DEALING WITH DORMANT AND ACTIVE THREATS:
THE STRATEGY OF SOUTH KOREA TOWARD CHINA
IN THE POST COLD WAR ERA

A Dissertation
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Government

By

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Washington, D.C.
August 28, 2008
This dissertation is dedicated to my parents

B.Y. Yoo and S.S. Park
Policies that the Republic of Korea (ROK) has employed toward China in the post Cold War era pose a puzzle for Realism. A power-driven argument predicts that the rise of China compels the ROK either to strengthen its alliance with the United States or to seek a new alignment with China. However, despite drastic growth in China’s material capability, South Korea has neither balanced against China nor bandwagoned with it. Moreover, existing literature on threat perception cannot explain why discussions on “a China threat” are absent in South Korea although Beijing constitutes good grounds for perceived threats to Seoul.

This dissertation develops a new theoretical framework “dyad threats.” The new theory explains how and why a given state differentiates between greater and lesser external threats aligned against it and whether this differentiation impacts the range of state behavior. The case study of South Korea reveals the relative strength of the dyad threats theory. South Korea’s behavior with respect to China is influenced directly by the threat perception vis-à-vis North Korea. Despite potential threats from China, the predominance of threats from North Korea as a major security challenger to the ROK makes China threats dormant and causes Seoul to choose a policy far short of balancing
against China and to seek Chinese help in mitigating the North Korea threats. However, when South Korea perceives decreased threats from North Korea, then more typical balancing behavior toward China becomes evident. The reduction of major threats from North Korea guides South Korea to recognize the existence of China threats immediately and therefore threats from China become active. This dissertation fills a void in our understanding of the processes by which states differentiate external threats and the range of state behavior that may sit in the grey area between balancing and bandwagoning.
### Abbreviation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>ASEM</td>
<td>Asia Europe Meeting</td>
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<td>DPRK</td>
<td>Democratic People’s Republic of Korea</td>
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<td>FDA</td>
<td>South Korea Food and Drug Administration</td>
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<td>JDA</td>
<td>Japanese Defense Agency</td>
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<td>KAMD</td>
<td>Korean Air and Missile Defense</td>
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<td>KCRP</td>
<td>South Korea Conference on Religion and Peace</td>
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<td>KRW</td>
<td>Korean Won (South Korean currency)</td>
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<td>KTC</td>
<td>Korea Trade Commission</td>
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<td>KITA</td>
<td>Korea International Trade Association</td>
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<td>MND</td>
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<td>MOCIE</td>
<td>Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy (South Korea)</td>
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<td>MOFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs (China)</td>
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<td>MOFAT</td>
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<td>Ministry of Finance and Economy (South Korea)</td>
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<td>NCCK</td>
<td>National Council of Churches in Korea</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PNBC</td>
<td>Pan-National Buddhist Commission for Dalai Lama’s Visit to Korea (South Korea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMB</td>
<td>Chinese Renminbi (Chinese currency)</td>
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<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
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<td>USFK</td>
<td>United States Forces in Korea</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines how states differentiate external threats and whether this differentiation influences the range of balancing behavior employed by states. In essence, I shed light on two types of general questions in international politics. First, what constitutes major threats and makes others minor threats? Why and how do states perceive some states as the greatest threats, while treating others as less threatening? What processes do states employ to recognize major and minor threats? Second, how do states deal with what is perceived as minor threats? Do states overlook them? Or, are there perhaps policies short of balancing to deal with threats other than major ones? These questions demonstrate limitations in existing research on threat perception. Current studies focus on how to deal with the most threatening countries and thus, ignore situations where other types of threats may exist simultaneously with major threats.

This subject is particularly compatible with arresting facts concerned with the Republic of Korea (ROK). While drastically growing China’s material capability has generated widespread discussions of a “China threat” in the world\(^1\), South Korea has

\(^1\) Discussions on a China threat appeared in the early 1990s and continued to exist in the 2000s. Most
hardly clarified the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as a threat or expressed any negative aspects of it, even though the issue has never been a taboo. Instead, Seoul has demonstrated positive viewpoints on Beijing on numerous occasions. For instance, according to a 2004 survey conducted among the members of a ruling party in South Korea, 63 percent of party members selected China as the most important diplomatic partner for the Republic, while only 26 percent chose America.

Several nation-wide surveys showed South Korean people’s genuine interest in and their acceptance of China’s growing weight in the Korean society. According to an internet survey in 1999, in response to a question comparing the influences of the United States and China on the Korean peninsula, 51 percent believed that both America and China would have similar political impacts by 2010, while 19.6 percent


expected China’s dominance. A 2006 survey unequivocally revealed that the South Korean public might prefer China to the United States. In terms of one hundred scales of preference, Beijing received 73 points and Washington got only 45.7 points from the respondents.

Along with this trend, pundits in Seoul emphasized ample opportunities that China could provide and the Seoul government hardly publicized domestic concerns over China’s economic prowess which has created a competition between the two Asian countries in the global exporting market. Considering this phenomenon, one study has cautiously assumed that people in the Republic may not perceive China as a serious threat.

Why is it that discussions about a China threat have been absent in South Korea when Beijing objectively constitutes a threat in terms of the traditional balance of

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6 David C. Kang, China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Although Kang’s study has not specified that China is not a threat to South Korea, one can infer this point from a few sentences in his book, China Rising. Kang says, “If South Korea considered China a threat, ostensibly its force structure would be different. Yet South Korea’s defense spending has decreased by over a third, from 4.4 percent of GDP in 1990 to 2.8 percent of GDP in 2004. South Korean naval and ground capabilities remained roughly the same over the decade. The number of main battle tanks, artillery, and surface combatants has remained roughly the same. South Korea did expand its tactical submarine force, but even here the expansion is modest. This shows that South Korea has not changed its military planning or procurement in any major direction, to face a land or sea threat. Thus, although South Korea still retains a strong military, it is clearly designed primarily to respond to a North Korean attack.”
threat? What prevents South Korea from recognizing the PRC as a threat, despite China’s proximate military capability and its long-time security relationship with North Korea, a political and security challenger to the ROK? Is there any negative influence of the fact that China cherishes different values in terms of the political system on Seoul’s views? These questions are pertinent to the first broad question above mentioned. That is, what constitutes South Korea’s perception toward China?

The following analyses of South Korea’s policy toward the People’s Republic are concerned with the second general question: what strategies do states employ vis-à-vis countries other than major threats? Since the two Asian countries normalized diplomatic relationship in 1992, Seoul has engaged in intensifying economic, political and military interactions with Beijing. In the field of economy, China has become the


9 South Korea, along with a number of other states in East Asia, normalized bilateral relations with China owing to the atmosphere of the end of the Cold War. Indonesia and China severed bilateral relations in October 1967 and restored the relationship in August 1990. Singapore established diplomatic relations with China in October 1990. The relations between Vietnam and China deteriorated in the 1970s and became normalized in November 1991. Lastly, the diplomatic recognition between the Republic of Korea and China occurred in August 1992.

10 Informal trade between China and South Korea began through Hong Kong as early as 1978. In terms of diplomatic contacts, the first meeting between South Korean and Chinese diplomats occurred in Seoul
largest trading partner to South Korea. China has been the number one destination of South Korea’s export since 2003, while the Republic has been the second largest market for Chinese goods since 2004.\textsuperscript{11} South Korea increased investment to China to 3,336 million dollars in 2006, which was 15 times as much as 1993.\textsuperscript{12}

Diplomatic and public exchanges have increased considerably. Leaders’ official visits take place in a regular basis and high and working level bureaucrat meetings occur frequently.\textsuperscript{13} Moreover, a growing number of South Koreans travel to China for various purposes.\textsuperscript{14} Particularly noticeable is the number of South Korean students which occupies almost 40 percent of the entire foreign students in the PRC.\textsuperscript{15} Scholarly articles have reflected a positive move in growing bilateral interactions.\textsuperscript{16}

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\textsuperscript{11} See appendix B.

\textsuperscript{12} For information on South Korea’s investment to China, see the Korean Bank of Export and Import. Accessible via http://www.koreaexim.go.kr.

\textsuperscript{13} See appendix D.

\textsuperscript{14} The number of South Korean visitors to China has grown drastically since 1992. In 1993, 0.1 million Korean traveled to China and the number became 2.96 million in 2005. The data is available in the Korea Tourism Organization. Accessible via http://www.knto.or.kr.

\textsuperscript{15} Korean ambassador to China, Kim Ha-Jung, provided this information during the press conference. He mentioned that the total number of foreign students in China was approximately 110 thousand in 2007. The number of South Korean students was 43 thousand, and that of Japanese students ranked at the second, running at 19 thousand. America sent the third largest number of foreign students to China (8.5thousand). Jaehoon Lee, "Kim Ha Jung Chungkuk Daesa, 'Chungkuk Nae Hankuk Yuhaksaeng Kun Jasan' [Ambassador Kim, 'South Korean Students in China Are a Big Asset']," \textit{Hankyoreh}, February 13 2006.

Interestingly, South Korea has increased military contacts with its Chinese partner. Two countries established liaison offices after the normalization and launched regular visits among high-level military personnel.17 Recently, they even established naval hot-line communications and set up plans to conduct joint search and rescue exercises in the Yellow Sea, the ocean between China and the Korean peninsula.

This phenomenon was coincided with growing tensions between Seoul and Washington on major issues, concerned with the core of the reforms in US-ROK alliance. For example, the Republic has avoided joining US missile defense programs to which America has spent considerable time and effort for several years. Moreover, Seoul has been reluctant to approve the flexible use of the United States Forces in the Korean peninsula (USFK) for contingencies in East Asia.

More importantly, central disagreements between leaders in the United States and South Korea emerged on how to treat the North Korean regime, whereas Seoul and Beijing seemed to share common grounds on the same subject. Recognizing this trend, some experts have claimed that the fact that Seoul has become closer to Beijing could decrease cooperation and perhaps increase frictions between South Korea and

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17 See appendix E-2.
America.\textsuperscript{18} Others even asserted that the creation of a possible security and political collaboration between the two Asian continental powers may occur in the foreseeable future.\textsuperscript{19}

However, a strategic coalition between South Korea and China has not fully developed. Indeed, both Chinese and South Korean leaders regard it as impossible to form an alliance for the time being. Moreover, Seoul’s detachment from Washington has not created a complete collapse of the alliance. South Korea, in particular, tried to restore relations with the United States by sending off a large number of troops to Iraq upon America’s request and was willing to adjust itself to other issues such as relocating US bases in the peninsula.

On the other hand, Seoul has adopted unfriendly choices with respect to the Chinese government in the political and economic arenas. The government of South Korea imposed tariffs on Chinese products, which created a trade war between the two. It also exhibited brazen behavior on political issues to which China was extremely sensitive. In summary, South Korea’s policies toward China range from cooperative to uncooperative gestures and more importantly, the behaviors represent neither traditional

\textsuperscript{18} David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks," \textit{International Security} 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003): 57-85. Jae Ho Chung, "South Korea between Eagle and Dragon: Perceptual Ambivalence and Strategic Dilemma," \textit{Asian Survey} 41, no. 5 (September 2001): 777-96. On the other hand, some may also argue that the fear of entrapment in alliance relations with the United States helps explain the ROK’s distancing from America. The fears of entrapment will be discussed in the next chapter.

balancing nor bandwagoning.

Given that South Korea’s threat perception on China is seemingly nonexistent, Seoul’s bifurcated policies profoundly challenge the current literature on threat perception. First, since balance of threat theory predicts that states balance against even potentially threatening countries, it cannot explain why South Korea sometimes distanced itself from its alliance partner, while pursuing an ambivalent tilt to China. Conversely, growing interactions between the two Asian countries have not yet promoted South Korea’s strategic alliance with China. This refutes major arguments that growing Sino-South Korean relations will increase the process of a US-ROK break-up. Second, since the balance of threat focuses on how to deal with major threats, it cannot explain the range of policies including cooperation to tough gestures toward China which Seoul does not perceive as the greatest threats.

This dissertation has two main goals. First, as “building-block” type of research,\textsuperscript{20} I suggest a new theoretical framework, called dyad threats, which uses novel explanatory variables, including the processes of differentiating external threats and the complex roles and interactions of threat perceptions. I argue that states differentiate external dyad threats: major and minor threats. Major and minor threats are connected, so changes in the former shift the status of the latter. Consequently,

\textsuperscript{20} For more types of research objective, see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, \textit{Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Science} (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 76. According to Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, it is necessary to address specifically which type of theory-building is conducted in the research.
states employ bifurcated strategies toward major and minor threats. Since major threats have been in the center of previous works, the focus of this dissertation is placed on how to deal with minor threats.

Second, this theoretical analysis is tested in case studies on South Korea. The application to South Korea is an important experiment in two ways. While ROK-China relationship has been a major part of area studies on East Asia, there is relative lack of theoretical attempts to explain this case. Most existing research yields similar chronological examinations and fails to provide coherent theoretical analyses. Second, South Korea constitutes a tough case for my hypotheses because the rise of China is highly likely to justify the use of the balance-of-power assessment.21

The remainder of this chapter is divided into five sections. Based on puzzles in regard to South Korea’s policies toward China, the following section offers alternative explanations. The second section presents the summary of the main theoretical argument. Third, I discuss methodology and case selection. Next, I address the contributions of this dissertation to the field of international relations. The last section briefly mentions a plan for subsequent chapters.

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21 More explanations for the logic of case selection are addressed in the later part of this chapter.
Alternative Explanations

In this section, I present four types of theoretical explanations, based on structural realism, economic liberalism, strategic culture and domestic politics. They may provide necessary explanatory variables, but do not provide sufficient accounts for the puzzles of South Korea compared to my argument based on dyad threats.

First, structural realism can explain two extreme behaviors, such as balancing and bandwagoning, but cannot account for ROK’s behavior that may sit in the middle range. Second, economic liberalism offers an explanation for economic cooperation and some spill-over effects on diplomatic and even military fields. However, it cannot explain frictions between Seoul and Beijing. Third, explanations based on strategic culture and domestic politics are overdetermined. Both can elucidate South Korea’s two different policies toward China, and yet cannot identify the point when Seoul is cooperative to China and when it is not.

Structural Realism

South Korea’s policy toward China is a puzzling phenomenon for structural realism. According to a general trend of realist analyses, state behavior is contingent on structural changes based on the trajectory of relative power. Because China’s material

\[\text{References}\]

capability has been drastically growing, a prediction based on realism is that South Korea should seek an alignment with or against the People’s Republic. In other words, South Korea is expected to “bandwagon” by engaging in a strategic alliance with China and leaving the alliance with the United States, or to “balance” by strengthening the current alliance with Washington against Beijing.

In addition, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of ideological competition erode the foundations of the alliance and thus constitute another reason for the US-ROK alliance to fall apart. South Korea and the United States lack common perceptions toward previous Cold War opponents after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Particularly, a notion that China may become a potential opponent against the US-South Korean alliance does not seem valid.

Nevertheless, South Korea’s policy toward China demonstrates neither a new alliance with Beijing nor a tightened alliance with Washington. First, it seems that South Korea’s alliance with China is not an option for leaders in the two Asian countries at present. Although Seoul’s diplomatic interactions epitomize an attachment toward Beijing, South Korea did not improve its relationship to the level of a security coalition with the Chinese government. The development of bilateral security relations between the two Asian countries is limited to the level of exchanges.

Second, structural realism also maintains that South Korea is expected to reinforce the alliance with the United States in order to balance against China.

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However, Seoul has distanced itself from its alliance partner on several occasions. The ROK, for example, has been reluctant to develop the theater missile defense system (TMD) with the United States. Official announcements by South Korean leaders, including ministers of national defense, clarified that one reason for this was that the TMD system would return the Northeast Asian region to the Cold War configuration.\(^{23}\) Their logic is that if South Korea joins the US-led TMD program, it will stimulate collaboration between Russia and China and accordingly, Northeast Asia will become an arena filled with arms competitions.

Some studies have noted that growing interdependence with China will place South Korea in a situation where it has to make a strategic choice between the United States and China.\(^{24}\) Other works have even claimed that South Korea’s policy toward China does constitute bandwagoning\(^{25}\) or accommodating\(^{26}\), leaving the alliance with America falling apart. Even though these assessments may be correct in interpreting South Korea’s diplomatic approach, they do not account for why there have not been any processes of real break-up in the US-ROK alliance or any signs of an actual strategic coalition between Seoul and Beijing.

The US-South Korean alliance contains more complexity. Off and on, Seoul

\(^{24}\) Chung, "South Korea between Eagle and Dragon: Perceptual Ambivalence and Strategic Dilemma."
and Washington swept aside concerns over the spirit of the alliance and worked on reassuring commitments to one another. For instance, South Korea deployed the third largest ground troops to Iraq and agreed with the United States to replace US bases despite strong domestic objections. The United States, on the other hand, secured 11 billion dollars to improve the combat capability of the USFK in place of a withdrawal of ground troops.²⁷ Structural realist analyses do not provide sufficient accounts for why the US-ROK alliance has shown seemingly contradictory observations: neither strengthened nor dissolved. It does not explain why the United States and South Korea have been cooperative in some issues but not others.

Economic Liberalism

While economic liberalism shares the structural realist assumption that the international system is anarchical, it maintains positive views on cooperation among states.²⁸ Cooperation is more likely because states expect absolute gains from it. Once states engage in cooperation, they can link cooperation in particular issues to other topics. As Robert Keohane argues, cooperation in certain economic issues is interlinked with efforts to promote cooperation in other interactions and spill over to a whole

²⁷ The Korea Herald, May 19 2004.
different field such as foreign policy agendas and military relations.\textsuperscript{29}

As the logic of liberalism explains, South Korea cooperates with China because this provides opportunities and gains for the Korean economy. Consequently, cooperation between South Korea and China in the economic field can spill over into political and even military collaboration. Nevertheless, according to this theoretical analysis, since the spill-over effect on the political and military fields is still on-going, South Korea is not ready to align itself with China and maintains its alliance with the United States, although the degree of military cooperation between Seoul and Washington may be reduced.

The growing Chinese economy has attracted South Korea with a huge market and opportunities for investment. South Korean Prime Minister Jin Nyum stated this point. “The drastic economic growth of China should not be seen negatively…Although some parts of Korean industries may be faced with Chinese rivalries; other types of industries will obtain much more opportunities than before.”\textsuperscript{30} The increase of bilateral trade is phenomenal. Although the trade volume was not more than 41 million dollars in 1980, it increased to no less than 31 billion dollars in 2000 and to 79 billion dollars in 2004. Moreover, South Korea’s investment in China


increased from 163 million dollars in 1992 to 892 million dollars in 2000 and to 2.33 billion dollars in 2004.

South Korea and China have expanded bilateral relations from the economic sphere to diplomatic arena. The bilateral relationship expanded from “friendly and cooperative relationship” in 1992, to “cooperative partnership” in 1998 and to “comprehensive and cooperative partnership” in 2003. Moreover, the two East Asian countries initiated official military exchanges, although their interactions remain minimal.

Nevertheless, there are two drawbacks of this theoretical assessment. First, growing economic contacts can create negative spill-over effects. As Kenneth Waltz has noted, more economic interactions increase the points of potential disagreements and can eventually cause conflicts between the two countries. One example is a trade war in 2001, when South Korea imposed a safeguard on Chinese garlic, while the Chinese government retaliated with a ‘comprehensive’ ban on two South Korean products, cellular phones and polyethylene. This incident turned the South Korean public against Beijing. Third, considering the puzzles mentioned previously, economic liberalism cannot fully explain the cooperation and conflicts in the alliance relationship between South Korea and the United States and how this alliance is linked to issues concerning China.

**Strategic Culture**

The core argument of strategic culture is that the foreign policy of a given state is formulated through its own strategic filter, which reflects history, cultural experience and norms. In contrast to rationalist assessments, which are agnostic on the formation of preferences, the strategic culture theory posits that state preferences can be formed by cultural values and historical experience and an ongoing process of the international and domestic interactions. States behave with the guidance of external norms and values, while these norms and cultural values are developed and reformulated by state behaviors.

Applying strategic culture to South Korea and its China policy leads one to think of unique historical relations between the two Asian countries. ROK’s cooperative behavior is responsive to how Korea interprets its external environment. That is, Seoul construes the rise of China as a peaceful phenomenon which Korea should willingly adjust and adopt. For thousands of years, Korea was a country that received direct influences from China. Importantly, Korea embraced a fully institutionalized tributary system during Chosun dynasty (1392-1910) under the Chinese dominance of East

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Asia.\textsuperscript{34} The China-centered tributary required Korea to fulfill obligations, but at the same time Korea was able to enjoy a relative freedom within its own territory without being interrupted by the Chinese government in every day life. David Kang, therefore, has maintained that the avoidance of balancing behavior reflects the influence of historical experience under the Chinese hierarchy.\textsuperscript{35}

Strategic culture can also explain why South Korea’s overtures include tough gestures with respect to China. It argues that South Korea has a belief that the external atmosphere is tantamount to a zero-sum game as it was during the Cold War when the two Asian countries refused to recognize the existence of each other. Moreover, Chinese active exporting policies since the late 1970s have created increasing concerns about the impact of China’s economic capability on Korea and fostered rivalry relations between the two countries.

On the other hand, Evelyn Goh has presented an argument that the recognition of the hierarchical order prompts a balancing strategy along side the United States. Her explanation demonstrates that the East Asian regional order is composed of four hierarchy points, with the United States as a preeminent power, China as the secondary command and Japan as the third-tier power. South Korea, which occupies the fourth-tier in the East Asian hierarchical system, “deters Chinese push for hegemony by


\textsuperscript{35} Kang, \textit{China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia}. 
preserving US forces in the region.”

The application of strategic culture, however, has two weak points. First, if two kinds of conflicting norms (one is accepting China as a dominant power in East Asia, while the other is treating China as a competitor) are equally influential on state behavior, the state policy is not predictable since one does not know which norms are more prevalent. In addition, since state behavior helps restructure existing norms, there are no clues for how the norms and the behavior will continue to formulate each other in what direction. Therefore, the analysis of strategic culture faces a causality deadlock.

Second, strategic culture explains that Seoul accepts Beijing’s hierarchical status and thus cooperation is possible. However, why has one not seen that South Korea accepts China as a dominant leader in the military field and leaves the alliance with the United States? On the other hand, if South Korea interprets China as a competitor, why has one seen South Korea distance itself from the United States instead of strengthening the alliance?

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37 Scholars driven by strategic culture may argue that the theoretical assessment can explain the coexistence of cooperation and competition in bilateral relations between Seoul and Beijing. However, they still need to figure out which direction this relationship would go and which norms matter in what situation.
Domestic Politics

Although there are a variety of works on the “inextricable link” between domestic and international levels of analysis, this section looks at domestic politics as major influences on state behaviors. The school of pluralism considers domestic politics as an important independent variable. The pluralistic approach has noted that the fundamental actors are individuals whose choices are geared toward forming state preferences. It presents a priori that the convergence and clash of state preferences cause international cooperation and conflict.

The pluralistic approach helps us understand South Korea’s policy toward China. The cooperation and tough gestures of South Korea are contingent on positive and negative sources of domestic politics. Positive sources, such as Korean industries doing business in China, the public with fervent interests in learning China as a culture, and progressive elites, have led the ROK government to continue focusing on economic, political and security opportunities in China. On the other hand, negative viewpoints among the Korean public, NGOs and conservative elites have generated imperatives to compel the South Korean government to adopt policies, which created frictions with the PRC, and to restrain Seoul from developing military relations with China.


Nevertheless, one major problem is that the argument is overdetermined.\textsuperscript{40} It does not account for when and why positive and negative sources matter in different time periods. In South Korea, the two opposite viewpoints toward China exist simultaneously. Several public surveys also show that the South Koreans held dual images of China as an important partner as well as a threatening neighbor. If two aspects in domestic politics guide South Korea to take two different paths, when do negative sources influence South Korea’s strategy and when do positive sources do so? The argument driven by domestic politics is necessary to understand the combination of cooperation and conflicts in the Sino-ROK relations, but it does not identify the point when these outcomes occur.

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<th>EXPLANATORY VARIABLES</th>
<th>EXPECTED BEHAVIOR</th>
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<td>South Korea either forms an alliance with China or strengthens the alliance with the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Liberalism</td>
<td>Expectation of absolute gains and a spill-over effect</td>
<td>South Korea engages in economic cooperation with China, which has a spill over effect on political and military cooperation</td>
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<td>Strategic Culture</td>
<td>South Korea willingly accepts the rise of China as a peaceful atmosphere in East Asia</td>
<td>South Korea cooperates with China in economic and political field and seeks alliance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>South Korea interprets the rise of China as a competitive atmosphere</td>
<td>South Korea has frictions with China in political and economic arenas and strengthens the alliance with the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Politics</td>
<td>The coexistence of positive and negative sources in South Korea</td>
<td>South Korea cooperates with China in economic, political and military field, while it also has frictions with China and maintains the alliance with America</td>
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**My Argument**

This section addresses a brief summary about the theoretical analysis of this dissertation, although the procedure of building a theory is discussed in detail in the next chapter. I present the core argument of **dyad threats** to explain the puzzles of South Korea.

Dyad threats portray a situation where a given state tackles a pair of external threats that form an alliance against the state. A state differentiates dyad threats and identifies major and minor threats because the first is offensive against the state and the second is not. Even if dyad threats are engaged in their own alliance relationship, differentiating dyad threats is a necessary process to produce proper policies toward these threats.

Major and minor threats are “interrelated” because major threats can change the status of minor threats. If a state perceives an increased major threat X, the role of a minor threat Y to constrain the major threat becomes useful. The state then assesses whether the minor threat has a constraining capability over the major threat. If the state believes that the minor threat Y has a constraining power over the major threat X, the state perceives the risks of the minor threat Y as temporarily dormant. On the other hand, if the state does not believe that the minor threat Y has its capability of diminishing the major threat X, it perceives the risk of the minor threat Y as active. A decreased danger from the major threat also influences the status of the minor threat. If the state perceives a decreased major threat X, the role of the minor threat Y to constrain the major threat is not useful. The state then considers its minor threat Y as
Consequently, if a state faces an increased major threat and a dormant minor threat, it employs a combination of deterrence against the former and accommodation toward the latter. Conversely, if the state faces a decreased major threat and an active minor threat, it chooses a combined strategy of deterrence against the former and soft-balancing against the latter.⁴¹

The application of the dyad threats theory to the puzzles of South Korea proceeds in two steps. First, the new theoretical analysis should be able to explain questions how states differentiate threats, and in particular why South Korea has been silent about a China threat. Second, the new theoretical tool should be able to clarify a question regarding a range of policies that the ROK has chosen toward China. In addition, the new hypotheses should explain why Seoul’s position does not show a strategic tilt toward Beijing despite its extensive cooperation with China, and how US-ROK alliance develops with growing interactions between Seoul and Beijing.

I argue that the strategy of South Korea with respect to China is contingent on changes in a North Korea threat. Although a potential threat from China may exist, the predominance of a threat from North Korea, as a major security challenger to the ROK, overrides a China threat. Since the threat from North Korea leaves the China threat latent, Seoul seeks cooperation with Beijing to promote Beijing’s role in reducing the

⁴¹ The definition of soft-balancing is presented in the next chapter on the theory of dyad threats.
North Korea threat. Conversely, when South Korea perceives a decreased North Korea threat, the role of China to restrain North Korea is not useful to South Korea and the China threat becomes active. Eventually, shifts in relative threat perception of North Korea and China compel South Korea soft-balance against the PRC.

Case Selection and Methodology

Case Selection

I carefully select cases based on different time periods and diverse issues. First, I exclusively examine fifteen years of bilateral relations between South Korea and the PRC by placing my focus on “what types of policies has the ROK chosen toward China in a given period of time?”, and “how have these policies eventually influenced bilateral relations?” I investigate South Korea’s policy toward China based on three time periods: case one between 1992 and 1999, case two between 2000 and 2002, and case three in 2003-2007.

Second, a variation in the ROK policies is also measured with respect to economic, political and military spheres. This process explores “what types of policies the ROK has chosen in three different fields?” and “how have the policies differed in one field from another in a given time period?”

It is imperative to clarify that case studies on South Korea pose a tough test for the theory of dyad threats. Although more discussions are presented in the next chapter, South Korea represents least-likely cases for the dyad threats analysis. The rise of
China is most likely to offer motives for South Korea to recognize a China threat. Power-driven research shows that states become the most violent when their material capability grows fast. And if it is combined with a concept of threat perception, rising powers are highly likely to pose the greatest threats to others.

**Methodology**

This dissertation employs qualitative methods to identify the influence of explanatory variables on outcomes. Precisely, congruence tests combined with process-tracing procedures are adopted for testing the newly developed theory in case studies. Congruence tests are necessary because they prevent the research from committing “over-generalization” of explanatory variables and omitting possible other explanatory variables that may lead to the same outcomes.

Process-tracing needs evidence in historical materials and interviews. I have conducted careful and extensive analyses on available historical data based on primary sources including government documents, newspapers and surveys. The historical records are pulled out from major government agencies and several libraries in Seoul, Korea. For instance, I visited the library of National Assembly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Finance, government-based think-tanks and internet websites of these agencies. Moreover, I have completed 25 interviews of government officials and 20 interviews of scholars and experts in Korea. I have also examined secondary sources such as academic journals
and policy reports published by think-tanks and private sectors, and yet leave them supplementary to primary sources.

I have checked and compared information gathered in South Korea and China in order to judge whether or not the data is reliable. Available primary sources on China mostly include newspapers, government documents and interviews. The Chinese data is drawn from the Beijing National Library, the Beijing University Korean Studies Center, the Institute of World Development, and the Chinese Academy of Social Science. I interviewed 5 government officials and 15 scholars and experts in Beijing, China. Some Chinese government documents were hard to access and only a small number of interviews were successful because of restrictions against foreigners. In order to overcome this limitation, I examined secondary sources, such as policy reports of government-related think tanks and academic journals, and interviewed scholars.

One valuable point of examining secondary sources on China is that academic journals and reports made by government-owned think-tanks may imply the basic guidelines of the Chinese government. Scholarly papers published in China are carefully examined by government authorities and scholars who publish papers in academic journals are significant policy advisors to the Chinese government.42

Process tracing complements some drawbacks in congruence tests by guiding the research to avoid applying spurious causalities. It helps to identify possible causal

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variables and intervening variables that may connect the explanatory variables provided by the deductive theory to case outcomes. In order to employ two methods together during the process of analyzing data, I keep three methodological questions in mind.

- Is South Korea’s perception on China consistent with new outcomes other than what the dyad threats analysis suggests?
- Are there any intervening variables as causal processes to link explanatory variables suggested by the theory of dyad threats to case outcomes?
- Why does South Korea choose a certain policy over other options?

Measuring Independent and Dependent Variables

South Korea’s policies toward China are measured in economic, political and military arenas. In terms of political and economic relations, I consider the number of contacts among government officials, the number of meetings, announcements made by government officials and joint statements after the summit meetings. In terms of military relations, I assess above mentioned exchanges and the US-South Korean alliance. I look at specific agendas in the US-ROK alliance related to China and attempt to differentiate these agendas from what is related to North Korea. I also investigate the level of South Korea’s self-defense capability and examine how the military transformation is connected to the alliance, China and North Korea. South Korea’s cooperative policies toward China may include increased numbers of contacts.

and proactive avoidance of a tough stance against the Chinese government. On the other hand, soft-balancing mostly includes direct criticisms against the Chinese government and the passive avoidance of frictions with China.

South Korea’s threat perception is measured by looking into the government officials’ comments, public surveys, newspapers editorials and government reports such as defense white papers. South Korea’s threat perception of China is hard to measure, since the Republic does not seem to express its concerns, as noted in the puzzles. Therefore, I also examine the point where the South Korean government officials could have mentioned China threats but remained quiet by comparing the situation with responses of other Asian countries to China.

**Contributions to the Field of International Relations**

*Theoretical Contributions*

This section evaluates three distinctive points of this dissertation. The first two points are related to the ability of the dyad threats analysis to explain phenomena for which existing body of IR theory do not offer proper accounts. Firstly, in previous works, the change of threat perception hinges mostly on the shift of intentions and material capability. The importance of these works is that they can explain the phenomenon that states may modify their policies if they perceive changes in major factors that constitute external threats. However, what if states change their policies toward external threats even when key factors that constitute external threats are
constant? The dyad threats analysis suggests that relative shifts of threat perception can create policy changes toward external threats even though external threats reveal no changes in their material capability and intentions.

Secondly, the dyad threats hypotheses attempt to explain the phenomenon where a given state chooses bifurcated policies toward external threats and their alliance partners. Previously, a power-driven approach in international relations stresses that since alliances bolster each member’s security, a proper response to the coalition of external threats is simply a single strategy of balancing. This approach, therefore, precludes a possibility that there may be different ways to deal with the coalition of adversaries. In contrast, the dyad threats argument, which entails the process of differentiating major and minor threats, can explain why states respond differently to each member of the coalesced external threats.

The last point addresses the lack of study on threats other than major threats. Much of existing research on threat perception places its focus merely on the most threatening countries and ignores the existence of less threatening countries. As a result, the current literature has provided a vague assessment on how to deal with minor threats. The conjecture of dyad threats, however, delineates why and how states deal with threats other than major threats.

*Policy Implications*

South Korea has constituted an important pillar of the US alliance in Asia by
fostering stability and prosperity of the region and consolidating US primacy in the world. The vibrant democracy, economic development and security of the Republic have represented a good example for the success of the US foreign policy to the region. All of these phenomena that the ROK enjoys have a capability to reduce conflicts, nurture democratization, and promote peace in Asia. Although during the Post Cold War era, discord between America and South Korea in regard to the transformation of bilateral alliance has engendered concerns among policy makers in Washington as well as Seoul, the role of South Korea as an alliance partner continues to fulfill the US national interest.

As long as South Korea serves as a security partner with America, understanding ROK’s behavior is critical. This dissertation helps our understanding of South Korea’s strategy to the PRC in East Asia where the United States has a stake. By bringing our attention to dynamic interactions of the two Asian countries, this dissertation presents implications for US policies.

**Chapter Plan**

This dissertation is composed of six chapters. The next chapter presents theoretical hypotheses on dyad threats. Chapter 3, 4 and 5 explore empirical case studies. Chapter 3 looks at South Korea’s policy toward the PRC from 1992, the normalization year, to 1999. Chapter 4 investigates years between 2000 and 2002. Chapter 5 is about South Korea’s policy between 2003 and 2007. Lastly, the
concluding chapter summarizes the outcomes and evaluates the theoretical framework presented in the theory chapter. Policy implications are also discussed in the conclusion.
CHAPTER 2

DYAD THREATS AND STATE BEHAVIOR

This chapter attempts to explore the processes of differentiating threats and their influence on state behavior. Specifically, I suggest potential variables that explain 1) how and why states differentiate external threats; and 2) how the processes of differentiation influence state behavior. While doing so, I develop dyad threats hypotheses. Dyad threats represent a pair of external threats engaged in an alliance. The hypotheses presented in this chapter are tested in case studies on South Korea in the following chapters.

