Who will be Winning the Power Game in Case of North Korea’s Collapse?

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Abstract

North Korea’s collapse has been incessantly predicted since early 1990s after communist block destroyed but its practical termination has been suspended over two decades. On the reverse, North Korea would initiate more complicated power struggles in Northeast Asia by getting troubles with nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, as current status in case of North Korea’s collapse, fundamental aspects of power game between major powers have not much researched in depth and width, where their national interests seriously get involved in.

This paper is digging up the core agenda that the U.S. and China’s competition to predominate the Korean Peninsula will work out as a primary factor of power struggle to impact the unified Korea when the time of North Korea’s collapse comes up. In the meanwhile, Russia and Japan will also jump in such a dashing political whirlpool while stimulating regional powers. Nonetheless, Korea and the U.S. alliance will finally beat up all the power struggles by conducting successful unification process toward the unified Korea.

Somehow, North Korea’s collapse might attenuate regional tensions but it will simultaneously produce major powers’ interference in the unification process for their national interests. As the symptom, another tension of power struggles might be deepened and expanded around the Korean Peninsula. This paper will research the destination who can be a real winner in the battle of power game in case of North Korea’s collapse.

Key Word: Power Game, North Korea’s Collapse, Major Powers, Win-Win Policy
I. Bound to Power Struggle

The Korean Peninsula has been the center of power struggle between major powers in Northeast Asia since early 20th century. Geopolitical posture of the Korean Peninsula in history would recall an irresistible national destiny which brings out major powers’ interests and their involvement to combat each other.\(^1\) Especially, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan which are contemporarily composed of Six Party Talks have severely gotten entangled in such a political whirlpool to venture out their national interests for going through political ambition toward the international society.

After the bitter experience through Japanese colonial period, Russia and China initiated North Korea as a communist country and supported its political activities in the opposite triangle relationship to confront the U.S.-Korea-Japan alliance. As such, the U.S. has strongly reinforced the relationship with

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South Korea as a democratic country in the name of alliance since the Korean War. Japan which has mainly taken the main role to deliver the U.S. policy in Northeast Asia would also adjust its position toward South Korea in favor of dealing with North Korea.

Even after communism failed around 1990s and China and Russia opened their society to overcome economic crisis, North Korea keeps on sticking around a national illusion to keep up its sovereignty with nuclear weapons. As the result, the international society come to expect an absolute termination of such a trouble regime. On the hand, South Korea enters into major power’s category in Northeast Asia with 12th position in the world economy. The U.S. now strategically considers South Korea as a substitute of Japan in Northeast Asia to control China and Japan which also strengthen their relationship with South Korea.

Nonetheless, as symptoms of North Korea’s collapse are getting imminent, major countries of Six Party Talks are likely to struggle to take a priority over the Korean Peninsula. In advance, it will be more seriously exposed as a political temptation in the international society. Its initiative exists in the process of North Korea’s collapse and its result ends up to who will be a real winner in the power game?

There are three main issues at stake when North Korea collapses, which will be finally proved through a successful unification process. Its main role absolutely counts on the unified Korea.

First, it is whether the unified Korea keeps up its close alliance with the U.S. The unified Korea will become one of major powers in Northeast Asia in view of economic potential. Furthermore, political level will be upgraded to influence China, Russia, and Japan in the reinforced relationship with the U.S. which is tending to implant its Asia strategy through the Korean Peninsula.

Second, it is how the unified Korea disposes the North Korea's nuclear arsenal. North Korea’s nuclear weapons has stimulated proliferation not only in Northeast Asia but also in the international society. As denouncing North Korea’s nuclear weapons, Japan would simultaneously announce it’s ready to develop nuclear weapons. As well, China has been unfavorable to impeach North Korea’s nuclear program. Korea and the U.S. have to persuade China which won’t interfere disposal process of nuclear facility.

Third, it is finally when the U.S. troops leave in the country. For regional security and peace, the U.S. is tend to continue advanced military alliance with the unified Korea. Since China, Japan and Russia’s military expansion has never been stopped, the unified Korea should also focus on military competition with them. The U.S. and the unified Korea through military alliance will do a main role to control major powers’ military competition in Northeast Asia.

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Refer to http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/17/AR2010101702608_pf.html
II. North Korea’s Collapse Symptoms

North Korea’s collapse scenarios can be predicted in three possible aspects: first, the overthrow or power struggles by a reform-minded military elites\(^3\) who are resisting Kim’s regime in complaint; second, a violent collapse by civil riots on the national stage who protest communist system; third, military attack by the U.S. and the international society to halt nuclear crisis. Nonetheless, if North Korea collapses, there could be three more fundamental factors of political corruption, economic crisis and military provocation with nuclear weapons. They have been so correlated to internal or external symptoms that North Korea will finally result in collapse.

After communist block destroyed around 1990s, North Korea’s collapse has been incessantly predicted by its domestic conditions standing for mainly economic crisis\(^4\) based on political corruption or even by the U.S. which would rethink to smash such an exclusive communist country\(^5\) as it actually broke into the Afghanistan War or the Iraq War. The Clinton Administration once planned a surgical strike to Youngbyun nuclear headquarter or change the troubled regime. Moreover, comparing to the Bush Administration’s strong policy as calling it as an Axis of Evil, the Obama Administration is not much softer than North Korea expects.

