security alternative. From the balance of power logic, the aggregate capability of the North three countries has weakened, and the counterbalancing alliance should be adjusted. However, from the perspective of balance of threat theory, there is a continuous need for the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance, because North Korea keeps pursuing volatile and aggressive foreign policy. Still, the basic policy line towards South Korea is aggressive reunification following communist tenets, and North Korea continue to develop and transfer weapons of mass destruction like nuclear warheads and long-range missiles. In this case, components making up security threats are not confirmed to have lessened, and this question leads many skeptics to raise a fundamental question, "is North Korea changing after the Summit Meeting in June, 2000?" If there is no sure mechanism to certify whether North Korea's policy line towards South Korea has changed, there is a persistent need for the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance to work[4].

3. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

3. 1. Arms versus Alliance

In looking at an alliance, it its critical to identify precise benefits and costs of both arms and alliance. Nations facing a threat must balance those costs against the benefits of additional security in their security policy. Building arms can improve a nation's ability to defend itself or can induce other nations to view the arming state as a threat. Internally, foreign policies can be used to gain support from domestic groups that advocate those policies for their economic and political effects. Other groups may resist such policies because they bear the economic costs or oppose the goals of those policies. Armament

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[4] See Kim (1995), Park (1997).

programs, however, can boost the political support of a government by raising employment or lessen it by provoking opposition to new taxes.

These domestic effects can also produce domestic political benefits, for example, through reducing unemployment. The benefits of allocating more resources to the military depend on its ability to use those resources to increase its capabilities. When technological change is rapid, there can be large benefits to replacing old weapons with improved models, whether they be jet fighters or rifles. Additional manpower can provide large increases in a military's strength when that manpower can be trained quickly and used efficiently within the military's current structure.

Increasing the military, however, can impose a variety of political costs. Building weapons costs money that can be politically difficult to raise. Legislatures often object to raising taxes or diverting expenditures from other areas to spend on the military. Citizens may attempt to evade additional taxes. Conscription is generally unpopular (Morrow 1995: 213-5).

The primary benefit of alliance is obviously security, but many non-security values may also accrue. Security benefits in a mutual defense alliance include chiefly a reduced probability of being attacked (deterrence), greater strength in case of attack (defense) and prevention of the ally's alliance with one's adversary (preclusion). The principal costs are the increased risk of war and reduced freedom of action that are included in the commitment to a partner. In general, alliances can attract aid from other nations to fend off a common threat or to seek change in the status quo, but they can reduce a nation's security by provoking opposition or tying security to an ally's ambitions (Snyder 1990: 109-110).

Alliances provide a substantial increase in capabilities immediately, but that increase must be discounted by the credibility of the alliance. The ally may not come to one's aid in the hour of need. Improving one's own military capability takes longer but those increases are more reliable. It takes time for weapons to be built and troops to be trained. Whether forming alliances or building arms produces more security depends on the exact conditions of each in a particular situation (Morrow 1995: 216).

Alliance values, like all security values, are future-oriented. In estimating them, the parties must take into account not only the general benefits and costs just mentioned but also specific events and effects that the alliance might precipitate overtime and across the entire system. Thus the value of the alliance must be discounted by the probability that it will trigger a counter-alliance, provoke the adversary to greater hostility, or increase the hostility of some other state that is friendly to the adversary. Its value should be appreciated by the likelihood that it will make the adversary more amenable in settling disputes, or that it will attract additional alliance members (Snyder 1990: 110).

Snyder argues that the size of these benefits and costs for both parties will be determined largely by three general factors in their security situations: (1) their alliance "need," (2) the extent to which the prospective partner meets that need, and (3) the actual terms of the alliance contract. Alliance need is chiefly a function of the ratio of a state's capabilities to those of its most likely antagonist(s), and its degree of conflict with, or perceived threat from that opponent. The greater the shortfall between its own military strength and that of its proponent and the deeper its conflict with the adversary (hence the greater the likelihood of its being attacked), the greater its alliance need and the greater the deterrent and defense benefits it will gain from any alliance that satisfies that need. However, different prospective partners will satisfy the need to different degrees, depending on their capabilities and perceived reliability. Obviously, an ally whose military strength is too weak to fill up the

capabilities deficit will provide little security benefit. On the other hand, a very strong ally may provide surplus security and be able to dominate the alliance. Further, the value of the alliance must be discounted by the likelihood that the partner will not fulfill his commitment.