Primarily, this chapter addresses a core question in international politics. If external threats form an alliance, how do states differentiate between them and respond to the coalition of external threats? While Stephen Walt’s balance of threat explores the causal relationship between threat perception and state behavior, how to deal with external threats and their security coalition is unspecified.  

Although a dominant strategy, suggested by Structural Realism, is balancing, it fails to provide useful guidelines to understand the range of state behaviors toward the coalition of external threats.

threats. Steven David, however, has demonstrated that a state chooses dissimilar strategies toward dyad threats. The state attempts to align with one external threat within this security coalition, while balance against the other. David’s observation evokes important questions. Why is it that a state chooses separate strategies toward the coalition of external threats, or dyad threats? How does a state choose with which threat to balance, and with which threat to align?

I argue that states differentiate dyad threats and identify major and minor threats. A major threat is related to a minor threat such that changes in the former bring about changes in the latter. When a state faces increased provocations from a major threat, it perceives its minor threat as dormant because the minor threat has a constraining capability over the major threat. Conversely, when a state faces decreased provocations from a major threat, the role of a minor threat in constraining the major threat is not useful to the state any more. The state then recognizes the existence of a minor threat and regards it as active. Consequently, when a state faces an increased major threat and a dormant minor threat, it adopts a combined strategy of deterrence against the major threat and accommodation toward the minor threat. On the other hand, when the state confronts a decreased major threat and perceives an activated minor threat, it chooses a combined strategy of deterrence against the former and soft-balancing against the latter.

The theory of dyad threats offers three useful insights to the field of international politics. First, it provides an account for a situation where threat

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perception changes not because of material capability and intentions, but because of the interaction of different types of threat perceptions. Second, considering that surprisingly little study has been conducted on how to deal with dyad threats, my theory explains how and why a state chooses separate strategies toward dyad threats. Third, it explains a phenomenon in which the increase of a major threat does not bring about an increase in a minor threat. This is a puzzling phenomenon especially to the balance of power theory. According to the power-driven approach, an increased major threat may automatically increase its partner, a minor threat, since major and minor threats are alliance partners and one’s material capability reinforces the other. However, my analysis on dyad threats shows that an increased major threat decreases the perceived relative danger of a minor threat.

This chapter is composed of five sections. The first part discusses theoretical analyses on multiple threats and state strategies employed toward minor threats. Next, I identify relevant variables that are related to the core argument of this dissertation. The second part provides definitions of terms in regard to a key independent variable, the processes of differentiating threat perceptions. Accordingly, the third part explains the dependent variable and testable hypotheses. Section four discusses competing arguments that can provide alternative explanations. The final section of case selection explains the application of my hypotheses to historical cases on South Korea’s approach toward China in different time periods.
1. Literature and the Puzzle

Multiple Threats and State Responses

Although states may confront numerous external threats from different countries, most of existing research on threat perception does not appreciate this phenomenon. Much of it puts an emphasis on state responses to major and imminent threats, while overlooking other threats that may exist simultaneously alongside major ones.

The most influential work, the balance of threat theory by Stephen Walt, purports that states are sensitive to proximate powers whose predatory intentions and offensive capability challenge one’s interests.\(^3\) Examining cases of alliances between Middle Eastern states and two superpowers during the Cold War era, Walt squarely argues that most states in Middle East seek alliances with the United States or the Soviet Union in order to deal with “the more imminent threats” that arise from the region.\(^4\) Since states face direct military aggressions from neighbors, distant superpowers—even if they are more powerful than any other regional actors—are “perceived as less threatening and as ideal allies” for states in Middle East.\(^5\) Walt’s work was unambiguous about emphasizing that states respond primarily to the most threatening country. Therefore, he says, “States tend to ally with or against the foreign

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\(^3\) Stephen Walt’s ‘balance of threat’ formulation that states respond to threat, not simply power, has been a noticeable leap from Neorealism put forth by Kenneth Waltz. See Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 148-72, Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Public Co., 1979).


\(^5\) Ibid.
power that poses the greatest threat.”

Since most attention was given to “the greatest threat,” understanding how states deal with less threatening countries has been considered relatively less important. Essentially, much early work implicitly assumed that numerous strategies states employed were related to major threats or their coalition. Generally, previous literature suggested that behaviors toward less threatening countries were not differentiated from those directly toward major threats.

For instance, Walt’s work has noted that states will not exhaust resources in order to handle less threatening countries. Since a state “cannot afford to meet all the potential threats simultaneously,” it prioritizes them and makes choices of what it should deal with. Walt aptly observed that Britain and France were threatened not

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6 Ibid., 21. Emphasis added. Walt recognized that the level of threat influences the degree of balancing. For instance, a low level of threats creates less intense balancing behavior. Nevertheless, the main target is still major threats.


8 One great ambiguity in Structural Realism is under what conditions states will balance and under what conditions they will bandwagon.

only by Germany but by Italy and Japan during World War II. However, they consistently concentrated their efforts to contain Germany and preserved their economic strength. Because states need to deal with an imminent threat, they place other types of threats in a lower priority in making policies.

Walt’s analysis generates a significant point to discuss in terms of major threats and their alliance partners. It is interesting to note that relatively less focus has been placed on the responses of states toward Italy during the Second World War. It has been implicitly assumed that states in Europe did not have luxury to think about Italy and that states employed a similar strategy as that aimed at Germany because Italy was part of the German coalition.

Invoking realist perspectives in order to understand the behavior toward Italy is useful here. In general, states do not need to make strategies toward less threatening countries because these threats are in line with the security coalition with major threats against which states already engage in balancing. On the other hand, if less threatening countries do not form security institutions with major threats, they become a lower priority and states choose not to do anything for the time being. Thus, an expected behavior toward less threatening countries is avoiding active balancing until the threat becomes really serious.

Balance of threat theory is not without limitations. Particularly relevant is how

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10 On the other hand, some studies have examined the behavior of Italy and classified it as bandwagoning to the German aggression. See Jason W. Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status-Quo States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
states prioritize threats in the beginning.\textsuperscript{11} If states balance against the most threatening countries, a necessary task is to understand the processes by which states differentiate the greatest threats as opposed to less threatening countries.

On the other hand, some works addressed state behaviors vis-à-vis relatively less threatening countries as opposed to major threats.\textsuperscript{12} In particular, Steven David has claimed that a state would align with a less threatening country in order to deal with a major threat. He has purported that when two types of threats form a strategic coalition, the state chooses an alignment with a lesser threat and uses it in order to contain a major threat. In his case study, the Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Mariam sought a new alignment with the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, while leaving the United States, although the Soviet Union was threatening to the Ethiopian regime.\textsuperscript{13} The Soviet government was allied with Somalia, which was a major external threat to the Ethiopian government. Simultaneously, it provided military assistance for Ethiopian insurgencies that challenged the Mengistu government.

Nonetheless, the Ethiopian leader identified the Soviet Union as less threatening

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} As soon as Jimmy Carter took office, the US government designated Ethiopia as a human rights violation country and reduced military assistance. Ethiopia responded with acerbic criticisms and Mengitsu announced that the United States was not a reliable partner. America went further by withholding assistance and Ethiopia ended the Mutual Defense Agreement and the Kagnew Agreement in April 1977. For the analyses of Ethiopia’s turn to the Soviet Union, see David A Korn, \textit{Ethiopia, the United States and the Soviet Union} (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 1-47.
\end{itemize}
than other internal and external threats.\textsuperscript{14} Mengistu’s decision to align with the Soviets was anchored in his calculation that the Soviet Union could help him suppress his domestic rebellious groups as well as ward off external threats from Somalia by withholding assistance to both of them.\textsuperscript{15} David maintains, “The leader appeased the secondary threats (the Soviet Union) in order to defeat more pressing ones.”\textsuperscript{16}

David’s analysis profoundly challenges the views advocated by Structural Realism.\textsuperscript{17} It is puzzling to see Ethiopia’s alignment with the Soviet Union, since those who emphasize the balance of power may expect that states hardly align with their adversaries.\textsuperscript{18} According to realist perspectives, Ethiopia should have maintained the alliance with the United States in order to balance against the coalition between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia. Structural realism purports that if states see a major security coalition against them, they naturally recognize it as adversaries and seek a balancing strategy. However less threatening it may be, the adversary, working in the axis with one’s major threat, is grouped as a part of the threatening coalition. In addition, even if threats are not major, balancing is safer than waiting for these states to

\textsuperscript{14} David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," 248.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.: 245-48.

\textsuperscript{16} Parentheses added. Ibid.: 248.

\textsuperscript{17} ———, \textit{Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World}. Steve David mentioned this point in his book. While his book focus on domestic consolidation, the focus here is placed more on explaining the alignment with the Soviet Union in terms of dealing with external threats.

remain benevolent.\(^{19}\)

The Ethiopia case demonstrates that the realist schools of thought have trouble explaining why states cooperate with a secondary threat, especially when it is supporting a major external threat. To this question, David has given a hint that states do so in order to restrain major threats. Yet, it is far short of a complete explanation. His analysis does not discuss the processes and the incentives of the alignment in detail. In addition, it demonstrates that it is necessary to examine conditions by which states distinguish more threatening countries from less threatening ones.\(^{20}\)

On the other hand, in dealing with a question, “Why do states cooperate with states engaged in an alignment with one’s major threats?” Glenn Snyder may suggest an

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\(^{20}\) David has placed his focus more on dealing with internal threats than external threats. He has argued that Ethiopia used the Soviet Union in order to improve the consolidation of domestic leadership, whereas he has paid little attention to examining what happened in dealing with a major external threat, Somalia. His argument is connected to the literature that studies that internal politics determine the alliance formation. For this type of literature, see Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73," *International Organization* 45, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 369-95, Larson, "Bandwagon Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality," 85-111.
answer based on his analysis of the composite security dilemma.\textsuperscript{21} He explains that cooperation with threatening countries occurs because a state wants to reduce tensions with them. These tensions were created by the state’s alliance partner because it stood firm against threatening countries.

In his book, \textit{Alliance Politics}, Snyder explains the composite security dilemma which examines two types of dynamic interactions: one is among alliance partners; and the other takes place among two players placed in opposing alliances. Particularly useful at this point is the latter—or an adversary game in Snyder’s term—which encompasses relations between a state and its adversary.

Snyder agrees with a possibility that a state may seek cooperation with its adversary. He claims that a conciliating gesture toward the adversary can improve the relationship and generate an actual reduction of conflicts.\textsuperscript{22} However, side effects do arise. The state may look feeble to its adversary, which will ironically lead the adversary to become more resolute against the state. On the other hand, the state may also look less loyal to its alliance partners, which may undermine the cohesion of the alliance. For this reason, Snyder presents an assessment that states fall into a dilemma where they have to suffer the positive and negative results of cooperation with their adversaries.

The composite security dilemma is particularly important in explaining relations


\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 195.
between alliance partners, which Snyder calls an alliance game. By cooperating with its adversary, the state has a bargaining power over its alliance partner and restrains its ally from being extremely violent towards enemies. Snyder appositely maintains that this phenomenon occurs because if a state cooperates with its adversary, this automatically makes the alliance partner worry about being abandoned. Since the ally fears being abandoned, it will have “less confidence that the state will stand four-square behind it in a crisis and becomes more cautious in dealings with an opponent.”

The alliance game analysis can explain a situation where states initiate cooperation with their adversaries or external threats. When a state faces extremely aggressive alliance partners, it fears being entrapped in violence that its alliance partner may initiate. The state then seeks reconciliation directly with its adversaries and initiates communication with them in order to reduce tensions created by its aggressive alliance partner. In summary, an aggression from the state’s alliance partner will prompt the state to cooperate with its external threats.

Although Snyder’s framework is useful, it currently faces two limitations. First, the alliance security dilemma offers partial explanations for the conditions of cooperation with adversaries. While fears of entrapment may provide a necessary condition for a state to cooperate with its adversaries, they are not sufficient to account for this behavior. In other words, the alliance security dilemma cannot explain why

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23 Ibid. Snyder has introduced a concept of abandonment fears, the feeling of being abandoned by one’s alliance partner. The side effect of this is that since one’s alliance partner feels abandoned, it will not fulfill alliance commitments.
states seek cooperation particularly with less threatening countries among adversaries. It is critical to discover *with whom* the state should initiate cooperation. Is there any specific party in the adversarial alliance with whom a state can initiate cooperation? When states cooperate with their adversaries, it is critical to examine who is the right partner to work with and Snyder’s theory does not offer enough explanations.

Second, since the focus of alliance security dilemma is placed merely on alliance relations, it cannot explain why states, which do not have alliance partners, engage in cooperation with adversaries or external threats. If states do not have their allies, what prompt states to cooperate with external threats?

In summary, the existing literature is deficient in state behavior toward secondary threats. It is because most works assume that states deal merely with major threats. However, one can predict a few possible state behaviors toward threats other than major ones. Realist schools of thought may predict that states essentially employ either a strategy of balancing against less threatening countries or a strategy of doing nothing until they get really serious because most states are busy taking care of the greatest threats.

Particularly, in dealing with dyad threats, scholarly works have demonstrated that states employ two types of behavior. First, the realist analyses purport that states may simply balance against this security coalition. This means that one’s balancing strategy aims not only at the major threat but also its security partner. Alternatively, as
David has found out, states can differentiate a less threatening country from a major threat. Accordingly, states align with the less threatening country, hoping that it will constrain the major threat. David’s work is significant because it opens up an opportunity to discuss why and when states choose cooperation with less threatening countries. In order to understand the phenomenon where states cooperate with less threatening countries, Snyder’s analysis provides an invaluable framework to start with. However, his argument needs to be developed by adding more specific conditions. For instance, one needs to explain which adversaries states initiate cooperation with, and what makes states, without alliance partners, engage in this type of cooperation.

The next section examines potential variables that determine the abovementioned variation of state behavior. It explores how states identify dyad threats and how the processes of identifying them have causal influence on state behavior. My argument, which emphasizes the processes of differentiating dyad threats, is significant because it presents accounts for the two phenomena that neorealist analyses cannot explain. First, it explains why a state employs strategies, ranging from cooperation to balancing vis-à-vis a less threatening country. Second, it also explains a phenomenon in which the state employs separate strategies toward dyad threats. Because pessimistic realists argue that states do not differentiate dyad threats, they fail to account for why state behaviors toward dyad threats are different.
2. Independent Variables: Dyad Threats

Definition

Before moving on, it is helpful to clarify two essential points. First, I agree with Steven David’s argument and assume that a state differentiates between greater and lesser external threats even when they are engaged in formal or informal alliances. I define two types of threats as “dyad threats.” Although a state faces the coalition of dyad threats, it prioritizes them and differentiates between major and minor threats. Major threats are the gravest threats to the state, while minor threats are threats placed in a lower priority. Accordingly, a necessary task in this section is to discover how states prioritize dyad threats. What constitutes major and minor threats is discussed in this section.

Second, I design a hypothesis that threat perception is influenced by other threats. In contrast to current literature on threat perception, I argue that threat perception changes because of the interactions between different types of threat perception. During the processes of prioritizing threats, states find the existence of a major threat and identify other threats in a lower priority. In other words, minor threats exist partly to the existence of major threats. The interconnection between major and minor threats generates an interesting result. Increased provocations from a major threat toward a state can prevent the state from recognizing the existence of a minor threat.

24 Among a great deal of literature on alliance, I adopt Glenn Snyder’s definition on alliance. According to his definition, “Alliances are formal associations of states for the use (or nonuse) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership.” Ibid., 4.
threat. I define the unrecognized minor threat as “dormant (minor) threats.” In contrast, decreased provocations from a major threat enable the state to recognize its perceived minor threat. I define the recognized minor threat as “active (minor) threats.” Consequently, an essential task in this section is to discover why states perceive the minor threat as latent and active.\footnote{One set of explanation is that organizations and individuals find it difficult to focus on multiple threats. However, the focus of my hypotheses lies in systemic analyses.}

A profound difference exists between my argument and existing work. Some theoretical analyses focusing on power may claim that the increased provocations of major threats make the minor threat obvious because according to the balance of power, major and minor threats are alliance partners and the increased capability of one country augments the power of the other. Conversely, my argument on dyad threats purports that the increased major threat decreases the perceived relative danger from the minor threat.

Prioritizing Threats

There is a widely accepted assumption in international relations that states differentiate threats and that the level of external threats varies. For instance, Peter Karsten has observed, “State actors perceive a threat from another state…There are clearly order-of-magnitude differences in the threats inherent in the state system. All threats threaten, but some threaten more than others.”\footnote{Peter Karsten, "Response to Threat Perception: Accommodation as a Special Case," in \textit{Historical}} Moreover, Steven David has
introduced a concept of less threatening countries, while Stephen Walt has acknowledged the existence of multiple threats and argued that states deal with the most threatening countries among multiple threats.

What is ambiguous, however, is how states prioritize external threats. As Gregory Gause has accurately pointed out, current literature is not yet clear on how states identify major threats. States may respond to the most threatening countries, but the processes by which they recognize threats are underdetermined.²⁷ What is the main criterion of defining the most threatening countries?²⁸ In other words, what constitutes major threats, while making others less threatening?

The logic of prioritizing major and minor threats is applied to dyad threats. Even if threats form an alliance, states differentiate them by judging several elements that constitute major and minor threats. In addition, the fact that the state can differentiate dyad threats implies that these dyad threats may have conflicts of interests. After defining major and minor threats, this section addresses conflicts within dyad threats.

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²⁸ Gause has claimed that because Walt’s seminal work, the Origins of Alliances, presents a nebulous idea that one should consider all of four factors—aggregate power, aggressive intentions, proximity, and offensive capability—in order to assess threats, still remained is a question: which elements do states take most seriously in perceiving major threats if there are numerous threats from different countries? See Ibid.: 280-81.
1. Major threats

Although a military capability, especially an offensive capability, may emanate threats, all countries with offensive capabilities are not major threats.\(^{29}\) What is more important is for what purposes states uses the offensive capability. One potential determinant for identifying major threats is the adversary’s challenges to domestic legitimacy. Activities to topple and criticize the existing government indicate major threats. Specifically, major threats engage in political actions of providing assistance to domestic insurgencies that can create disorder in the society.

Gause’s work serves this definition well. Gause has claimed that states that contest one’s government authority pose severe threats. He argues, “The threat trip-wire for...leaders was direct assaults on the legitimacy and stability of their ruling regime. It was those rhetorical and subversive signals, not distribution of power, which were salient in how the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan prioritized among the potential threats they faced.”\(^{30}\)

Second, states feel most threatened when they see the deployment of growing ground troops, missiles and tanks near the territorial borders, not to mention actual provocations. As Raymond Cohen defined, a threat is “anticipation on the part of an observer, the decision maker, of impending harm—usually of a military, strategic, or


economic kind—to the state.”  

Major threats not only possess the capability of carrying out attacks but also give signals to use their weapons. Although it is possible that states may exaggerate or underestimate signals because there is a gap between signals and the actual use of military capability; signals with tangible evidences at a critical moment—especially “costly signals” that require considerable resources or generate domestic or international costs—are sufficient to generate threats. Therefore, a potential component in major threats may include provocations, attacks with conventional weapons, and threats of military activities against their territory, citizens, military bases, government agencies and commercial and industrial constructions.

Third, geography can intensify existing threats. Threats are severe when they are adjacent to one’s territorial borders where there is no geographical buffer zone which neutralizes direct threats and make one’s defense more advantageous against the


32 David Singer, for instance, emphasized the link between military capabilities and intentions to use artillery. He argued that threats arose from a situation of “armed hostility”, which meant the combination of estimated capability and estimated intent. In his work, which focused on the situation of the Cold War, Singer asserted that both the Soviet Union and Britain had enough military capability of launching attacks against the United States. America, however, felt threatened by the Soviet Union while it did not feel threatened by the British military because the Soviet intention was hostile and that of Britain was not. J. David Singer, "Threat-Perception and the Armament-Tension Dilemma," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 2, no. 1 (March 1958): 94-95.

threats. Sharing borders may make offense succeed easily, while geographic buffer makes defense easy.

Finland, for instance, felt the greatest threats from the Soviet Union during the period of mounting German aggression in the late 1930s, since it shared its eastern borders with Russia. Annette Fox says, “The Finns never doubted that Communist Russia was a greater threat to European peace than Nazi Germany, even if it was the Germans and not the Russians who were likely to start the dreaded world conflagration.” Indeed, the Soviets concentrated aircrafts and conducted military training near the Finnish-Russian border and even let the Red Army march in the Finnish territory. The Soviet Union did so because it was afraid that Germany would occupy Finland for the base of moving toward the Soviet border.

One may find another example in Northeast Asia. While China has actively disapproved the existence of the Taiwanese government, Beijing deployed growing number of missiles near the Taiwan straits and increased naval capability. As to Taiwan, the China threat intensifies owing to the proximity of the Chinese missiles

35 Finland had gone through a control of the Russian Empire until 1917.
37 Ibid., 49-50.
aiming at major cities in the island.

To sum up, **major threats** are composed of following elements

- **Challenges to domestic legitimacy**: attempts to topple the existing government, criticisms against the government and assistance for insurgencies which will create a disorder in the society

- **Threats to conduct provocations and actual attacks** against one’s territory, population and military resources

- **Geographical proximity that makes offence easy**: a place with no buffer zone, which renders offense advantageous

While elements outlined above seem analogous to Walt’s analysis of threat perception, my definition further elucidates the meaning of hostile intentions. Scholars, including Walt himself, have underlined the relative importance of intentions, since it represents a substantial change from the logic of balance of power.\(^\text{39}\) And yet, more studies on defining intentions are still needed.\(^\text{40}\) Here, a malignant intention is represented by behaviors from others, such as challenges against one’s domestic legitimacy and an actual use of the offensive military capabilities.


Furthermore, my definition of major threats attempts to identify the time when an offensive capability plays out the most important role in constituting threats. How does the logic of offense-defense balance work in order for the offensive capability to threaten others successfully? Although the logic of threat perception introduced by Walt recognizes this point, more clarification is needed regarding whether or not states will take other’s offensive capability seriously when geographic dispositions between them make the defense more advantageous. The definition mentioned above suggests that the combination of an offensive capability and geography is necessary. The offensive capability matters specifically when geographical buffer does not exist, which makes defense difficult and offense easy.

2. Minor Threats: Threats with a Lower Priority

On the other hand, threats with a lower priority may have a few potential features. Importantly, one element that constitutes minor threats is a relational feature in regard to major threats. As soon as a state recognizes its major threat, perceived threats from other countries are relatively less important. In other words, when a state recognizes a major threat which challenges the survival of the current government, other types of threats become relatively less serious.

In contrast to major threats, minor threats do not undermine opponents’ political authorities, even though they may have the capability of doing so. Their intentions may change in the future, and yet their current behavior does not aim at the collapse of an
existing government. They do not conduct provocations and direct attacks against the territory of the state. In addition, even if they possess some offensive capability, perceived threats from them are placed in a lower priority when they are distant from one’s borders and geographical features make their offense difficult to succeed.

It is possible that one state’s minor threats may be another state’s major threats because they might engage in provocative actions to topple the existing government of another state. This behavior may imply the malignant intentions of one’s minor threats and provide a good reason for one to be wary about them. However, it is likely that the state still places the threats in a lower priority unless it faces actual provocations from the threats.41 Although remaining potentially threatening, one’s minor threats do not present any considerable political and military challenges to domestic leadership at the moment. The geographical separation also makes this type of judgment more plausible.

**Minor threats** are composed of following elements

- **The existence of major threats**
- **Military capability is not used for the collapse of the domestic legitimacy**
- **Military capability is not used for provocations or threats to conduct attacks**
- **Geographical distance that makes offence difficult**: states have a geographical buffer zone which renders offense difficult and defense easy

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41 The state maintains its focus on dealing with a more urgent subject, the major threats.
Disagreements within Dyad Threats

The processes how states identify major and minor threats imply that discord exists within dyad threats. Particularly relevant elements in causing disagreements within dyad threats include 1) an attempt to topple the government and 2) the willingness to employ the offensive capability. These elements for major and minor threats reveal the opposite tendencies. Among dyad threats, a major threat attempts to challenge the government of an outside state with military provocations, while a minor threat does not attempt to topple the government and is reluctant to use the military force. These differences within dyad threats toward an outside country can create the conflicts of interests.42

For better understanding of the conflicts of interests between dyad threats, it is useful to employ codes to identify concerned parties in this complex situation. Suppose that state A faces dyad threats X and Y. X and Y are alliance partners and they oppose state A. X is extremely aggressive toward state A, whereas Y is not hostile to state A. X and Y do not share strategic interests in the critical assets of state A and thus, the behavior of X toward state A is different from that of Y. The behavior of X indicates the characteristic of aforementioned major threats from the perspective of state A. It attempts to topple the government of state A and initiates wars with A. On the other hand, Y does not express any interests in initiating attacks against state A. Assessing their behaviors, state A identifies X as a major threat and Y as a minor threat.

42 On conflicting interests among alliance partners, see Snyder, Alliance Politics, 22-28.
The major threat X may want to seek assistance from its alliance partner Y in order to carry out a war against state A. Alliances are useful since they function as a tool to increase one’s military capability within a short period of time. While building new arsenals is considered as a long-term project, pulling out available resources from their alliance partners can maximize a short-term capability.\footnote{One of reasons for the creation of alliances is related to the economic benefit that alliances bring about. By relying on alliance partners, states may be able to spend less resource in military than the situation without alliance partners.}

Before seeking assistance from the alliance partner Y, there is an important condition that X needs to consider: the credibility of an alliance partner.\footnote{James Morrow has argued that the choice between alliance and arming oneself is based on the balance of costs and benefits. According to Morrow, costs and benefits depend on one’s domestic situation and the credibility of alliance partners. James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggression Model of Alliances," \textit{American Journal of Political Science} 35, no. 4 (November 1991): 904-33.} If the ally has been consistent in honoring alliance commitments in previous interactions, the cost of getting help from Y is relatively low. However, if the ally has not consistently valued its pledges, getting military assistance from Y is relatively costly. In this case, the aggressor X needs to make more efforts to convince its ally Y by explaining why the war against state A is necessary.

On the other hand, the partner Y strongly opposes wars and prefers conciliation and other peaceful means in dealing with state A. It is because Y may not have strategic interests in obtaining the territory or other assets of state A. One way of avoiding the war, waged by X against state A, is holding military assistance to the aggressive partner X and discourages the short-term power aggregation of X.
The lack of common interests in dealing with adversaries implies that alliance partners may not share threat perception. States which see more of an external threat have a high expectation for security cooperation from their alliance partners. On the other hand, if they perceive less of an external threat, their expectation for the security cooperation with their alliance partners may be low. Moreover, threat perception may be at times reciprocal. While state A perceives X as a major threat, X may regard state A as its major threat. On the other hand, while state A perceives Y as its minor threat, Y also regards A as its minor threat. This can create a difference between X and Y in approaching state A.\textsuperscript{45}

The fact that X and Y have different approaches in dealing with state A may generate frictions between these two. Simultaneously, as Glenn Snyder has pointed out, conflicts within an alliance interact with outsiders of the alliance.\textsuperscript{46} In other words, the confrontation between X and Y is concurrent with the processes through which state A differentiates X and Y. State A’s differentiating X and Y occurs simultaneously with discords between X and Y.

\textit{Dyad Threats and Alliances: Dormant and Active Threats}

The previous section has discussed how states differentiate dyad threats. This

\textsuperscript{45} Threat perception may not be mutual. Even if X does not regard state A as its major threat, X may engage in aggressive behavior toward state A and consequently, state A perceives X as its major threat.

\textsuperscript{46} Snyder, \textit{Alliance Politics}, 192-94.
section focuses on the next step. After state A perceives dyad threats X and Y and identifies X as a major threat and Y as a minor threat, it takes a next step by looking at the interactions between X and Y. Assessing how X and Y deal with their differences vis-à-vis state A by invoking alliance interactions is important for state A because it is part of the processes to perceive dyad threats.

Increased provocations from an aggressor X against state A stimulate the role that the alliance partner Y plays. Since Y is reluctant to engage in provocations, Y is likely to prevent the aggressive behavior of X. As Snyder has argued, “Restraining threats (between alliance partners) will be more credible when the allies have different interests in conflict with the adversary than when their interests are similar.”47 This is linked to the process how state A perceives its minor threat Y as dormant. Conversely, when Y cannot play a role in constraining provocations of X against state A, state A perceives the minor threat Y as active. In addition, a relative decrease in provocations from X against state A also leaves the minor threat Y active.

When Minor Threats Become Dormant

This section discusses how the minor threat Y becomes a dormant threat to state A, by explaining the logic of constraint between alliance partners. Among the few works on alliance constraints, Christopher Gelpi has found that allies are more

47 Ibid., 326. Parentheses added.
successful than impartial mediators in restraining disputes between states.\textsuperscript{48} Based on statistical data, Gelpi has concluded that alliance partners are more successful in preventing one another from initiating disputes with outsiders because in contrast to a third party, alliance partners can threaten their allies to terminate the alliance.

In addition, Patricia Weitsman has offered an assessment that alliance partners constrain one another.\textsuperscript{49} In contrast to a realist argument that states create alliances as one form of balancing strategy against external threats, Weitsman argues that states form alliances \textit{with} threats for the purpose of preventing wars with them.\textsuperscript{50} Locking external threats into security institutions enables states to constrain them and preclude unnecessary wars. As a result, the cohesiveness of the alliance with threats is not as strong as the alliance aiming at balancing against common external threats.

The logic of constraints between alliance partners can be applied to the alliance between X and Y, the dyad threats to state A. If X has a hostile approach toward state A, while Y is reluctant to be aggressive; it is likely that Y attempts to constrain X from being too aggressive. The constraining role of Y against X becomes significant especially when X increases provocations against state A. In this case, since X poses a predominant threat to state A, while Y attempts to reduce or prevent provocations of X,


\textsuperscript{49} Weitsman, \textit{Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War}.

\textsuperscript{50} Weitsman has argued that states form tethering alliances or hedging alliances with countries that might wage wars against the states.
state A perceives the minor threat Y as latent. This phenomenon occurs because the usefulness of Y’s role to constrain X offset the threat from Y. Hence, the dormant threat perception held by state A toward Y is tied up with the constraining role of Y against the major threat X.

Figure 2-1 Process of Perceiving Dormant Threats

| State A sees increased provocations from its major threat X against state A | State A thinks the constraining role of its minor threat Y over X is important | State A perceives the minor threat Y as dormant |

In order to succeed in implementing the policy of constraint vis-à-vis its alliance partner X, Y should have enough leverage over X. The constraint between alliance partners hinges on who has more bargaining leverage. Next are two potential determinants which make the constraint work best between alliance partners. The first factor is a degree of dependence between alliance partners and the second determinant is a systemic factor, polarity.

1. Degree of Dependence

Potentially, the degree of dependence within the alliance establishes one condition for alliance constraints. The dependence among alliance partners functions in two ways: symmetric dependence and asymmetric dependence. Symmetric dependence obtains when two alliance partners place almost an equal degree of reliance on one
another, while asymmetric dependence is a situation in which one alliance partner relies more on the other for its survival. In essence, one who relies less on the other has more influence on the bilateral relationship. This is because whoever wants something more is willing to make any adjustments to the other’s demands, and loses a bargaining chip in managing the alliance relationship. In light of this, asymmetric dependence is more likely to increase the possibility of the success in constraining alliance partners. Whoever relies less on the other has more constraining capacity over the other.  

Particularly, a difference in the relative material capability between alliance partners constitutes asymmetric dependence. A weaker partner tends to count its survival more on the stronger side. If the power of a constraining state is stronger than its aggressive ally, it is highly likely that the former state succeeds in preventing an unsolicited war that the aggressor would wage against outsiders. Since the aggressor is a weaker ally, it may need military supply from the stronger partner in order to win the war. Without proper assistance from the alliance partner, the weaker cannot guarantee a victory and, therefore, may forego a violent option. On the contrary, if the aggressor is more powerful than the constrainer and is able to wage wars against outsiders alone, restraining will not have an effect and the war will eventually occur.

Allies within asymmetric alliance have cohesive relations. James Morrow, for  

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51 Asymmetric interdependence also has to do with whether the resources X from Y could not be received with equal ease and cost from some other source. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1989).

52 According to a realist perspective, alliances, as one form of international institution, do not have an independent effect on state behavior. For criticism of international institutions, see John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," International Security 19, no. 3 (Winter 1994): 5-49.
instance, has maintained that asymmetric alliances are easier to form and last longer than symmetric alliances.\(^{53}\) Because intra-alliance relations are composed not only of military substance but also political advantage, asymmetric dependence between weaker and stronger partners contains reciprocity. The weaker power may receive a great deal of military assistance from its alliance partner, while it gives the autonomy in managing the alliance to the stronger partner. What the larger power gets from an asymmetrical dependence is, as Morrow claims, autonomy benefit, while the weaker power can free-ride on the collective-security good provided by the larger partner.\(^{54}\)

2. Polarity

The second potential determinant in terms of the function of alliance constraints is polarity. Specifically, multipolarity generates more possibilities of getting new alliance partners and, therefore, the allies constrain each other better in multipolarity than bipolarity. The large number of powers generates uncertainties about who threatens whom, but it also opens up more opportunities to exit the current alliance and enter a new one. Waltz argues, “In multipolar systems there are too many powers to permit any of them to draw clear and fixed lines between allies and adversaries and too

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few to keep the effects of defection low. In the multipolar system, today’s ally can become tomorrow’s adversary. This creates a relatively cheap cost of exiting an alliance and creating another. Since states can change their alliance partners easily in the multipolar system, they can threaten to leave the alliance as bargaining leverage in order to prompt adjustments by the alliance partner.

In the multipolar system, alliance constraints are relatively easy especially when offense is dominant. If they have conflicts in interests, they are more willing to compromise their differences with one another because states are afraid of the possibility for their alliance partners to leave them. The influence of multipolarity maximizes when the alliance demonstrates asymmetric dependence. A larger power, which does not accumulate a great deal of capability from the alliance with a smaller power, does not need to rely on its security on its partner. Accordingly, the larger power can get out from the alliance and find new alliance partners easily. On the other hand, a smaller power, which relies its survival on the larger alliance partner, cannot easily walk out the alliance in the multipolarity.


57 Christensen and Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity."
To the contrary, in bipolarity where states have relatively fewer choices for future alliance partners, the cost of leaving and creating alliances is higher than multipolarity. Since creating a new alliance is more costly than maintaining a current alliance, alliance partners are willing to locate their resources in supporting their partners and constraints over their allies become difficult. In addition, conflicts between alliance partners are not likely to be solved easily in the bipolar system, because they do not back down from their demands, knowing that their partners do not easily leave the alliance.