In the other hand, as getting more military provocations, North Korea’s collapse symptoms seem to be much more serious not only in domestic conditions but also in the international level. There are two possible scenarios that North Korea can internally collapse.\(^6\) One is civil riot in the climax of economic crisis by starving, indignant people while mainly causing to produce countless of refugees looking for food. The other is leadership’s breakage in political system so that its dictatorship is leaking out to result in conversion between power groups. These two domestic factors beside international isolation caused by military provocations with nuclear weapons are likely to end up to collapse North Korea.

1. Political Corruption

Nowadays, it seems to be too far to keep up Kim’s sovereignty in the name of communist dictatorship which would be the biggest dilemma of North Korea in near future. Kim IlSung’s charismatic leadership has been diminished after Kim JongIl took over his father’s dictatorship and finally will be fading out in

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\(^5\) Sunny Lee( Beijing Correspondent at the Korea Times), Kim Jong-il safe from Osama’s fate, for now. Asia Times. 5/5/2011. Refer to http://atimes.com/atimes/Korea/ME05Dg01.html
\(^6\) Sunny Lee( Beijing Correspondent at the Korea Times), Why are NK doomsday scenario hard to kill? Korea Times. 7/25/11. Refer to http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/07/120_91610.html
Kim JungUn’s era. North Korean people are getting much more furious and aggressive as far as they realize how North Korea is severely pressing down its own society by dictatorship and block out all the information routes from the outside of the country that people should deserve.

North Korea is the only communist country in the international society as it strives to continue the audacious regime by third successor, Kim JungUn. However, North Korea’s political corruption means it will not be very possible to hold up its sovereignty by Kim’s regime. When Kim JungUn succeeds in North Korean regime, political corruption will be prevailed over the country out of government control. Lack of charismatic leadership will result in corruption of power elites so that they might plot protests, who will be split in variable political interests. This scenario is relatively potential factor to collapse North Korean society internally. To hinder political corruption, North Korea has sustained horrible punishment system that jail or camp for political dissidents, where most of prisoners die of persecution or maltreatment. It is the principal system of political liquidation for Kim’s sovereignty. Nonetheless, political corruption is getting serious.

As well, groups of gangsters who mostly come from military class or frequent civil demonstration are already appearing in the national stage so that they finally can collapse North Korea. Indignant people who have been so starving and thus sometimes turn to refugees obviously recognize that corrupt political leaders or bureaucrats spoil food system. Famine situation in North Korea is getting worse despite incessant food support by the international society that corrupt power groups mostly take away from people who are supposed to take in. Such corruption is more directly connected to people’s survival so that riots will be prevailed in much faster speed to turn over Kim’s regime.

The corruption of North Korea could be one of the serious crises and threat in advance that might even cause the collapse of North Korea such as it happened in Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s, Poland at the beginning of the 1980s, the December 1986 riots in Kazakhstan, the Tiananmen incident in the PRC in 1986, Eastern Europe in 1989 and the USSR in 1991. Most of communist leaders believed in political illusion that their countries had kept on demonstrating the superiority of the communist system through their omnipotent dictatorship. But ironically, it resulted in political corruption that most of communist countries failed to keep up their communist system so that they collapsed or changed government system except North Korea which is still hanging on false illusion of communism but finally such a political delusion will lead North Korea to fall into collapse.

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2. Economic Crisis

If North Korea collapses by domestic conditions, the top reason could be definitely from an economic crisis which has been accumulated on the steep brink of demise up to now. As well, it would be directly connected to civil riots so that power elite group is likely to be split in overall national crisis and finally result in power struggles against to the government by Kim’s sovereignty. Elite group will try to reform fundamental economic system to open up North Korean society, where market value can be widespread over the nation. They would be believing it’s the only way to overcome economic crisis and appease indignant people as benchmarking China as a role model. It will bring out serious conflicts against the government in danger if Kim’s regime fails to negotiate with power elites. If North Korea develops international economic zones including seaports, its economic crisis can be overcome by international trade and investment. North Korea provides cheap labor market and variable natural resources, where will be worked out as international trade market places in Northeast Asia.

Ironically, nonetheless, North Korea can survive without any support or international trade so that sometimes, it becomes so bold to reject food aid in the international society, especially the U.S. Despite its chronic food shortages, for instance, North Korea declared in 2009 right after firing missiles toward the U.S. that it will reject food support of 330,000 metric tones due to arrive before May and order the U.S. non-governmental organizations to leave North Korea. Even though the World Food Program warned that around 40%(8.7 million) of the North Korean population would need food aid every year, North Korea has insisted on getting through economic crisis with the severe experience of a vast famine that three millions died of starvation in 1990s. North Korean regime’s stubborn food policy has stimulated people who are struggling with fundamental condition for survival so that people turn to become so aggressive while complaining government.