There are, however, costs accrued to alliances. Alliances, foreclosing options, reduce the capacity of states to adapt to changing circumstances. They also weaken a state's influence capacity by decreasing the number of additional partners with which it can align. Sometimes conceptualized as the reduction of autonomy, these costs are more serious for weaker partners in asymmetrical alliances. Alliances may eliminate the advantages in bargaining that can be derived from deliberately fostering ambiguity about one's intentions. Also they can provoke the fears of adversaries, preserve existing rivalries, and worse, foster counter-alliances. They may also entangle states in disputes with their allies' enemies. Last, alliances may stimulate envy and resentment on the part of friends who are outside the alliance and therefore are not beneficiaries of its advantages (Kegley & Wittkopf 1995: 471).

It can also be noted that the costs of alliance will turn on similar factors as they affect the ally. The weaker the ally vis-a-vis his adversary, the more one will have to contribute to his defense. The deeper his conflict with his adversary, the more likely he will be attacked or the greater the chance that, counting on one's support, he will precipitate a crisis or war himself. The costs of alliance will be minimized when the allies have the same adversary (or when their different adversaries are allied) because they will then have a strategic interest in defending each other even without alliance (Snyder 1990: 109-110).

The end of the Cold War affected the alliance need, the extent to which the U.S. meets that need, the degree of conflict with, or perceived threat from former communist countries, and possibly North Korea. These transformed the basic components of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. Also with the economic development and the increase of independent defense power of South Korea, the extent to which the U.S. can meet South Korea's security need is decreased. The same situation can be applied to the U.S., because there is a smaller chance of regional upheaval coming from communist threat after the end of the Cold War.

Overall, the benefit-side of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance has been undervalued, whereas the cost-side of the alliance is being more emphasized. Some parts of South Korean public opinion address the issue of loss of autonomy coming from defense dependence on the US. Hot debate concerning inequality of the SOFA with issues of jurisdiction of US criminals, environmental degradation, and labor rights touches on the problem of South Korean autonomy. Efforts to lessen defense expenditure by lessening overseas US forces drive some sections of US congress members and probably the newly elected Bush administration to re-evaluate changing benefits and costs of USFK. These changes redirect the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance, pushing two countries to search for new common interests, and subsequent appropriate alliance structure and norms[5].

3. 2. International Structure of Power Distribution

Another crucial factor in analyzing an alliance choice is the systemic or structural factor.

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[5] For an analysis of R.O.K.-U.S. alliance from the perspective of trade-off model, See Jang (1996). In this article Jang conceptualizes the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance as one of power asymmetry, and analyzes the nature and change of the alliance. For the cost of the alliance for South Korea, see also Baek (1988).

The constellation of power distribution in a given time provides a strong constraint to individual states' alliance choice. Neorealists, especially Waltzian structural realists emphasize structural variable. For example Snyder argues that in general, alliances in a bipolar system will have less independent effect on relations than alliances in a multipolar system, because interests and expectations, and hence alignments, are substantially established by the structure of the system (Snyder 1990: 117). In a multipolar system, we witness typical issues of alliance formation, maintenance, and termination. However, in a bipolar system, the issues are much simpler. When we think of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance since its formation until the late 1980s, the Cold War bipolar factor dominated significant part of the alliance. As the Northeast Asian countries have been divided along the ideological or bipolar power political line, alliance choice was highly rigid and diplomatic leeway with a strong tie to two superpowers was very limited. South Korea was considered as the strategic frontline containing the communist expansion in this region, and the alliance was strongly maintained under the bipolar system.