If all factors are taken into account, the logic of dormant threats can be clarified. Again, I use labels that refer to the situation where a state perceives its dyad threats: state A against dyad threats X and Y. The starting point is where alliance partners X and Y have conflicting interests in dealing with state A. If X is an aggressor and Y opposes X’s aggressions; if Y’s material capability is larger than that of X and thus X relies its survival on Y; and if Y, as a large power, has many options for alternative alliance partners, Y is able to implement a constraint policy toward X successfully and prevent X from being too aggressive and waging wars against state A. Since state A perceives that threats from X are severe, while Y can neutralize these threats, threats from Y are relatively dormant for state A.
Active Minor Threats

Increased provocations from a major threat make a minor threat dormant due to the function of alliance constraints between dyad threats. Conversely, if the major threat X decreases aggressive activities against state A, a perceived threat from the alliance partner of the major threat X is not dormant any more. Due to the decreased major threat X, state A realizes the existence of the minor threat Y. An active (minor) threat means that a state can recognize a minor threat because two factors (aggressions from a major threat; and the role of a minor threat to neutralize the major threat) which make the minor threat dormant disappear.58

A decreased major threat means that the major threat X decreases its aggressions and challenging attempts against state A. If state A encounters this new situation, it does not need the constraining role of Y to defuse the major threat X. The major threat X remains, yet the relative decrease of the major threat X makes Y less useful to state A. However, growing aggressions from the major threat X lead active threats back to a dormant condition because the role of Y in constraining the major threat X will be useful to state A again.

58 I distinguish my definition of dormant and active threats from previously studied potential threats. I interpret that potential threats discussed in previous works imply the possibility of becoming major threats in the future. My dormant and active threats have the similar feature of potential threats in that they do not constitute major threats. However, a difference is that my dormant and active threats entail relative changes in threat perception because of interaction of different types of threat perception, whereas potential threats in previous works do not include this type of changes. In previous works, potential threats shift only when they transform their intentions and increase material capability. I agree with the point that non-major threats, or potential threat in previous works, may become major threats. But I emphasize that non-major threats may transform not only because of the changes in their capability and intentions, but also because of their interconnection with major threats. Knorr, "Threat Perception," 79, Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," 15.
Moreover, it is worth noting that a minor threat becomes active when it does not have leverage over its aggressive alliance partner. If the minor threat Y’s ability is limited and it cannot constrain its aggressive partner X because Y is more dependent on X, threats from Y are no longer dormant to state A. Even if X and Y have a difference on aggressions against state A, if the aggressor X is a larger power and if there are many options of future alliance partners for the aggressor X, the smaller partner Y will make an adjustment in favor of its aggressive ally and may provide supports for the aggression. Therefore, if the minor threat Y does not have a constraining capability over major threat X, state A perceives an activated minor threat.

**Figure 2-2 The Process of Perceiving Active Threats**

- **State A sees decreased provocations from its major threat X** → **State A thinks the constraining role of its minor threat Y over X is useless** → **State A perceives the minor threat active**
- **State A sees increased provocations from its major threat X** → **State A thinks the constraining role of its minor threat Y over X is useless** → **State A perceives the minor threat active**

3. **Dependent Variable**

Before making strategies toward dyad threats, states go through processes in recognizing them. Perceiving dyad threats proceeds in three steps. First, state A
differentiates dyad threats X and Y based on their propensities toward the state: a major threat X reveals its interests in toppling the existing government of a state and using military forces against it, whereas a minor threat Y does not show any interests in challenging the government and using military forces. Second, after differentiating dyad threats, state A examines whether the major threat X increases or decreases provocations. Third, if the state observes increased provocations from X, the alliance constraint of Y over X becomes significant. Consequently, the state perceives the minor threat Y as dormant. If the minor threat does not have the capability of constraining the major threat, however, the state perceives the minor threat as active. In addition, if the state sees decreased aggressions from its major threat, the constraining role of the minor threat over the major one becomes useless. Accordingly, the state perceives its minor threat as active.

What kind of strategies do states employ in response to relative shifts of threat perceptions? When state A faces dyad threats X and Y and it perceives X as a major threat and Y as a minor threat, state A chooses deterrence against X, while it adopts two types of strategies toward Y. If state A perceives its minor threat Y as dormant, it chooses accommodation toward Y. However, if state A perceives a minor threat Y as active, it chooses soft-balancing against Y.
The processes of differentiating dyad threats X and Y are important. According to realist perspectives, state A, which faces dyad threats X and Y, does not differentiate dyad threats, and thus chooses a single strategy of balancing against both of them. However, what if state A’s dyad threats have dissimilar approaches toward state A? What if one of dyad threats is aggressive toward state A, while the other is not? Even if Y tries to constrain X from launching war against state A, does state A have to employ a hostile approach to Y?

My assumption is that state A uses a minimum amount of resources in order to obtain maximum effects. State A deals with external dyad threats X and Y by minimizing the cost. Since balancing needs a great deal of resources, state A does not want to overspend its wealth in balancing against the dyad threats. Distinguishing dyad threats enables state A to focus its resource merely on the major threat. In response to its major threat X, state A chooses deterrence. However, state A makes efforts in order
to neutralize major threat X by accommodating minor threat Y that has the capability of preventing X from being too aggressive toward state A. Accommodation toward Y is a way to reduce tensions caused by the major threat X. By accommodating Y, state A may show that it shares interests with Y in avoiding aggressions caused by X. If the alliance constraint of Y over X succeeds, it helps reduce tensions created by the provocations of X against state A. On the other hand, if Y does not have a constraining capability over X’s aggressions, state A does not need to cooperate with Y. Instead, state A chooses soft-balancing against Y.

Even when X decreases its aggressions, state A still adopts deterrence against X, although the level of deterrence may decrease. Simultaneously, state A adopts soft-balancing, or less cooperative strategy toward Y, since threats from Y become activated after the decrease of aggressions from X.

*Definition of the Dependent Variable*

Although studying how to deal with major threats is important, the focus of this study is examining what types of strategies states choose with respect to their minor threats. The next section discusses state’s strategies toward minor threats including accommodation and soft-balancing.

*The definition of accommodation* is based on Peter Karsten’s work. Karsten has depicted that accommodation is an act of “one-sided concessions that are taken in
order to preserve a part of what is threatened, to avoid war, to avoid making increased provisions for deterrence-defense, or to win ‘clients.’” 59 Accommodation includes cooperation and circumvention of confrontations in economic, political and military fields.

Economic cooperation includes trade and investment. According to Realism, economic cooperation with adversaries is less likely because states are worried that their cooperation partner will obtain more gains which are directed toward the increase of their wealth and power. 60 Nevertheless, if states are less concerned about the consequences of relative gains, it is easier for them to engage in cooperation with their adversary. 61 If a state shares common interests with a dormant threat to avoid conflicts caused by a major threat, it is likely that relative gains become less problematic. 62

Political cooperation and the avoidance of confrontations have to do with conciliation. In conciliating its dormant minor threat, a state may give up something valuable. 63 The benefit of this behavior is that non-aggression toward a dormant threat is helpful to maintain the status quo. This strategy prevents a dormant threat from turning into being supportive of their aggressive alliance partner. Premature balancing

59 Karsten, "Response to Threat Perception: Accommodation as a Special Case," 126.
63 Karsten, "Response to Threat Perception: Accommodation as a Special Case," 126.
against a dormant threat can generate tensions even with the dormant threat and deprive the state of the opportunity to use it.\textsuperscript{64} Lastly, by conciliating the dormant threat, the state also keeps open an option of the alignment with it in the future.\textsuperscript{65}

Accommodation toward a dormant threat is a less risky option than conciliating a major threat. In general, previous works have demonstrated that conciliation, or what is generally called appeasement,\textsuperscript{66} is a weak and wrong strategy because aggressors can never be satiated.\textsuperscript{67} Accordingly, despite the appeasement, which aims to change the behavior of aggressors, the state ends up with a hazardous position where aggressors launch attacks eventually.

On the other hand, differentiating between major and minor threats tells an important implication on appeasement. In cases on dyad threats, states differentiate those who would not be satiated from those who would have defensive motives. Major threats, which attempt to topple the government of other country, are not satiated until the collapse of the government. Conversely, dormant threats, which hope to avoid wars, might be able to prevent major threats’ aggressions. Hence, choosing conciliation toward dormant threats is less dangerous since dormant threats share similar concerns in

\textsuperscript{64} George Liska has made a similar point. He has argued that if a threat is not fully established, a premature balancing aggravates the threat. Hence, states do not create alliance with other countries while they maintain neutrality in order to avoid the situation where the threat becomes really serious. If threats become grave, states threaten to give up neutrality and forge an alliance against the growing threats. Liska, \textit{Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence}, 32.

\textsuperscript{65} Snyder, \textit{Alliance Politics}, 192-200, 329-46.


stopping unwanted conflicts that major threats may provoke.

Accommodation toward dormant threats is a cautious strategy. It is useful in testing whether or not the alliance constraints between major and dormant minor threats serve one’s interest. That is, by accommodating dormant threats, a state does not overspend their wealth by focusing its resources on the deterrence of major threats, while it is able to test whether or not the constraining dynamics between major and dormant threats would create a decrease of tensions. Therefore, a desirable consequence is that dormant minor threats succeed in constraining major threats and tensions finally diminish. However, if dormant minor threats do not turn out to be as helpful to constrain their alliance partner as the outsider thinks, and if tensions inadvertently increase, the outsider will be placed in a risky position.

The last point is about the influence of accommodation on alliance relations. If a state engages in its own alliance, the combination of deterrence and accommodation toward external threats gives mixed signals to its own alliance partner. The deterrence toward major threats increases one’s commitments toward its ally, whereas the accommodation toward dormant threats brings about an opposite behavior. Increasing commitments on the one hand and decreasing commitments on the other make one look like an unreliable alliance partner. Specifically, the accommodation toward dormant threats can create frictions with its ally. Since the accommodation is accompanied with decreased commitments toward one’s ally, it includes a denial of support for the alliance or evasion of responsibility with respect to subjects related to one’s dormant
threats.

If alliance partners share common threat perceptions, their policy option to deal with dormant threats may generate burden-sharing disputes within the alliance relationship. Since both alliance partners accommodate dormant threats, they are reluctant to increase commitments to one another. In this case, alliance relations may deteriorate to some degree as each ally accuses the other of “free-riding.” If one’s alliance partner does not share threat perception, accommodation creates even more severe problems. Because one’s alliance partner does not perceive dormant threats, it may assume a tough position toward one’s dormant threats to which one maintains a pacifying position. Consequently, this will generate conflicts between alliance partners.

**Soft-balancing**, on the other hand, encompasses limited interactions with active minor threats in political, economic and military fields. It also includes behavior to cause friction in relations with active minor threats in political and economic fields. In the military arena, the behavior of soft-balancing does not contain war and conflicts with active minor threats. However, it means that if states have their own alliance partners, they increase alliance commitments in regard to the active minor threats.

Even though states maintain interactions with minor threats, the level of interactions is restricted. In contrast to accommodation, states do not take a soft posture. As a result, although limited interactions with minor threats may include limited cooperation, an unyielding behavior toward minor threats makes confrontation
dominant as opposed to cooperation in the economic and political spheres.

Soft-balancing is a prudent strategy. Since there are possibilities for activated minor threats to become dormant minor threats in the future, states do not adopt complete deterrence against the active minor threats. If states have their own alliance partners, soft-balancing means that they are willing to provide commitments to their allies than the case of accommodation in coping with active minor threats. This behavior may bear a similarity with buck-passing. Buck-passing occurs among alliance partners when states do not want to be engaged in balancing against external threats. It is a particularly attractive strategy to states which want to avoid spending their resources and to maximize their power.

The definition of soft-balancing is discussed by current literature. Some scholars note that under the unipolarity where no countries could balance against America’s military capability, states chose “soft-balancing” against the American supremacy instead of “hard-balancing.” States level criticisms at the policies of the United States and avoid providing support. However, the behavior is limited to the economic and political spheres and states do not forge traditional alliances against the United States in the security arena.

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68 Mearsheimer explains the behavior of buck-passing particularly well. Ibid.
70 Stephen Walt has claimed, “Soft-balancing accepts the current balance of power but seeks to obtain better outcomes within it. In the current era of U.S. dominance, therefore, soft-balancing is the conscious coordination of diplomatic action in order to obtain outcomes contrary to U.S. preferences—outcomes that could not be gained if the balances did not give each other some degree of mutual support.” Ibid.
To sum up, the definition of soft-balancing includes

- Limited cooperation in economic, political and security relations
- Economic and political oppositions and tough gestures
- No attempts to cause war or confrontation
- Increased alliance commitments to let allies deal with minor threats

Finally, figure 2-4 captures three different strategies that states may choose based on relative shifts in threat perception.
Figure 2-4 State A’s Differentiation of Dyad Threats and its Strategies

Dyad Threats X and Y

State A **differentiates Dyad Threats**: Major threat X and Minor threat Y

State A **does NOT differentiate Dyad Threats** and it perceives both as Major threats

- **Major threat X increases aggressions against State A**
  - State A thinks Y’s alliance constraint over X is important
    - Yes
    - Minor threat Y becomes **Dormant** to State A
      - State A employs a combined strategy of *Deterrence* against X and *Accommodation* toward Y
        - Hypothesis 1
  - No
  - State A thinks Y’s alliance constraint over X is not needed

- **Major threat X decreases aggressions against State A**

- **Minor threat Y becomes **Dormant** to State A**
  - State A employs a combined strategy of *Deterrence* against X and *Soft-Balancing* against Y
    - Hypothesis 2

- **State A employs a single strategy of Deterrence against Major threats**
  - Hypothesis 3
Dual Threats Hypotheses

This section presents three following hypotheses.

- **Hypothesis 1**: State A differentiates dyad threats X and Y and identifies X as a major threat and Y as a minor threat. If the major threat X increases its provocations against state A, the constraining role of the minor threat Y over X is significant to state A. If state A thinks that Y has a capability of constraining X, it perceives Y as a dormant threat. Consequently, state A employs a combined strategy of deterrence against its major threat X and accommodation toward its dormant threat Y.

- **Hypothesis 2-1**: State A differentiates dyad threats X and Y and identifies X as a major threat and Y as a minor threat. If the major threat X decreases its provocations against state A, the constraining role of the minor threat Y is not important to state A. State A then perceives its minor threat Y as active. Consequently, state A employs a combined strategy of deterrence against its major threat X and soft-balancing against its active threat Y.

- **Hypothesis 2-2**: State A differentiates dyad threats X and Y and identifies X as a major threat and Y as a minor threat. If the major threat X increases its provocations against state A, and the minor threat Y does not have constraining leverage over X, state A perceives the minor threat Y as active. Consequently, state A employs a combined strategy of deterrence against its major threat X and soft-balancing against its active threat Y.
Hypothesis 3: State A does not differentiate between dyad threats when they have a similar hostile approach to state A. Consequently, state A employs a strategy of deterrence against dyad threats X and Y.

4. Competing Explanations

This section examines alternative explanations to my argument. I suggest two competing explanations. The first includes realist perspectives which purport that states do not differentiate dyad threats. The second addresses the alliance security dilemma which maintains that alliance relations influence one’s strategies toward external threats.

Realist Perspectives: Balance of Power

Power-driven analyses in the realist schools of thought predict that states balance against dyad threats.\textsuperscript{71} Even if partners within the dyad threats have different approaches, this type of realism argues that as long as the dyad threats maintain their alliance, they facilitate each other’s power aggregation. Therefore, it is not necessary for states to differentiate dyad threats. If an aggressive party in the dyad threats increases provocations toward an outsider, the other party in the dyad threats could aggravate the provocations. Even if the other does not want wars with an outsider, once war breaks out, it is necessary to provide military supports to its aggressive partner in


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order to achieve a victory. According to the balance of power analysis, the process of differentiating dyad threats is not specified and the proper strategy to deal with the dyad threats is balancing.

**Alliance Security Dilemma**

The alliance security dilemma, introduced by Glenn Synder, focuses on the interaction of alliance partners.\(^2\) This analysis explains how the interactions between alliance partners generate strategies toward external threats. If an aggressive partner in the alliance assumes an unyielding posture against external threats, and consequently strengthens its alliance commitments, it generates fears of entrapment for the aggressor’s alliance partner. The state, which has fears of entrapment, seeks a way to reduce tensions, created by the aggressive partner, and initiates a cooperative approach toward external threats. Hence, the entrapment fears prompt cooperation with external threats.

On the other hand, if one weakens its alliance commitments and decreases military and political supports to its alliance partner, the alliance partner feels fears of abandonment. The state, which feels fears of abandonment, engages in more cooperation with its alliance partner and tries to avoid cooperation with external threats. Because the state, feeling being abandoned, needs to show that it is trustworthy to its alliance partner, it stands firm against external threats and strengthens the alliance

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commitments. Therefore, abandonment fears increase cooperation with allies, while they decrease cooperation with external threats.

Propositions Based on Alternative Explanations

Balance of Power

- **Proposition 1**: It is not necessary for state A to differentiate dyad threats X and Y since X and Y form an alliance and they reinforce each other’s military capability. Consequently, state A employs a single strategy of balancing against dyad threats X and Y.

Alliance Security Dilemma

- **Proposition 2**: If state A feels entrapment fears because its alliance partner increases commitments to state A and takes unyielding stance against dyad threats, it initiates cooperation with dyad threats.

- **Proposition 3**: If state A feels abandonment fears because its alliance partner reduces commitments to state A and takes cooperative stance toward dyad threats, it increases cooperation with its alliance partner and assumes a resolute stance against dyad threats.
Figure 2-5 Comparison of Dyad Threats Hypotheses and Alternative Explanations

**Dyad Threats Hypotheses**

| State A differentiates dyad threats X and Y | Major threat X | State A chooses deterrence against X |
| State A differentiates dyad threats X and Y | Dormant minor threat Y | State A chooses accommodation toward Y |

| State A differentiates dyad threats X and Y | Major threat X | State A chooses deterrence against X |
| State A differentiates dyad threats X and Y | Active minor threat Y | State A chooses soft-balancing against Y |

**Balance of Power**

| State A does not differentiate dyad threats X and Y | States A regards both X and Y as major threats | State A takes a balancing strategy against dyad threats |

**Alliance Security Dilemma**

| State A’s relationship with its own ally | State A’s entrapment fears or abandonment fears due to relations with its ally | State A takes actions toward dyad threats |

Primarily, this dissertation tests dyad threat hypotheses against the realist analysis that focuses on the balance of power. In order for dyad threat hypotheses to work, case studies in this dissertation need to show how states differentiate dyad threats and choose different strategies toward them. First, by consistently comparing with the
balance of power, the case studies should demonstrate causal relations between the
differentiation of dyad threats and state behavior. Second, the case studies should
demonstrate that increased military provocations from one of dyad threats do not
necessarily create the worst case where the state has to balance against both dyad threats.

5. Research Design: Application to the Cases of South Korea

Testing my hypotheses includes the processes of knowing how South Korea
develops its own dyad threat perception and how the threat perception influences its
behavior toward China. To begin with, I need to operationalize threat perception held
by South Korea. It is necessary to discuss how South Korea has perceived North Korea
and China and why the ROK has differentiated threats emanating from these two
countries. Next, this section briefly examines why South Korea constitutes a tough case
for the test of my hypotheses by comparing them with alternative explanations.

Threat Perception in South Korea: Operationalization

The Cold War Era

During the Cold War era, South Korea’s perception toward North Korea and
China was antagonistic. South Korea perceived North Korea as a major adversary,
while it publicly identified China as a hostile country, or Chokseong Kukga (a country
with an adversarial nature). North Korea’s continuous provocations and assertive intentions to overthrow the ROK government have greatly influenced the threat perception of South Korea. Moreover, South Korean leaders believed that North Korea’s sporadic violence was often supported by the Chinese government. China, remained a quasi-opponent for the ROK, provided extensive economic and military aids, oil, and other basic necessities to the North Korean regime, and more importantly, refused to have official relations with the ROK government for almost forty years.  

Differentiating Threats from Pyongyang and Beijing

South Korea’s judgment on China changed based on overtures from the Chinese government. Compared to its assertive attitude during the Cold War, Beijing has shown a substantial change by shoring up diplomatic and economic ties with Seoul. China has acknowledged South Korea as a *de jure* state by normalizing diplomatic relationship in 1992. It has implemented a delicate foreign policy that maintained equidistance between Pyongyang and Seoul. Accordingly, Seoul’s view on China has been altered from a Cold War revisionist threat to a “post-Cold War status quo power.” Chung-In Moon, a Korean scholar and policy advisor to Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations, has affirmed the changes of South Korea’s perception toward the PRC. He says, “China…is no longer regarded as actual…threats—a payoff of a new regional

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73 North Korea endorsed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual assistance with Moscow and Beijing respectively in July 1961.

order and the end of the Cold War system.”

After the Chinese showed a growing attention to maintaining the stability of the Korean peninsula and promoting relations with the ROK government, South Korea began distinguishing the military capability of the DPRK from that of China. South Korean defense white papers published between the late 1980s and the early 1990s acknowledged that the Chinese support for Pyongyang had been extremely limited to political and economic areas. In addition, an important change in the assessment of the South Korean government in regard to the People’s Republic was that Seoul believed that Beijing had restrained Pyongyang’s provocations in recent years. ROK defense white papers stated that China had reduced arms sales to North Korea since the mid 1980s, and the focus of Beijing’s foreign policy to North Korea had been placed on preventing the North from waging a second Korean War.

Although the actual purpose of the Chinese restraints came out of its own interest in maintaining amiable external conditions for the continuous economic development, South Korea believed that threats from North Korea and China should be taken separately. In contrast to the Cold War era when South Korea treated China as


threats in an axis with North Korea, in recent years, China has shown that its support for North Korea is conditional and its diplomatic stance serves South Korea’s efforts to prevent North Korea’s provocations.

China’s Constraint on North Korea

It is necessary to understand the PRC’s leverage in bilateral relations with North Korea. Although South Korean leaders believe that China still has influence on dealing with North Korea’s provocative activities, it is still questionable whether the constraint of the Chinese government will succeed and how eagerly the PRC will place itself in a position of constraining North Korea.  

After the normalization of the Sino-South Korean relations, bilateral relations between North Korea and China had deteriorated. Consequently, pundits proposed cautious analyses that reveal significant limitations of China’s diplomatic and military influence on the North Korean government. Andrew Scobell, for instance, has aptly observed that although North Korea and China restored bilateral relations recently, leaders in the Chinese government started believing that Pyongyang would not rely on Beijing as much as it used to be and it would not be influenced.

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80 It is not a novel fact that the United States has also expected that the Chinese government would play a role as an honest broker between the United States and North Korea especially during the deadlock of negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang with respect to North Korea’s nuclear program.

China has continued to place the focus of its foreign policy in maintaining a
peaceful atmosphere in the Korean peninsula. As far as the Chinese government is
concerned, the peaceful Korean peninsula at present means the survival of the North
Korean regime and the division between North and South Korea.  

There are three reasons why North Korea’s survival is important for Beijing.
The first reason has to do with a political ideology. Even though Beijing and
Pyongyang do not honor a Cold-War style ironclad relationship, North Korea still
remains a significant political and security partner for China. Second is a social
consequence caused by the collapse of North Korea. China is apprehensive about a
situation where the collapse of the North Korean government will generate an influx of
refugees to the Chinese territory. The third reason is that North Korea has been a
buffer zone against the American troops in the Korean Peninsula. Without Pyongyang,
the Chinese army might confront US ground forces across the territorial border. For
this reason, a desirable consequence that the Chinese government has hoped for is a
complete withdrawal of the American troops before the establishment of unified Korea
or an emergence of pro-China government in the Korean peninsula after the unification.

The current situation of Sino-North Korean bilateral relations resembles a

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dilemma among alliance partners. While China espouses the survival of North Korea in order to maintain peace and avoid tensions in the peninsula, Pyongyang frequently employs provocative actions for the purpose of its survival. The dilemma that Beijing has been dealing with is that if it cuts off the official and unofficial aids to North Korea due to provocations, the least pleasant possibility—the collapse of the North—may eventually take place. If China continues providing assistances, however, it looks as if North Korea gets compensated for its provocations. Hence, North Korea’s aggressive behaviors can be a test of whether China can be resolute over the Pyongyang government.

Many have believed that China will not discontinue the assistance to Pyongyang because Beijing has continuously rejected proposals for a reduction or a withdrawal in its generosity. However, continuous economic and military aid to the North Korean regime in fact gives more leverage to the PRC to handle North Korea. A withdrawal after continuous commitment can give a big impact on North Korea because Pyongyang expects consistent support from Beijing.

Case Selection

Case studies on South Korea’s strategy toward China examine three time periods: 1) South Korea’s accommodation with China between 1992 and 1999; 2) ROK’s soft-balancing between 2000 and 2002; and 3) South Korea’s accommodation
between 2003 and 2007. Variations in ROK policy are also measured with respect to economic, political and military spheres.

South Korea as a Tough Case

There are three reasons why South Korea represents a tough case for my hypotheses. First, I choose South Korea because it is the least likely case for the hypotheses. Much work on East Asia, where there is a growing Chinese influence, is dominated by the analysis of the balance of power. The focus has been placed on how Asian countries choose different strategies in response to new circumstances caused by China’s growing material capability. As mentioned in Chapter 1, China’s growing capability is most likely to create threats to South Korea because states become the most violent especially when their power increases drastically.

I need to compare causal variables of my hypotheses and those of the power-driven analyses. If the balance of power is right, South Korea should show a consistent strategy toward China since the material power of the PRC has been consistently growing. My dissertation, however, offers a more nuanced threat-based argument for our understanding of South Korea’s behavior. Therefore, I need to show evidence

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85 For instance, Robert Ross has clearly argued that South Korea has been accommodating China because of the relative power difference. On the other hand, David Kang’s work argues that different identities create different strategies in East Asian countries vis-à-vis Chinese rising power. However, Kang’s argument is still close to the balance of power analysis. Robert S. Ross, "Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China: Accommodation and Balancing in East Asia," Security Studies 15, no. 3 (2006): 355-95, David C. Kang, China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
about the perception of South Korea toward North Korea and China and the causal influence of relative changes in threat perception on the behavior.

Second, South Korea presents the least likely cases because it is a general sense that the foreign policy of the Republic is determined by US-ROK alliance. The structural factor of alliance relations, particularly the alliance security dilemma, has provided a consistent impact on the process of policy making in South Korea. In other words, fears of entrapment and abandonment explain the changes of South Korea’s policies toward China. Therefore, I need to prove that the alliance security dilemma does not determine the variance of South Korea’s behavior. Since abandonment fears increase cooperation with alliance partner and decrease cooperation with adversaries, I need to demonstrate that South Korea’s abandonment fears are not connected with its soft-balancing strategy toward China. Simultaneously, since entrapment fears encourage cooperation with adversaries, I need to show evidence that the entrapment fears do not generate cooperation with China.

Lastly, my dissertation differs from previous works that preclude the possibility that Seoul may be threatened by Beijing. Previously, a few important scholars have observed the absence of South Korea’s fears of the China threat and concluded that the threat perception may not exist in South Korea. On the contrary, I argue that South Korea may perceive China as threatening and yet threats from China have been dormant because of the predominance of North Korea threats. I argue that the fact that South Korea has maintained silence with respect to threats from China does not necessarily
mean that South Korea does not hold threat perception toward China. Instead, Seoul has been relatively calm because it has placed threats from Pyongyang in a high priority while threats from Beijing in a lower priority.

South Korea is a case of “the dog that doesn’t bark.” China has shown good grounds to constitute threats to South Korea, and yet the ROK does not reveal its fear. Therefore, it is necessary to demonstrate the evidence about how South Korea’s threat perception toward China appears. First, I need to demonstrate the case where the China threat should have appeared but did not appear in actuality. In addition, I need to show how the China threat is activated by looking at evidence including newspapers, public surveys and government documents. While doing so, I need to explain causal links between threats from North Korea and those of China.
CHAPTER 3

ACCOMMODATION TOWARD CHINA: 1992-1999

This chapter tests the following hypothesis on dyad threats: if a state differentiates a major threat X from a minor threat Y and faces increased provocations from the major threat, it perceives an increased major threat from X. If the state believes that the minor threat Y can exercise restraint on the major threat X, it perceives the minor threat as dormant. Consequently, the state chooses a combined strategy of deterrence against X and accommodation toward Y.

This chapter examines the processes how South Korea perceives threats from North Korea and China and how the processes influence the behavior of South Korea vis-à-vis China between 1992 and 1999. This chapter confirms the theory of dyad threats. In this period, South Korea perceived grave threats from North Korea. Pyongyang developed nuclear programs, and continued to engage in provocations against Seoul. Hence, the Republic considered China as an important player to constrain North Korea’s provocative behavior, and thus perceived threats from China as dormant, despite China’s drastically growing material capability. As a result, Seoul’s policy toward Beijing was characterized as accommodation.
South Korea’s Threat Perception of North Korea

South Korea perceived severe threats from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) between 1992 and 1999. Nuclear attempts by North Korea threw a wet blanket over a peaceful mood in the Korean peninsula, created by the North-South joint declaration of denuclearization in late 1991. In the year 1993, North Korea was not willing to reveal major suspicious nuclear sites in Yongbyon to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). After several months of tug of war with the international nuclear watchdog that sought greater transparency of Pyongyang, the DPRK withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993. This increased the level of suspicion in the international community that the North perhaps had processed weapon-level plutonium and successfully developed a few nuclear weapons.

It was shocking news to South Korea which worked for economic cooperation

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1 While Pyongyang and Seoul declared an ‘Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Cooperation’, they also approved ‘Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula’ after three consecutive meetings in December 1991. The declaration of denuclearization revealed that the United States withdrew tactical nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula. The South Korean President Roh Tae Woo announced that the ROK did not hold any nuclear weapon in December 1991. Nevertheless, an Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress showed that a threat from North Korea increased despite series of its peaceful gestures in 1991. See The Department of Defense, "Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress," (The Department of Defense, 1992).

2 The North Koreans were able to launch their nuclear program in the 1960s with the help of the Soviet Union. In the beginning, the nuclear complex did not look threatening. In the mid 1980s, however, an American satellite took photos that showed new constructions of nuclear complex in North Korea, which generated concerns among the Americans. See Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).

3 North Korea signed the treaty of Nuclear Nonproliferation (NPT) on December 12, 1985 and yet never allowed the IAEA inspections until 1992.

4 The number of nuclear weapons in North Korea is debatable. Some argue that the North has developed two to three and others claim that the number ranges from seven to nine.
with the North and the South Korean government criticized Pyongyang for causing instability in the Korean peninsula and isolating itself from the world. North Korea continued to put off giving out permissions to the IAEA inspection teams, which increased tensions in the Korean peninsula. To make matters worse, North Korea attempted provocations such as ballistic missile tests and continued to disrupt the South Korean society. In May 1993, Pyongyang succeeded in test-firing missiles (Rodong one) at the Sea of Japan. It ranged about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) covering major cities in Japan and could carry small nuclear warheads and chemical weapons.5 Furthermore, North Korea initiated traditional provocations toward the South. Pyongyang deployed a growing number of commando forces near the border6 and let armed commandos sneak into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).7

South Korean president Kim Young Sam immediately recognized threats from North Korea. During the general meeting of the National Assembly in 1993, President Kim noted, “North Korea’s nuclear weapons gravely threatens the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula as well as the world.”8 During his interview with Hankuk Ilbo,


7 Anonymous, "Chimtu Bukhan'gun 3 Myung Sasal [Killed Three North Korean Soldiers Who Infiltrated into D M Z]," Dong-A Ilbo, May 23 1992. This incident occurred in the northern part of Chulwon in South Korea

8 ———, "Kim Daetongnyong Shijong Yonseol [President Kim's Address]," Hankuk Ilbo, October 26
one South Korean daily newspaper, Kim warned people who presented optimistic viewpoints on Pyongyang and argued that the North Korean regime was not a rationally understandable group.⁹

According to some conservative members in the National Assembly in South Korea, North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT meant that Pyongyang had already possessed nuclear weapons.¹⁰ Some conservatives criticized the ROK government for not having been tough toward North Korea, and argued that South Korea needed to stop economic aids until the North allowed inspections.

Consequently, South Korea and the United States made an adjustment to urgent situations created by the nuclear crisis. A few years ago when the Korean peninsula reached the peaceful mode, the US Congress approved a Nunn-Warner amendment that mandated to reduce 7,000 US ground forces from Korea.¹¹ Based on this plan, America had been planning two phases of reduction and the Bush administration completed the first cut by withdrawing the second infantry division’s third brigade in 1992. However, rising nuclear threats from North Korea interrupted the second phase of reduction and

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⁹ Kyushik Choi, "Kim Daetongnyong Tukbyol Hoekyun [Interview with the President Kim]," Hankuk Ilbo, June 9 1994.

¹⁰ Kihong Kim and Ohjin Kwon, "Ahnbo Wihyup Kyujong Chodangjok Daecho [Bipartisan Effort Needed to Deal with a Security Threat]," Segye Ilbo, March 14 1993. The Committee on Foreign Affairs and Unification of the National Assembly made an announcement that if North Korea would not nullify the announcement that it would withdraw from the NPT, the joint declaration of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula coming into effect on February 19, 1992 was void.

¹¹ After this reduction, about 37,000 US troops were remained in the Korean Peninsula. For U.S. policy options in East Asia, see William J Crowe Jr. and Alan D. Romberg, "Rethinking Security in the Pacific," Foreign Affairs 70, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 123-40.
Washington agreed to maintain the number of the United States Forces in Korea (USFK) temporarily by reversing a decision for a withdrawal.\textsuperscript{12} Deputy Defense Secretary William Perry stated, “The United States will not reduce its forces in Korea until the problem of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program is resolved.”\textsuperscript{13}

A hawkish group of people emerged in the US government and their influence appeared in comments by several American government officials.\textsuperscript{14} President Clinton, for instance, mentioned in the interview with a television program that the United States remained “firm” about preventing North Korea from developing nuclear weapons.

With respect to 70 percent of North Korea’s troops newly deployed near the border with South Korea in 1993, Clinton stated, “They (North Korea) know that any attack on South Korea is an attack on the United States.”\textsuperscript{15} Director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) James Woolsey also recognized increased tensions in the peninsula and hinted that the United States might consider a military option.\textsuperscript{16}

Tensions did not subside completely even after Washington and Pyongyang

\textsuperscript{12} During the annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) in October 1992, the United States and South Korea agreed that a further drawdown in the US ground troops was delayed, since the nuclear inspections in North Korea proved fruitless.


reached an agreement that froze North Korea’s five-megawatt nuclear reactors and other nuclear facilities.\footnote{In return, the United States government agreed to provide light water reactors and heavy fuel oil for Pyongyang. R. Jeffrey Smith, "N. Korea, U.S. Reach Nuclear Pact; Political, Economic Ties Are Involved," \textit{The Washington Post}, October 18 1994, Alan Riding, "U.S. And North Korea Sign Pact to End Nuclear Dispute," \textit{The New York Times}, October 21 1994.} The 1994 Geneva Agreement had practical obstacles. The North Korean government refused to accept the agreement that their light water reactors should be made by South Korea, and threatened to reprocess its nuclear facilities. The South Korean government was persistent in advocating the South Korean style reactors and encouraged the North to go with that style.