Such an economic crisis would be directly connected to civil riots by infuriated people in famine in North Korea. To express their resentment against the government, North Koreans stopped obeying official orders. Its initiative was broken out as a widespread symptom in 1990s when they had to pass over the nationwide starvation to death which originated the line of countless of refugees looking for food. As people are getting more hungry, they turn to more aggressive to resist government’s control in indignation and complaint. Moreover, after the recent failure of currency reform shook fundamental economic system of North Korea which has sprout civil markets toward the open society out of

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8 Tania Branigan, North Korea turns down US food aid. guardian.co.uk. March18, 2009. 
Refer to http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/18/north-korea-us-food-aid
government control, North Korean people have been more often exposed to refusing national orders while criticizing government policy. This huge failure which was planned to reinforce new dictatorship motivated overall economic crisis so that it will also propel third successor Kim JungUn’s power leakage when he takes over North Korean regime.

3. Military Provocation

If political and economic crises are domestic factors, military provocation is more worldwide to merge global security in danger so that the international society can’t be out of watching North Korea’s military activities in a minute. The biggest misunderstanding of North Korea to deal with the international society is coming from the delusive ideas that military provocations to threaten the world can hold up North Korea’s national fortitude. On the contrary, though, when North Korea’s military provocations are getting harder and harder as confirming itself as a nuclear country, the international society’s denunciation and sanction would be stronger and stronger.

North Korea’s military provocations have been exposed in two ways: one is toward South Korea and the other is toward the international society, especially targeting the U.S. Two military provocations, for instance, South Korean warship, Cheonan and Yeonpyeong Island in 2010 were plotted to announce new dictator, Kim JungUn’s era that North Korea has burnished the leadership credentials of its 27-year-old dictator. Shelling of Yeonpyeong Island caused its revenge by returning fire and scramble F-16 fighters. Before this, there used to be previous skirmishes in variable military attacks along the border including the deaths of 46 South Korean sailors when the corvette Cheonan was torpedoed.

Such bold attacks of North Korea initiated to reinforce military alliance between South Korea and the U.S. to defeat North Korea’s attacks that the U.S. seriously rethink to smash North Korea after ending the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War. Military drills based on Korea-U.S. military alliance with Japan’s support around the Korean Peninsular, despite China and North Korea’s strong denunciation, worked out to reduce military tension for regional security. North Korea has often carried out similar provocations before the annual joint exercises. Shelling of waters which has been past patterns of provocations near the Northern Limit Line with multiple purposes as a warning message prior to South Korea-U.S. annual joint exercises.

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drills. But this year's provocation was not as strong as in previous years.\textsuperscript{11} It showed that U.S. nuclear warship George Washington threatened North Korea’s appetite toward military provocations. These overwhelming drills proved the U.S. military power in the top position in the world that if the U.S. tends to smash North Korea’s territory, it can happen in a second at any time.

But more fundamental problem of military attacks by North Korea toward the international society comes from nuclear crisis that the U.S. has strived to stop it but failed to negotiate so far. Professor Siegfried Hecker, an American nuclear scientist reported that its nuclear plant of North Korea would fit into any American processing facility at the advanced stage of a new uranium enrichment facility after he visited North Korea in early 2011. The facility had 2,000 completed centrifuges and it was already producing low-enriched uranium destined for a new reactor. This would take Pyongyang towards creating a far more powerful arsenal than the estimated eight to 12 plutonium-based warheads that have been built over the past five years.\textsuperscript{12} It’s the proof that North Korea would strongly announce itself as a nuclear country as that it becomes so bold to require the U.S. to ratify.

The Clinton Administration seriously considered surgical strike to Youngbyun nuclear headquarters. As well, after the Bush Administration found out that North Korea had been supported nuclear techniques and military weapons to nuclear potential countries as well as terror groups, the U.S. sustained more restrict military strategy toward North Korea to abolish nuclear weapons. Even the Obama Administration is waiting for a right time that the U.S. blows up North Korea’s military provocations with nuclear weapons. As such, if North Korea collapses by its uncontrolled military provocations with nuclear weapons, it willingly induces to collapse itself by U.S. military strategy to clean up nuclear crisis for regional security and peace around the Korean Peninsula.

III. Who will be Winning the Power Game?

In the imminent moment of collapse, who will be taking the predominant position with most of benefits in power game? It is the primary question between major powers and they already know the answer so that they become more aggressive to take a priority on the unified Korea which will enter into one of major powers in Northeast Asia. All the power struggles basically come from economy which will be more important for international trade and market around the Korean Peninsula rather than politics or

military strategy in advance. The Korean Peninsula has been explored in three major fields of potential: politics, economy and military presence that major powers have been deeply involved in and are unlikely to give up their interest no matter what kind of potential will be coming up around the unified Korea. The unified Korea’s economy will be upgraded and military presence will work out the balance for regional security and then political posture as one of major powers will impact on regional issues and interests.