This characteristic defined as the high degree of common interest inherent in facing a common opponent, along with the absence of alliance alternatives, meant that the interaction approached a "game of pure coordination" rather than the "mixed motive" game that typically characterized alliance bargaining in a multipolar system. Also the alliance management problem is easier in bipolar than in multipolar alliances, at least in alliances of the superpowers, basically because the structure of the system provides little opportunity or incentive for defection (Snyder 1990: 118). The two superpowers have no common enemy strong enough to motivate them to ally, and their allies either have no incentive to align with the opposite superpower, or if they do have an incentive, they will be prevented from acting upon it by their own patron. As will be discussed later, the danger of abandonment is low under the biopolar system, and therefore, the alliance security dilemma is weak. The fear of entrapment is present for both the superpowers and their clients, but the distancing measures they may take to reduce the risk do not significantly increase the danger of alliance collapse (Snyder 1990: 118-9).

Changes in power distribution at the global level, and ongoing change at the regional level of Northeast Asia, transforms the nature of systemic factor affecting the alliance structure in the region. The Cold War structure has ended, and the alliances to support bipolar confrontation have been under serious transformation. The USSR-DPRK military alliance ceased to be renewed and the U.S.-Japan alliance has been redefined to adjust to the changing structural influences. If the level of the North Korean threat changes as the reconciliation process after the summit talks in 2000 result in any unignorable gains, the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance should be redefined.

From the structural perspective, there is a need to reconsider the current military structure, which is a hegemonic structure for the time being. Under the hegemonic structure with lessened North Korean threat, there will be both common interests and diverging ones between South Korea and the US. The Two countries would still agree to cooperate to deter and defeat North Korean attack; to prevent North Korean nuclearization; to achieve peaceful unification; to prevent rise of hostile regional hegemony; to deter regional conflicts; and to counter proliferation. However, it is also true that there are diverging interests. South Korea wants to secure self-sufficient defense; to maintain defense industry; to enhance defense technology transfer; and to reduce defense costs and adjust burden sharing. The US, on the other hand, wants to maintain regional and global influence to sustain market access, economic growth, to spread democracy, to share roles and secure bases; to provide US

weapon systems; to defend US; and to reduce US costs and enhance allied responsibility-sharing (Pollack and Cha 1995: 15)[6].

3. 3. Effects of Socially Constructed Identity

The factor of identity, which gained significance with the development of the social constructivist paradigm, seems to be useful in analyzing alliances. As Walt argued, states ally considering the nature of threat, and the identification of threat and the determination of whether and with whom to ally in response to that threat is determined by the factor of identity (Barnett 1996: 401).

Barnett argues that realists exclusively focuses on power politics and systemic pressures. According to realists, material factors and threats to the state's security generate the definition of the threat, and the decision to construct an external alignment and with whom is dependent on a rational calculation of costs and benefits that deprive primarily from material forces and the state's relative military power vis-à-vis potential and immediate threats. In contrast, Barnett asserts that state identity offers theoretical leverage over the issue of the construction of the threat and the choice of the alliance partner. It is the politics of identity rather than the logic of anarchy that often provides a better understanding of which states are viewed as a potential or immediate threat to the state's security. He proposes a direct link between identity and strategic behavior (Barnett 1996: 401).

It seems illuminating to take a look at Barnett's case, the alliance politics in the Middle East after the Second World War. He argues that Arab nationalism guided Arab states to identify both with whom they should "naturally" associate and the threat to Arab states. The factor of common identity and threat, in turn, created desire for certain normative and institutional arrangements to govern inter-Arab security politics that were reflective of their self-understanding of being Arab states. By exploring the details of the 1955 Iraqi-Turkey Treaty, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and some features of the post-Gulf war security patterns, he concludes that changing identities are associated with changing regional security and alliance patterns. In the Middle East case the decline of Arab national identities and the emergence of statist identities was significant.

This social constructivist argument asserts that actors with a shared identity are likely to have a shared construction of the threat, and that actors with a shared identity might clash over the norms that are to govern their behaviors that are a reflection of that shared identity. Consequently, a shared identity might not help to cement the basis of the alliance, but a change in identity can undermine the alliance's formation. Because an important basis for the strategic association is not simply shared interests in relationship to an identified threat but rather a shared identity that promotes an affinity and mutual identification, the language of community rather than the contractual language of alliance arguably better captures this type of strategic association. Then, identity is linked to the construction of the threat and represents a potential source of alliance formation (Barnett 1996: 410).