Meanwhile, intelligence communities in the United States and South Korea observed increased military exercises in the North Korean army and more air forces placed near the demilitarized area. ROK National Security Planning publicized a report that the North completed a war plan against the South by relocating approximately 90 airplanes near the DMZ.\footnote{The head of the National Security Planning reported the status of North Korea in front of the Committee on Security of National Assembly on December 15, 1995. A summary of the report appeared in news papers. See John Burton, "North Korea 'Preparing War Plans'," \textit{Financial Times}, December 16 1995, Seongshik Yoo, "Puk, Gunjunjin Bae'chi [North Korea Moved the Forces Forward]," \textit{Hankuk Ilbo}, December 16 1995, Chunkyu Lee, "Pukhan Donghyang [Current Status of North Korea]," \textit{Segye Ilbo}, December 16 1995.} The report continued to say that because of this deployment, North Korea’s IL-28 bombers were able to fly to Seoul in five minutes and Mig17 and 19 fighters could attack South Korea within six minutes.\footnote{Lee, "Pukhan Donghyang [Current Status of North Korea].", Yoo, "Puk, Gunjunjin Bae'chi [North Korea Moved the Forces Forward]."} Unification white papers published by the Republic also noted that the most threatening factor for national
security was North Korea’s ground forces and fighters deployed near the DMZ.\textsuperscript{20}

Consequently, the majority of South Korean people paid growing attention to the argument that the North Korean regime might seek a war in the near future.\textsuperscript{21}

The South Korean government opposed food aid to North Korea. Although the Red Cross reported that nearly 130 thousand people were in the brink of starvation in 1995, Kim administration suggested that additional assistance should come only after Pyongyang became less hostile toward Seoul and blamed the North Korean government for letting its population starve to death. ROK defense white paper published in 1995 was noticeable because unlike previous versions, it clearly designated North Korea as an enemy of South Korea.\textsuperscript{22}

The next South Korean government led by Kim Dae Jung continued to perceive North Korea as threatening. The defense white paper in 1999 recognized that North Korea posed grave threats to South Korea.\textsuperscript{23} Importantly, ballistic missiles tested in 1998 and the incident of North Korean espionage heightened the level of threats. Conservative people in the South Korean government and the ROK National Assembly reprimanded the regime of the North for causing instability in the peninsula.


\textsuperscript{21} Major reports in 1995 and 1996 argued that North Korea was close to a regime collapse because of economic problems and pervasive famine. For these economic reasons, many claimed that North Korea was more likely to seek provocations and even wage a war.


Particularly, in response to several incidents that deteriorated North-South relations, President Kim Dae Jung stated that North Korea’s behavior was not forgivable and that he would seek an apology. South Korea’s threat perception was shared by the United States. The Defense Secretary of the United States and the South Korean counterpart declared that threats from the DPRK emanated mostly from nuclear weapons. Several annual meetings of the SCM reconfirmed this point.

**South Korea’s Threat Perception of China**

According to a hypothesis on dyad threats, as soon as South Korea perceives increased threats from North Korea, threats from China become latent because South Korea believes that China has valuable leverage in dealing with North Korea and its provocative activities. The following evidence supports this hypothesis. South Korea’s defense white papers noted that China had been discouraging North Korea from initiating conflicts, although the effectiveness of Chinese influence was debatable. South Korean leaders including President Kim Young Sam stated on several occasions that Beijing could wield a certain degree of an influence on Pyongyang and showed gestures to seek help from the Chinese, hoping that it would promote Chinese role in reducing tensions in the Korean peninsula.

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The South Korean government did not publicize discussions on a China threat, despite China’s continuous modernization in the ground, air and naval forces that may constitute perceived threats to South Korea.\(^{26}\) Only noticeable were ROK’s defense white papers which acknowledged China’s growing military expenses after 1989 and its procurement of advanced weapons from Russia and western countries.\(^{27}\)

The same is true among South Korean policymakers. They never brought up China’s military capability, which might suggest that discussions on “a China threat” in the United States and Japan—the core allies of the Republic—did not bother South Korean bureaucrats during the processes of making policies vis-à-vis China.\(^{28}\) Some South Korean officials claimed that this was because North Korea had dominated policy agendas and the ROK government did not have a chance to pay sufficient attention to other countries especially China.\(^{29}\) Others maintained that the China threat was a

\(^{26}\) While China’s defense expenditure occupies three to five percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the absolute amount of military spending in recent years increased even faster than before. The continuance of military modernization in China aims to restructure the ground, air, and navy forces by obtaining state-of-the-art technology. Moreover, Beijing has made progress in missile forces by successfully producing wide-range strategic ballistic missiles. In particular, the number of China’s SRBMs has grown quickly in recent years. The US Defense Intelligence Agency estimates that the People’s Liberation Army has 900 SRBMs as of October 2006. SRBMs have been located on the east coast targeting Taiwan, Japan and perhaps Korea. See The Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China* (The Department of Defense, 2007), 17.


\(^{29}\) Author’s interview with a former Foreign Minister, December 2006.
concept created by the United States and Japan and it was not applied to South Korea.\textsuperscript{30} They believed that the rhetoric of a China threat was an overstated reality, since the military capability of the PRC was far behind that of the United States, although they were vigilant on the gap of military capability between Seoul and Beijing.\textsuperscript{31} South Korean leaders emphasized the fact that China is an opportunity for South Korea instead of a threat. The major statements of China as an opportunity specifically focused on the field of economy. Interestingly, in the next empirical case study in Chapter 4, when South Korea perceived China threats as active, Korean elites highlighted the negative side of the Chinese economy.

When China conducted missile tests and provocative actions near the Taiwan straits in 1995 and 1996, the South Korean government was reluctant to express negative viewpoints and official statements by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) were lukewarm. MOFAT announced only a brief comment that the missile tests were against the basic principles of the NPT and it hoped for the incident to be solved in a peaceful way.

\textsuperscript{30} Author’s interviews of three government officials in the Ministry of Defense, three in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and one former China desk officer in National Intelligence Service (previously National Security Planning), June 2006. The interviewees said that Chinese military forces were not targeting South Korea. They also mentioned that South Korea should be able to avoid the situation where China would carry on a possible attack on the Korean peninsula.

\textsuperscript{31} Jin-young Suh, a renowned South Korean scholar on China argues that the China threat is a somewhat overstated concept and yet not a groundless argument. He maintains that there are some reasons that China will challenge and compete with the United States which will create tensions between the United States and China. However, he does not provide assessment of South Korea’s viewpoint on growing Chinese military capability. Jin-young Suh, "Pukanghan Chungkuk Ui Tungchang Kwa Chungkuk Wihyunnon Kuriko Hanpando [the Rise of a Strong China and the Theory of China Threat: Their Implication on the Korean Peninsula]," \textit{Korea and World Politics} 18, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 3, 8.
The United States, Japan and other Asian countries, on the other hand, evinced fears and concerns and even threatened to reduce economic aids to China. More importantly, the United States sent a navy ship to pass through the Taiwan Strait, while Japan brought Chinese ambassador to Japan in order to express an official complaint.

In contrast to the government, newspapers in South Korea expressed negative viewpoints. According to numerous newspapers published in Seoul, Chinese military conduct was “adventurous” in order to vie for “hegemony”\(^{32}\), while “destroying the stability of the Asian region”\(^{33}\) and perhaps creating “a surprisingly disastrous result and military tensions”\(^{34}\) among Asian states. The South Korean newspapers continued to argue that China’s military development could no longer be regarded as purely defensive\(^{35}\) and their nuclear tests were not a problem between China and Taiwan but a crisis that would generate threats to South Korea and other Asian countries.\(^{36}\)

According to a public survey conducted by RAND Corporation and Jungang Ilbo in 1996, the South Koreans, who recognized this incident, favored an idea of forging an alliance with Japan against a potential Chinese attack on the Korean peninsula.\(^{37}\)

Responses from the South Korean government never lived up to domestic


\(^{33}\) Kyunghyang Shinmun, July 28 1995, Dong-A Ilbo, March 12 1996.

\(^{34}\) Segye Ilbo, July 31 1995, Hankuk Ilbo, March 8 1996.

\(^{35}\) Jungang Ilbo, September 5 1995.

\(^{36}\) Kukmin Ilbo, August 18 1995.

concerns. For this reason, many people in South Korea condemned the ROK government for currying China’s favor.\textsuperscript{38} For their defense, South Korean officials claimed that the reason of indifference was that the incident was related directly to the security of Japan not South Korea because Tokyo had an island between Taiwan and Okinawa within a range of short-ranged ballistic missiles (SRBM) deployed within China. However, I argue that the reason was because South Korea did not want to impair bilateral relations with China which was believed to wield political leverage over the North Korean regime.\textsuperscript{39} One South Korean government official made a comment reflecting my argument. He stated that if South Korea criticized Chinese military conducts, it had to put up with possible repercussions on dealing with North Korean problems.\textsuperscript{40}

It is interesting to note that South Korean leaders demonstrated relatively solid and strong responses to the development of nuclear weapons in North Korea, whereas they took a relatively nonchalant and moderate attitude toward China’s nuclear tests and its violation of the NPT. Importantly, since Beijing’s violent attempts could have prompted North Korea to resume its nuclear program or even provocations, South Korea should have taken a tougher gesture to the PRC.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{39}Byungkwang Lee, "Taejung Chojase Oikyo [Low Key Diplomacy toward China]," Kyunghyang Shinmun, August 19 1995.
\textsuperscript{40}Taehee Lee, "Taeman Satae Chungbu Ipchang [Korean Government's Position to Taiwan Straits Incident]," Kukmin Ilbo, March 9 1996.
\end{flushright}
In reality, while the threat from North Korea at that point was grave to South Korea because of increasing provocations near the borders, South Korean policy makers regarded Beijing’s political role as salient in order to restrain Pyongyang. The South Korean ambassador to China underlined this point during the North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993. He argued that South Korea should appreciate the voice and influence of the Chinese government in dealing with North Korea instead of relying merely on the United States. In summary, Chinese political leverage over the North Korean regime led the ROK government to dismiss the military threat coming from China and to perceive a dormant China threat.

South Korea’s Policy to China: Accommodation

The hypothesis on dyad threats predicts that if South Korea perceives a China threat as dormant, it adopts a policy of accommodation. This section tests this hypothesis by analyzing policies that the ROK government employed with respect to China in the period of 1992-1999. Seoul’s cooperation with Beijing in the political, economic and military relations proves this hypothesis. Seoul’s teaming up with China in order to deal with the Japanese textbook issue was a good example to confirm the hypothesis. In the field of economic interactions, South Korea was enthusiastic about

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41 *Chosun Ilbo*, March 29 1994. The ambassador’s statement was ‘corrected’ later by a senior advisor to president who said that South Korea communicated with the United States more and discussed the North Korean issue with the United States first.
having nuclear energy cooperation with China and it declined a financial offer from the Taiwanese government during the South Korea’s economic turmoil. In the security sphere, Seoul increased official communications with the Chinese government, while distancing itself from the United States by declaring that it would not join the US-led missile defense system.

**Political Relations**

**President Kim Young Sam’s Visit during the Nuclear Crisis**

Considering that South Korea and China did not have diplomatic relations until 1992, one may argue that increasing contacts between South Korea and China is a natural process because the two Asian countries want to compensate for their ‘lost’ years when they did not recognize each other in the Cold War era. Growing political contacts between the two Asian countries merely reflected the impact of structural change in the region, the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Hence, when South Korean President Kim Young Sam, who took office six months after the Sino-ROK normalization, visited China in March 1994—the time when tensions in the Korean peninsula reached the highest point due to North Korea’s brinkmanship in the nuclear crisis—people believed that the visit merely represented growing diplomatic relations between the two countries. This argument critically challenges the hypothesis of dyad threats which I test in this chapter because according
to this argument, South Korean leaders paid visits to China without the influence of ROK’s threat perception of China as a dormant threat.

In order to prove the hypothesis of dyad threats, it is worth discussing and emphasizing the fact that South Korea was extremely eager to improve relations with China. South Korea was interested in leveling up the relations with China because getting full support from the People’s Republic could work as a political pressure over Pyongyang. With enough support from China, South Korea would have a legitimate voice and leverage to deal with North Korea and to bring it into bilateral talks more easily.

For instance, during his state visit, President Kim Young Sam reportedly offered a proposal that the two countries should be able to upgrade bilateral relations and to call “Cooperative Partnerships” instead of “Friendly Relations.” These terminologies are what China usually employs to describe its relations with foreign countries, which mostly implies the attitude and the understanding of China vis-à-vis others. Friendly relations were established during the normalization in 1992 and South Korean leader’s suggestion for cooperative partnerships came only a year later. Changes in words from friendly relations to cooperative partnerships meant that China accepted that the bilateral relations with South Korea improved significantly.

To Kim’s disappointment, the Chinese counterpart was unenthusiastic. The

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42 China and South Korea declared a ‘Cooperative Partnership for the 21st Century’ when Kim Dae Jung visited China in November 1998. Most Korean newspapers reported that the Sino-South Korean relationship had improved. Previously, China identified the bilateral relations with South Korea as a ‘Good-Neighbor’ relationship.
reason was because China perhaps wanted to slow down in developing relations with South Korea. Formal relationship with the South Korean government already meant a diplomatic success for the People’s Republic. At the same time, because the 1992 normalization estranged relations with Pyongyang, Beijing, by maintaining the current situation, wanted to obtain an advantage to restore relations with Pyongyang and to prevent any unexpected violence that North Korea might create owing to its feeling isolated from China.

Second, Kim’s visit to China proved the hypothesis of dyad threats since South Korea was willing to coordinate its position with China in dealing with North Korea. After coming back from Kim Young Sam’s tour to China, South Korean officials’ public announcements regarding North Korea became softer than a week before. Before the summit meeting, however, South Korea sounded as if it ran out of patience with Pyongyang’s continuous drag on the nuclear inspections. South Korean nuclear ambassador of MOFAT Kim Sam Hun stated that the time for discussion to solve the North Korea’s nuclear problem was over and the South Korean government began considering tough alternatives, such as resuming Team Spirit military exercise with the United States and deploying the Patriot missiles in South Korea.\(^{43}\) This announcement came out as soon as North Korean officials threatened to initiate a war in Korea and

\(^{43}\) _Chosun Ilbo_, March 18 1994. Byungjin Chung, “Chongbu, Daehwa Haekyul Eoryupta Pandan [Government Concluded That It Is Impossible to Solve the North Korean Issue through Discussion],” _Hankuk Ilbo_, March 18 1994. After Kim Sam Hun’s announcement, the Senior Presidential Secretary for Diplomacy and Security Affairs Chung Jong Wook said that the government recognized the serious status and yet did not make a decision to resume military exercise and deploy the missiles.
would turn Seoul into a sea of fire.\footnote{When South Korean representatives mentioned economic sanctions during the bilateral meetings with North Korea in early 1994, North Korean counterparts furiously stated that they would respond with a talk for a talk and a war for a war while adding a comment that Seoul might turn into a sea of fire once a war occurred. At that moment, the North Korean government continued avoiding the IAEA inspections. Bonyoung Ku, "Seoul, Bulbada Dwel Kot [Seoul Will Turn into a Sea of Fire]," \textit{Seoul Shinmun}, March 20 1994.}

Right after the summit between the ROK and China, a spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) announced that China did not support any behavior that might do harm to maintaining peace and easing tensions in the Korean peninsula. Most South Korean newspapers interpreted this comment as a direct opposition to the US-ROK military exercises which the South Korean government brought up a few days before. Accordingly, in response to the announcement, President Kim clarified that he was still considering an option for military exercises with the United States and would make a final decision after he came back.\footnote{It was reported that China conducted operational exercise in the Liaodong peninsula close to South Korea in August 1994. The Chinese magazine said that the exercise for the amphibious warfare was aimed at the Korean peninsula in order to warn the ROK and the US governments. See “Chungkuk, Chaknyun Hankuk Kyonyang Kunsu Hullyun [China Conducted Military Exercise Targeting South Korea Last Year]” \textit{Jungang Ilbo}, October 10, 1995. Also see Jing Bao, October 1994 cited in Jae Ho Chung, \textit{Between Ally and Partner: Korea-China Relations and the United States} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 163.} When Kim finished his trip to Beijing and came back to Seoul, he emphasized diplomatic approaches and did not raise the issue of military exercises.\footnote{This mood did not last long, however.}

\section*{Collaboration with China on the issue of History}

China and the ROK have been sensitive to Japanese historical issues which have
frequently interrupted their bilateral relations with Japan. The two Asian states have paid close attention to various versions of Japanese history textbooks that have dismissed the Japanese colonization in East Asia during the Second World War. Japanese extreme right-wing politicians often agitate neighboring countries by justifying colonial periods by the imperial Japan. China and South Korea have imposed harsh criticisms on the Japanese government for denying its war crime and for avoiding apologies for its invasion to the two Asian countries. Because of the similar historical experience, China and South Korea share a special bond.

How South Korea dealt with issues on Japanese history in the period of 1992-1999 demonstrated what the theory of dyad threats predicted. South Korea attempted to work together proactively by seeking political coalition with the Chinese government in a way to ward off Japanese political assertiveness and the distortion of history.47 Leaders in the Republic made efforts to highlight their mutual feelings with the Chinese

counterparts and sympathy about the past.

In November 1995, a few Japanese government officials made controversial comments. Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama mentioned that the treaty between Korea and Japan in 1910, which colonized the Korean peninsula, was legitimate. Moreover, one of Japanese government officials made off-the-record remarks that Japan had done something good to Korean people during the occupation period by providing education and building infrastructure which became the backbone of industrialization in South Korea. After these comments were publicized, South Korea responded with furious gestures to Japan. Seoul threatened to cancel forthcoming foreign minister meetings and the summit meeting between South Korean President Kim Young Sam and Japanese Prime Minister Murayama.

The Republic immediately sought cooperation with the Chinese government to denounce the colonial brutality of Japan. During the Sino-ROK summit meeting, South Korean President Kim Young Sam stated, “Japanese leaders have made reckless remarks (on history) on as many as 30 occasions since Korea’s independence. Now we must put an end to their nerve.” The Chinese side was a bit cautious but showed its willingness to join South Korea’s attempt to condemn Japan. Chinese leader Jiang Ze Min responded to Kim’s comment by noting, “Japan should view history from the right-wing’s perspective. Some Japanese leaders have denied the Japanese invasion of China

48 However, Japan and South Korea eventually had a summit meeting where the Japanese leader made an apology. Takami Eto, whose unofficial statement was regarded as a main cause of the diplomatic conundrum, had to resign from his position as a chief of the Management and Coordination Agency.

49 "Kim, Jiang Harshly Chastise Japan at Summit," Korea Times, November 15 1995.
and other Asian states. A core problem is whether Japan will admit that the war against Asia was an aggression.” Additionally, Jiang warned that people in Asia should be wary of the militarism supported by extreme conservatives in Japan.

Kim’s criticism was extremely harsh, which came from his confidence boosted up by shared feelings with and support from the Chinese counterpart. The meeting also signified a critical moment for the South Korean leader to use cooperation with China for political leverage in bilateral relations with Japan. Without proper Chinese support, South Korea’s complaints had been shrugged off by the Japanese.

Since both China and South Korea had previously made similar criticisms on Japan’s returning to militarism, the critical contents in their statements were not surprising. However, what made their comments meaningful to Japan was that it was the first collaborative attempt of two continental powers to criticize Japan. Some Japanese people feared that this perhaps revealed a trend of the Sino-South Korean cooperation to isolate Japan. Some pundits in South Korea boldly argued that after this incident, Seoul could truly move forward to the creation of political partnerships with Beijing as opposed to Tokyo. They claimed that how China treated history incidents showed that China might feel confident to give pressure on Japan and send a

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50 Kihong Kim, "Hanjung Chungsang Hoidam Ilmun Iltap[South Korea-China Summit Meeting Press Conference],” Segye Ilbo, November 15 1995.

51 On the other hand, major Chinese newspapers did not cover the leaders’ comments on history. They merely reported that after the summit meeting, China and South Korea achieved a great improvement in bilateral relations. Compared to South Korean newspapers, the Chinese media remained silent on their leader’s criticism on Japan. Theresa Tan, "China Media Skirts Japan Issue in Reports of Jiang's Historic Korean Trip," The Straits Times, November 24 1995.
message that South Korea might be able to replace Japan as a better political and economic partner for China.  

**Economic Relations**

This section starts with assessing the general trend of economic relations between South Korea and China which began through Hong Kong and Macao before the normalization in 1992. The volume of projects invested in China and bilateral trade increased particularly in the early 1990s, after a series of procedures paved a road to develop interactions more easily. The two countries signed a treaty on bilateral trade in December 1991, which lifted duties which had discriminated South Korean products exported to China. In terms of investment relations, major Chinese cities

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54 For example, in 1991, a year before the normalization, the bilateral trade increased 67 percent compared to 1990.

55 After the trade treaty became effective on February 1 1992, the South Korean government expected that bilateral trade with China would grow fast and that China would become the third largest trading partner in two to three years. See Anonymous, "Hanchung Muyok Hyupchong Balhyo [South Korea-China Trade Treaty Comes to Effect]," *Dong-A Ilbo*, February 1 1992. Also, for South Korea, 1992 was a memorable year in economic relations with China. South Korea for the first time opened a trade fair in Beijing on May 12 1992 and was allowed to use its flag for the first time in the PRC. On May 1 1992, China first allowed South Korean national flag carriers to make port in China. The Chinese government had refused to let South Korean carriers enter ports in China despite growing bilateral trade with South Korea.
such as Tianjin and Weihai approved special industrial complexes for South Korean companies in order to attract investment. The PRC government also allowed several provinces, including Shandong and Jilin, to initiate direct contacts with South Korean companies which could bring the spirit of market economy.

The 1992 normalization stimulated the growth of trade and investment even further. The increase rate of bilateral trade volumes was almost 30 percent between 1992 and 1999 and South Korea started enjoying surplus in trade with China. The investment of the Republic in China ran at 163 million dollars in 1992, while the amount expanded by nine times to 992.315 million dollars in 1996. After Asian economic crises, however, the total investment of South Korea decreased as low as 367.764 million dollars in 1999.

While abovementioned facts help us understand bilateral economic relations between Beijing and Seoul, they do not present proper information to test the hypothesis of dyad threats. Therefore, the following section should conduct rigorous tasks to show the influence of changes in North Korea threats and China threats on South Korea’s policies vis-à-vis the People’s Republic.

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The Rejection of Taiwan’s Offer

One indicator of the influence of dormant China threats on South Korea’s behavior is an intentional avoidance of friction with the Chinese government. The following incident confirms this point. As the theory of dyad threats predicts, after South Korea perceived increased North Korea threats and consequently regarded China threats as dormant, the circumvention of confrontation with China became obvious. The Republic proactively avoided challenging China particularly with respect to issues, such as entertaining and communicating with the Taiwanese government. After its economic imperatives caused by the 1997 financial crisis, South Korea received an offer for economic support from Taiwan and refused to accept it, an opportunity which would have helped Korea get over the disastrous situation more quickly.

Many people remembered that 1997 was the year of major economic crises in most East Asian countries and South Korea.58 Seoul, running out of foreign exchange reserves and holding malfunctioning banks and stock markets, had to seek bail-out

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programs from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on conditions of restructuring the basis of economic institutions, including financial organizations, and of trimming down many private and government-owned industries. South Korea, around this time, underwent a general election for its new president. Due to economic turmoil created by the existing government, South Korean people selected Kim Dae Jung, the leader of a major opposition party, as a new president. President-elect Kim Dae Jung started his work by dealing with financial emergency together with then incumbent president Kim Young Sam.

Under the urgent economic condition, Kim Dae Jung was informed that the Taiwanese government was willing to provide financial assistance to economically ill-fated South Korea. Although the amount of money that Taiwan suggested was not confirmed, the offer was attractive enough for the South Korean government which ran out of foreign currency reserves at the moment. The offer from Taiwan was not without conditions, however. It was reported that the conditions of the loan included the restoration of bilateral relations between the two political entities after they severed forty-year formal relations in 1992. Taiwan and South Korea discontinued aviation and official economic and diplomatic contacts in the course of the 1992 Sino-ROK normalization’s implementation.

According to Jungang Ilbo and Dong-a Ilbo, two major South Korean newspapers, Taiwan suggested that it would give ten billion dollars to South Korea. However, during author’s interview, a former high level South Korean government official said that the amount ranged from one to two billion dollars and that Taiwan was willing to provide the money in March 1998. See Jungang Ilbo, January 5 1998, Dong-A Ilbo, December 31, 1997, Author’s interview, Seoul, December 30 2006.
Knowing Taiwan’s offer, the Chinese government made a remark that it would not oppose the financial assistance from Taipei only if the aid was completed through international organizations such as IMF instead of direct government-to-government support.\(^6^0\) Taiwanese, of course, hoped to make their money be transferred directly to Seoul and to opt out the option of international mediators. South Korean policy makers and a financial task force under the newly elected Kim Dae Jung were extremely cautious. First, they believed that assistance from Taiwan was undeniably helpful for the Korean economy, considering an urgency that may be directly related to South Korea’s survival. Taiwan’s suggestion was not something that they easily ignore. In fact, some advisors suggested that the new South Korean government should accept the offer from Taiwan.\(^6^1\) On the other hand, receiving money from the Taiwanese government might create unwanted political complexity. A direct transfer from Taiwan meant that South Korea recognized the “de jure” status of the Taiwanese government, which would create without doubt a backlash from the Chinese government.

After due consideration, the South Korean president elect and his advisors finally decided not to receive Taiwan’s financial assistance. For the new presidential team in South Korea which needed to work with the Chinese counterpart in a few days, an option of receiving money from Taiwan and a consequent recovery of bilateral relations with it were a big burden. However, they argued that the reason why they did

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\(^6^0\) Jong-ho Han, ”Taeman Taehan Kanjop Chiwon Inchong [Approve Taiwan's Indirect Financial Assistance to the R O K],” *Munhwa Ilbo*, December 27 1997.

\(^6^1\) Author’s interview, December 30 2006.
not accept the offer was that the IMF emergency loan was expected to come shortly and the amount of Taiwanese assistance was not enough to cover the crisis in South Korea. Nevertheless, economic situations at the moment were certainly serious and the Republic was requesting financial support from other foreign countries.

Considering this phenomenon, one can argue that South Korea certainly needed help from Taiwan. South Korea’s decision was something that reflected the influence of increased North Korea threats and dormant China threats. Since the role of China in restraining North Korea was significant, South Korea, by avoiding dealing with Taiwan, lost a critical financial opportunity in order not to create friction with the PRC. Even in urgent financial situations, South Korea was extremely sensitive about the response from the Chinese government and its diplomatic repercussions on the Korean peninsula.

Atomic Energy Cooperation

Another instance which proves the hypothesis on dyad threats is South Korea’s nuclear energy policy. Although South Korea’s civilian nuclear cooperation with the PRC was essentially commercial; exchanging sensitive information about nuclear technology may not sound purely economic. Compared to its alliance partners, South Korea was more enthusiastic in transferring technology and facilities to China. The United States and Japan, the first and the third largest nuclear-power consumers in the world, did not have much progress in cooperating with China until the late 1990s, although the two countries had agreements with Beijing, concerning peaceful use of
nuclear technology in July 1985 (America and China on July 25 and Japan and China on July 31).

The United States, in particular, had much trouble with China. The Congress enacted sanctions on suspending nuclear cooperation with China after the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989.\textsuperscript{62} Crises in Taiwan straits between 1995 and 1996 and a growing suspicion that the Chinese government transferred nuclear technology to Iran and Pakistan also prolonged the implementation of nuclear cooperation. Only after President Clinton waived the sanctions placed on China in 1988, companies in America began seeking contracts with China to build nuclear reactors in the late 1990s.\textsuperscript{63}

South Korea’s willingness to exchange civilian nuclear technology with China was not prohibited by political obstacles, however.\textsuperscript{64} Their collaboration was vibrant owing to major bilateral agreements on science and technology completed even before their diplomatic normalization. First, South Korea agreed with China to provide nuclear power information and technology.\textsuperscript{65} For the Chinese government, nuclear power was

\begin{footnotes}
\item[62] For detailed information, see Shirley Kan and Mark Holt, "C R S Report for Congress: U.S.-China Nuclear Cooperation Agreement," (September 6, 2007).
\item[64] The ROK was not able to levy sanctions on China for the Tiananmen incident because two countries did not have formal relationship at the moment. In addition, although the United States and Japan levied sanctions on China after the incident, a part of the sanctions were lifted shortly. For Tiananmen incident and the responses of international community, see George Hicks, ed., \textit{The Broken Mirror: China after Tiananmen} (Chicago, IL: Longman Current Affairs, 1990). Some scholars have shown interest in South Korea’s responses after the Tiananmen incident. For example, see David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," \textit{International Security} 29, no. 3 (Winter 2004/05): 67.
\item[65] “China’s Nuclear Cooperation Agreements”, \textit{The Nuclear Threat Initiative}, available via \url{http://www.nti.org/db/china/nca.htm}
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especially attractive because of growing energy demands in major industrial cities and
the South Korean government understood that building nuclear power reactors for the
production of civilian nuclear energy was an urgent project in China.\(^{66}\) Subsequently,
the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (KAERI) signed an agreement with
China’s Research Institute of Nuclear Power Operation (RINPO) in February 1991, and
provided technology for inspecting the capacity of the Daya Bay units one and two—
the first two nuclear power plants located in Guangdong, China—before their
commercial operation.\(^{67}\) In 1993, the ROK completed a 340,000 dollar contract with
China in order to provide an emergency help to deal with the Loss of Coolant Accident
in Qinshan reactors.\(^{68}\)

South Korea has been successful in securing electricity by building major
nuclear power plants since the late 1970s with the help from France and the United
States.\(^{69}\) South Korea’s Wooljin nuclear plants of which the capacity ranges 1,000

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\(^{66}\) Chinese electricity production mostly comes from fossil fuel (80%) and hydro power (about 18%).
Nuclear power plants produced only 1% of electricity in 1999. However, the growing demand of energy
in major industrial cities in the east coast particularly needs nuclear plants because of their location
remote from the coal field and the speed of energy consumption. China plans to build 40 units of reactors

\(^{67}\) The commercial operation of Daya Bay reactors which were built by Framatome, a French company,
began in February and May 1994 respectively. See “Nuclear Power in China” *World Nuclear Association*
(November 2007).

\(^{68}\) Hyunseok Ko, "Hankukhyung Wonjaro Suchul [Export South Korean Style Reactors]," *Seoul Shinmun*,
November 1 1994. Qinshan nuclear plants are located in Zhejiang province. The first unit entered
operations in 1994, while other four units between 2002 and 2004.

\(^{69}\) South Korea is regarded as one of ten largest consumers of nuclear power in the world. The ROK
megawatts are particularly important because they represent the Korean style light water reactors. Moreover, they were the nuclear reactors that the KEDO agreed to provide for the North Korean government in exchange for giving up Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons.

President Kim Young Sam’s visit to China in March 1994 created an opportunity for discussions about the cooperation on nuclear energy plants. In November 1994 when Chinese Premier Li Peng paid his first visit to South Korea, the two Asian countries completed an agreement to cooperate in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. This allowed South Korean companies to participate in Chinese nuclear power projects. As a result, the Korea Energy and Power Corporation (KEPCO), a state-owned company in South Korea, made the first contract with a Chinese counterpart to establish manufacturing facilities for nuclear components in Qinshan reactors in January 1995, and completed the second contract for the fabrication of major equipments for Qinshan reactors in July 1996.\(^70\) During the 1990s, Presidents Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung approached Chinese counterparts to seek more opportunities for South Korean companies to build nuclear energy plants in China.

\(^70\) Yonhap, January 19 1995, Kyunghyang Shinmun, July 18 1996.
Security Relations

This section examines security relations between South Korea and China by looking at bilateral military exchanges and US-ROK alliance. The focus of this section, however, is placed more on the alliance between the United States and South Korea. Although the traditional alliance has not clearly designated China as an adversary, the process of restructuring the alliance has shown a direction towards new tasks, possibly related to issues on China and regional contingencies generated by discord between the People’s Republic and Taiwan. As the dyad threats hypothesis argues, this section should demonstrate that the behavior of South Korea epitomizes cooperation toward the PRC, due to the impact of increased North Korea threats and dormant China threats. Hence, while intensifying basic military contacts with the Chinese government, South Korea should not increase its commitments to America and it should show reluctance to adjusting the alliance to handling tasks which may involve China in the new US-ROK alliance plans.

Military Exchange and Disarmament talk

Analyzing general military exchanges does not show the effect of Seoul’s view on China as dormant threats. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning briefly in this section to understand the improvement of bilateral security relations. Seoul and Beijing began military exchanges through the ROK military attaché office in Beijing in December 1993 and the Chinese one in Seoul in April 1994. During this period, there was only
one major meeting between the two countries and South Korean Minister of National Defense visited China in August 1999. Mutual visits by working level officials continued to increase and educational exchanges occasionally occurred.\textsuperscript{71}

In June 1999 when tensions in the Korean peninsula increased after a few offensive attempts by North Korea, there was an important improvement in bilateral military relations between South Korea and China. The two countries held the first bilateral disarmament meeting and reaffirmed their position that the Korean peninsula should be free from the proliferation of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. They even reached an agreement that they would encourage North Korea to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and more importantly, the IAEA Safeguard Agreement.

Even though the bilateral meeting was a symbolic talk shop, there were a few significant meanings in this talk. First, the ROK and China not only developed an instrument of discussing significant military agendas, but also confirmed that their strategic interests were met in dealing with the North Korean problems. Insofar as North Korea’s ballistic missiles and nuclear program, Seoul and Beijing would find more grounds to cooperate with each other.\textsuperscript{72}

Second, both countries want to see the denuclearization of North Korea and the


stability of the Korean peninsula. Since the bilateral meeting took place after North Korea test-fired Taepodong missile in summer 1998, the disarmament meeting between Beijing and Seoul might intend to deliver a message to Pyongyang and discourage its further provocative actions.

The Chinese representatives used this meeting in order to express their concerns about the US-led theater missile defense system in which Japan decided to participate. The Japanese government had been conducting precautionary research on the missile defense system since the early 1990s and finally agreed to co-develop the program with Washington in December 1998. South Korea, however, clarified that it would not join the missile defense and during the conference, the Chinese representatives welcomed South Korea’s refusal.

Relations with the United States: The TMD Issue

Exploring how South Korea deals with the United States in managing alliance relations is a way to show the impact of threat perception on the strategy of South Korea toward China. Particularly, the main subject is the US-led theater missile defense system which targets US soldiers and its alliance partners in East Asia. Although the United States and Japan claim that the MD system is to protect the East Asian region from missiles in North Korea, a general sense is that it is aimed at medium and longer-range ballistic missiles in China which is believed to be the only Northeast Asian country that can actually launch accurate missiles.
The fact that South Korea declined the anti-missile system ran contrary to what
the theory of balance-of-power predicted. According to the argument focusing on
relative powers and competitions among states, South Korea should have cooperated
with the United States to develop the TMD system because at the moment, the Republic
did not have proper capability of defending itself from long-ranged and medium-ranged
ballistic missiles. Even after China and North Korea proved to have their missile
capability which might cause serious damage to the Korean peninsula, Seoul showed its
desire not to join the US-led missile program and focused on improving “independent”
missile systems that would parry the North Korea’s missile attacks. South Korea’s
behavior signaled that the anti-missile program should target North Korea, not China, as
predicted in the dyad threats theory. South Korea did so in order not to cause problems
in managing relations with China which was strongly against the TMD development
and estranged alliance relations with the United States.