China has been the biggest obstacle when the U.S. ventures out Asian policy toward the Korean Peninsula. On the contrary, China is much vulnerable to change its attitude when South Korea builds up its national competition in Northeast Asia, even though it is in favor of North Korea’s political status. China has recognized South Korea’s economic potential and how it matches up to China’s economy in future. Moreover, the unified Korea’s economic potential will mostly an important role to bridge China’s economic expansion as benchmarking international markets. Moreover, the unified Korea can exploit Northern area’s economic zones around borderline between China and Russia as international markets where the U.S. and Japan take part in.

If North Korea collapses, Korea should pay huge amount of unification expense but the unifies Korea can cut down big scale of military budget and instead, it invest economic balance and develop around North part. The unified Korea’s military presence after completely disposing nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula will be turned to self-defense for national security. Military alliance between Korea and the U.S. will remain for regional security and peace in Northeast Asia as properly controlling major powers military expansion.

1. The U.S. Strategy to Win

Since the world economy has been through giant recession that the U.S. would encounter such an incessant desperation, economy became relatively a primary factor between major powers. The U.S. strategy to the Korean Peninsula has been focused on continuing its power to control regional powers in Northeast Asia through Korean policies. It will be extended to more important strategic figures even after Korean Reunification. Beside major powers of China, Japan, and Russia, the unified Korea has different meaning in the U.S. policy to Asia. China and Russia are still on the side of communist country as politically confronting the U.S. by their national interests and will revive their political ambition whenever times up. Japan is betraying its alliance relationship which has been tied up to hold the U.S. policy to Asia. As the substitute, the U.S. rethinks the unified Korea taking over the position.

Win-Win policy between the U.S. and South Korea has initiated that they reinforce their alliance through North Korean attacks as announcing them as a new partner in Northeast Asia. As tensions on the Korean Peninsula rise after an international investigation found that North Korea was
responsible for the sinking of a South Korean warship, Cheonan, the U.S. warns that North Korea’s continued provocations pose a serious threat to its neighbors and that its nuclear weapons program must be stopped.\textsuperscript{13} It became also a strategic turning point that the U.S. provides leadership with its regional partners to coordinate reciprocal reactions relevant to possible North Korean violations while insisting that North Korea give up its continual military attacks. For instance, Korea-U.S. partnership promoted the close alliance coordination following the ship incident as urging the passage of Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, standing for a message of strong support toward South Korea. As well, shelling Yeonpyeong Island finally induced Korea-U.S. military drills around the Korean Peninsula based on much stronger military alliance.

In the meanwhile, the U.S. would persuade the Six Party Talks countries: China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea with strategic concerns as emphasizing the North Korean standoff will depend on all parties cooperating with one another and being firm with North Korea. First of all, cooperation with China is essential to the success of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula for ensuring regional stability. If the U.S. properly communicates major powers to deal with North Korean issues, it will take a predominant position in the close relationship with Korea when North Korea collapses and even after then. Then the U.S. can keep up its influence as well as military presence for regional security in Northeast Asia as controlling major powers’ military expansion like China, Russia and Japan. Its practical steps can be figured out as U.S. Strategy in the Process of Collapse of North Korea. This step can be pursued after the international society has been failed to open North Korean society by soft power, such as humanitarian assistance as supporting food to relive North Korean people’s famine so far.

| Table 1 |
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| **Step 1 The U.S. Bilateral Contact** |
| **The U.S.** | **Contact** | **Agenda** |
| China | Direct Dialogue | North Korea’s Future |
| North Korea | Bilateral Talk | Military Attacks and Nuclear Weapons |
| South Korea | Reciprocal Talk | Reinforcement of Alliance |
| Japan | Strategic Contact | Continual Support |
| Russia | Strategic Contact | Positive Position toward the U.S. |

Even though the U.S. and North Korea held their first direct talks on July, 2011 since December 2009, it just implies that the Obama Administration explores ways to return to multilateral talks to dismantle North Korea’s nuclear program.\(^{14}\) The Obama considers it’s the best way to resume Six Party Talks to handle North Korean issues while leading them in the ultimate position. North Korea’s misunderstanding toward U.S. policy is likely to result in its termination that the U.S. is preparing for North Korea’s collapse scenario at any time.

2. China’s Advantage

China's number one priority is likely to economic advantage when North Korea collapse. China will take over economic priority on the Korean Peninsula as the closest neighbor based on formal experience in economic zones. This practical advantage will be more important than military predominance before the U.S. China is only the country which has supported North Korea with the strongest influence and has also been on the side of North Korea’s national stance no matter what North Korea’s military provocations with nuclear weapons. As well, in the moment of North Korea’s collapse, China would

definitely resist any U.S. military presence north of the DMZ. On the other hand, China would be comfortable with the reunified Korea, even though it is tend to anchor to the U.S. in a stronger alliance as long as Korea is not hostile towards China. China’s military intervention in the event of North Korea’s collapse will be exposed in very rare chance, because China’s strategic economic interests now lie with the U.S., Japan, and South Korea not North Korea.  