Other discussions emphasizing the identity factor in international relations in general, and in alliance in particular can be found in other writers' arguments. Risse-Kappen gives a case

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[6] Pollack and Cha (1995), in their joint projects, reviews the trajectory of the alliance between South Korea and the United States, and suggest possible future alternatives for the alliance. See also Kang (1996).

of NATO which is conceived as the security community among democracies. Combining the theory of democratic peace and social constructivism, he argues that democracies are likely form democratic international institutions whose rules and procedures are aimed toward consensual and compromise-oriented decision-making respecting the equality of the participants. The norms governing the domestic decision-making processes of liberal systems are expected to regulate their interactions in international institutions (Risse-Kappen 1996: 368).

According to him, democracies not only do not fight each other, they are likely to develop a collective identity facilitating the emergence of cooperative institutions for specific purposes. These institutions are characterized by democratic norms and decision-making rules that liberal states tend to externalize when dealing with each other. The case he emphasizes is NATO. He argues that NATO was formed and maintained not just by the logic of balance of power in a bipolar system but also by democratic ties between Western European states and the U.S. Even though there existed many other alternatives to forming a multilateral security institution like NATO, nations concluded the alliance based on the democratic conception of security community.

The enactment of these norms and rules strengthens the sense of community and the collective identity of the actors. Domestic features of liberal democracies foster the security community and its institutionalization exerts independent effects on the interactions. In the final analysis, Risse-Kappen argues that democratic domestic structures, international institutions, and the collective identity of state actors do the explanatory work together (Risse-Kappen 1996: 397).

For the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance, there has been a strong, "blood-tied" conception of the alliance, coming from the experience of the Korean War. South Korea conceived itself as a democratic, capitalist country opposed to an autocratic, communist regime. This self-image and identity that was an outgrowth of bipolar world politics accelerated the formation of the collective identity between South Korea and the United States. Also according to the theory of democratic peace, their respective democratic governments strengthened the promise of forming a more collective democratic security community.

However, it is also true that without the Cold War ideological pressure, South Korea began to develop other identities and self-conceptions. First, Koreans began to emphasize autonomy issues of the alliance, criticizing the dependent posture of South Korea. Problems such as command structure and operational control, human rights, environmental degradation resulting from the structure of the SOFA, have been raised by civil movements since the late 1980s. Second, South Koreas tried to reinvigorate the so-called "one-nation identity," and even put higher priority on reunification over security. This movement made Koreans look at the USFK (US forces, Korea) from a different perspective, and even ignited anti-Americanism in some sections of the society.

The dual identities that South Korea society possesses in regards to the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance are still be worked out. Although it is hard to measure how much influence this identity factor will wield on South Korean foreign policy making process, it is a strong factor that will transform the alliance in the future[7].

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[7] For a constructivist analysis of the identity change, and its influence on South Korea's foreign policy, see Chun (2000).

3. 4. Learning factor

One of the main components of identity is an actor's experience, self-image, belief system, organizational memory, and learning. These factors have been extensively discussed in the literature of foreign policy analysis as idiosyncratic or individual factors. When thinking of alliances, these factors are also significant. Reiter argues that the alliance choices of states, especially minor powers in the twentieth century were determined mainly by lessons drawn from formative national experiences, and only marginally by variations in the levels of external threat. Also striking is that these states learned in quite a simple fashion: success promoted continuity and failure stimulated innovation (Reiter 1994: 526)

The finding of the virtual irrelevance of variations in the level of threat to states' decisions is a serious blow to the balance of threat variant of realism. Whereas realism proposes that states ally in response to changes in the level of external threat, the learning theory advanced by Reiter proposes that states make alliance policy in accordance with lessons drawn from formative historical experiences. His evidence points to learning as the dominant explanation of states' alliance choices, and it shows that variations in the levels of external threat have only marginal effects on alliance behavior (Reiter 1994: 490).

South Koreans have a relatively short history of being integrated into the modern states system, and a much shorter history in alliance politics. This means that South Koreans lack extensive experience to experiment various options concerning alliance. The clearest lesson that South Korea could have learned was that the US has been the strongest and most formidable alliance partner, and without this strong ally, South Korea would have been in a vortex of colonialization or destructive war. From this background, there seems to be a strong inclination to maintain a military alliance with a dominant power and to dismiss a rash alternative to independently build arms.