When the United States made a move to persuade its allies to adopt the TMD
system in the early 1990s, South Korea’s initial response was unenthusiastic. The ROK
Ministry of National Defense conducted research on patriot missile systems which
constituted the core MD implementation. Some South Korean defense experts
maintained that the missiles would not work in the Korean peninsula because of
geographical features which made these missiles unable to protect South Korea from
North Korea’s bombardment flying within 70 miles away.\textsuperscript{73}

South Korea conveyed its reluctance to Washington during the nuclear crisis in 1994. The United States was persistent in the deployment of patriot missiles in the Korean peninsula, whereas South Korea avoided giving clear answers because doing so would antagonize the North Korean regime.\textsuperscript{74} National Assembly members in Korea evinced concerns that joining anti-ballistic missile systems would create enormous financial burden to Seoul and exacerbate tensions in the Korean peninsula.\textsuperscript{75}

South Korea’s reluctance became evident after the economic crisis in late 1997. Desperate economic situation led South Korea to allocate financial resources in handling industrial problems instead of prohibitive US-led missile defense programs. In private and public conversations with American partners, the Seoul government stated that the missile defense plan was too much burden for its tight budget.

The negative perspective of South Korea on TMD was demonstrated on several occasions. The defense white paper for 1999 says, “Japan’s decision to participate in the theater missile defense project is causing a conflict to surface between the US-Japan alliance and China…Regarding Taiwan’s participation in the US-led Northeast Asia TMD project, China will regard such an action as an infringement on Chinese


\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Dong-A Ilbo}, February 22 1994. The South Korean government decided not to deploy the patriot missiles in 1994.
sovereignty, and therefore, vehemently oppose it.”

During his conversation with Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) chief, South Korean Foreign Minister warned the Japanese official to be cautious about the missile defense plan. The Korean minister mentioned that Japan’s decision to cooperate with the United States should be in line with maintaining stability in the East Asian region instead of a simple response to North Korea’s provocations. More importantly, an official comment came out from the South Korean government which had been careful about announcing its rejection. The ROK Defense Minister Chun Yong Taek noted that South Korea could not afford the missile defense system and did not have technology to develop it.

Threats from North Korea were obvious to the South Korean government. Pyongyang continued its provocations near the border area, while it launched its first missile test (Rodong missile) in 1993 and the second (Taepodong missile) in 1998. It meant that North Korea had enough capability to attack South Korea and had shown its willingness to do so. However, a discrepancy between Seoul and Washington in terms of the deployment of TMD was obvious. The South Korean government was genuinely cautious in deploying patriot missiles and decided to go without them, while the United

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States were interested the deployment in the Korean peninsula. Does this mean that South Korea made a wrong decision on TMD? Should the Republic have cooperated with the United States and developed anti-missile programs in order to increase its defense capability?

In actuality, threats from the North Korea’s ballistic missiles need a fast response. If launched, the North Korean missiles deployed near the DMZ area will arrive in Seoul less than five minutes—even two to three minutes according to some defense experts. However, the TMD system at present needs more time to recognize the missiles flying over the territory and it better works against longer-ranged missiles. The South Korean government, for this reason, voiced that it needed its own independent missile capability in order to counterbalance the North Korean ballistic missile capability.

It is significant to note the China factor. China’s short and medium-ranged ballistic missiles can damage the Korean peninsula at any time and the number of their missiles has increased in recent years. This means that without improving missile defense systems along with the United States, South Korea has no capability of dealing with the Chinese ballistic missiles. Even if threats from North Korea were gone, the ballistic missiles of China would continue to constitute potential threats to South Korea.

Nevertheless, South Korea’s decision on the missile defense during this period clearly showed a rejection. As predicted in the theory of dyad threats, it represented the influence of latent China threats due to increased threats from Pyongyang. South
Korea’s strategic calculation was that because the US-Japan cooperation on the TMD system might defend missiles from China, South Korea could put much effort to develop independent missile projects against the North Korean regime. For this reason, after North Korea test-fired Rodong and Taepodong missiles in 1993 and 1998 respectively, the South sought to develop its own missile programs. The 1999 Security Consultative Meeting between the United States and South Korea essentially proves this point. The meeting occurred after bilateral talks between Washington and Tokyo which confirmed the point that they would cooperate in developing missile defense programs.

When Secretary of Defense William Cohen visited Seoul, however, the joint statement after the US-South Korean meeting did not include any comments on the TMD. Instead, the focus was placed on whether South Korea would be able to develop its own missiles with a range of 300 kilometers.

This incident shows an important point. South Korea passed the buck to the United States and Japan in dealing with Chinese missiles. It did not have to proactively join the prohibitive anti-missile programs because geography allowed Seoul to be placed naturally within the programs that the United States and Japan planned to pursue. On the other hand, the Republic made an effort to improve internal mobilization through seeking indigenous missile programs to ward off North Korean missiles. By doing so, Seoul was able to get away from Chinese criticisms, whereas Japan, which joined the US-led TMD system, antagonized China. The Chinese welcomed ROK’s

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79 For Japan’s missile defense, see Kori J. Urayama, “Chinese Perspectives on Theater Misssile Defense,”
decision. During the first defense ministerial meeting between South Korea and China in 1999, Chinese Defense Minister praised South Korea for not joining the missile defense system.

Conclusion

This chapter has tested the key hypothesis on dyad threats. If a state perceives an increased major threat X, it emphasizes the role of the minor threat Y to constrain the major threat X and thus the state seeks cooperation with the minor threat Y. Evidence in this chapter has proved this hypothesis.

Between 1992 and 1999, South Korea perceived that North Korean threats were prominent. Consistent military provocations along with nuclear brinkmanship were a significant factor to heighten Seoul’s threat perception toward Pyongyang, despite growing economic and military gaps between the two Koreas. While North Korea emanated a high level of threats to Seoul, Beijing’s threats became latent. In contrast to a general sense that threats from China may increase along with its drastically growing material capability, the increased North Korean threats defused the threats from China. South Korea’s responses to China’s missile tests in 1995 and 1996 were salient.

evidence. While most East Asian countries neighboring China criticized China’s provocations, the South Korean government took a nonchalant position and generated domestic criticisms.

Consequently, changes in South Korea’s threat perception were reflected in Seoul’s policies toward Beijing in political, economic, and military fields. South Korea was eager to improve political relations with China. The contents of leaders’ announcement demonstrated that South Korea was eager to increase cooperation with China. It came out from the calculation that increased relations with China could work as leverage in dealing with the North Korean regime.

Economic relations with China have also proved the hypothesis. For instance, the fact that the South Korean government refused economic assistance from Taiwan implied that the ROK government had been sensitive to the role of China in restraining with North Korea. South Korea forewent a critical opportunity to improve its economic conditions, while it cared too much about China’s reactions to how South Korea dealt with a Taiwan issue. Lastly, in the field of military relations, due to the influence of dormant China threats, the ROK rejected the US-led missile defense system and focused on developing independent missile programs. This incident estranged South Korea’s position from the United States and Japan, while bilateral relations between Seoul and Beijing remained strong.
CHAPTER 4

SOFT-BALANCING AGAINST CHINA: 2000-2002

In this chapter, I test the hypothesis on the framework of dyad threats, focusing on the effect of an active minor threat. If a given state differentiates a major threat X from a minor threat Y and perceives a decreased major threat, it treats Y as an active minor threat. Consequently, the state adopts a combined strategy of deterrence against X and soft-balancing policy toward Y.

The main argument of this chapter is that as soon as South Korea perceives a decreased major threat from North Korea, the role of China to constrain Pyongyang is not useful and the ROK recognizes an active China threat. Particularly, economic threats from China are apparent because South Korean elites make comments regarding negative views on the PRC.

Consequently, South Korea’ policies toward China between 2000 and 2002 reflected the influence of decreased North Korea threats and active China threats. The Republic sought limited cooperation with the PRC and employed policies that created friction with the Chinese government in the political and economic fields. In the security arena, South Korea was more willing to make adjustment to its traditional alliance in regard especially to the missile defense programs.
ROK’s Threat Perception of North Korea

In this section, I present how South Korea perceives its major threats. ROK’s perception took a positive turn as a result of the 6.15 North–South summit in 2000, although North Korea remained threatening to South Korea to some degree.¹ The following evidence shows how South Korea perceived reduced threats from North Korea between 2000 and the later part of 2002.

The 2000 summit was a historical event. It was the first meeting between the leaders of North and South Korea, after the two countries were established in 1948. During the meeting, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung and his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong Il agreed to work together for peaceful unification and continue to preserve stability in the Korean peninsula and the North Korean leader promised to visit Seoul in the near future. After coming back from Pyongyang, President Kim Dae Jung stated to South Korean people that the threats of war in the Korean peninsula decreased considerably.² In numerous public announcements and meetings with

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¹ In fact, North Korea’s provoking behavior continued in this period. For instance, in September 1999 North Korea unilaterally declared a new border line of the west sea that divided the North and the South. The North reconfirmed this line in March 2000 and threatened to use military options if South Korea intruded the line which lay far below the Southern part of the existing official division. Around this time period, the South Korean Defense Minister said in an interview with a newspaper that more provocation from North Korea was expected at the moment than previously because the North Korea’s military exercise had been increased drastically. For the comment from the South Korean Defense Minister, see Sungkook Bae, "Cho Sung Tae Kookpang Taedam [Interview with Defense Minister Cho Sung Tae]," Seoul Shinmun, March 27 2000.

² During the breakfast meeting with people who had dispersed family members in North Korea, President Kim also made a similar comment. He said, “Threats of war will eventually disappear if the economic condition of North Korea improves. If North Korea becomes poor, the risk of a war and the cost of unification will increase.” Anonymous, "6.15 Kongdong Seonun 1 Junyun [First Anniversary of the 6.15
general population, Kim continued to emphasize his optimistic viewpoints on the political ambience of the Korean peninsula.

The society of South Korea turned into a positive mood. South Korea’s National Assembly adopted a resolution to support the summit meeting, noting that it was a step toward the Korean unification, and prevented threats of war in the peninsula. Major newspapers cogently demonstrated this phenomenon. The number of editorials discussing military threats from North Korea in major newspapers decreased drastically.

According to opinion polls, optimistic viewpoints on North Korea increased compared to previous years. For instance, before the meeting between North and South Korea, a survey conducted by the Sejong institute in 1996 showed that only 30.4 percent respondents supported unification with North Korea, while 56.5 percent was skeptical. On the contrary, according to a public survey by Dong-A Ilbo around the time of summit meeting in 2000, 73 percent of respondents believed that the Korean unification was highly likely. In the same survey, 55 percent of respondents said that

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3 The resolution was adopted on June 9, 2000. Joonho Yoon, "Kukhwae Tukwi Chungsang Hoidam Chiji Kyulyiahn Chaetaek [National Assembly Special Committee Adopted a Resolution to Support the North-South Summit Meeting]," KBS, June 9 2000.

4 See Appendix A.


they received good impression from the North Korean leader Kim Jong Il.

Importantly, the South Korean public acknowledged decreased threats from Pyongyang after the summit meeting.\(^7\) In the 1999 Dong-A Ilbo’s survey, more than 70 percent of respondents in South Korea perceived military threats from North Korea.\(^8\) However, perceived North Korea threats went downward drastically in 2000. In the 2000 survey conducted by Dong-A Ilbo, only 54 percent chose North Korea as threatening to the ROK.\(^9\) After the nuclear crisis in late 2002, however, the number increased to 71.5 percent.

### Table 4-1 South Korean Public’s Perception on North Korea Threat

**Question: Is North Korea the most threatening country to South Korea?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dong-A Ilbo</th>
<th>Hankuk Ilbo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^7\) Most people in South Korea still believe that North Korea will wage war. 53 percent in the 1996 survey and 59 percent in the 2000 survey believed that war between North and South Korea was still possible. See Ulchul Im, "Jeungpok Doinun Hanpando Wikisol Chumgum [Analyze Views on the Crisis in the Korean Peninsula]," *Hankyoreh*, June 30 1997.


\(^9\) Na, "Hanil Yoron Chosa: Han Il Mi Jung Kukmin Uisik [Korea-Japan Public Survey: Public Opinion in South Korea, Japan, the United States and China]."
South Korea’s defense white paper published in 2000 recognized North Korea’s positive about-face. It noted, “North Korea’s attitude toward South Korea has shown changes in the process of fulfilling the 6.15 agreement.” Changes within the Ministry of National Defense were uncovered. Serious debate erupted among people in the MND over whether the word of an opponent should be used against North Korea. Some argued that since there was an enormous improvement in bilateral relations after the summit, the ROK should be able to accept Pyongyang as a true political partner for unification and avoid labeling it as an enemy. Others asserted that because North Korea did not give up its intention to topple the South Korean government and the possibility of war did not completely disappear, it should continue to be designated as Seoul’s adversary.

The existence of debates over using the word of an enemy revealed stark shifts in the South Korean society. Whether Pyongyang should be called a major opponent or not was not even a debatable question in previous years. Eventually, it was reported that South Korean officials and military personnel could not settle their differences. Subsequent to this, the MND had to stop publishing white papers for three years till 2004.

Interestingly, a mismatch between South Korea and the United States was great

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In contrast to the fact that Seoul focused more on the reconciliation mood with Pyongyang, Washington continuously emphasized threats from North Korea.

\textbf{ROK’s Threat Perception toward China}

After the reduction of tensions between the two Koreas, South Korea perceived that major threats from North Korea decreased. Consequently, as the hypothesis of dyad threats attests, South Korea found little value in the leverage of China in constraining Pyongyang’s provoking conducts.\footnote{Previously, Chinese leverage on dealing with North Korea appeared in following episodes. One the one hand, China was supportive for North Korea’s withdrawal from the Military Armistice Commission in the DMZ by recalling North Korean military officers in 1994. On the other hand, the Chinese government did not espouse North Korea’s idea of the peace agreement between the North and the United States and direct North Korea-United States bilateral talks, while emphasizing Chinese diplomatic principle that the peace agreement should be discussed by related parties, North and South Korea. China scholars in Korea has claimed that Chinese two different types of behavior was a good example of showing its leverage on North Korean regime and South Korea can take advantage of this opportunity in order to project South Korea’s influence on North Korea through relations with China. See Hwang Byung Moo’s comment in Sewon Kim, "Kang Taek Min Jusuk Panghan Muot Ul Namkyunna [Conversation with Specialists: What Did Jiang Ze Min's Visit Bring to South Korea]," \textit{Dong-A Ilbo}, November 21 1995.. Also see Inhye Ahn, "Hanung Chunsang Hoidamul Pogo [Observing the South Korean-Sino Summit Meeting]," \textit{Seoul Shinmun}, November 17 1995.} Previously, Seoul interpreted Beijing
as a significant player to stimulate communications with Pyongyang.\textsuperscript{14} However, direct bilateral contacts between two Koreas reduced the strategic imperative for China to the ROK government.

As predicted in dyad threats theory, decreased threats from North Korea brought out China threats. South Korea acknowledged particularly economic threats from China. Compared to previous years when the rhetoric on Chinese economy was not critical, during the period from 2000 to 2002, South Korean political leaders cautiously publicized their negative remarks. During his meeting with Chinese Communist Party officials, South Korean opposition party leader, Lee Hoi Chang stated that the growth of China could be a threatening factor to South Korea. President Kim Dae Jung, who had been silent on a question as to whether China was an opportunity or a threat, finally noted that South Korea and China would compete with each other. South Korean Finance Minsiter Jin Nyum also evinced concerns that the development of technology in Chin’s major industries was catching up with South Korea drastically.\textsuperscript{15} The trend of changing attitude within South Korea was accompanied by a growing number of discussions on “a China threat” in research papers written by private as well as

\textsuperscript{14} Political relations between China and North Korea were restored when North Korean leader Kim Jong Il visited China in May 2000 a month before he had a meeting with the South Korean president Kim Dae Jung. Kim Jong Il’s visit to China was unofficial and yet the first visit by the North Korean leader ever since 1992. During the meeting, it was reported that Kim Jong Il appraised the Chinese economic reform and its open-up policy. In addition, North Korea and China maintained military exchanges. In particular, in May 1996 China signed an agreement to provide military assistance to North Korea. For military relations between China and North Korea after 1992 see Jong-Seok Lee, *Bukhan Jungkuk Gwangye 1945-2000 [North Korea-China Relations 1945-2000]* (Seoul: Jungshim, 2004), 281-84.

government-supported think tanks, newspapers, and private sectors.

Interestingly, however, the next chapter shows that as soon as South Korea perceived increased major threats from North Korea, the South Korean leaders returned to the avoidance of mentioning China threats in the economic field and stressed opportunities that China could create. As mentioned in Chapter 2, existing literature has noted that a China threat in South Korea is hardly noticed and that the threat does not exist in South Korea. However, by analyzing comments made by different leaders in the various periods of time, I delineate how and when changes in South Korea’s perception toward China appear. I argue that the threat perception toward China has been virtually determined not merely by China’s material capability or tensions due to growing interactions between Seoul and Beijing. Instead, it has been determined more by the change of threat perception toward North Korea. As shown above, Korean leaders’ comments on China became negative especially in the economic field, after perceived North Korea threats decreased between 2000 and 2002.

South Korea has not yet clearly expressed concerns about the military capability and the political influence of China. South Korean officials essentially stated that they should be wary about China’s growing investment in its military capability, but they never designate China as a target for the ROK’s military build-up. However, one way to measure the change of ROK’s perception in this period is the coordination of threat perception with the United States. Seoul showed its willingness to support the United States, which had been vigilant about China’s growing power in East Asia, in dealing
with future uncertainties created by China. One military advisor to South Korean President affirmed that the Republic was able to share a long-term threat with the United States.\textsuperscript{16}

More importantly, the influence of China on North Korea was no longer useful to South Korea. An analysis of various South Korean newspapers proves that South Korea did not take China as seriously as before.\textsuperscript{17} Editorial were full of improved relations between the two Koreas, whereas they hardly made remarks on the weight of China on the Korean peninsula.

**South Korea’s Policy to China: Friction and Limited Cooperation**

The hypothesis of dyad threats predicts that if South Korea perceives a decreased North Korea threat and an active China threat, it chooses a strategy of soft-balancing vis-à-vis China and deterrence against North Korea. Following evidence in this section confirms the link between the effect of the active China threat and Seoul’s uncooperative behavior to Beijing. The Republic of Korea did not have to seek China’s help in dealing with issues on North Korea because it believed that the two Koreas by themselves decreased tensions. Acknowledging active threats from China, South Korea became less sensitive about adopting policies that may create confrontations with the


\textsuperscript{17} Appendix A.
PRC in the economic and political fields. In the area of security, South Korea gave more commitment to the United States especially on issues related to China, such as missile defense programs.

**Political Relations**

While South Korea and China celebrated 10\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of diplomatic relations, the two Asian states continuously improved government-to-government interactions. High and working-level meetings continued to take place on regular bases just like previous years.\textsuperscript{18} The number of meetings, however, does not offer proper evidence to test my hypothesis because it does not capture the degree of tensions. Specifically, previous works focusing on the development of Sino-South Korean relations merely provided general assessments on political relations and failed to analyze negative changes.

However, this dissertation shows that during the period between 2000 and 2002, the ROK handled several important issues in a manner less cooperative with respect to the Chinese government. South Korea did not collaborate with China in dealing with an

\textsuperscript{18} For instance, Chinese Premier Zhu Rong Ji visited Seoul in order to attend the Asia and Europe Meeting (ASEM) in October 2000 and had meetings with South Korean President and the head of the opposition party. In 2002, a large number of Korean National Assembly members visited China. Chairman Lee Man Sup met his Chinese counterpart Li Peng. On the other hand, lawmakers in opposition parties in South Korea had meetings with Chinese officials and attended scholarly seminars in Beijing and Shanghai. Within a month in January 2002, scores of South Korean politicians met Chinese leaders and discussed issues related to the Korean Peninsula.
issue on Japan’s history, although it had sought cooperation with the PRC in the previous chapter. Moreover, the ROK government showed inconsistency in handling Dalai Lama’s visit on which it had been previously consistently supportive to China.

Independent Response to the History Issue

South Korea’s reaction to the Japanese history problem reflected changed Seoul’s views on China threats. Chapter 3 showed that when South Korea did not recognize China threats due to the predominance of North Korea threats, the behavior of the ROK showed that Beijing was a good partner to work together against the Japanese. Conversely, in this period when South Korea realized that China might be potentially threatening due to decreased North Korea threats, it invested much independent effort to respond to Japan and grew skeptical of cooperating with China.

A critical incident occurred when the Japanese Ministry of Education endorsed new versions of history textbooks that argued that the Japanese aggression in Asia was liberation war and justified the Japanese occupation in the region. The South Korean government immediately conducted official protests against the Japanese counterpart and requested to reverse the decision made by the Japanese educational ministry and to revise problematic history textbooks. The Japanese side, however, was unresponsive to South Korea’s complaints. With growing concerns and criticisms within the public, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung recalled South Korean ambassador to Japan.

The Chinese government also criticized the Japanese government and Chinese
President Jiang Ze Min sent an official complaint. The gesture of China meant a possibility for the ROK and China to work together since both countries were responding to the problem in a similar fashion. Hence, some South Korea politicians suggested that the ROK should seek collaboration with the Chinese government to send a strong message to Japan. A number of South Korean newspapers also reported that the government might be considering a political alliance with China in order to cope with the Japanese textbook problem.

The Korean government did not consider this option, however. An immediate official announcement by the South Korean government was that Seoul had no intention to work with China.\textsuperscript{19} During the press interview, the Deputy Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirmed this point. He stated that although the ROK government was examining how other Asian countries had responded to Japan, collaboration with China was not a choice at that moment.\textsuperscript{20} Moreover, President Kim Dae Jung reconfirmed the government position by saying, “Japan’s interpretation of history is evidently wrong. Nevertheless, the problem between Japan and South Korea should be solved between concerned parties. It is not appropriate to involve China into our efforts to deal with this problem.”\textsuperscript{21}

Importantly, this incident may suggest an implication on the trilateral relations


\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Asahi Shimbun}, April 5, 2001.
among China, Japan and South Korea. Quite a few Japanese believe that because of the drastic improvement in Sino-ROK relations, Seoul is likely to choose China over Japan as its new political and perhaps security partner in the foreseeable future. However, South Korea is not simply leaning toward China. Instead, Seoul’s cooperation with Beijing is determined by its assessment of threats from North Korea as well as China. Good news for Japan, therefore, is that China is not a natural partner for the Republic and the ROK will not simply discard bilateral relations with Japan in favor of China. Moreover, in case of tensions or even conflicts between Japan and China in the future, the ROK may not be interested in supporting China unconditionally. It may depend on whether South Korea perceives active or dormant threats from China. This may also imply that Japan does not need to worry about the possibility that South Korea may automatically tilt toward China, while distancing from Japan.

**Dealing with Dalai Lama’s Visit**

How South Korea handles the issue of Dalai Lama was related to its perception of North Korea and China. The hypotheses tested in this dissertation is that when Seoul deals with salient increased threats from North Korea and dormant threats from China, it proactively avoids handling controversial points in bilateral relations with Beijing. South Korea does not attempt to invite Dalai Lama in order not to agitate the Chinese government which blames the Tibetan religious leader for his pursuit of the independence of Tibet. On the contrary, decreased North Korea threats made South
South Korea less reluctant to avoid the same issue. That is, South Korea shows flexibility with respect to Dalai Lama. As the hypothesis of dyad threats predicted, South Korea’s challenging behavior to invite Dalai Lama was concurrent with the summit between North and South Korea in June 2000.

South Korea consistently rejected the Dalai Lama’s visit. Even before establishing formal relations with the PRC, the government refused to issue an entry visa. For instance, in 1990, two years before the normalization of diplomatic relations with China, the South Korean government disapproved the invitation of Dalai Lama given out by the Korean Buddhist Broadcasting System and the World Fellowship of Buddhists Korea. Additionally, two more invitations in 1994 and 1996 were called off on the same grounds. Continuous refusals by South Korea are often compared with other Asian countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Mongolia which have already allowed the Tibetan spiritual leader to step on their territory several times and to give spiritual lectures to the public despite the objection of the Chinese government.

The period of 2000 through 2002, however, revealed a subtle difference from previous years. The South Korean government hinted on numerous occasions that Dalai Lama’s visit was very likely. Specifically, the year 2000 witnessed the most vibrant movements among religious and political groups in South Korea in regard to Dalai Lama’s visit to Korea. Several religious groups, including Protestant Christian and Roman Catholic, civic organizations, labor groups, and a number of people in the
Korean National Assembly assisted the central organization of the Buddhism in Korea to persuade the ROK’s and the Chinese governments.

The incident began with a primary invitation of the Tibetan religious leader by a Buddhist student organization in Seoul National University in January 2000. In March 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic informed the student council that the government could not give permissions to proceed with this program. Immediately, several Buddhist groups created a nationwide religious organization called ‘Pan-National Buddhist Commission for the Dalai Lama’s Visit to Korea (PNBC).’ The commission had meetings with Vice Foreign Minister and other government officials in Chong Wa Dae in order to receive endorsement from the government, while it held seminars and conducted campaigns to drum up support from the Korean public.

Consequently, the PNBC extended a formal invitation letter to Dalai Lama in early May. The commission received a full endorsement from approximately 3,250 citizens of Seoul. This effort was also supported by the Korea Conference on Religion and Peace (KCRP: a pan religious organization), the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK: the Protestant) and the Catholic Church. Moreover, the coalition of civic groups called ‘People Concerned about Tibetan Affairs’ held a rally in downtown Seoul and announced a public statement to call for the ROK government to allow the Tibetan leader’s visit. A similar public gathering occurred among 24 civic

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23 Hye-son Shin, "Buddhist Groups to Rally for Korea Visit by Dalai Lama," *The Korea Herald*, April 25
organizations, including *Chamyo Yondae* (People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy) and *Kyungshillyun* (Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice), which declared their official requests for the permission of the Dalai Lama’s entry visa.

When religious gatherings developed into political mobilization, the ROK government signaled that it might consider approving the Dalai Lama’s visit. Major newspapers reported that during the ministerial meeting in Beijing, the South Korean Foreign Minister told his Chinese counterpart that the ROK government was facing growing calls from religious groups to allow Dalai Lama to visit South Korea and that the government would be in a more difficult situation if the pressure from the public grew into nationwide resistance against the government.\(^\text{24}\) It was also reported the Korean Minister sought Beijing’s understanding of Seoul’s possible choice to grant a visa to the Tibetan leader.\(^\text{25}\)

The South Korean government continued to send a positive signal to the Korean people. The Foreign Minister Lee Joung Binn said in front of the National Assembly, “We are not in the position to reject his (Dalai Lama’s) entry any longer, considering the majority of Korean people hope for this visit.”\(^\text{26}\) He also stated that the government was planning to allow the Dalai Lama’s visit after the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)


\(^{26}\) Yong-bae Shin, "Seoul to Allow Visit by Dalai Lama This Year," *The Korea Herald*, June 23 2000. Parentheses added.
held in Seoul, Korea in October 2000. Even though the government did not yet issue an official announcement, the announcement increased hope among South Korean people that they would meet the Nobel Peace Prize winning spiritual leader sooner or later. As a result, the PNBC invited the Ambassador to East Asia of the Tibetan government twice in June and September 2000 in order to discuss the Dalai Lama’s itinerary in Korea.

Chinese responses were clearly antagonistic. The PRC government protested to South Korea by saying that Dalai Lama was not a spiritual leader but a political separatist. Furthermore, the Chinese ambassador to South Korea, Wu Da Wei, stated an objection to the proposed visit of Dalai Lama during his keynote speech in the forum of the National Assembly Pacific Policy Studies. Wu said, “Even though the Dalai Lama visits Seoul, I don't believe that bilateral relations would deteriorate to the extent that we should sever diplomatic ties. By hurting the sentiment of the Chinese people, however, it would affect bilateral relations in some form.”

South Korean officials complained that Wu’s comment had gone too far. That afternoon Vice Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon summoned Chinese Ambassador Wu to express South Korea’s disappointment with his remarks in the morning. Ban also added that Seoul would make a final decision after considering all factors, including the position of the Chinese government, the sensitivity of the issue and the opinions of the South Korean public.

Despite Chinese objection, the PNBC announced that the Dalai Lama’s visit was slated for November 15. Right after this announcement, Chinese Deputy Ambassador to South Korea visited the office of the PNBC in order to convey Beijing’s opposition. Consequently, the PNBC held a press conference and publicized its complaints to the Chinese Embassy. A few days later, South Korean Vice Foreign Minister visited the PNBC and suggested that the spiritual leader’s visit should be deferred to the end of November. The reason was that President Kim Dae Jung expected to have two significant meetings with Chinese leaders. One was the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the other was the ASEAN Plus Three. At the same time, the Vice Minister emphasized that the postponement did not mean a full cancellation. He gave a hope that the Dalai Lama might be able to come to Korea after the international events in November. Nevertheless, it took a month and a half for the Korean government to publicize a final decision that Seoul could not allow Dalai Lama to come to Korea in November. The government stated, “If we receive an official request for his visit next year, we are planning to consider it.”  

The issue of the Dalai Lama’s visit was transferred to 2001. The PNBC invited the Dalai Lama once again hoping for the ROK government’s approval. During the ASEM ministerial meeting in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan requested the South Korean Foreign Minister to deal with the issue of Dalai Lama’s visit with care. South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung Soo replied that since South

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29 "Dalai Lama Panghan Naenynuh Chaekumto [Dalai Lama's Visit to Be Considered Next Year],” *Hankuk Ilbo*, October 31 2000.
Korea allowed freedom of religion and more than 10 million Buddhists yearned for Dalai Lama’s sermon, the government had difficulty in resist domestic pressures.\(^{30}\)

Again, despite the positive hint from the South Korean government, the visit from the spiritual leader never occurred. Accordingly, the government of South Korea came under bitter censure from the public. Members of the committee of preparation for the Dalai Lama’s visit held a rally in downtown Seoul and criticized the government for low-profile diplomacy toward China. The Grand National Party (GNP), which was an opposition party, also attacked the Kim Dae Jung administration for yielding to Chinese pressure. A GNP spokesperson said “Such actions would only be ridiculed by the international community and goes against the spirit of a country whose president had recently won the Nobel Peace Prize.”\(^{31}\) Major newspapers’ editorials expressed great disappointment and critical remarks on the government’s inconsistency of treating the Dalai Lama’s visit.\(^{32}\)

Even though the final decision was a rejection, the South Korean government’s behavior can be distinguished from previous years. Previously, the Dalai Lama’s visit was treated as an indisputably impossible option. South Korea had observed that


\(^{31}\) "Opposition Calls on Gov't to Allow Dalai Lama's Visit," *The Korea Herald*, November 1 2000.

countries giving out permissions to Dalai Lama had to suffer hostility from the Chinese government.\textsuperscript{33} South Korea’s essential stance, therefore, was to avoid mentioning this agenda or simply support the Chinese position.\textsuperscript{34} However, in the period between 2000 and 2001, the government of the Republic moved a step forward and raised the issue of Dalai Lama to the Chinese government, knowing that possible political repercussions would occur. The fact that the South Korean government gave out signals to the public indicated that it was genuinely considering the Dalai Lama agenda.

Importantly, the size of mobilization among the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may influence a difference in the ROK’s behavior. The Korean government could not disregard the nation-wide political movements. As democratization became mature in the Korean society, people proactively revealed their interests in order to influence government policies. President Kim Dae Jung himself fought for democracy for his whole life and thus, it was not too much to say that his administration symbolized the development of the Korean democracy.

Even though domestic politics were important to some extent, it was likely that South Korea’s behavior was motivated mostly by North Korea threats. Counter-factual

\textsuperscript{33} For instance, the bilateral relations between the United States and China became sour when the United States allowed Dalai Lama’s visit. Japan and Australia had to go through similar experience.

\textsuperscript{34} In previous years, only a few newspapers reported on the Dalai Lama’s visit to South Korea. After researching major newspapers in South Korea, I found only two articles reporting that the Dalai Lama would visit South Korea after a Buddhist group sent out an invitation for the spiritual leader to attend a Buddhist ceremony. A following report regarding the government’s rejection never appeared in newspapers and a debate on the Dalai Lama’s visit did not occur among the public. For the report on Dalai Lama’s visit, see Byungchan Kim, "Dalai Lama Hankuk Onda [Dalai Lama Comes to Korea]," Hankuk Ilbo, May 29 1994, "Dalai Lama Naenyun Hankuk Onda [Dalai Lama Is Coming to Korea Next Year]," Associate Press-Yonhap, October 28 1993.
methods can be applied here. If North Korea threats had increased, the Korean government would not have given out positive signals on the Dalai Lama’s visit and Seoul would have avoided offending Chinese leaders. Looking at the timeline of South Korea behavior proves this point. The time when South Korea most actively implied the positive signals to domestic religious groups was right after the summit meeting between North and South Korea. The hint came out during the hearing of ROK foreign minister in the National Assembly when he reported the result of the summit meeting and the plan for the South Korean policy.

Nevertheless, I need to admit that the final rejection given to the Dalai Lama still challenges the hypothesis of dyad threats. In other words, one might argue that the fact that South Korea did not approve his visit should be regarded as cooperative behavior toward the Chinese government. This is a tough counterargument. Perhaps, South Korea may never be able to allow the Dalai Lama’s visit. However, as mentioned above, I highlight the point that the South Korean government even initiated the invitation, which was a subtle sign for resistant gesture against China. Why did the ROK government even try to invite the religious leader when it was well aware that the Chinese response would be furious undoubtedly? Moreover, this type of behavior is also compared with other time period. During the period of increased North Korea threats, the South Korean government generally responds to the Chinese government’s complaints immediately. However, the Republic tried to maintain its position despite growing Chinese verbal assault during the crisis related to the Dalai Lama.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ROK NGO’s Action</th>
<th>ROK Government’s Response</th>
<th>China’s Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2000</td>
<td>The Seoul National University Buddhist Student Organization sent out invitation to Dalai Lama</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2000</td>
<td>The Pan-National Buddhist Commission for the Dalai Lama’s visit to Korea (PNBC) was launched</td>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign Minister told China that South Korea might have to approve the Dalai Lama’s visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2000</td>
<td>Religious groups and civic and labor groups organized rallies and requested the ROK government to allow the Dalai Lama’s visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2000</td>
<td>Ambassador to East Asia of the Tibetan government visited South Korea.</td>
<td>Foreign Minister hinted that the government would allow the Dalai Lama’s visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2000</td>
<td>Ambassador to East Asia of the Tibetan government visited South Korea.</td>
<td>ROK Vice Foreign Minister suggested postponing the Dalai Lama’s visit</td>
<td>Chinese Ambassador to ROK conveyed objection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Formal Announcement that the government could not allow Dalai Lama’s visit in 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2001</td>
<td>The committee for preparing the Dalai Lama’s visit sent out an invitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>ROK Foreign Minister hinted on approval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>The government disapproved the visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Economic Relations**

Bilateral trade and investment have increased continuously, although the constant development does not necessarily prove the hypothesis of dyad threats. Hence, this section focuses on two important issues in the field of economy and shows that the Republic becomes less sensitive to having troubles in relations with China. First, the development of South Korea and Taiwan relations was an example that South Korea became less cooperative in managing relations with China. Previously, the ROK government had restricted itself from holding formal contacts with the Taiwanese authorities in order not to antagonize China. Second, as a result of an active China threat, South Korea adopted punitive measures against Chinese garlic.