Ironically, China kept on also holding the main key to impact on North Korea among Six Party Talks countries as suggesting a three-step formula for resumption of Six Party Talks: first, resume inter-Korean dialogue, second, resume high-level U.S.-North Korea direct contacts through a visit by Vice Minister Kim Kye-gwan to the U.S., and finally reconvene Six Party Talks in Beijing. Nevertheless, since China’s economic growth became national agenda, its interests have been turned to South Korea from North Korea in speed so that South Korea becomes the most important economic partner to China as the most important military ally to the U.S., even though North Korea mainly counts on China. Korea is listed in the 14th position in the world economy with the world’s 12th largest military power in terms of expenditure. The International Monetary Fund expects Korea’s economy to expand 4.5 percent 2011. If Korea becomes unified, its economic level will be much upgraded as threatening Japan’s position that it will be the main factor to become one of major powers not just in Northeast Asia but also in the world.

Furthermore, China’s economic interests have been deeply explored in North Korea more than political influence and will be continued to take over the priority position on the unified Korea in advance. Chinese investment in North Korea grew from $1.5 million in 2002 to about $42 million in 2008. China's official data from early 2008 also shows 84 Chinese investment streams in North Korea with a total value of $440 million. Recently embarked China-North Korean economic projects are seen as the most significant event that the joint development of special economic zones has drawn special attention by the Chinese central government.

This project started in 1991, near the Chinese and North Korean border, which also involved Russia.

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Mongolia, South Korea and Japan by using the market to play a major role in its own economic development, so that it could be applied in their joint project with North Korea while launching a groundbreaking ceremony on one of the joint economic zones, Hwanggumpyong Island in the following day to build roads connecting the Chinese city of Hunchun with the North Korean port city Rajin. As well, by developing the economic zones, China gains access to the East Sea from its northeastern region and a maritime transport route to the south. China is apparently interested in using the port to ship resources, grain and timber more swiftly and cheaply from north to south.\textsuperscript{20} If such high-profile projects on the prospects of the special economic zones succeed in economic improvement, China might tend to reconfigure North Korea’s strategic calculations in dealings with the U.S. and its Asian allies, including South Korea and Japan. China’s main goal is to produce a synergy effect by linking the joint initiative to its ongoing economic development projects in the northeastern region near the North Korean border, Changchun, Jilin and Tumen as dubbed the "Chang-Ji-Tu" plan.

With all these economic potentials that China eagerly pursues with North Korea, first of all, China is not in favor of North Korea’s collapse which will bring into a swarm of North Korean refugees pouring in across its border and spill its overall economic projects.\textsuperscript{21} In other way, China is, as well, in fear that the U.S. and its allies’ troops such as South Korea and Japan start emerging on its doorstep\textsuperscript{22} in the name of security and stability for denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula so that China unwillingly has to withdraw its economic projects on Northern area. Nonetheless, China is the only country which is practically preparing to take over the priority in the time of collapse as it propelling economic tides with North Korea as encouraging inter-Korean companies to go behind the border fence and get a foothold in the market before other countries.

China’s national interest toward North Korea is getting very simple to concentrate on economic advantage as the priority. Its ongoing process related to contemporary economic zone projects will be background to predominate Northern part of the unified Korea when North Korea collapse. If the U.S. focus on military influence on the Korean Peninsula as ignoring economic potential, China will be the number one country with strongest economic tide with the unified Korea. Korea would be more dependent and closer to China with the biggest national debt for unification expense of the unified Korea after North Korea collapses.

3. Russia’s Interest

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il made a step for an unofficial visit with the invitation Russian president Dimitry Medvedev in nearly a decade on August 20, 2011 since 2002. The principle aim of Kim’s visit is to venture out economic cooperation with Russia which recently turned its policy toward North Korea with economic interests. Kim Jong-il’s visit significantly implies that Russia starts its economic projects in full scale in the prospect that it is going to prepare North Korea’s collapse and new venture with the unified Korea in economic relationship. Russia drew Kim Jong-il’s agreement that North Korea will allow gas pipeline from Russia to South Korea through out North Korea, where three countries are involved in reciprocal interests to reinforce their economic relationship.

Russia has sunk considerable amounts of capital into numerous large-scale, long-term international infrastructure projects involving the Korean Peninsula, such as oil and gas pipelines and Trans-Korean(TKR) and Trans-Siberian railroads(TSR) junctions, which will continually produce immeasurable interests between inter-Koreas and Russia. Many countries are also interested in such projects which would gain much through the more economical transportation of export goods to Europe. For instance, such railways would be able to carry cargo from Busan to Germany with virtually no transshipment in only 15 days instead of 45 days. As much, these projects are of crucial importance to the economic revitalization of the Russian Far East area but in the case of collapse, these projects and Russian economic interests would be also severely damaged. Russia now dashes to set up such infrastructure projects with North Korea, which can go through the Korean Peninsula. Such economic initiatives would be more influential on inter-Koreas to determine North Korean issues and build up new relationship with the unified Korea as the most important economic partner more than China or the U.S.