4. ISSUES

4. 1. Security versus Autonomy

One of the most significant issues in maintaining an alliance is to adjust the ratio of benefits and costs under changing security environments. Although in the case of symmetric alliance, the conflict between the benefit of augmented security and the cost of lessened autonomy is not serious, generally the conflict becomes an issue, particularly in an asymmetrical alliances. Alliances require a critical choice between conflicting goals of security and autonomy. The pursuit of one exacts sacrifices from the other.

Symmetric alliances bind together nations with very similar interests, whether they be security or autonomy interests. It is unlikely that the kind of policy differences necessary to start a serious conflict could develop within a symmetric alliance. If such differences did emerge, the alliance would fail to provide the desired benefits, and one nation would break the alliance before going to war. In an asymmetric alliance, the parties gain different interests. The difference in interests could lead the parties into conflict while preserving their overall interest in the alliance (Morrow 1991: 929).

Altfeld (1984) presents a rational choice theory of military alliances that emphasizes the trade-off between increased security and decreased autonomy. The autonomy-security trade-off model explains both symmetric (where both allies receive security or autonomy

benefits) and asymmetric (where one ally gains security and the other autonomy) alliances and the conditions under which each type occurs (Morrow 1991: 907)[8].

The exact nature of autonomy benefits is negotiable in an alliance. If one party is willing to offer concessions like changes in its internal policies or military bases that allow the projection of military forces, the other side can gain autonomy from the alliance. Control over one ally's internal and external policies can produce autonomy benefits by realizing desired changes in the status quo and by freeing resources to pursue other goals (912). Alliances can advance diverse but compatible interests.

In general, leverage will be enhanced if the supplier enjoys an asymmetry of dependence vis-a-vis the recipient. For example, if a client state faces an imminent threat, but its principal patron does not, then the latter's ability to influence the former's conduct should increase. When dependence is mutual, however, both states must adapt to their partner's interests. In short, when one ally does not need the other very much, its leverage should increase.

Conversely, the more important the recipient is to the donor, the more autonomy it is likely to have but the less leverage such aid will produce. Patrons will be reluctant to pressure important allies too severely by reducing the level of support (Walt 1987: 44).

For the case of South Korea, the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance was clearly an asymmetric alliance from the outset. As Wendt and Barnett conceptualized, the process of state-building and militarization was highly dependent. The world military order, or the hierarchical structure of the world system after the end of the Second World War conditioned state-formation of South Korea (Wendt and Barnett 1993). Even though most of alliance theory literature implicitly assumes the relationship between sovereign states, the R.O.K.-U.S. military alliance started as the process of state-formation and militarization between client and patron, or states with highly limited empirical sovereignty and full sovereignty, respectively (Jackson 1993)[9].

The United States as a hegemonic state used asymmetric alliances as one of the tools to extend their control over the international system. The hegemony provides its allies with security from their neighbors and receives some control over the allies' policies and strategic locations to advance its interests further. The United States, under the strategy for extending hegemony through the network of asymmetric alliances, agreed to form an alliance with South Korea. This both protected South Korea and provided the United States with bases for the projection of power and the position to intervene on behalf of "friendly" governments.

In a sense, the development of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance is a process of acquiring more autonomy for South Korea. The degree of increasing autonomy is reflected in the lessened degree of security dependence of South Korea on the US. It should be noted that this process should be reciprocal. The desire to be more autonomous without considering the possible increased security ability might have negative effects on the security preparedness of South Korea. Especially if one asserts that more autonomy is desirable solely based on the uncertified decreased level of North Korean threat, this may lead to cause worse results[10].

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[8] The concept of autonomy can be defined as "the degree to which a state pursues desired changes in the status quo, the degree of external self-assertion, and a state's ability to determine its own policies" (Morrow 1991: 909).

[9] By the end of the 1960s, half of the South Korean defense expenditure was supported by the US assistance.