**Resuming an Economic Cooperation Commission with Taiwan**

A noticeable transformation in economic relations between South Korea and Taiwan occurred in late 2000. Two economic entities resumed an Economic Cooperation Commission, composed of representatives including corporate CEOs and advisors specialized in trade and investment. The commission was discontinued when Seoul and Taipei severed government-to-government relations in 1992. The two political entities had not renewed this key economic channel for eight years, despite the fact that their bilateral trade and investment remained virtually intact. Except for the year 1993 (a year after South Korea established relations with the PRC and thus the growth of trade and investment between South Korea and Taiwan were almost nothing),
Seoul and Taipei have been significant trading partners. The ROK was the fifth largest trading partner to Taiwan, while Taipei was the sixth largest partner to Seoul.

Given that the ROK government had been sensitive about having any kinds of formal “relations” or “connections” with Taiwan, its approval for this formal economic meeting with Taiwan could be interpreted as a distinguishable move. The two parties reached an agreement to resume a commission, when South Korean delegates, including a chairman of Federation of Korean Industries, former government officials and a future security advisor to South Korean President, visited Taipei in order to attend the Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian’s inauguration.\(^{35}\) Even if the commission represented a meeting among people in private sectors, the role of this apparatus was deeply related to the government. It coped with problems, sought for better and more economic cooperation and proposed policies for government agencies.

One might claim that the reason why they resumed the meeting was a positive political atmosphere in Taiwan after the change of Taiwanese leaderships. Chen Shui-bian took office in May 2000, and concentrated proactive attitudes vis-à-vis South Korea.\(^{36}\) Taiwan’s leaderships, however, were a necessary factor rather than a sufficient condition. The Taiwanese government, regardless of leaderships, had been consistent in restoring bilateral relations with the ROK for several years. Importantly, if Taiwan’s interest was not met with South Korea’s willingness, one would hardly see

\(^{35}\) Jung-Soo Kwak, "Han Taemankan Minkan Tongsang Channel Pokwon [South Korea and Taiwan Restore a Private Commercial Channel]," *Hankyoreh*, June 10 2000.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
any types of progress between these two political entities. Hence, the reason why the renewal of the commission was related more with South Korea and less with Taiwan.

Garlic Dispute

The lowest point of bilateral relations between South Korea and China was a trade war over Chinese garlic in 2000. This incident offers evidence of “soft-conflict,” where South Korea ignored Chinese complaints and implemented sanctions against China.

The garlic dispute stemmed from the dropping price of garlic in South Korea in the late 1990s. Between 1997 and 1999 the amount of Chinese garlic—frozen, pickled, and fresh—exported to South Korea grew drastically with an increase rate ranging from 30 percent to 138 percent annually. Especially frozen garlic on which 30 percent of tariff was levied had revealed a drastic increase compared to two other types of garlic. The amount of Chinese garlic in general took up 9.5 percent of garlic in South Korea in 1999 and the figure was tripled from 1996.37 On the other hand, the similar period of time witnessed that the production of garlic in the ROK also increased considerably. The increase rate of domestic garlic production was 22.8 percent in 1998 and 1999.38 Overall, domestic overproduction and the increase of imports brought the garlic price down. The price of farm sale decreased from 2,001 Korean Won (KRW) in 1997 to

37 Jaeyeol Lee, "Han jung Manul Punjaeng [South Korea-China Garlic Dispute],” Hankuk Ilbo, July 7 2000.

38 Jae Ho Chung, "From a Special Relationship to a Normal Partnership?: Interpreting The "Garlic Battle" In Sino-South Korean Relations," Pacific Affairs 76, no. 4 (Winter 2003-2004): 556.
1,520 KRW in 1999, while whole sale prices shifted from 3,097 KRW in 1998 to 1,859 KRW in 1999.\textsuperscript{39}

With growing concerns among Korean farmers that the import of Chinese garlic would increase further, in late 1999 the Agricultural Cooperative Association (ACA), or Nonghyup, appealed to the ROK government for investigating the damage caused by the import of Chinese garlic. Some South Korean lawmakers in the ruling and opposition parties requested the government to institute curbs on Chinese garlic. In February 2000, the Korea Trade Commission (KTC) in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy (MOCIE), judged that the Korean garlic market was damaged by the increase of Chinese garlic and filed a report to the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE). The MOFE decided to levy 315 percent tariff on frozen and pickled garlic imported from China and 436 percent on the fresh.\textsuperscript{40}

Between April and May, the Chinese government continuously called for a withdrawal of ROK’s decision during several meetings in the Sino-South Korean economic committee. Instead of reversing its decision, the South Korean government sought negotiations with the People’s Republic and claimed that it could import other Chinese products instead of garlic. No agreement between the two governments was made and the safeguard on Chinese garlic became effective on June 1. The Chinese government took a retaliatory action right away by inflicting a comprehensive ban on

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.: 555.

\textsuperscript{40} Yongseok Kim, "Han Jung Manul Takyul Doetchiman [Although South Korea-China Garlic Dispute Was Resolved]," \textit{Kyunghyang Shinmun}, July 17 2000.
importing two South Korean products, cell phone and polyethylene, on June 7, 2000. A trade war was on.

From South Korea’s viewpoints, Chinese retaliation was against the WTO regulations. The ROK government believed that China’s imposing sanctions on unrelated items was unfair and that South Korea followed proper processes through the KTC, the legal trade investigation institution that examined trade issues. On the other hand, the Chinese side also seemed angry about the ROK’s gesture. The Chinese reportedly felt “offended by the South Korean government.”

South Korea has achieved surplus from bilateral trade with China since 1992, and the amount reached as much as 4.8 billion dollars in 1999 a year before the garlic dispute. Because the total cost of importing Chinese garlic that South Korea had to bear was merely 15 million dollars, the safeguard measure on garlic was unacceptable to China. The imbalance of trade between Seoul and Beijing comes from the fact that most Chinese items exported to Korea are agricultural products, whereas items exported from Korea to China were high-technology merchandise and heavy industries. Moreover, in recent years, the Chinese asserted that they had been building refrigerating facilities in order to export

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41 Chung, "From a Special Relationship to a Normal Partnership?: Interpreting The "Garlic Battle" In Sino-South Korean Relations," 560-61.

42 For this reason, it was reported that some South Korean government officials for instance in the Department of Commerce and Negotiation in the MOFAT opposed the safeguard measure of the ROK. See Sanghyup Kim, "Manul Pamun Uro Bon Tongsang Chongch'aek [Trade Policy through Garlic Incident]," Munhwa Ilbo, July 20 2002.

more garlic to South Korea. As soon as Beijing and Seoul began negotiations in July 2000, the Chinese side partially lifted a ban on Korean products. Only after the final agreement was made in August, did China remove a full ban on the items from Korea. The agreement, however, sounded like South Korea’s surrender. It included a quota and a reduction of tariff on Chinese garlic for three years. South Korea agreed to import a total 31,895 tons of Chinese garlic every year including 11,895 tons of garlic with 30 percent tariff for Minimum Market Access and additionally 20,000 tons with 50 percent of tariff. After the trade war, the estimated amount of loss that South Korea suffered from the Chinese punitive measure was approximately 14 million dollars for polyethylene and 1.5 million dollars for the cellular phone in the month of June 2000.

The total amount of Chinese garlic imported to South Korea in 2000 did not fulfill the quota, however. In March 2001 during the working-level meeting on bilateral trade, the Chinese side suggested that the South Korean government should purchase the agreed amount; otherwise Beijing would retaliate by forbidding the import of Korean cellular phones. In order to complete the agreement, the South Korean

44 Kim, "Han Jung Manul Takyul Doetchiman [Although South Korea-China Garlic Dispute Was Resolved]."
government financed the funds by employing subsidies allocated originally for promoting mobile phone industries and petrochemical industries which had been a target of Chinese retaliation in 2000.\footnote{Cellular phone industries and polyethylene companies were strongly against this idea.}

**Alternative explanation: Domestic Politics**

Some pundits in South Korea believed that the South Korean government made an imprudent decision. They pointed out that the garlic dispute was attributed to the election held in Korea in April 2000.\footnote{Uiyoung Kang, "Toero Chuko Malo Padun Manul Punjaeng [Sow the Wind and Reap the Whirlwind]," *Weekly Hankook*, June 13 2000, Kim, "Manul Pamun Uro Bon Tongsang Chongch'aek [Trade Policy through Garlic Incident].", Sujung Kim, "Hanjung Manul Punjaeng Ui Kyohun [Lessons from the Korea-China Garlic Dispute]," *Seoul Shinmun*, July 17 2002, Sungki kim, "Safeguard," *Kukmin Ilbo*, July 23 2002, "Kukik Chech'eodun Manul Nollan [Editorial: The Garlic Debate]," *Seoul Shinmun*, July 24 2002.} The majority of garlic farms are located in the Southwest in Korea, which has been politically crucial to the incumbent New Millennium Democratic Party.\footnote{The result of election was that the opposition party, Grand National Party (GNP), became the number one party in the National Assembly. However, the GNP did not become a majority.}

Relying on the election cycle provides a limited range of accounts for this incident, however. Even before the election, South Korean people had expressed concerns about China’s growing influence in the South Korean market. The ACA (*Nonghyup*) and Korean farmers blamed the growing amounts of Chinese garlic imported to Korea for the decrease of garlic price in Korea. Their concerns were turned into an official complaint in 1999.

In addition, the government made a provisional decision to impose the safeguard
on Chinese garlic based on their study. The KTC, an institution on trade disputes, organized a group of investigators composed of officials from the KTC and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and researchers at the Korea Rural Economic Institute in order to examine the case on Chinese garlic. They went through investigations by visiting farms and interviewing importers and producers of garlic, and finally approved the damage of Chinese garlic on the South Korean farmers. The KTC’s decision was based on their research rather than the influence of the election.

In fact, the election merely expedited the process and thus intensified the scale of trade disputes between Seoul and Beijing. Even without domestic pressures, the South Korean government would take actions on Chinese garlic. Because the South Korean government realized the damage, President Kim Dae Jung and his party members were willing to make a tough gesture to China, even if they knew that doing so would generate problems.

Moreover, while the ruling party sought to secure votes in Southwest Korea where the majority of Korean garlic had been produced, the region nevertheless had provided a strong political base for the incumbent government, because it had been loyal to Kim Dae Jung and his party for a long time. In the current political situation in South Korea, one can hardly imagine the region would choose the opposition party.


This is because of the patterns of the South Korean domestic politics where the Southwest has supported the Millennium Democratic Party headed by Kim Dae Jung, while the Southeast has supported more conservative parties including Grand National Party. An approval rate in the region might have not changed a lot even without additional tariffs on garlic. To sum up, domestic politics played a role in a way that they influenced specifically on timing instead of whether or not the government levy sanctions on the Chinese product.
### Table 4-3 Chronology of the Garlic Dispute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 30, 1999</td>
<td>The Agricultural Cooperative Association, <em>Nonghyup</em>, filed a request for investigation on the damage from Chinese garlic imported to South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 27, 1999</td>
<td>The KTC recommended a provisional relief measures on Chinese garlic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 18, 1999</td>
<td>The MOFE announced a provisional safeguard which ended on June 4, 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 2000</td>
<td>The ruling party and the government had a meeting and publicized the safeguard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3, 2000</td>
<td>Announcement of a 3 year safeguard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14, 2000</td>
<td>Election for National Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1, 2000</td>
<td>Safeguard became effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2000</td>
<td>China announced a ban on importing cellular phones and polyethylene from South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 29, 2000</td>
<td>Negotiation between the ROK and China began</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 6, 2000</td>
<td>China lifted a ban on cellular phone and polyethylene partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31, 2000</td>
<td>South Korea and China reached an agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 2, 2000</td>
<td>China lifted a ban completely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2001</td>
<td>China said that the ROK government should complete the purchase of the agreed amount of garlic. It also said that it would ban on importing South Korean cellular phone again if the South Korean government failed to abide by the agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2001</td>
<td>The South Korean government purchased Chinese garlic the amount of which was not sold to South Korean garlic importers in 2000.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Garlic Disputes and the Dalai Lama’s Visit**

Some argue that there is a connection between the Dalai Lama and the garlic disputes. While the ROK government sent out positive messages to religious groups, the final decision was not issuing a visa to the Tibetan religious leader. The reason was that South Korea, which had already experienced Chinese retaliation in managing the garlic issue, did not have guts to create similar troubles with China on the Dalai Lama’s
visit. In other words, the garlic disputes were invaluable lessons for Seoul in learning what not to do in dealing with Beijing.

Nevertheless, this argument does not disprove my core argument. In fact, the ROK government tried to separate these issues. It was after Beijing levied a ban on importing South Korean products that the ROK government hinted an approval for inviting the Tibetan leader. Moreover, even after the confrontation with China on the trade issue continued to hurt South Korea’s economy, Seoul continued to consider an option for inviting the religious leader until the final decision was made in November 2000.

*Security Relations*

A key problem in analyzing military relations between Seoul and Beijing is that military exchanges *per se* do not prove the effect of the ROK’s perception toward China. Hence, in order to assess the influence of an active China threat on South Korea’s behavior in the security field, this section focuses on how the ROK dealt with alliance relations with the United States. This section generally approves the hypothesis of dyad threats. Since South Korea perceived active minor threats from China, it was more proactive in the modification of its alliance with the United States, specifically in dealing with the TMD.
Bilateral Military Relations Continued

South Korea improved military interactions with China gradually in recent years, although their relations were in the level of exchanges as opposed to cooperation. In 2000, Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian came to Seoul. Moreover, one of highlights in military relations during this period includes mutual visits of navy ships. The South Korean naval vessels, including 3,800-ton destroyer Ulchimundok and two smaller navy vessels, made a port call on Shanghai in October 2001.\(^5^2\) In return, two 2,393-ton Chinese warships, Jiaxing and Lianyungang, with total 438 crewmembers aboard, docked at the west port of Incheon in May 2002.\(^5^3\) Pundits highlighted the reciprocal visits and claimed that the Sino-South Korean military relations began making a real improvement.\(^5^4\)

Alliance with the United States: the Missile Defense

1. Reluctance to reject the missile defense programs

As a result of South Korea’s perception of an active China threat, South Korea, compared with previous period, softened its position about the US-led missile defense


\(^5^4\) Sungjin Park, "Jung Hamjeong Chut Hankuk Pangmun [Chinese Navyship's First Visit to South Korea]," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, May 9 2002. On the other hand, the Sino-Japanese military relations reached a low point at that moment. After the Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi visited Yasukuni shrine in 2002, the Chinese government, as a retaliatory action, postponed its navy vessels’ port call on Japan and canceled defense ministerial meeting with Japan in April 2002.
system, instead of outright rejecting it. After the George W. Bush administration launched new missile defense initiatives that encompassed the theater missile defense (TMD) and the national missile defense (NMD), viable options in South Korean leaders’ hands were extremely limited. Jumping into the MD system would serve the defense of South Korea against ballistic missiles, but it would simultaneously damage the relations with North Korea and China which had been vociferously in the opposition. Moreover, the ROK government wanted to avoid making an official denial because it would imply direct confrontation with the position of the United States and thus increase the misunderstanding of ROK’s important alliance partner.

While several influential non-governmental organizations expressed their opposition to the American MD system, the ROK government had examined the possibility by holding seminars and inviting military specialists in think tanks, government officials in the Ministry of National Defense and representatives of the non-governmental organizations, such as Peace Korea. Despite increasing attention paid by the Korean public, the government did not express any thoughts on this issue.

There was one example that revealed that the South Korean government was more careful than before in expressing its negative views on the missile defense. After


56 The government published several reports on MD seminars. For instance, The Korea Institute for Defense Analysis, "M.D. Gyehwaek Gwa Kukga Ahnbo [Plan for the M.D. And National Defense]," (The Korea Institute for Defense Analysis, 2001). On the other hand, Pyonghwa Network, or Peace Korea, is one of the most active civic groups that are invited to conferences on military issues.
Kim Dae Jung came back from his official visit to Washington in March 2001, the ROK Foreign Minister announced that the South Korean government was considering avoiding the missile defense system. Worried about the responses from the United States, the ROK government corrected the foreign minister’s announcement and noted that his comment did not mean that South Korea had opposed America’s plan for the MD. A few days later, the Foreign Minister himself made an announcement. “The (foreign) ministry is still carefully reviewing its position on the missile defense and had not voiced any opposition to it.” In a few weeks, the Foreign Minister was presumably under pressures for misstating ROK’s position and resigned.

The ROK government’s position is likely to reflect the perception of China. While threats from China materialized in this period of time, the ROK government showed more willingness to consider the MD system. In the previous period when increased level of North Korea threats made threats from China dormant, Seoul avoided any political activities that might antagonize the Chinese government and continuously avoided accepting the American missile defense system.

Thinking of the time when the South Korean President refused to accept the TMD system affirms this point. Kim Dae Jung’s announcement about the rejection of the TMD system came out in early May 1999 when the South Korean government was working on bilateral talks with the North Korean counterpart through the channel of the third party in China. By making his official rejection to the missile defense system to which the PRC offered fierce opposition, Kim might believe that the Chinese could
render more valuable assistance to South Korea in improving relations with North Korea. On the other hand, after the summit in 2000, the attitude of South Korea exhibited change. South Korea proactively avoided the rejection of missile defense programs and corrected wrong messages that could disrupt the relations with America.

2. Considering Procurement of Patriot Missiles and MD related weapons

Another change was the ROK’s consideration of obtaining patriot missiles and a plan for procuring other types of weapons related to the missile defense. This provided some reasons for military specialists to claim that South Korea was ready for the US MD system, despite the fact that South Korea did not make official announcements.

In order to access changes in South Korea’s behavior it is now necessary to address two factors that have been obstacles for the ROK to develop the US missile defense program: cost and inapplicability. In previous years, the South Koreans claimed that the development of the missile defense system was too expensive for Korea and the system would work better for intercepting longer-range missiles instead of North Korea’s Scud missiles targeting major South Korean cities. South Koreans used to say, “Why should the Republic spend zillions on the TMD system which does not improve the defense capability against North Korean artilleries aimed at Seoul?”

Nevertheless, it seems that the calculation of South Korea has changed. The ROK seemed to move toward the procurement of weapons related to the missile defense

system, despite the fact that two official reasons (the financial burden and the inapplicability of TMD to Korea’s geographic feature) did not change. The cost of TMD was still prohibitive and the feature of the TMD to deal with longer-ranged missiles was still valuable. What made South Korea more open to the missile defense than before was probably that Seoul could no longer ignore long-range missiles, which may target the Korean Peninsula, from neighbors especially China and Russia. A comment by one government official proves this change. The military advisor to the President stated that there was a possibility for South Korea to synchronize its missile defense policy with United States in order to deal with long-term missile threats.  

Seoul’s decision to obtain Patriot missiles implied that South Korea was ready for an opportunity of being engaged in the US-led missile defense system. South Korea chose Patriot systems over other cheaper options including Russian S-300. More importantly, South Korean understood that purchasing American missiles might entail an impression that it was joining the American MD system.

As part of the military modernization, South Korea upgraded its missile capability under the project called SAM-X by replacing more than 40-year old US-made Nike Hercules surface-to-air missiles.  

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58 Assistant to President on military affairs Kim Hee Sang’s comment cited in Yoo, "Hankukhyung Misail Pang Eo Mang [Korean Style Missile Defense]."

59 SAM-X, a new surface-to-air missile project for the next generation, began in September 1999 after a long time project planning along with other procurement projects. South Korea’s defense modernization is called X-project (X represents the next generation) which equips the ROK military with a cutting-edge
requirement, the ROK had considered three options including Russian S-300, French EUROSAM LAND and American Patriot. The ROK government was particularly interested in Russian made missiles because of their speed, capacity and costs.\(^\text{60}\) Also, Russian missiles along with Russian made air fighters and other military hardware could substitute the payment of approximately 1.5 billion dollars the Russian government’s debt to the ROK government.\(^\text{61}\)

The United States, on the other hand, had persistently encouraged the ROK government to choose Raytheon’s Patriot missile system since 1997. During the defense minister meeting in Seoul in 1997, Defense Secretary William Cohen emphasized that the Patriot system was superior to Russian missiles in terms of interoperability with the US forces in Korea.\(^\text{62}\) The South Koreans criticized the US government for the comments that interfered with the sovereignty of the Republic. In November 1999, a few months after the new SAM-X project was actually launched, the technology. The project includes SAM-X (missile procurement), FX (air fighters), AHX (helicopters) and KDX (Aegis system). In fact, South Korea’s independent missile development came before the SAM-X project. About 30 years ago, South Korea enhanced its arsenal with upgraded versions of Nike Hercules including Paekgom (NHK-1) and Hyunmu surface-to-surface missile (NHK-2) which had a 180 kilometers range. Although American military specialists believed that the NHK-2 could fly as far as 300 kilometers, the South Korea’s missile program had been restricted with the US-ROK agreement which only allowed the ROK to develop missiles with a range of 180 kilometers. The renewed agreement in 2001 permitted South Korea to develop 300 kilometers with a 500 kg warhead with a condition of Seoul’s participation in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

\(^{60}\) Seok-min Yoon, "Hankuk Daekong Misail Pangwi Ch'eje Toyip [South Korea Introduces Surface-to-Air Missiles]," \textit{Hankuk Ilbo}, April 9 1997.


\(^{62}\) According to specialists, Russian S-300 does not have an identification friend-or-foe system compatible with the United States and Western technologies. This would increase a risk of American pilots being targeted by the Russian system. See Barbara Starr, "USA Urges South Korea to Buy Patrio over S-300v," \textit{Jane's Defense Weekly}, April 16 1997.
United States gave more pressure on the ROK government. Even though the South Korean government did not make a choice between Russian and the US missiles, the US DoD announced that it approved for the sale of Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3), the key components of the US missile defense system, to South Korea with approximately 4.2 billion dollars. The atmosphere in Korea was against the US pressure and the South Korean government dragged its feet on choosing PAC-3. Eventually, in 2000 the South Korean government finally decided to go with Patriot missile system PAC-2.

Consequently, suspicions continued to arise after Seoul adopted the indigenous missile defense system, or Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD), which might be compatible with the US-Japan missile defense technology development. The KAMD was a plan to develop indigenous weapons and enhance arsenals with advanced technologies in order to increase the defense capability of South Korea for its own. Furthermore, the procurement of Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEWACS), KDX-III (Korean Aegis combat system) with SM-6 missiles and other defense programs gave more weight on the argument that South Korea might be leaning toward a participation in the American missile defense system and its final decision was


Conclusion

This chapter has proved that after South Korea perceives decreased North Korea threats, threats from China become active. Accordingly, it has confirmed that the ROK government becomes less cooperative with China and engages in policies of soft-balancing that can create friction with the Chinese government. South Korea did not avoid policies that brought about pains in relations with China, while responding more willingly to accept negative viewpoints in the domestic politics. Two incidents, the Dalai Lama and the trade disputes on Chinese garlic were cases related to negative perspectives on China within the Korean society. In terms of military relations, South Korea’s behavior was more subtle than political and economic relations. On the TMD issue, South Korea became more adjusted to the US strategy than previously. All in all, the underlying meaning of changes in South Korea’s behavior was that the Republic did not worry about creating problems in bilateral relations with China.

a matter of time.
CHAPTER 5

ACCOMMODATION TOWARD CHINA: 2003-2007

This chapter tests the following hypothesis on dyad threats. If a state differentiates a major threat X from a minor threat Y, and observes an increased major threat, it emphasizes the role of the minor threat Y to constrain the major threat X and regards the minor threat Y as dormant. As a result, the state chooses a combined strategy of deterrence against X and accommodation toward Y.

Policies that South Korea employed toward China in 2003-2007 reflected the result of increased major threats from the DPRK after the second nuclear crisis. Increased threats from North Korea guided Seoul to perceive China threats as dormant. Consequently, the Republic emphasized China’s significant role in the Korean peninsula and made positive comments on the PRC. As a result, South Korea’s behavior toward China epitomized accommodation. Various incidents related particularly to political and military issues confirmed the hypothesis of dyad threats.
ROK’s Threat Perception of North Korea

In October 2002, Pyongyang admitted that it had been developing clandestine uranium-based nuclear weapons.¹ Announcements came out from North Korea that it had unfrozen nuclear facilities and made nuclear weapons out of plutonium from 8,000 spent fuel rods. South Korean president immediately recognized the crisis. President Roh Moo Hyun was regarded as one of those who fervently espoused progressive ideas and was the successor of the previous Kim Dae Jung government’s sunshine policy toward North Korea. His speech, nevertheless, was a clear warning against the North Korean regime. During his inauguration, President Roh was genuinely concerned about nuclear threats from North Korea and suggested that Pyongyang should renounce nuclear weapons as soon as possible.²

South Korean newspapers poured out criticisms against the North Korean regime. According to the compiled data based on my analysis of 14 South Korean newspapers, the number of editorials, which emphasized nuclear threats from North Korea, increased after late 2002.³

In the mean time, Washington suspended the assistance of heavy fuel oil for Pyongyang, claiming that North Korea breached the 1994 agreed framework.

¹ It happened when US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly visited Pyongyang. Interview of James Kelly in "A News Hour with Jim Lehrer: Nuclear Weapons," (PBS, November 5, 2002). Accessible via http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-dec02/nuclear_11-5.html# North Korea, however, denied its uranium-based weapons and argued instead that the North Korean counterpart told Assistant Secretary Kelly that Pyongyang was entitled to develop such weapons.

² Roh Moo Hyun’s inauguration, see "Roh Moo Hyun 16 Dae Daetongnyong Chuiyimsa [the 16 Th President Roh Moo Hyun's Inauguration Speech]," Chosun Ilbo, February 25 2003.

³ See appendix A-1.
Consequently, North Korea expelled the IAEA inspectors and withdrew from the NPT. To make matters worse, despite a few rounds of multilateral efforts to resolve the nuclear crisis, North Korea test-fired missiles and conducted tests on nuclear weapons in late 2006.\(^4\) The level of tensions in the Korean peninsula inevitably increased.

To the contrary, one may argue that North Korea threats have gradually decreased because Pyongyang and Seoul have engaged in growing economic interactions in recent years and thus, North Korea is no longer viewed as an enemy by South Korean people. It may be true, but conventional weapons and particularly nuclear programs in North Korea nonetheless indicate clear and serious threats. Most South Korean people still believe that Pyongyang might wage war against South Korea. Moreover, the South Korean people were sensitive to the situation where North Korea can now exert the new types of threats with its nuclear capability. According to a public survey in 2005, 60-66 percent respondents were worried about nuclear weapons that the North Korean regime reportedly developed.\(^5\) Even political elites, who represented prevalent progressive and liberal ideas in the South Korean society, such as President Roh and his advisors, acknowledged that nuclear programs in North Korea left the Korean peninsula even more unstable.

President Roh’s remarks, however, often implied that he would not worry too much about the crisis. For instance, right before his meeting with his US counterpart at

\(^4\) North Korea test-fired missiles in June and tested nuclear weapons in October 2006.

\(^5\) See appendix A-4.
the APEC in 2004, Roh stated “There is a good reason in North Korea’s argument that nuclear weapons are needed for their defense.” Some pundits in the US side cast doubt on Roh’s real intention, because his comment seemed to support North Korea’s brinkmanship. American policy makers strongly believed that the comment might reveal his political orientation that guided him to be close to North Korea and to distance himself from South Korea’s ally, the United States. Roh courageously repeated similar messages and consequently, uncovered disagreements with his US counterpart on how to deal with the North Korean regime.

However, Roh’s comments, which sounded sympathetic to nuclear North Korea, actually stemmed from his fears. With its capability of launching nuclear missiles at the moment, the North would be able to initiate nuclear war in the Korean peninsula. If the war really occurred, Roh argued, there was no denying that South Korea was the country that would suffer the most. South Korean president believed that the most effective way to deal with the nuclear crisis was to avoid goading the Pyongyang government. Hence, Roh emphasized over and over again that the nuclear issue should be handled diplomatically and an option to use forces should be off the table, whenever he had meetings with US president. Roh’s calls for diplomacy and his pro-North Korea announcements were based on the recognition of heightened threats from North Korea rather than decreased threats.

Another problem was that the ROK defense white paper for 2004 eradicated a

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word to designate North Korea as an enemy.\textsuperscript{7} This demonstrated a vital change in South Korea’s assessment of North Korea and displeased some Americans who believed that the existence of alliances was rooted in common opponents. During the hearing on the Korean peninsula, Henry Hyde, chairman in the Committee on International Relations of House of Representatives, pointed out:

“The Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense White Paper for 2004…causes some confusion. On the one hand, it deleted the designation of Pyongyang as the main enemy, although Pyongyang’s continued hostility has been a major rationale for the US-ROK alliance. Secondly, the White Paper stated that in the event of armed conflict in Korea, the United States would dispatch 690,000 troops, over four times the 150,000 United States forces now serving in Iraq. This seems to reflect great expectations at a time when US resources are already elsewhere committed. Congress would certainly have a major role in examining the implications of such a massive deployment. It also raises a very germane issue: If you need our help, \textit{please tell us clearly who your enemy is}.\textsuperscript{8}"

The word of enemy is indeed removed from the defense white paper. Yet, looking at the white paper closely reveals that South Korea still perceives North Korea threats. The 2004 defense white paper designated North Korea as military threats and


noted that Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons developed in 2003 was specifically threatening. The 2006 white paper observed, “North Korea’s nuclear program is the most serious threat,” and continued to argue that Pyongyang had improved its preparedness for the second Korean War particularly in 2005-2006, acknowledging that Kim Jong Il’s visit to military bases drastically increased. The paper stated, “Kim visited the bases 30 times between January and October 2005 and 64 times between November 2005 and June 2006.”

**South Korea’s Threat Perception toward China**

The theory of dyad threats predicts that the processes how a state perceives its minor threat as dormant hinges on whether or not the minor threat is capable of constraining the major threat and reducing tensions increased by the major threat.

South Korea’s perception of China in this period confirms the dynamics. First, although the military expenditure of China drastically expanded based on the economic development, the ROK treated China threats as dormant. The government of South Korea deliberately avoided mentioning China threats publicly. In the military and political arena, the “China threats” argument was hardly noticed. A few conservatives

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11 Ibid., 45.

12 See appendix C.
warned that South Korea should be attentive to the growth of Chinese military capability, and yet these comments were still far from the China threat discussions. Moreover, President Roh Moo Hyun stated that throughout history, Korea had been attacked by neighboring countries including China, but his speech never meant to criticize China directly.

The South Korean government emphasized opportunities coming from the development of Chinese economy, while downplaying negative perspectives in the business sector. Some people in the public sector were particularly worried because a growing number of South Korean products had to compete with cheap Chinese merchandise in the international market and China’s technology development had been catching up with South Korea rapidly. President Roh Moo Hyun, however, noted that China’s drastic growth and dynamic movement could work as a stimulus for the South Korean economy. He claimed, “The development of China is not what we should be wary and anxious about.” More importantly, compared to the previous case between 2000 and 2002 in Chapter 4 when perceived China threats were active, South Korean leaders, in this period, returned to focusing more on the opportunity of China than on challenges that China’s economy might bring about.

Second, as soon as North Korea resumed its nuclear program, South Korea

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13 For instance, Ssangyong Motors, one of big South Korean car makers, was taken by an unknown Chinese auto company Shangahi Automotive Corporation in 2004. Some South Korean people worried that China would learn this Korean company’s know-how and make cheaper products than other South Korean car makers. In a worst case scenario, the Chinese company would learn the technology from Ssangyong and sell it to others and South Korean workers in Ssangyong would end up with losing their jobs.
underscored the influence of the PRC on North Korea. South Korea’s belief in the capability of China to constrain North Korea was quite strong. For instance, the number of newspapers editorials that emphasized the importance of China increased immediately after the nuclear crisis became apparent.\textsuperscript{14} South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun also stated that the role of China was “very significant” to solve the problem of North Korean nuclear programs, during his speech to South Korean people on his state visit to Beijing in 2003.

Indeed, the Chinese role was proactive and efficient in this period. China began exerting pressures on the North Korean regime after Pyongyang launched missiles in July 2006 and conducted nuclear tests three months later. First, China temporarily closed North Korea’s account of Bank of China in Macao branch. It was an important gesture coordinated with what members in the six-party talks planned to do. Second, Beijing decided to hand over three North Korean escapees, arrested by the Chinese police, directly to the United States in July 2006. It was the first case that China ever approved the refugee status of North Korean defectors in China and allowed them to go wherever they want without having them pass through a third country. A usual way to deal with North Korean people in China has been either to send them back directly to North Korea or to deport them to the third country in Southeast Asia where they can choose to go to places they wish. Third, the influence of Beijing on Pyongyang was described in the New York Times which said that after North Korea tested its nuclear

\textsuperscript{14} See appendix A.
weapons, China reduced sales of oil to North Korea, which might work as one of causes that brought North Korea back to six party talks in late 2006.  

**South Korea’s policy to China: Accommodation**

The previous section has shown that South Korea has interpreted the role of China as a significant constrainer in managing North Korea’s provocative activities. This section demonstrates that with the effect of changes in threat perception, the ROK adopted cooperative policies toward China in the political, economic, and security fields. In the political and military areas, the influence of dormant China threats was obvious. The Republic intentionally avoided lodging loud complaints with the PRC and maintained modest gestures even if the South Korean public leveled criticism at the Seoul government. In the field of economy, one notable incident in trade relations supported the hypothesis of dyad threats.

**Political Relations**

This section begins with placing an emphasis on the gradual improvement of bilateral relations. Since the official recognition of each other in 1992, China, in particular, has used specific phrases in order to describe continuously improved bilateral relations. According to Chinese terminologies, Sino-South Korean relations developed

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from “Friendly and Cooperative Relationship, or Youhao Hezuo Guanxi” for the period of normalization in 1992, to “Cooperative Partnerships, or Hezuo Huoban Guanxi” under the Kim Dae Jung administration in 1998. Finally, in 2003, when South Korean President Roh visited China, the two countries leveled up their relations to “Comprehensive and Cooperative Partnerships, or Quanmian Hezuo Huoban Guanxi.”

Analyzing government-to-government interactions, however, does not present enough evidence to test dyad threat hypothesis. More important incidents that can prove and disprove the hypothesis are discussed in the following section.