In fact, Russia was the only country with China on the side of North Korea in the international society which denounced investigation process and its result related to South Korean warship, Cheonan incident in 2010. No matter what Russia also presented regret for North Korea’s shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in the same year, its stance is still toward North Korea more than South Korea. Even though

23 North Korea’s Kim Jong-il arrives in Russia on rare visit. BNO News/Channel 6 News. August 20, 2011.
25 North Korea – Russia relations. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia-North_Korea_relations
Russia’s assistance has offered South Korea's space program for a solid jump start and economic relations became much developed where many of major companies of South Korea have research centers. Korean companies have hired hundreds of Russian engineers and scientists to improve the technology for their products. For instance, Samsung and LG both develop in Russian software platforms for the digital technologies in their cell phones and other digital products. The Russians are also willing to share intellectual property with Korea.

Despite remarkable economic progress with South Korea, Russia is rethinking of reinforcing North Korean interests with economic potentials and invites Kim, Jong-il for the practical step. Even though Russia’s invitation seems to signify simply economic cooperation with North Korea, it also contains political plots. Russia tends to revive its political influence on inter-Koreas at the same time which become more volunteering to Russia by involving economic interests and cooperation. If oil and gas pipeline or TSR and TKR get installed going through on the Korean Peninsula, three country will make giant economic interests and moreover, their relationship will be much advanced and impact on the world economy. Then unified Korea and Russia will concentrate on economic development in the bigger scale even after North Korea collapses. In the long term projects, as well, Russia plans to manage free trade areas such as Najin and Sunbong that it invites many of companies from South Korea, the U.S. and Japan to invest by constituting consortium which can develop Russia’s economy based on natural resources. Russia tends to lead major powers through its economic importance in Northeast Asia and take a priority in the process of North Korea’s collapse.

4. Japan’s Revival

Japan’s policy toward North Korea can be understood in the context of a general desire to increase its influence vis-à-vis competitors in Asia such as China and Russia while enhancing its own capacity for autonomous action within the confines of its security relationship with the U.S. This strategy would be focused on manipulating itself as the main factor to deal with North Korean issues. In advance, Japan’s pursuit of better diplomatic relations with North Korea has been aimed primarily at securing its economic and political influence in the future development of the united Korea.27 Japan has been supporting a part of the U.S. policy in the category of the U.S. and Japan alliance. As well, Japan has ran parallel with its own principle policy is based on constraining the ability of any regime on the Korean Peninsula to

conduct a direct military attack against Japanese territories, especially by medium-range missiles, and develop the ability to protect the Japanese homeland in the event of such an attack. In advance, Japan prevents China or Russia from having dominant influence over the Korean Peninsula.\textsuperscript{28} Japan's Korea policy has been characterized as a mix of strategic caution and opportunistic policy. Although the Korean Peninsula has long been critical to Japanese national interests, Japan was unlikely to play a proactive role and would remain cautious, reactive, and adaptive to the process of reunification as it develops.\textsuperscript{29}

As much, Japan is apt to pursue very flexible national strategy in Northeast Asia. Japan’s alliance with the U.S. already leaked out. It is willing to turn to China which becomes more influential on regional issues in the Northeast Asia after it took over Japan’s position in the world economy. Japan obviously recognizes the U.S. is initiating an important strategy to reinforce alliance with South Korea through military drills. In fact, the U.S. strategically rethinks South Korea as a main partner to keep up Asia policy after the U.S.-Japan alliance breaks down. Between Korea and the U.S., Japan is losing its national symmetry power.

In some way, Japan is very afraid of Korean Reunification, because the unified Korea will be much stronger and powerful in Northeast Asia, which will challenge Japan’s national position and furthermore it will take over Japan’s role in U.S. relationship as a regional power. Japan has been recognized that Korea and the U.S. alliance is getting reinforced in speed and China’s national power spreads over Northeast Asia, which is successfully propelling its strategic or economic ventures toward with the prospect of the unified Korea. These political symptoms will suffocate Japan’s status as a regional power which doesn’t bounce its voices to impact on regional issues. It can be very positive that the unified Korea will take over Japan’s economic position in Northeast Asia as the major economic partner with China. Then, the U.S. which tends to kick out Japan will make a fast economic cooperation with Korea based on FTA as economic strategy to beat up China and Russia.

With all these prospects around the Korean Peninsula, Japan is now frustrating to prepare North Korea’s collapse without any continual confidence related to political royalty in the relations with the U.S. To overcome such a dilemma which can push out Japan from major powers’ strategic interests, Japan will build up new policy toward North Korea’s collapse with economic and military background. U.S. military headquarter still stays in Japan and it will do a main role as a back-up military base when

the U.S. starts up military actions in the eminent moment of North Korea’s collapse. Japan will also
eagerly take part in North Korean economic zones through large scale of investment as a potential
competitor to promote its economic leverage to compete China and Russia when they fully conduct their
economic zone projects with North Korea. Japan will concentrate on focusing its national revival through
these military and economic strategy between major powers.

IV. How Korea-U.S. Reconciliation will Beat Up Major Powers

Since major powers around the Korean Peninsula recognized that the unified Korea’s economic
position will be much upgraded in large scale of potential in the world economy, they rush to jump on
improving relationship with Korea. Especially, China and Russia push up their economic projects with
North Korea on the national stage as preparing to take an economic priority at the moment of North
Korea’s collapse. With economic benefits, especially China and Russia wouldn’t be likely to allow North
Korea’s collapse or instability in their national strategy. They will promote as well as share economic
interests by supporting North Korea to hold its sovereignty.