[10] For a good application of trade-off model to the case of R.O.K.-U.S. alliance, see Jang

4. 2. Alliance Security Dilemma between Entrapment and Abandonment

After an alliance has formed, the partners face a variety of management tasks: coordinating foreign policies (especially toward the adversary), coordinating military plans, and allocating preparedness burdens and collaboration during adversary crises, for example. The principal common interest in any alliance is holding it together; the principal source of conflict is the stance to be taken toward the adversary or adversaries. The first gives rise to fears of the ally's defection and perhaps realignment; the second generates worries about being dragged into a war over the ally's interests that one does not share.

Snyder names this conflicting situation as "alliance security dilemma" since reducing one tends to increase the other. The risk of abandonment can be reduced by strengthening one's commitment to the ally, but this increases the risk of entrapment. First, the ally is emboldened to stand firmer and take more risks vis-a-vis his opponent, and second, one becomes more firmly committed to the ally. The danger of entrapment, on the other hand, can be reduced by weakening one's general commitment or by refusing support to the ally on a particular issue, but this increases the danger of abandonment by reducing the alliance's value to the ally.

The cost of abandonment varies with a state's dependence on the alliance, largely a function of its strength and its degree of conflict with its adversary. The cost of entrapment, on the other hand, varies with the extent of shared interests with the ally; it is highest when the parties have different opponents or have different interests at stake vis-a-vis the same opponent. Snyder argues that outright abandonment of allies has not occurred frequently in history, but the structure of a multipolar system generates persistent fears that it might occur (Snyder 1990: 112-3).

The alliance security dilemma, however, is represented in a different form in a bipolar system. Under the bipolar structure, partners of superpower enjoy the "freedom of the irresponsible"--confident that the superpower will not withdraw its ultimate protection, they are free to indulge their own preferences. Conversely, the Superpower has the "the freedom of the powerful"--free of worry about its allies defecting, it can safely take unilateral initiatives which the alliance partners might deplore (121).

As the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance was predominantly asymmetric alliance, there is virtually no need to worry for the US to be abandoned. What worried the US most was the risk of entrapment from the outset. When President Syngman Rhee strongly proposed an alliance with the US, the US tried to evade it worrying the risk of entrapment. South Korea, on the other hand, has been faced with much more serious alliance security dilemma. The four-time withdrawal of the US troops in 1954, 1971, 1977, and 1991 after the conclusion of the alliance, continuously made South Korea face the risk of abandonment. The risk of entrapment for the part of South Korea is not absent. The participation of South Korea in the Vietnam War, despite huge economic gains, was precipitated considering the security ties with the U.S. Generally, the need to evade abandonment by the alliance partner drives one to raise the commitment level. In the case of South Korea, efforts to overcome abandonment may make it more subservient to various assertion of the US.

The alliance security dilemma between South Korea and the US was less serious under the Cold War bipolar structure, as discussed above. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the risk of the alliance security dilemma could be more serious,

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(1996).

especially one in which South Korea is abandoned by the US. Although the undiminished North Korea security threat keeps the security need for the alliance, the structural transformation in the region might aggravate the dilemma. Especially the advent of the Bush administration in 2001 will raise a refreshed perspective to the issue of US entrapment and excessive burden[11].

4. 3. Burden-sharing

Forming and maintaining alliance is, in a sense, practice in how to share burdens, responsibilities and power. In symmetric alliances, burden sharing, in general, is not a great problem because each nation wishes to increase its security and is capable of making a significant contribution to its own security. Consequently, neither ally will be interested in free riding on the alliance. An asymmetric alliance, however, The essential nature of these leads to a disproportionate sharing of military expenditures. The dominant partner is willing to provide security for its allies if they provide autonomy benefits for it.

Then, we have a problem of free-riding or unfair distribution of alliance responsibilities. One rich research tradition is the so-called economic theory of an alliance. According to this theory, security is a public good within an alliance. Each member of an alliance will attempt to free ride on the military expenditures of its allies, so alliances should underproduce military goods unless one dominant member provides sufficient security for all[12].

Security goods, like other goods, fall at various points on a public-private continuum. A (pure) public good is totally nonrival in consumption, and consumption by one actor does not diminish the amount available for consumption by others. It is also completely nonexcludable. Once it is provided, no one can be kept from consuming it. By contrast, a (pure) private good is totally rival, and consumption by one actor decreases the amount available to others by an equal amount. It is also excludable, and those who do not pay for or contribute toward the good can be kept from consuming it.