**Behind the Summit Meeting**

The 2003 summit meeting between South Korean leader Roh Moo Hyun and Chinese President Hu Jin Tao revealed the effect of increased North Korea threats on South Korea’s behavior. During the one-hour meeting, one major topic was the nuclear crises in the Korean peninsula. The two leaders agreed that they would make efforts to settle the problem with diplomatic approaches. They, however, revealed a clear difference on the application and the meaning of diplomacy. South Korea suggested adopting multilateral talks, while China clearly opposed. In fact, South Korea had

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16 Terminologies are drawn from the information of bilateral relations between China and the Republic of Korea in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. Accessible via http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/

17 Newspapers pinpointed that the communiqué was announced 28 hours after the actual summit meeting and reported that two parties had trouble in the agreement of the way to solve the North Korea’s nuclear program. "Hanjoong Kongdong Seongmyong Huyoozung Kokchong Dwenda [Concerns About the Side Effect of the South Korea-China Communiqué]," Dong-a Ilbo, July 10 2003, Jang-jin Hwang, "Korean Leader Has Limited Success in Beijing," The Korea Herald, July 11 2003.
already made a decision after several meetings with the United States and Japan to initiate multilateral efforts in dealing with North Korea. Thus, the meeting between South Korea and China was a significant opportunity for the Republic to present the idea and draw assistance from the Chinese government. South Korean President believed that the meeting with the Chinese president would complete the plan for multilateral attempts. He stressed this point during the meeting with Hu and requested Chinese leader to persuade North Korea to join the process of multilateral negotiation.¹⁸

The Chinese government, however, was not so enthusiastic. China believed that multilateral talks would provoke North Korea even further. At the moment, Pyongyang was vehemently against nuclear dialogues supported by Washington, Tokyo and Seoul, and insisted on having bilateral meetings merely with the United States. Kim Jong Il was anxious about the possibility that the United States might conduct an actual attack against North Korea. The North Korean leader believed that the axis of evil speech by President Bush in 2002 demonstrated a hard line in US foreign policy and that Pyongyang might be the next military target of the United States after the war in Iraq. Hence, the Chinese leader was unwilling to try to force multilateral talks on North Korea. He avoided answering the request of South Korea during the meeting and instead, conveyed the point on behalf of North Korea that the North was concerned more about the guarantee of Pyongyang’s security from America.

Moreover, the Chinese side suggested that the joint communiqué of Seoul and

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Beijing should not include any words related to “multilateral meetings” on the issue of North Korea. The Republic immediately forfeited its promise to the United States and Japan and showed sympathy to the Chinese concerns. During the press conference, the South Korean President indeed stayed away from using multilateralism. He employed nebulous language and stated that the two countries agreed to have meetings among “concerned parties” in order to discuss the North Korea’s nuclear programs. Finally, no terminology related to multilateral measures was found in the joint communiqué. Although the framework of multilateral talks eventually developed several months later, the leader of South Korea looked as if he disproved his own plan which was supported by the United States and Japan. Some South Korean people criticized Roh for not being strong enough to carry his point against China during the summit meeting.

**NTD TV Incident**

South Korea’s soft stance on the PRC was reflected in an incident in late 2006. An America-based Chinese broadcast system, New Tang Dynasty (NTD) made an agreement with the South Korean national theater in October 2006 to put on a show called “Chinese New Year Spectacular” in early 2007. This show, which includes Chinese traditional dances and songs, is performed worldwide in the beginning of the year. NTD TV has been renowned as critical to the Chinese government. It has been

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19 The substance of the press conference by President Roh Moo Hyun and President Hu Jin-tao appeared in the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Republic of Korea. Accessible via http://www.mofat.go.kr/state/areadiplomacy/asiapacific/

20 Finally, the joint communiqué was announced a day after the summit meeting.
vociferous about human rights issues in China such as *Falungong*, a religious group illegal in China, and has criticized the Chinese Communist Party for cracking down the freedom of people in mainland China.

A few days before the performance organized by NTD TV, the South Korean national theater suddenly cancelled the show, arguing that NTD TV did not follow the necessary procedures and regulations in South Korea. After the show was cancelled, a representative in the NTD TV Korean branch publicized that there was pressure from the Chinese government on Seoul. He stated during the press conference, “The South Korean national theater was told by the Korean government agency that all other performances signed up by mainland China could be cancelled, unless the show organized by NTD TV would be called off.”\(^{21}\) A comment made by one South Korean government official approved the influence of the Chinese. He said that he carefully watched the process of the show in advance because he knew that *Falunguong* people participated in one program in the show.\(^{22}\) Moreover, the Chinese embassy in Seoul reportedly contacted with most South Koreans, who had been invited to the show and the NTD TV reception, and discouraged them from attending those events.\(^{23}\)

Although representatives in the South Korean national theater refused to tell the

\(^{21}\) "Ntd Tv, Gongyon Chuiso Joongkuk Daesagwan Amnyok Yissota [Ntd Tv Says There Was Pressure from the Chinese Embassy]," *Yonhap*, January 10 2007.

\(^{22}\) "Hwagyo Bangsong Gongyon Chuiso Wa Dae Joongkuk Oyekyo [a Cancellation of a Show by a Chinese Broadcast System and Our Low Key Policy toward China]," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, Jaunary 8 2007.

whole story, it seemed that the governments of South Korea and China were involved in this incident. The South Korean government was obviously not interested in provoking the Chinese by approving the show which was performed by a controversial religious group and supported by the TV company that had been at odds with the Chinese government.

Avoiding Friction: The Koguryo Kingdom Dispute

South Korea and China had a historical dispute over an ancient kingdom called Koguryo in this period. As the logic of dyad threats predicted, South Korea wanted to maintain a cooperative stance toward China in dealing with the problem by showing reluctance to file complaints with the Chinese government.

The Koguryo kingdom existed between B.C. 37 and A.D. 668 with a territory covering the northern part of the Korean peninsula and Manchuria.24 The northern part of the Korean peninsula is now occupied by the North Korean regime, while Manchuria has turned into three provinces—Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang in northeast China. The problem reached the highest point when Renmin Ribao, the Chinese government

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24 Although I recognize that Koreans pronounce Koguryo, or Goguryeo (고구려), while Chinese call it Gaogouli, here, I use “Koguryo” instead of “Koguryo/Gaogouli” for the sake of simplicity based on the current research that shows that the majority of newspapers, magazines and academic journals uses Koguryo. While the pronunciation of Koguryo originally sounds as Gao-ju-li (高句丽) in Chinese, the Chinese government adopted a pronunciation of Gao-gou-li (高勾丽), which sounded similar to Koguryo, as China conducted research on this ancient kingdom. For the information of the pronunciation of “Gaogouli”, see Yang Ma, Chang-qing Zhou, and Yun-jie Cheng, “Gaogouli [Koguryo],” Renmin Ribao, July 1 2004. Accessible via http://www.people.com.cn/GB/wenhua/1088/2610644.html. Last accessed on June 11, 2008.
mouthpiece, reported that Koguryo was a regime established by the oldest ethnic minority in the Northeast China and that the culture of Koguryo was an integral part of China. South Korean people, for whom Koguryo constituted a significant part of Korean history, expressed resentment and carried out on-line and off-line protests against the Chinese government.

In order to soothe the South Korean people’s anger, the Chinese government explained that some Chinese scholars had incorrect information and what they said in the Chinese newspaper was not the opinion of the Chinese government. Nevertheless, some observers maintained that considering the unique situation of Chinese media, which were carefully monitored by the leadership, the announcement on Koguryo could not have come out without an approval of the Chinese government. Thus, South Korea believed that the incident demonstrated that the Chinese government was highly likely to be involved.

1. The Story by the Chinese

The Chinese government launched a five-year “Northeast Asia Project” in February 2002 with a 20 billion Chinese Renminbi budget—approximately 2.9 billion


US dollars.\textsuperscript{27} It was designed to collect data for the history in the northeast part of China especially for its ethnic minority, notably 2.6 million ethnic Korean-Chinese living in three provinces in northeast China.\textsuperscript{28}

It has been argued that the Northeast Asia project is not only about Koguryo but also intended to preempt the Korean minority’s potential political claim.\textsuperscript{29} It has been argued that the Chinese government is concerned about the worst case scenario that ethnic Korean-Chinese, geographically close to Korea, may become sympathetic to Korea if the Korean peninsula is unified, and seek independence from the PRC. The Chinese government is concerned about any types of potential separatist movements because they would have domino effects on other Chinese ethnic minorities and damage the integrity of Chinese territory. By claiming that Koguryo is part of Chinese history, the government of China attempts to incorporate the ethnic Koreans into Han Chinese culture.

\textsuperscript{27} Bumsoo Kim, "Shimin Danche Jung Yoksa Weagok Hangyi [South Korean Civic Groups Protest over Chinese Distortion of History]," \textit{Hankuk Ilbo}, October 20 2003.


\textsuperscript{29} Hyun-sung Khang, "China's Historical Bid Unites Koreans," \textit{South China Mornin Post}, March 2 2004.
2. South Korean People’s Response

The South Korean public and historians proactively responded to continuing Chinese challenges by creating several non-governmental organizations and requesting that the Chinese government make corrections. The South Korean voluntary groups distributed to the international community the information that the Chinese government was distorting the truth and that Koguryo was a part of Korean history. They also organized rallies where they received 10 million signatures for the petition to the ROK government for defending Koguryo in Korean history. Academic organizations initiated public discussions and scholarly meetings in order to receive public recognition on this issue. One South Korean scholar argued that China’s offense in the issue of history was more serious than the history problem generated by Japan, because the Chinese project was put forward mostly by the Chinese government, while the Japanese history problem was related only to one of several versions of history textbooks that few schools adopted for classes.

For South Korean people, the Chinese claim that Koguryo is part of Chinese history is tantamount to a humiliation. Peter Hays Gries, for instance, has maintained that China challenges the domain of Korean identity which is founded on the long political tradition including Koguryo.

“Koguryo is a symbol of heroic Korean resistance against foreign invaders. It is central to a virile and masculine Korean nationalism: robbing Korea of Koguryo, therefore, is like robbing Korean nationalists of their manhood. “China’s Koguryo,” in other words, translates into a emasculated, feminized Korea.”

Since Koreans interpret the Koguryo dispute as a zero-sum game, as Gries has aptly argued, the history issue between China and Korea is likely to tip the balance of South Korean people’s views on China to a negative direction. As a result, according to a general survey in South Korea during the incident of Koguryo, only 12.2 percent of respondents chose China as the most favorite foreign country. On the contrary, in the same survey, 50.1 percent respondents selected the United States as the most favorite one.

3. Responses from the South Korean Government

Although the South Korean government arranged a meeting to discuss the history problem created by China as early as 2003, it did not lodge official protests until summer 2004. The official position of the South Korean government was that the

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33 Ibid.: 8.
35 The government agencies in this meeting included the Ministry of Education and Human Resource, Cultural Heritage Administration, the Government Information Agency, the Korea-Japan joint committee of history, the Korea Foundation and the Academy of Korean studies. Director of the Culture and Foreign Affairs Bureau in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade presided the meeting. The meeting was held in November 27 2003.
issue of Koguryo should be handled by academic circles instead of the government.\textsuperscript{36}

In addition, Seoul’s main response was extremely cautious by saying that the government had to check whether the announcement truly represented the opinion of the Chinese government.\textsuperscript{37}

Only after the Chinese Foreign Ministry took the egregious act of deleting the information of the history of South Korea in its website, did the South Korean government change its position and engage in official but still gentle protests against Beijing.\textsuperscript{38} The government of South Korea merely demanded that China restore the information of Korean history in the website. South Korean ambassador to China visited the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other bureaucrats in the ROK foreign ministry met with the Chinese ambassador to Seoul in order to express the concerns of the South Korean government. One government official in the MOFAT made the right statement, “Because China has been deaf to South Korea’s request for correcting its account for Korean history, we need to take a variety of mid-term and long-term countermeasures.”\textsuperscript{39} Finally, Seoul decided only to build an inter-agency committee among government officials and politicians in order to deal with the

\textsuperscript{36} For this purpose, the ROK government stated that it would provide a financial support for academic research. South Korea’s government-funded research center opened with an annual budget of 9 million dollars in March 2004.

\textsuperscript{37} ”Seoul to Ask China to Clarify Reports on Koguryo,” \textit{The Korea Times}, July 6 2004.

\textsuperscript{38} The Chinese government deleted the era of three kingdoms (Koguryo, Baekje and Shilla) from the Korean history in the Chinese Foreign Ministry website in April 2004. After the South Korean requested China to restore the deleted part, China deleted the whole history in the introduction of the Republic of Korea. Newspapers described this situation as “humiliation” of the South Korean government.

\textsuperscript{39} ”Seoul Ups Ante over Beijing's Historical Distortions,” \textit{The Korea Times}, August 9 2004.
Koguryo issue. It was still only a bureaucratic measure to distract people from engaging in further criticisms against China.

Internal criticisms against the Korean government continued because the attitude of China had not changed much. Some argued that the ROK government’s reaction was a “belated and stopgap measure.” Others condemned the government for having reacted passively toward the Chinese government. The leader of the opposition Grand National Party (GNP) stated, “The government failed to keep the Koguryo Kingdom's history from being distorted because it failed to make appropriate efforts in its diplomacy.”

4. Agreement between Seoul and Beijing and Afterwards

When the incident of Koguryo occurred, Seoul was caught up with the problem of Pyongyang’s nuclear programs and was consulting closely with Beijing and other countries in coordinating six party talks. The Koguryo incident was around the time when the nuclear problem worsened, as the North Korean government declared that it had reprocessed nuclear facilities. The Chinese government had been actively communicated with North Korea to bring it back to the discussion table although being irritated by Pyongyang’s brazen behavior.

41 "Political Parties to Set up Committee to Tackle Koguryo Issue," The Korea Times, August 7 2004.
42 According to one report, China organized the first preliminary trilateral talk among the United States, North Korea and the PRC in April 2003 which was a product of about 50 times of contacts with the North Korean government by the PRC. Hyung Joong Park, Haek Moonje Haegyol Gwajong Aeso
When formal complaints from the South Korean officials, with respect to the Koguryo problem, were directed at the Chinese government, Beijing initiated a settlement with Seoul. On August 23, 2004, China dispatched Wu Da-wei who had served as ambassador to South Korea and recently promoted to China’s Vice Foreign Minister. During the closed-door meeting, Wu encouraged his South Korean counterpart to unravel this issue through academic research. Eventually, an agreement was reached between the two countries and Wu Da-wei was praised by the Chinese government for concluding the tricky issue so smoothly.

For South Korean people, the agreement was far from satisfactory. They wanted to receive apologies from China and the immediate correction of history was necessary. To their disappointment, China did neither. South Korean people thought that the South Korean government reached a hasty agreement with China because it wanted to avoid deteriorated relations with Beijing when the role of China in

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*Nambukgwangye Mit Bookhan Gyongje Jiwon Scinario [Relationship of Two Koreas and Economic Assistance to North Korea under the Process of the Settlement of the Nuclear Problem] (Tongyil Yonguwon [Korea Institute of National Unification], 2003), 334.


44 Ibid.

45 The agreement was a verbal understanding with five points. Five points of the verbal accord include: 1) China understands that the issue of Koguryo becomes an impending agenda to relations between China and South Korea; 2) Two parties will make an effort to prevent this issue from damaging bilateral relations and continue to improve relations based on the communiqués announced after the 1992 diplomatic normalization and the first presidential meeting in 1993; 3) Two parties agree with a point that they seek proper measures to solve the problem of Koguryo within the framework of cooperative relationship; 4) China expresses its understanding of South Korea’s interest in the interpretation of Koguryo by the Chinese central and local governments and makes efforts to make proper measures; 5) Two parties endeavor to create academic exchanges which will help the understanding of the public in two countries.
moderating the North Korea problem was critical. A few radicals in South Korea argued that the government should have levied economic sanctions toward Beijing.⁴⁶ Other options suggested by them included recalling South Korean ambassador to China, inviting the Tibetan religious leader Dalai Lama and rekindling ROK’s bilateral relations with Taiwan. Of course, the South Korean government did none of them. The government did not even sound out the Chinese response through political activities such as acting as if it invited Dalai Lama or Taiwanese leaders.

Even after the bilateral agreement, the debate over Koguryo was not completely over. At the end of the year 2004, the ROK government discovered that China published postage stamps portraying Koguryo’s mural tombs in order to celebrate the registration of the UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Moreover, in 2006, China published books and articles that claimed that not only Koguryo but also Balhae, a descendent kingdom after the collapse of Koguryo, were originated from China.

Again, the response from the South Korean government demonstrated a clear desire to avoid frictions. Vice Foreign Minister stated that the government needed to be cautious in responding to China and had to explore whether or not the publication stood for the official viewpoint of the Chinese government. Moreover, the Roh administration continued to confirm the point in the agreement with the Chinese counterpart that the history issue should be handled through academic research.⁴⁷

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⁴⁶ Some scholars argued that the economic sanction on China was actually not plausible because Seoul relied on Beijing more than China did on South Korea.

⁴⁷ Interestingly, the North Korea’s reply to the Koguryo issue was also quiet in general, although it was
also annoyed by the Chinese announcement that the Koguryo was part of the Chinese history. In the beginning, a number of North Korean historians denounced the Chinese attempt to distort the history of Koguryo as “a vain effort.” Yet, the Pyongyang government seldom expressed direct criticisms against the Chinese government. Kwang-sik Nam, "Keeping Mum on China's Claim," *Vantage Point* 27, no. 9 (September 2004): 9-11.

Economic Relations

Economic interactions between South Korea and China continuously expanded during this period. However, the growth in bilateral trade and investment does not necessarily confirm the effect of dormant China threats perceived by South Korea. For instance, although South Korea’s investment to the mainland China has exceeded Seoul’s investment to the United States since 2003, it does not necessarily mean that South Korea invested more in China than America due to the influence of threat perception. More importantly, assessing economic relations does not clarify the point when South Korea becomes more cooperative to China and when it does not.

Increasing investment and trade between the two Asian countries, instead, entails a trend of growing regional economic integration in East Asia. For instance, Eun Mee Kim and Jai Mah made two important points on this phenomenon.\(^{49}\) First, they argued that South Korea’s investment contributed to the development of China. Most of the South Korea’s investment flows into the consumer goods industries such as clothing and textile, and footwear which have been major pillars in the economic growth of China.\(^{50}\)

Second, Kim and Mah found that ROK’s investment to China complemented its export to China. Their data analysis demonstrated that the correlation coefficient


\(^{50}\) Ibid.: 890-91.
between the two countries showed a strong linear association. According to their analysis, South Korea’s multinational companies build their subsidiaries in China and these subsidiaries import intermediate goods from South Korea. Therefore, for South Korea’s part, the increasing investment to China may prompt the growth in South Korea’s export to the PRC. Finally, the final products made in China are exported to foreign countries, which are added up to the total amount of Chinese export.

**Avoiding Friction: The Kimchi Clash**

A trade problem related to Korean traditional food Kimchi, however, confirms the hypothesis of dyad threats. The policy of South Korea was to avoid frictions with the Chinese government when problems occurred. The South Korean government backed down immediately after the Chinese filed complaints and invested much effort to prevent these problems from deteriorating the status quo.

The problem began when South Korea Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a surprising report that Kimchi imported from China included lead and was infected with four different kinds of parasite eggs. The Chinese worried about this announcement because it would create harm to the image of Chinese products exported to other countries. Through various diplomatic channels, the Chinese government

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51 Ibid.: 893-94.
52 Jin-fang Zhang, "Paocai Zhiliang Anquan Kunrao Hanguo Hanguo Shichang [the Safety of Kimchi Troubles South Korean Market]," *Xinhua*, November 4 2005, Dae-soo Song, "Joong, Kimchi Padong Ae Bulman Pokbal Jikjon [China Displeased with Kimchi Crisis]," *Hankuk Ilbo*, October 25 2005. Chinese also argued that strictly speaking, Kimchi which was imported to Korea was not actually a Chinese made
demanded that the analysis of the inspection be withdrawn and requested South Korea to provide the result of the investigation. However, both the government and the food agency in Korea reportedly failed to provide any type of information for China.\(^{53}\)

Shortly, the PRC made a public announcement that it also discovered parasite eggs in the South Korean-made Kimchi and other kinds of food imported from South Korea. Consequently, the Chinese government stopped nine Korean food companies from importing their products to the PRC.\(^{54}\) The South Korean food companies banned by the Chinese authority said that the behavior of China merely represented retaliation. Some of them stated that to their embarrassment, they did not even export Kimchi to China.\(^{55}\) Moreover, China moved on to testing other South Korean products, which were not directly related to Kimchi, such as plastic wraps and cosmetics for carcinogens.\(^{56}\) This reminded the South Korean government of trade disputes over Chinese garlic a few years ago which ultimately paralyzed bilateral trade for about a month or so.

\(^{53}\) Jin-seok Lee, "Joong, Gisaengchoong Kimchi 'Noone Nun Noon' [China, Tit-for-Tat on Kimchi]," Chosun Ilbo, November 2 2005.


Pundits in South Korea claimed that the China’s retaliation in the Kimchi Clash was the outcome of a hasty decision by South Korea. Shortly after the Chinese government’s report, the South Korean food inspector also found parasite eggs in Kimchi made in Korea. Although contaminated Kimchi was made by small sized Korean companies which occupied only 4.9 percent of Kimchi sold in the South Korean market, the result impaired the credibility of the South Korean government.

The Republic immediately made a clear statement that the incident should not develop into a trade war. The Seoul government also tried to calm down the general public in South Korea by boosting the image of the Chinese product in South Korea. One South Korean official stated that Chinese product did “something good” by stabilizing consumer prices in Korea. More importantly, the South Korean government could not overlook the growing domestic demand of readymade Kimchi. Kimchi has been imported from China with the amount worth of 400 thousand dollars every year and occupied about 8 percent of the Kimchi market in South Korea. A decrease in Kimchi imported from China will raise the price of cabbages, a major

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57 For this argument, see, for instance, Si-young Lee, "Han-Joong Kimchi Padong Tongsang Issue Ahnida [Kimchi Incident Is Not the Issue for Trade Disputes]," Seoul Shinmoon, November 4 2005.

58 Hee-kyung Kim, "Mandu, Song-Uh, Kimchi, Tuhturigo Boja [Dumpling, Trout and Kimchi, Let's Announce It First]," Dong-A Ilbo, November 5 2005.

59 Gang-won Lee, "Interview with a Director of Trade and Negotiation in Mofat," Yonhap, November 6 2005.

60 South Korea imported about 430 thousand dollar worth of Kimchi in 2002 and the amount continued to grow. Yonhap, January 8 2003.
ingredient of Kimchi, and directly impact South Korean consumers negatively.\footnote{One South Korean government report on Kimchi revealed that the demand for cabbages which were used to make Kimchi slowly decreased from the early 1990s in South Korea, while the demand of readymade Kimchi increased average 7.7 percent every year in the 1990s and was expected to grow until 2006. Gye-im Lee, Jee-hyun Choi, and Byung-il Ahn, "Research Report: Demand for Kimchi in Korea," (Insititue of Korea Agriculture and Economy, 2000), 74-75.}

One can argue that the reason why South Korea immediately solve the problem was related to the fact that Chinese President Hu Jin-tao was slated to come to Korea for his first state visit. President Hu’s visit in November 2005 was particularly significant to South Korea. Hu came to Seoul after he went to Pyongyang and met Kim Jong Il and other North Korean officials. Most South Korean policy makers hoped that the meeting between Chinese and North Korean leaders could lubricate the temporarily stopped multilateral discussions over the resumed nuclear programs in North Korea.\footnote{The Chinese side also felt that constant debates over this issue would eventually hurt the bilateral trade with the ROK which had been the third largest export partner for Beijing. Eventually, both Korea and China created a taskforce and tried to patch up the quarrel.}

Expecting China’s proactive role in the security issue, the South Korean government might not want to raise an unpleasant clash over Kimchi during the meeting with its Chinese counterpart.

On the surface, the Kimchi problem looks similar to garlic disputes in 2000-2001 in that both incidents were initiated by the South Korean government. However, a clear difference exists between the two events. The Kimchi clash did not develop into a major trade problem with China, while the incident on garlic disputes analyzed in the previous chapter created frictions with China.\footnote{I recognize that there are other differences between the garlic disputes and the Kimchi incident. One is that garlic disputes occurred before the Chinese government entered the WTO and thus the Chinese was...} In terms of the Kimchi problem, the
South Korean government carefully managed the situation by keeping the voice of the public from turning into serious protests against China, while making efforts to allay Chinese anger. At the outset, South Korean government officials continuously stated that the Kimchi incident should be settled promptly. In addition, they emphasized the fact that importing Chinese products was advantageous to South Korean people by keeping down the consumer price.

The garlic disputes, however, occurred after the South Korean government followed a required procedure. When China complained, the South Korean government did not back down and implemented the safeguard against Chinese product. Moreover, the Republic did not try to calm down domestic criticisms against the Chinese government.

**Active Cooperation: Market Economy Status**

South Korea’s cooperative policy toward China includes an active form of cooperation. Seoul provided “Market Economy Status (MES)” for Beijing during the second summit meeting between Roh and Hu in 2005. Among top five trading partners for China, South Korea was the first country which provided this beneficial status to China. The United States, Japan and other western European countries, however, have not yet offered the status.

The reason why the ROK provided the MES in the particular moment is still able to retaliate by levying a ban on importing other type of South Korean products. The focus of my argument is to examine how the South Korean government handles incidents differently.
debateable, although South Korea’s overture certainly gives advantage for the Chinese product in Korea. Some argued that the status for China aimed at decreasing the discrepancy of the bilateral trade and thus alleviating Beijing’s complaints. Because the Chinese government had complained growing deficits from bilateral trade with South Korea, the MES would benefit Chinese products imported to the ROK. Others maintained that providing the MES was regarded as a compensating gesture for Chinese continuous endeavor in the six party talks. Still others argued that it was a gesture to patch up the estranged bilateral relations due to the Kimchi clash.

Security Relations

The change of ROK’s perception toward North Korea and China was reflected in the security arena. As soon as the Republic perceived an increased North Korea threat, cooperation with China became noticeable. This was based on the belief that the Chinese government is a key player in constraining the North and, thus, the ROK perceived threats from China as latent.

The Republic was eager to move on to the next level of military cooperation with China. Military contacts between South Korea and China continued to increase, as some scholars have argued, although the traditional alliance between the United States and South Korea worked as a “ceiling” that allowed limited military exchanges between the two Asian countries. Nevertheless, some meaningful announcements, made by
South Korean leaders, were interpreted as a political tilt to the PRC. Second, discord between South Korea and the United States in terms of changes in the US strategy challenged the spirit of the US-South Korean alliance. Some pundits predicted that the survival of 50-year alliance relationship became uncertain because of South Korea’s cooperative gesture toward China.

South Korea’s Getting Close to China

A signal that South Korea might be getting close to the PRC came out on several occasions. Among them, the most controversial was President Roh Moo Hyun’s remark on the role of South Korea as a balancer in the Northeast Asia. When he delivered his speech at the Korean Air Force Academy in March 2005, Roh stated, “South Korea’s military should be able to work as a balancer in the Asian region in order to achieve peace and prosperity of the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia. In order to complete this goal, Korea will strengthen its military capability and increase self-reliance, while strengthening security cooperation with neighboring countries.”

The terminology of “balancer,” according to advisors in Chong Wa Dae and the president himself, meant the role of mediating major powers in East Asia. One professor who advised president Roh claimed that the proposal of balancer worked with the basis of the US-South Korean alliance and yet avoided joining the formation of

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64 Moo Hyun Roh, "Daetongryung Yeonseolmun: Gongkun Sakwan Hakgyo Je 53 Hwae Jolupsik [President's Speech During the 53rd Air Force Academy Commencement]," (Cheong Wa Dae, March 8, 2005). Accessible via http://www.cwd.go.kr. President continued to made similar observations at the National Assembly and the Korea Third Military Academy.
triangular security arrangements with the United States and Japan, which would work as the containment of China.\textsuperscript{65} Government officials affirmed this assertion by stating that the role of balancer meant a mediator in possible conflicts between neighboring countries, namely, Japan and China.\textsuperscript{66}

As soon as publicized, the balancer comment generated a vast range of debates inside as well as outside Korea. Especially, conservatives in South Korea felt uneasy about this word. For instance, the Grand National Party leader Park Geun Hye mentioned that the balancer argument could gainsay the spirit of the US-South Korean alliance and generate challenges to the alliance relationship with America.\textsuperscript{67} She continued to claim that the word could imply that South Korea would take a neutral position and alienate the United States. Others argued that South Korea’s role as a balancer could make an impression that the ROK was leaning toward China by distancing itself from its long-time ally, America and Japan.\textsuperscript{68} Still others pointed out that this proposal would merely contradict South Korea’s current security relations with

\textsuperscript{65} Chung-In Moon, "Dongbukah Gyoonghyonngjaron Ganunghada, Soft Power Ui Yebangjok Oigyo Rahmyon [Balancer Is Possible If It Is Based on Soft Power]," \textit{Next} 20 (June 2005): 5 and 9.


the United States.\textsuperscript{69}

Responses from Japan were not friendly. Japan made negative analyses on the Roh’s speech, feeling that the comment disregarded the Japanese position. For instance, one Japanese newspaper reported, “Doubts will cast on what the United States-South Korea alliance really is.”\textsuperscript{70} One Japanese expert stated that South Korea could not play a role as a balancer in East Asia simply because it did not have enough capability to support this role. He also mentioned that the intention of Roh’s balancer announcement was simply being close to China.\textsuperscript{71}

The balancer comment intensified the estrangement between Japan and South Korea, for these two countries already had serious troubles in dealing with history and territorial disputes. Because of Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni Shrine and the Japanese claim for Tokdo/Dakeshima islet, the South Korean government made official protests and cancelled the meetings with the Japanese counterparts. At the end of March, Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi mentioned that Japan could no longer share intelligence with South Korea because Washington did not trust Seoul any more.\textsuperscript{72}

\begin{flushleft}


\textsuperscript{71} "The End of Korea-Japanese Friendship?," \textit{Chosun Ilbo}, March 31 2005.

\textsuperscript{72} Sang-hun Choe, "Comments by a Tokyo Diplomat Miff Seoul," \textit{International Herald Tribune}, March 27 2005. Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi also added, “The United States and Japan stand to the right, and China and North Korea to the left. South Korea appears to be moving from the center to the left.”
\end{flushleft}
On the other hand, China welcomed the statement. Chinese Ambassador in Seoul expressed that China supported South Korea’s role as a balancer in Northeast Asia, although he said “It is not clear as to how the balancer role will work.” According to People’s daily, South Korea’s role as a balancer seemed lack of theoretical discourse, but “The comment of balancer indeed reflects the new diplomatic idea” of the current South Korean government.

While debates over ROK’s role as a balancer continued, government officials in South Korea made friendly remarks on China. South Korean Minister of National Defense Yoon Gwang-woong, who visited Beijing in April 2005, made an announcement that Seoul should ratchet up military cooperation with China as much as it had with Japan. In line with this improvement, the MND announced that the government would expand military exchanges with the PRC, through building naval and aerial communication hotlines and conducting search-and-rescue cooperation at the Yellow Sea, the ocean between the Korean peninsula and China.

Changes in the US Strategy and South Korea’s Response

South Korea’s policies in dealing with key issues in the alliance with the United States were contingent on the perception of China. South Korea was resistant on specific issues related to China, while it gave full support for the change of the US

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73 "China Supports South Korea's Balancing Role," The Korea Times, April 6 2005.
74 Walt, Taming American Power: The Global Responses to U.S. Primacy.
strategy in other areas including the war against Iraq and strengthened alliance commitments.

Changes in the US forces

The United States has initiated a comprehensive transformation in its grand strategy in response to more diversified security challenges. Particularly, the military reform of US alliance strategies to East Asia proposed greater flexibility in the US forces. After the launch of George Bush administration, this type of reform became evident. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) in 2001 and the Global Posture Review (GPR) program in 2004 called for improved military capability by reducing the number of ground troops overseas and reinforcing the air and navy forces with increased technology. The reorientation of US forces included “the new combinations of immediately employable forward stationed and deployed forces; expeditionary and forcible entry capabilities; globally available reconnaissance, strike, and command and control assets; information operations; special operations forces; and rapidly deployable, highly lethal and sustainable forces that may come from outside a theater of operations.”

———, "Quadrennial Defense Review Report," (2006), 34. As a result, America began withdrawal of the ground troops in East Asia. Although the ROK government expected the withdrawal of US forces, the size and the timeline of the phase-out came as a grave shock because it happened in the midst of North Korean nuclear crisis. In an original proposal in early 2004, the American side stated that it planned to withdraw 12,500 soldiers, about one-third of the existing USFK, within one and a half year. The United States intended to implement this plan on the basis that the high-tech equipment and the investment of 11 billion dollars in increasing the defense capability of the USFK would compensate for
1. Accommodating China: Strategic Flexibility

The flexibility of the USFK, a necessary task in the new GPR program of America, created painful processes for the two allies. The strategic flexibility meant that the US forces would be involved in tackling regional contingencies which were highly likely to imply clashes in the Taiwan straits.

As predicted in the theory of dyad threat, South Korea has been reluctant to approve this change. South Korea was cautious in making official remarks with respect to the flexibility of the USFK. While the South Korean government expressed its understanding of US strategy, it did not give consent publicly. South Korea and the United States could not pronounce their agreement of the GPR program for a few years even after several bilateral defense meetings, including annual Security Consultative Meetings and Security Policy Initiative meetings, taskforces to upgrade the bilateral alliance between the United States and South Korea.

While South Korea and the United States experienced stalemate on the issue of strategic flexibility, President Roh Moo Hyun made brave comments. He noted, “I can clearly say that our people will not get entangled in regional disputes against our will.” In addition, during his meeting with President Bush in June 2005, Roh

the reduction of human resources. However, the ROK claimed that the reform of the USFK needed more years and requested to postpone the time of the withdrawal. Therefore, during the annual Security Consultative Meeting in October 2004, Washington and Seoul reached an agreement to complete the withdrawal of 12,500 US forces by the end of 2008.

77 "President Opposes Role for Usfk in Regional Conflict," The Korea Times, May 9 2005.
suggested that US forces should get an approval by South Korean people when deployed to other regions. Roh’s comments were interpreted as a rejection, which turned the situation worse.

Eventually, after three-year diplomatic turmoil, South Korea and the United States finalized the debate and announced a joint statement during the ministerial level dialogue in January 2006. The statement demonstrated that South Korea agreed with the deployment of the USFK to regional conflicts. However, it also contained a clause that Seoul would not be involved in regional contingencies without the consent of South Korean people. According to interviews that I conducted, the government officials in MND argued that although South Korea agreed with the United States, since the agreement contained vague words about the deployment of the USFK, it would not necessarily work merely for the interest of the United States.78

By contrast, the Japanese move in terms of the flexible role of US forces in the region was clearly supportive for the United States. A moot point was focused on the Japanese military role beyond the Japanese territory.79 Compared with previous years when the Japanese government was reluctant to be involved in regional issues, especially Taiwan, one meeting between United States and Japan revealed changes in Japanese attitudes. After the two plus two meeting in February 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in the United States

78 Author’s interviews with government officials in MND, August 2006.
announced a joint statement with their Japanese counterparts that the security of Taiwan was their common strategic objective. The rhetoric was the first confirmation made by the Japanese government in terms of the Taiwan issue. The response from the Chinese government was furious. The Chinese claimed that the United States and Japan interfered with China’s internal affairs and infringed on its sovereignty.  