When North Korea collapses, as such, the first priority of major powers could be not politics but
economy. Real winner in such power games will be number one economic winner. China is the most
potential in this point. However, in view of overall challenges, the unified Korea is likely take the
number one beneficiary, because the unified Korea will take a lot of benefits from China and Russia
with economic ventures toward the world market and from the U.S. and even Japan with military security
and stability as a new regional power which reorganize power structure in Northeast Asia.

Despite this positive prospect, if the North Korean regime were to collapse, security issue will be
number one agenda through the Korean Peninsula that major powers directly involve. The ensuing chaos
would require immediate action by the U.S. and its allies to restore stability, provide humanitarian relief,
and search for and prevent the distribution of WMDs. International attention has been focused on North
Korea's nuclear weapons program, which endangers U.S. national interests, the safety of critical U.S.
allies Japan and South Korea, and peace and stability in Asia. The U.S. must continue to use a
combination of diplomatic pressure and highly conditional negotiations to induce Pyongyang to abide by
its denuclearization pledges, as well as to prevent nuclear proliferation.

In the other way, there would be very possible environment because of instability in the country's
leadership as an internal factor toward collapse. The planned succession from the ailing Kim Jong-il to
his third son faces many challenges and may not be successful. Because of lack of experience of young
leader, there would be possibly exposed the potential of severe power struggles among challengers within
the senior party and high ranked military group\textsuperscript{30} If the situation became so dire as to bring about the collapse of the regime, it could lead to North Korea's loss of control over its nuclear weapons. It will result in greater risk of rogue elements selling weapons of mass destruction to other rogue governments and terrorist groups as fighting among competing factions, economic turmoil, and humanitarian disaster. Under such circumstances, China or South Korea might feel compelled to send troops into North Korea to stabilize the country, raising the potential for miscalculation and armed confrontation.\textsuperscript{31}

Final destination to stop repeating such as military provocations as well as void echoes to threaten international security with nuclear weapons will be some type of collapse in the North Korea. It is necessary to preparing for that eventuality as just time, no matter how far it lies in the future.\textsuperscript{32} Stephen Bosworth, special envoy to North Korea emphasized the U.S. is always ready to support Korean Reunification on the side of South Korea as long as North Korea might collapse any time.\textsuperscript{33} Therefore, Korea-U.S. win-win policy will pack up major powers’ political ambition on the Korean Peninsula. Korea-U.S. alliance will enhance regional peace and security. It depends on how Korea-U.S. reciprocal strategy beats up major powers’ political appetite in the collapse process and finally ends up to the unified Korea which dedicates regional security and stability.

1. Strategic Goal

The U.S. has to prepare to play a major and direct role in dealing with the effects of North Korea’s collapse, when it actually occurs. It is also very natural that North Korea’s collapse scenarios make South Korea’s direct role larger than that of the U.S. At this point, the U.S. should carefully coordinate with South Korea, and even China and other players to develop a basic strategy of operations which should include three major missions.\textsuperscript{34} In fact, it became a drastic turning point that the sinking of the Cheonan and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010 raised concerns for both the South Korean and U.S.

\textsuperscript{30} Sunny Lee, \textit{North Korea’s Future toward Collapse or Survival}. \textit{Korea Times/ New York}, 8/12/11.
\textsuperscript{33} \textbf{2005 IKUPD Interview article with Stephen Bosworth} by IKUPD Director Sunny Lee. Refer to www.ikupd.org
governments that North Korea may no longer be conventionally deterred.\(^{35}\) The two governments have been reviewing how their basic and extended deterrence policies should be reorganized to adapt to control North Korea’s unpredicted military provocations. In reviewing deterrence, the following four considerations are particularly important:

   First, North Korea was certainly not deterred from launching not one but two limited strikes against the South in 2010. North Korea most likely calculated that its attempt to escalate aggression against the South Korea was successful and that there was a margin for even further escalation.

   Second, due to progress in its nuclear weapons program, North Korea may have greater confidence in its capacity to control the level of escalation. North Korea has believed that its nuclear capacity enhanced the effectiveness of mutual deterrence vis-à-vis South Korea and the US at the strategic level.

   Third, both Koreas and the U.S. appear keen to exercise a certain level of restraint and control escalation. South Korean F-16 and F-15 jets were also rushed to the area, but they did not provoke North Korean targets. More importantly, the US did not take joint action directly on initial counter strikes. In terms of the range of escalation, the offensive exchanges in the Yeonpyeong case were relatively low in intensity.