Under this condition, some actors free ride in production of pure public good. If security has a characteristic of a pure public good, then actors, especially weak alliance partners tend to free ride, underproducing the desirable amount of security.

The issue of cost-, burden-, and responsibility-sharing between South Korea and the United States became a hot issue starting from the 1980s. With the economic development of South Korea and a tight American budget situation with subsequent public opinion critical of extensive overseas involvement in the US, the issue became more salient. South Korean security, for both countries, had been close to pure public goods contributing both to South Korean's national security and to containing communist expansion, which, in turn, support American grand strategy. After the end of the Cold War, the character of pure public goods of South Korean security persists. Not to speak of the value to South Koreans, peninsular security contributes to American vital interests such as continuing hegemonic control of the

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[11] Lee (1998) conceptualizes the history of the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance from the perspective of cycling change of security-autonomy trade-offs.

[12] This line of research, extensively recorded in the Journal of Conflict Resolution, has voluminous contents. See Lepgold (1998); Murdoch & Sandler (1982, 1984); Zeckhauser (1966); Olson & Zeckhauser (1967); Oppenheimer (1979); Russett & Sullivan (1971); Sandler (1977); Sandler & Cauley (1975); Sandler, Cauley & Forbes (1980); Sandler & Forbes (1980); Thies (1987); Vayrynen (1976).

region, prevention of the possible regional competitor, maintaining stability to continue economic ties with states in this region, and stationing of USFK to keep its military influence. By emphasizing and precisely measuring the public-ness of the South Korean security to both countries, they can reach a reasonable consensus[13].

5. CONCLUSION

The R.O.K.-U.S. alliance is now faced with new changes: the initiation of possible reconciliatory process since the Summit talk between two Koreas, the inauguration of the Bush administration, and more generally, the diminished effect of the Cold War confrontation among Northeast Asian countries. North Korea keeps arguing that the R.O.K.-U.S. military alliance is disturbing to the peace on the Korean Peninsula, because without any intention of North Korean aggression and threat, the maintenance of the alliance aggravates the security dilemma between North and South Korea. Especially after the summit, Pyongyang criticizes the South's posture to keep defense and deterrence with North Korea as the "main enemy." Also rising critics at the U.S. policy of USFK regarding controversial issues such as Mae Hyang Ri, No Geun Ri, SOFA, environmentally unfriendly actions, and also criminal acts of USFK, burden-sharing issues, embarrasses the Bush administration's South Korea policy.

The issue of formation and persistence of alliance, and the problems coming from the maintenance of alliance, however, should be clearly distinguished. As discussed above, the formation of alliance is based on the assessment of security threat, and determination of the most favorable partner. The reason of alliance persistence for South Korea is the need to augment security capability of South Korea by having the U.S. as an alliance partner. The most significant variable for thinking about this issue is the level of North Korean threat, not problems coming from the maintenance of alliance. Unless there emerges clear evidence that North's threat has been lessened to the extent that South Korea alone is capable of defending and deterring North's military threat, the need to persist the alliance will not be fundamentally changed. The loss of autonomy when a country does not have sufficient self-defense power, according to security-autonomy trade-off model, is inevitable. If a country hopes to regain or achieve full autonomy, it is essential to build sufficient self-reliance defending capability.

The problems coming from the maintenance of alliance, on the other hand, awaits reasonable discussion and solution process by rationally evaluating costs and benefits of the alliance for both countries. Alliance realizes national interests. Based on convergent recognition of mutual interests of the alliance, reasonable discussion of cost- and burden-sharing could take place. Also identity that comprises national interests should be reconsidered. As considerable time has passed since the Korean War by which most of Korean came to have the conception of a blood-tied American friend, therefore new identity politics are emerging. New generations without the experience of the Korean War came to rethink the US from a different perspective, thereby forming new conceptions of South Korean national interests. However, groundless anti-Americanism at the social level without clear thinking of military security would be detrimental to South Korean security.

These processes require extensive efforts to find out common security interests in a

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[13] For the Korean case, see Baek (1998), Kang (1996), and Oh (1990).

rapidly changing situation and to define the purposes and policy directions for a future alliance. Leaders in both countries will also have to build domestic supports for the collaboration.

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