   Fourth, the role of China in deterring North Korean aggression is increasingly important. As deterrence consists of sets of action to convince a party to refrain from initiating harmful action, it is not determined only by opponents but also by supporters. Nevertheless, China could weaken deterrence through efforts to persuade South Korea and the U.S. not to pressure North Korea. It can also increase its anti-access and denial capability to encourage North Korean military operations.

\[\text{Table 4} \quad \text{Korea - U.S. Strategic Goal}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Disposal</td>
<td>Locating and Securing Nuclear Materials through Disposal Process</td>
<td>Nonproliferation on the Korean Peninsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Security</td>
<td>Restoring Order and Combating Remnants of North Korean Military</td>
<td>Termination of the State of Anarchy by Armed Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
<td>Providing Basic Goods and Services</td>
<td>Removal of Anti-emotion toward the Presence of Foreign Forces and Military Domination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the strategic goal between Korea and the U.S. which results in economy, military and political reinforcement in Northeast Asia should also beat up major powers’ ambitions to win their national interests in the time of North Korea’ collapse as well as preparing the stronger relationship with the unified Korea. If Korea and the U.S. initiate major powers’ interests when North Korea collapses, they will follow up most of strategies that Korea and the U.S. successfully conduct their mission toward the unified Korea.

2. Korea - U.S. Win-Win Policy

North Korea requested the U.S. that the Six-Party Talks as the negotiations over North Korea’s nuclear program between the U.S., China, Japan, Russia, North Korea, and South Korea should resume as early as North Korea is willing to negotiate. If so, it would not only mark an end to what's been a two-year hiatus in the talks, but it could also signal the beginning of a new, and critical, phase of the negotiations. Indeed, while all the involved parties are by now deeply familiar with the basic issues at hand, the stakes are higher now than ever to salvage a palatable solution to North Korea's nuclear problem. Right now, North Korea may well be at a critical transitional moment in the development of its nuclear arsenal. Such a dashing request means North Korea is likely to recognize instability of Kim’s sovereignty and predict its collapse by internal factors.

The consequences of a regime change in North Korea could be staggering. Immediately, the U.S., South Korean, and Chinese troops could charge into North Korea to secure its nuclear facilities and

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Table 5 Strategic Interests of Major Powers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Power</th>
<th>The U.S.</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Military/ Economy/ politics</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Economy/ Security</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S.</td>
<td>Headquarter of Asia Strategy</td>
<td>Economy/ Security</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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confront each other. Midterm, reviving North Korea could cost South Korea, Japan, China, and the U.S. with enormous sums. Long term, the reunited Korea would change the power balance of Northeast Asia.\textsuperscript{37} But no matter what major powers involve, Korea-U.S. win-win policy will cover up all the conditions which will be brought out through successful conduct to handle North Korea’s collapse. It will also go through unification process and finally bring out national interests to both countries which can control other major powers in Northeast Asia.

Table 6  
Korea-U.S. Win-Win Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Regional Security</th>
<th>Regional Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
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<td>FTA</td>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>Nonproliferation</td>
<td>Defense Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S.</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Asia Policy</td>
<td>Nonproliferation</td>
<td>Power Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Headquarter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Conclusion

National competitiveness comes basically economic power and military capacity. The U.S. has been the superpower after the Cold War. But its economy contemporarily gets serious dilemmas which propel its decline. Nevertheless, U.S. military power will keep up the number one position in advance. Even though Japan’s economy once followed up right after the U.S., it was not considered as the second position in the level of national competitiveness. As such, China will pass over U.S. economy but still its national status can’t beat up the U.S. power. As such, the U.S. can do the most important role with South Korea to handle the urgent moments of North Korea’s collapse. If the U.S. promote its economic potential through FTA to explore international markets around the Korean Peninsula, it will effect economic recover and work out the U.S. return to the superpower’s position. Korea-U.S. relationship is exposing a key role when North Korea collapses and toward the unified Korea.

China and Russia already changed their strategic interests toward North Korea by launching numerous economic projects, because they recognized economic predominance on the Korean Peninsula will be really winning the power game in the collapse of North Korea. Military predominance is not much necessary to impact on the unified Korea after nuclear dismantlement without getting any productive

interests comparing to expending military expenses. The U.S. is likely to lose the power game if it keeps on the remote line from economic importance and its potential of the unified Korea which will be definitely entangled with China and Russia in huge scale of economic markets and projects. Such economic partnership based on reciprocal economic interests will establish new triangle relationship with China and Russia will constitute economic hub around the Korean Peninsula as the center of the world economy as the most important international market.

If China focuses on economic advantages in power game, it will be the winner when North Korea collapses, unless the U.S. propels FTA between Korea and the U.S. in economic reinforcement. China has been already prepared through economic zones projects with North Korea which will work out with practical function in market value. Even though the U.S. military occupancy takes a predominant position on the unified Korea, it doesn’t mean real winning, because the unified Korea will be more closer to China. However, as viewing economic interests through STR and KTR which will go through Russia and will be connected, Russia’s role can be a larger than China in the much bigger scale. Russia already recognizes this economic potential for its national interests which can be also a main factor to revive its economy toward the world market through the Korean Peninsula.

However, security and stability in the unified Korea still important which will keep up alliance with the U.S. Japan will be less important but it will take two sides in economy and military benefit to join regional security. Finally, North Korea’s collapse will be win-win game to all major powers. And real winner will count on its own national interests to take the priority position but Korean and the U.S. will handle all power games as leading countries in Northeast Asia.
References


Martin’s, 1995.