2. ROK’s Reluctance to Join the US-Missile Defense System

South Korea’s response to the US missile defense system was important evidence for a cooperative gesture toward China. The previous chapter has shown that although the official position of the ROK government was absent in the early 2000, South Korea proactively avoided making negative comments on the US-led missile defense due to the influence of active China threats. In this period, on the contrary, Seoul returned to negative remarks on the missile defense and emphases on the self-reliant missile defense facilities. Particularly, South Korean officials’ public statements aimed at North Korea and China, which have been criticizing Japan for their research and development of the missile defense programs, in order not to intensify tensions with the two countries. The South Korean government continued to focus on its own military transformation and separated the Korean style missile defense, or KAMD, from the US MD system. Moreover, South Korea defense ministers constantly underlined a point that the ROK was not ready to join the American missile defense because the

United States did not even call for it.  

The remarks of the South Korean government on the missile defense reflected the realist schools of thought. President Roh argued against the US-led missile defense system because it would generate a Cold War style configuration among great powers around the Korean peninsula. The growing coalition between China and Russia, a possible counter-balance against the US-Japan alliance, became obvious in recent years. For instance, after Russia and China signed a treaty on “good neighborly friendship and cooperation” in 2001, their political coalition has aimed at offsetting the hegemonic power of the United States. Furthermore, Russia has transferred military technology and sold advanced missile systems to China. A particularly noticeable development in bilateral relations was that China and Russia began joint military exercises.


82 The formal end of political split between China and Russia occurred in 1989 when President Gorbachev arrived at Beijing during the Tiananmen Square movement. Since then, the development of Russo-Chinese bilateral relations has been accomplished through leaders’ visits and economic and military exchanges. Additionally, Russia transferred weapons technology and sold advanced missile system to China. More importantly, two countries signed military cooperation agreement in 1993 for further technology transfer and arms sales, and announced troop reduction on borders in 1996.


84 In August 2005, Russia and China conducted eight-day joint military exercises with an official purpose of counter-terrorism. The “Peace Mission 2005” was the most extensive joint military operation between Moscow and Beijing in recent years targeted at Central Asia for counter-terrorism. It involved a participation of around 10,000 troops—1,800 Russian and nearly 8,000 Chinese troops and included active beach landing and sea-air deployment. The operational maneuver took place from Russian Far East port of Vladivostok to the Shandong peninsula in Chinese territory which is 3,000 miles away from the Central Asia—the major target of the anti-terrorism exercises, and military specialists become suspicious about the real purpose of Russo-Sino counter-terrorist exercise. South Korean government requested China and Russia to observe these military exercises, and got a rejection from both
Some scholars in the realist schools of thought have acknowledged this trend. Robert Ross has indicated that East Asia is heading toward America-versus-China bipolarity. “While the United States has been expanding its capabilities, China has been conforming to the expectations of balance of power theory. Rather than accommodating U.S. power, Beijing has been seeking security vis-à-vis the United States by mobilizing international and domestic resources to enhance China’s relative power.”  

In terms of external mobilization, since China is incapable of catching up with the US economic and strategic power, it “keeps secure the relations with Russia through cooperation.”  

Avery Goldstein has noted that official alliance targeting the United States is not what both China and Russia want, but the predominance of America provides motives for China to maintain a strategic partnership with Russia.  

A few reports and documents published by government-supported think tanks in Korea pointed out that South Korea’s cooperation with the US missile defense is essential. Some scholars in South Korea have argued that while the Chinese would
oppose this movement, their response might include verbal attacks or criticisms instead of real mobilization against the South Korean government, if Seoul would cooperate with Washington in terms of low-tier systems, which aim at shorter-ranged missiles.\(^8^9\) Considering the case of the Israeli missile defense as a proper example, other scholars in South Korea have recognized the feasibility of the cooperation with Washington in the low-tier missile defense system.\(^9^0\)

Despite the fact that South Korea did not possess a proper defense system against ballistic missiles in neighboring countries and growing Russo-Chinese collaboration, as the theory of dyad threats predicts, the government in Seoul showed reluctance to develop the US-style MD system in this period. The South Korean government deliberately avoided guiding its missile defense program to the direction of collaborating with America. As Table 5-1 shows, South Korea has focused on developing indigenous lower-tier system in order to protect its small territory with a north-south length of about 380 kilometers and an east-east width of 260 kilometers. The low-tier land based systems include the protection of Seoul and its vicinity against

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\(^{8^9}\) Jeon, *Miyil Ui T M D Gusang Gwa Hankuk Ui Chollyakjok Seontaek [T M D Plan of the United States and Japan and South Korea's Strategic Choice]*, 83-84. On the other hand Robert Sutter has pointed out several Chinese responses in response to the TMD development in East Asia. First, China may choose to wait until the US and its alliance really develop the TMD. Second, China may use arms control regime to prevent the development. Third, China may seek an assurance from the United States that the TMD does not target China. Fourth, China may develop its own military technology to destroy the TMD. Finally, Beijing may choose protest using testing missiles. Robert Sutter, G., "C R S Report for Congress: China and U S Missile Defense Proposals: Reactions and Implications," (The Library of Congress, 1999). Accessible via http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rs20031.pdf

the immediate and very short-ranged ballistic missiles, while low-tier sea-based systems protect coastal area. The upper-tier systems, on the other hand, cover medium and long-ranged ballistic missiles targeting South Korea. The fact that South Korea has not developed the upper-tier systems, which ward off ballistic missiles from neighboring countries including China, represents that Seoul wants to limit the goal of the ROK’s MD within the Peninsula. In addition, PAC-2, or patriot missiles, that South Korea purchased from Germany is deployed to target mostly airplanes instead of ballistic missiles flying from neighbors.

However, some pundits still argue that South Korea’s procurement of missile defense can be regarded as its long-term plan to join the American anti-missile system in the end. Although suspicions may exist, the current gesture of South Korea demonstrates that the ROK makes efforts to avoid provoking China by limiting its defense capability within the peninsula.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architecture Class</th>
<th>South Korea’s military procurement as of 2007</th>
<th>America’s military defense requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land-based upper-tier</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>THAAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-based lower-tier</td>
<td>PAC-2  • <em>Protect Seoul and its vicinity</em></td>
<td>PAC-3 with remote launchers at most sites to extend their coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea-based upper-tier</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Aegis SPY-1 Radar and NTW SM-3 (destroy ballistic missiles) • <em>Cannot defend the northern 2/3 of the ROK against the low flying short range ballistic missiles</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea-based lower-tier</td>
<td>3 KDX-3 navy ships with SPY1D (Radar to detect ballistic missiles within 1,000 kilometers) and with SM-2 (destroy aircraft and cruise missiles and probably ballistic missiles) • <em>Cannot defend inland critical assets and population centers</em></td>
<td>Similar to Navy Defense System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PAC: Patriot missiles      SM: Standard missiles
THAAD: Theater High Altitude Area Defense

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3. Support for the US Strategy: The Iraq War

South Korea’s assistance to the United States increased on issues which were not directly related to China. It was because South Korea intended to strengthen alliance relations with the United States due to the influence of the increased North Korea threats. South Korea, therefore, was extremely supportive for the US strategy in

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92 This figure appears in "Report on Congress on Theater Missile Defense Architecture Options for the Asia-Pacific Region," 6.
Iraq.

The ROK’s decision was made by President and his close security advisors. According to president’s announcements, an increased North Korea threat highlighted the importance of the alliance with the United States. Roh said, “When considering the deployment in 2003, I believed that the most significant was the peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula. In the situation where the North Korean nuclear crisis could deteriorate at any moment, I believed that maintaining growing coalitions with the United States was essential.” Roh’s security advisor Lee Jong Seok stated a similar point that an increased major external threat from North Korea was the most influential in the decision.

Grave support by sending troops to Iraq was South Korea’s reassurance to the United States. The left-wing South Korean president decided to dispatch more than 600 non-combat troops including military medics and engineers in 2003, a few months after he took office. It was president Roh’s first task related to the US alliance and his decision was somewhat sensational since many believed that Roh was not likely to approve dispatching troops to Iraq considering his previous unfavorable remarks on the alliance with the United States before he was elected.

93 Author’s interview, December 27, 2006.


Later, the Roh government decided to deploy 3,000 additional troops—this time including combat forces, despite public opposition and political squabbling. His choice left South Korea the third largest contributor to the US-led military coalition in Iraq.\textsuperscript{96}

South Korea maintained approximately 3,600 troops for the operation Iraqi Freedom for a few years and decreased troops to 2,300 by the end of 2006 and to 1,200 in the mid 2007. A complete withdrawal from Iraq was slated by the end of 2007. However, a few months before the end of his presidency, President Roh reversed the plan and extended the date of a complete withdrawal to the end of 2008. In summary, despite domestic oppositions, international imperatives—the nuclear crisis in North Korea—seemed to compel Roh and his advisors with liberal viewpoints to decide to strengthen the alliance commitments instead of ignoring them.

**Alternative Explanation: Domestic Politics**

Some have argued that the alliance policies that the South Korean government had chosen revealed tendencies of anti-America sentiment and accordingly pro-China feelings. This dynamic was accompanied with a political skirmish between the two factions of South Korean elite. One of them was called \textit{Ja-Ju-Pa}, or a group of people, including President Roh Moo Hyun and his close advisors in \textit{Chong Wa Dae}, who focused specifically on strengthening the military capability of South Korea and self-reliant military force and thus were regarded as a anti-America-and-pro-China faction.

\textsuperscript{96} South Korea is the third largest contributor behind the United States and Britain in 2003.
The other was called *Dong-Maeng-Pa*, or a group of conservatives, including lawmakers in the opposite Grand National Party, who emphasized reinforcing the alliance with the United States.

Although President Roh clarified that he valued the US-South Korean alliance, his remarks at times brought about criticisms from the conservative faction that he intended to refute the existing alliance. The conservatives, or *Dong-Maeng-Pa*, made three points. First, Roh’s emphasis on the self-defense capability of South Korea disproved the meaning of the alliance. Second, his reluctance to allow US forces to be employed for a flexible application to the regional conflicts embarrassed the Americans. Lastly, his liberal posture toward North Korea often created complaints from the United States.

Moreover, his emphasis on the transfer of the wartime operational control from America especially generated an opposition of the conservatives and military personnel including former ministers of defense who argued that this move would damage the effective role of US troops in case of wars in Korea. The conservatives claimed that President Roh and his *Ja-Ju-Pa* advisors offended the feeling of American counterparts and eventually left South Korea in the lower priority of US alliance policy to East Asia, compared to Japan whose relations with the United States looked even stronger than before.

The liberal slant of the South Korean government, which contrasted with previous conservative governments, might create disagreements with the United
States. However, South Korea was resistant on some issues, while it gave full support for the change of US strategy and its war against Iraq. The Roh government’s political orientation cannot explain why South Korea’s policy has not been coherent in alliance commitments. For instance, those who argued that Roh Moo Hyun distanced himself from the United States and intensified anti-American sentiment could not explain why the progressive South Korean President sent the third largest troops to Iraq despite oppositions from the public.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented how an increased major threat from North Korea influences South Korea’s behavior toward China. As the hypothesis of dyad threats predicted, despite the growth of Chinese military and economic capability, the ROK government treated China threats as dormant after the second nuclear crisis. Discussions about the China threat did not exist and South Korean leaders simultaneously highlighted the importance of China as leverage to reduce political tensions created by North Korea.

The effect of dormant threats caused South Korea to seek cooperation with the Chinese government. In political relations, the ROK not only engaged in typical

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97 Some has argued that the South Korean Government tried to discourage the United States from considering a military option to deal with the North Korean nuclear crisis. The ROK reportedly threatened the United States by saying that the US military gesture toward Pyongyang would damage the US-ROK alliance.
political interactions with China but also avoided creating problems with Beijing by following Chinese ideas on how to deal with North Korea and by treating China softly with respect to the history issue. South Korea also cancelled a show that the Chinese government might not like. In the economic arena, although their growing interactions did not prove the effect of threat perception, the fact that the South Korean government made efforts in order not to exacerbate the Kimchi problem proved South Korea’s cooperative policy due mostly to the effect of dormant China threats.

Nevertheless, I need to admit that although South Korea’s interactions with China in the economic arena can be regarded as cooperative policy, the economic sphere may still pose the greatest challenge to the theory of dyad threats. It is difficult to point out how South Korea becomes more cooperative to China than before if I look merely at the continuous expansion in bilateral trade and investment. In order to deal with this problem, I have looked at the Kimchi clash that South Korea initiated and compared it with the incident related to the garlic dispute discussed in the previous chapter.

In terms of security, the fact that South Korean president Roh Moo Hyun made an announcement on “balancer” made people think that South Korea cared too much about China. In dealing with alliance relations with the United States, South Korea’s policy was unfolded in two directions. First, it supported the United States by sending troops to Iraq and was willing to accept the reduction of the USFK. South Korea felt relatively easy in strengthening alliance commitments on issues which were not directly
related to China. Second, the ROK revealed its unwillingness to agree with the flexibility of the USFK to be deployed to regional conflicts that might include China-Taiwan clash. In terms of the US missile defense system, South Korea had been pursuing lower-tiered missile defense system based on the “Korean-style” program in order not to provoke China. However, the fact that South Korea’s lower-tier missile system was compatible with the US MD system still caused suspicions to military strategists in neighboring countries. In order to dispel the suspicions, Seoul confirmed its position again that it would not join the US anti-missile program.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explored the concept of dyad threats to explain the policies of South Korea toward the People’s Republic of China in the post Cold War era. I have suggested a model which explains how states differentiate dyad threats, and how this differentiation influences the range of state behaviors between balancing and bandwagoning. Consequently, the model’s hypotheses have been tested in empirical cases.

The conclusion is divided into three parts. The first presents the summaries on the new theory of dyad threats and its application to empirical studies. The second assesses potential critiques and problems that may be leveled at my dissertation. The final section discusses policy implications for the United States, followed by an assessment on the new theory.

Summary of Theory and Empirical Studies

Summary of the Analysis of Dyad Threats

This dissertation has introduced a theoretical framework to understand how
states differentiate threats and the policies that follow from the threat perceptions. I model this analysis by focusing on dyad threats where one state faces a pair of adversarial threats, which forge their own security coalition.

In contrast to realism, which merely tells us that states behave against threats, I look at the processes how states differentiate dyad threats and identify them as major and minor threats. Distinguishing major threats from minor threats is based on three factors: the challenge of leaderships, the use of offensive capability, and geography. Major threats usually attempt to overthrow the government and use their offensive capability of achieving this goal. In addition, major threats are proximate threats which make their offense advantageous. On the other hand, minor threats do not attempt to topple the government and thus they do not employ offensive weapons. Moreover, minor threats are remote threats which make their offense disadvantageous.

Major and minor threats are alliance partners and linked to each other. The former influences the status of the latter in the context of dynamic interactions between alliance partners. Increased provocations from a major threat bring out the importance of a role that a minor threat can play in constraining the major threat. Therefore, if a given state believes that its minor threat has a constraining power over the major threat, the above state perceives the minor threat as dormant. The reason is that the usefulness of the minor threat to restrain the major threat offsets the risks coming from the minor threats.

On the other hand, if a state believes that its minor threat does not have a
constraining power over the major threat, the minor threat is perceived as active. Since the minor threat cannot exercise restraint over the major threat, the state recognizes the existence of the minor threat. Finally, a decreased major threat also compels the state to consider the minor threat active because the constraining role of the minor threat is not as useful as it is with an increased major threat.

As a result, policies are chosen toward dyad threats. In response to the major threat and the dormant minor threat, the state chooses a combined strategy of deterrence against the former and accommodation toward the latter. In response to the major threat and the active minor threat, the state employs a combined strategy of deterrence against the former and soft-balancing against the latter.

There are five valuable points in the theory of dyad threats. First, the new theory of dyad threats fills the void in existing literature on threat perception. Balance of threat theory explains how states identify external threats and focuses on the greatest threats, while ignoring the existence of other types of threats. The dyad threat framework, however, recognizes that identifying major threats is automatically related to discerning minor threats. That is, once states identify major threats, other types of threats become minor. Hence, the new theory maintains that the process of differentiating external threats demonstrates that major and minor threats are inter-related.

Second, because the dyad threats theory highlights the importance of recognizing the existence of minor threats, it expands our understanding of threat
perception. Because major and minor threats are inter-related, shifts in major threats change the status of minor threats. This is not a phenomenon that balance of threat theory can predict. In particular, current literature on balance of threat cannot explain the dormant status of a minor threat. Existing literature on threat perception acknowledges potential threats, but never expects to see the dormant status of threat perception.

Third, differentiating dyad threats is a critical and necessary procedure. The process helps us understand the reason why states choose different policies in dealing with dyad threats. This fills the hole in current literature on balance of power and balance of threat. Because both balance of power and balance of threat theories tell us that alliances reinforce each member’s material capability, they maintain that the state, which confronts dyad threats, chooses a single strategy of balancing. They cannot explain bifurcated behaviors toward coalesced external threats. The theory of dyad threat, however, offers a range of balancing behaviors that states employ vis-à-vis dyad threats.

Fourth, the process of threat differentiation is useful in making policies. Since balancing requires much wealth, states can avoid overspending available resources by aiming deterrence merely at major threats. On the other hand, how to deal with minor threats hinges on the usefulness of their capability of constraining the major threats. If minor threats can restrain major threats, they can alleviate tensions increased by major threats.
Lastly, the analysis of dyad threats can explain a phenomenon where threat perception changes not because of material capability and intention but because of relative shifts of threat perception. It is also able to explain a possible situation where states modify their policies even when key factors that constitute external threats are constant.

**Summary of Empirical Studies**

Two hypotheses based on the argument of dyad threats have been tested in three empirical cases on South Korea. Relying on the logic of dyad threats, I hypothesize that South Korea’s perception of North Korea threats is interconnected with how Seoul perceives China threats. Consequently, relative shifts in South Korea’s threat perception of Pyongyang and Beijing impact the ROK’s policy to China. As a result, the first case has examined South Korea’s accommodation (cooperative approach) between 1992 and 1999. The second case has explored Seoul’s soft-balancing in 2000-2002. The third case has dealt with ROK’s accommodation (cooperative policy) from 2003 to 2007. Table 6-1 below includes the result of case studies.
Table 6-1  South Korea’s Policy to China from 1992 to the 2000s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SOUTH KOREA’S THREAT PERCEPTION</th>
<th>SOUTH KOREA’S POLICY TO CHINA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N. KOREA THREATS</td>
<td>CHINA THREATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1999</td>
<td>Increased (1st Nuclear crisis and continual provocations)</td>
<td>Dormant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2002</td>
<td>Decreased (North-South summit and diminished concerns on nuclear program)</td>
<td>Active (Particularly obvious in the economic field)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2007</td>
<td>Increased (2nd Nuclear crisis and continual provocations)</td>
<td>Dormant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceived Threats from North Korea

Although having accomplished economic superiority to North Korea, South Korea perceived grave military threats from Pyongyang. The North continued to challenge the South Korean government and to intimidate the public, by deploying a growing number of conventional weapons including tanks and artilleries near the DMZ, aimed at the capital of South Korea. If launched, the conventional weapons near the border would be able to destroy Seoul and major adjacent cities in several minutes.

More importantly, the South then faced nuclear threats from North Korea. According to case studies, how South Korea interpreted North Korea threats was tied closely with North Korea’s nuclear programs. Nuclear crises increased existing threats from Pyongyang in periods of 1992-1999 and 2003-2007. During the periods, South Korea discerned nuclear threats from the North. Between 2000 and 2002, however, South Korea perceived a relative decrease in North Korea threats due to the North-
Perceived Threats from China

The South Korean government believed that China had valuable leverage over the North. South Korean Defense White Papers, for instance, noted that the Chinese had prevented the North Korean leadership from waging wars in the Korean peninsula. Based on my analysis on various newspapers, Seoul emphasized the constraining role of Beijing over Pyongyang especially when it perceived increased threats from North Korea. Chinese threats, therefore, were latent particularly during the North Korean nuclear crises from 1992 to 1999 and from 2003 to 2007.

On the other hand, the second case showed that between 2000 and 2002 North Korea threats decreased for a short period of time. Accordingly, South Korea deemphasized the leverage of the Chinese government over North Korea and thus perceived active China threats. South Korea’s concerns over China were revealed, particularly aiming at the growing economic prowess of China.

The Policies of South Korea toward China

The first case has tested the first hypothesis. If a state perceives an increased major threat, it treats a minor threat as dormant and thus adopts accommodation toward the minor threat. The period between 1992 and 1999 has proved this hypothesis. When Pyongyang walked out from the NPT and engaged in nuclear brinkmanship, South
Korea perceived increased threats from North Korea. The China threat was dormant, which caused South Korea to accommodate the PRC. Seoul increased economic, political and security interactions and proactively avoided frictions with China. South Korea initiated investment in building nuclear energy plants in China and transferred skills and technology. The South Korean leader sought a political coalition with the Chinese counterpart with respect to the issue of history distortion by Japan. Moreover, South Korea opposed joining the US-led missile defense system which was allegedly aimed at ballistic missiles in China. Even opportunities were rejected that were in South Korea’s interests. While experiencing the financial debacle, the ROK government declined a tempting offer from Taiwan which promised to provide financial assistance.

The second case has examined the second hypothesis of dyad threat that a decreased major threat makes a minor threat active and thus causes soft-balancing against the minor threat. The period of 2000-2002 has confirmed the hypothesis. Soon after the 2000 North-South summit meeting alleviated North Korea threats in the Korean society, South Korea evinced concerns over China particularly in the economic arena. Although ROK did not clearly designate China as military threats, a careful examination on comments by the South Korean politicians revealed that South Korea might be worried about China’s military capability.

As a result, South Korea was not afraid of choosing policies that might strain bilateral relations with the Chinese government. In terms of economic relations, Seoul
levied a safeguard on Chinese garlic on the ground that Chinese garlic imported to South Korea decreased the price of garlic in the South Korean market. The ROK opted out an option of cooperating with China in criticizing Japan for the distortion of history. In addition, the South Korean government defied China and made a few attempts to invite Dalai Lama, which only engendered acute criticisms from the Chinese government. In terms of security, a tough gesture employed by South Korea did not target China directly but it was related to the US-ROK alliance. That is, South Korea seemed more willing to make commitments to its alliance partner. In contrast to the first case, South Korea was reluctant to reveal an opposition against the TMD program.

The third case has tested the first hypothesis again. It has discovered the process of perceiving an increased major threat and a dormant minor threat. Consequently, the process of threat differentiation creates an accommodation policy toward the minor threat. The third case which has examined a period of 2003-2007 has proved the hypothesis. The revival of the nuclear crisis in the Korean peninsula heightened threats from Pyongyang. South Korea immediately believed that the role of China was valuable to serve its interests in reducing tensions in the peninsula. As a result, South Korean leaders resumed emphasizing the positive side in the Chinese economy.

The hypothesis on dyad threats can explain ROK’s cooperative gestures and its avoidance of frictions with China during the period of 2003-2007. The third case has examined how the ROK dealt with problems with China and avoided damaging bilateral relationship. In particular, in terms of historical disputes with China over Koguryo, the
ROK government adopted a soft stance. Seoul was extremely careful about making negative comments on the Chinese government. South Korean government officials stressed that the problem should be solved by scholarly research instead of the governments of the two Asian countries.

In the economic arena, the South Korean government made efforts to reduce anger of the South Korean public after having troubles with China on trade issues. The Republic also provided “Market Economy Status” for China in order to improve trade. Finally, South Korea’s policy in the security field was complex. As predicted in the analysis of dyad threats, South Korea showed reluctance to support US alliance policies on issues related directly to the PRC. On the other hand, the ROK strengthened its commitments to the alliance in terms of issues that were not related to China. For instance, South Korea sent out the third largest troops in Iraq because of the influence of increased North Korea threats and dormant China threats.

**Critiques and Other Arguments**

This section presents possible critiques that may be leveled at my dissertation. There are four problems to discuss. The first has to do with the interpretation of North Korea threats. One may argue that North Korea threats have gradually decreased since the end of the Cold War. The gap of material capability between the North and the South has been growing and the South Korean society has made a fundamental
transformation in interpreting North Korea.\(^1\) South Koreans may no longer hold views that the relationship with the North is a zero-sum competition. More importantly, economic cooperation between Pyongyang and Seoul has expanded in recent years. Thus, a growing number of South Korean people espouse the concept of economic cooperation with Pyongyang instead of confrontation.

This assessment may challenge my argument in two ways. First, it counters my argument that North Korea threats fluctuate. Second, it contradicts my argument that South Korea has chosen deterrence against its major threat, North Korea. In terms of how to perceive North Korea threats, I admit that more and more South Korean people hold decreased threat perception toward Pyongyang than before. Nevertheless, based on my case studies, I argue that nuclear threats from North Korea are not something that can be offset by the gap of economic and military capability between North and South Korea. In other words, although South Korea has stronger economic capacity and better military technology than North Korea, the ROK still perceives a major threat from North Korea. Defense white papers still recognize that Pyongyang continues to be engaged in provocative attempts to topple the South Korean government.

Moreover, the Roh Moo Hyun government, deemed as the most liberal and progressive leadership in Korean history, revealed concerns over grave nuclear threats

\(^1\) For intensive analyses on the military capability of North and South Korea, see Taik-young Hamm, *Arming the Two Koreas: State, Capital and Military Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999). Hamm argues that there exists an ‘asymmetric military balance’ between the two Koreas. The North has achieved conventional and non-conventional war fighting capabilities which offset the South’s superiority in conventional weapon systems strengthened by Seoul’s investment and US support.
from North Korea after the second nuclear crisis. In addition, while South Koreans, especially the younger generation, showed positive attitudes toward North Korea, the majority of population still perceives the greatest threats from North Korea.

The second criticism is concerned with the possibility of multiple threats. Some may argue that South Korea faces threats not only from North Korea and China but also from the United States and Japan. Growing anti-American sentiment and constant anti-Japanese feelings in the South Korean society may imply that South Korea confronts multiple threats from neighboring powers. I do not disagree with this assessment. The fate of the Korean peninsula has been described as a shrimp among whales. For instance, in the early 1900s the Korean peninsula became the battle field of great powers.

I argue that anti-Americanism and anti-Japanese feelings are a by-product of the structure. The unique situation of South Korea which has been surrounded by multiple great powers compels Korea to fight against any types of influence from external powers. This, however, does not disprove the application of dyad threats. Compared to South Korean sentiment against the United States and Japan, Chinese threats are still understated in South Korea, despite the fact that key structural factors may make China constitute a grave threat. This is because China threats are connected to the existence of North Korea threats and my dissertation explains the reason and the consequence of this phenomenon.

Third, there may be more explanatory variables other than the dyad threats
theory. For instance, in assessing the first empirical case, one cannot ignore the influence of the structural factor: the end of the Cold War and the normalization of bilateral relations between South Korea and China. There is no denying that without the help of the structural factor, Seoul and Beijing could not have an opportunity to improve relations. The end of the Cold War truly provided a momentum for the ROK to cooperate with China and growing interactions in this period reflected the honeymoon period after the normalization. Nevertheless, because the influence of the structural factor has been constant between 1992 and 2007, it cannot explain why South Korea took a strategy of soft-balancing toward China during the period of 2000-2002.

In the second empirical case, domestic politics may work as an intervening variable to account specifically for South Korea’s economic sanction on Chinese garlic. The South Korean government and the ruling party took a tough position because they wanted to secure votes from farmers for the upcoming general election of National Assembly members. Indeed, domestic politics may serve as a helpful condition to understand specific timing because imposing sanctions on Chinese garlic occurred right before the election was held.

Nevertheless, this does not disprove the logic of dyad threats. I argue that domestic imperatives, especially negative ones, are influential on the process of policy making in South Korea only when threats from North Korea are mitigated and the Republic feels less worried about having tensions with the Chinese government. Since the government in South Korea has received consistently growing complaints from
general population in recent years, the point where the negative side comes up should depend on the structural factor, or the threat perception of South Korea toward North Korea and China. Based on this analysis, one can extrapolate that in cases on South Korea’s policies toward the PRC, the pressure of domestic politics is submissive to new explanatory variables proposed by the argument of dyad threats.

Lastly, one may challenge the logic of my case selection and interpret cases presented in my dissertation in a different way. According to this argument, bilateral relations between South Korea and China have improved consistently; while there are also growing pains that will negatively influence bilateral relations. In addition, since problems in bilateral relations grow gradually, one may be able to find more frictions between South Korea and China in the third case which has examined the cooperative policy of South Korea toward China. Therefore, my case studies are problematic in interpreting data because the third case, which examines South Korea’s cooperation, in fact demonstrates more problems in bilateral relations than previous years.

I argue that people, who emphasize the consistent growth of frictions in Sino-South Korean relationship, fail to point out when and why South Korea and China have troubles. My analysis, however, delineates the point when South Korea becomes tough in dealing with China and the reason why it does so. Secondly, I do not disagree with the assessment that Seoul and Beijing have growing problems in recent years. However, previous works, by analyzing growing difficulties in the Sino-South Korean relations, failed to make coherent analyses on the variance of bilateral relations. I argue that
examining how South Korea deals with problems with China may be more useful than looking merely at bilateral relations. I do not argue that the policy of South Korea is not interlinked with bilateral relations with China. Instead, my dissertation is able to provide a better analysis to understand dynamic interactions of two Asian countries by placing the focus on South Korea’s behavior.

**Policy Implications**

Based on the assessment of my theory and the result of empirical studies, this section discusses policy implications. First, since South Korea’s perception of China threats is interconnected with North Korea threats, ROK’s policy options in dealing with the alliance with the United States may be complex. With an increased North Korea threat, South Korea will increase deterrence against the North and strengthen its commitments in the alliance with the United States. Simultaneously, since China threats are dormant, South Korea will be reluctant to support US plans for any types of policies to deter China. The behavior of South Korea, therefore, may confuse American policymakers.

As realism predicts, the United States expects that South Korea will tighten the alliance when the North Korea threat is high. However, the reality shows that South Korea has distanced itself from America when the threat from North Korea has decreased, while it has strengthened the alliance commitments when the threat from
North Korea has increased. The theory of dyad threats explains this puzzling behavior. South Korea does so because it differentiates the North Korea threat from the China threat and the differentiation between these threats influences the behavior of South Korea.

Second, especially in recent years, South Korea has emphasized its self-defense despite the alliance with the United States. This has also led American policy makers to worry about the alliance. As South Korean leaders have clearly pointed out, the meaning of self-defense does not imply that South Korea will disprove the alliance with the United States. An analysis based on the dyad threat has demonstrated that South Korea emphasizes the argument on self-defense when it perceives increased North Korea threats and dormant China threats. Self-defense means that South Korea focuses on building up its military capability more because of the increased North Korea threats. Simultaneously, the remarks also aim at reducing suspicions held by China that the alliance between the United States and South Korea may be transformed against China. Therefore, South Korea pays more attention to the plan of self-defense when North Korea threats increase and China threats become dormant. Conversely, South Korea’s effort for the self-defense becomes less obvious when the Republic perceives decreased North Korea threats and active China threats.

Third, the new theory predicts that the United States will get more cooperation from the ROK when North Korea threats decrease and China threats are active. In this scenario, South Korea will be willing to make adjustment to the United States even if it
means deterrence against China. Conversely, America will get less cooperation from South Korea when threats from North Korea increase and China threats become dormant. In this case, South Korea will focus on its self-defense and will be less willing to commit itself to alliance policies targeting China.

Fourth, within the context of increased North Korea threats and dormant China threats, if the United States pushes South Korea in transforming the alliance to the direction of managing regional contentions too fast, Seoul is likely to be resistant to the United States. This may ignite frictions between alliance partners and cause damages in alliance relations. Instead, Washington needs to make a gradual move in improving the US-ROK alliance for dealing with key tasks in the East Asian region. Washington can draw an agreement with the South Korean government, while keeping it in private and not clarifying it in public for the time being. On the other hand, since South Korea is more willing to support the United States in regions other than East Asia, the United States may be able to call for more responsibility that South Korea can take in alliance missions in Africa and Middle East.

Fifth, South Korea regards North Korea as its major threats while treating China as minor threats. This unique situation helps the cohesiveness of the US-ROK alliance particularly when South Korea perceives decreased North Korea threats and active China threats. With active China threats, South Korea strengthens its alliance commitments and becomes less reluctant to the transformation of the alliance to deal with East Asian regional tasks. However, decreased North Korea threats and active
China threats are an abnormal situation and may rarely occur. South Korea’s unique interpretation of threats from North Korea and China, therefore, means that Washington and Seoul may have more troubles in improving the alliance if the transformation is made based merely on the current status of threat perception. Therefore, it is a necessary task for the United States to work with South Korea in order to restore common grounds that hold the alliance intact, instead of placing the focus of the alliance merely on enemies. This can also help the alliance survive even when the North Korean regime no longer exists or when a new unified government occurs in the Korean peninsula.

**Conclusion: Dyad Threats and International Relations Theory**

I present a few final thoughts regarding my theory on dyad threats and its implications in the field of international relations. First, the dyad threats argument is a relatively new theoretical analysis. It explains a situation where a given state deals with a pair of adversaries which form their own alliance. An assessment based on realist schools of thought fails to provide a proper account for the above situation. Realism purports that a proper response to the alliance, composed of adversaries, is balancing. Balancing behavior, however, is a nebulous idea. In order to remedy this problem, I provide a refined version of theory to deal with the situation and offer better responses to deal with adversarial threats.
Second, differentiating dyad threats is an important feature in the new theory. Previous works about threat perception presume that states recognize the major threat, while most of them do not clarify how states do so. The new theoretical analysis offers an explanation for a better understanding of the necessary process in threat differentiation. Differentiating threats, however, does not necessarily mean that states always succeed in differentiating threats. States may not be able to differentiate dyad threats in a certain occasion when these threats conduct similar attempts to challenge their adversarial governments, as I have mentioned in the theory chapter.

Third, dyad threats examine how adversaries deal with their alliance partners. Existing works on alliances explore the interactions among alliance partners, while they do not apply this logic to explain external threats that may forge an alliance with others. The theory of dyad threats demonstrates that looking at how external threats interact with their own alliance partners is important because it constitutes the process of differentiating external threats and eventually influences policies employed toward these threats.
[Appendix A-1] Number of “North Korea Threats” Discussions in South Korean newspaper editorials

[Appendix A-2] Number of Discussions on the Chinese important role with respect to issues on North Korea in South Korean newspaper editorials
[Appendix A-3] Number of discussions on North Korea threats and Chinese influence on North Korean issues in Korean newspapers editorials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of discussions on North Korea threats</th>
<th>Number of discussions about Chinese influence on North Korean issues</th>
<th>Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>SK*-CHN Normalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nuclear crisis/ NK missile test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Nuclear crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>NK vessels crossed NLL**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NK missile test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>North-South Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NK-SK West sea skirmish***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nuclear crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nuclear crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nuclear crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>NK Nuclear weapons test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* SK: South Korea, NK: North Korea, CHN: China  
** NLL: Northern Limits Line or the border in the sea  
*** NK-SK West sea skirmish: North Korea and South Korea had about 30 minutes skirmish in the West sea when a North Korean warship crossed the NLL and fired at a South Korean navy ship nearby.  
Source: This table in this page and two graphs in the previous page are compiled from 14 South Korean newspapers: Dong-A Ilbo, Hankuk Ilbo, Kyunghyang Shinmun, Seoul Ilbo, Moonhwa Ilbo, Hankukkyungche Shinmun, Maeilkyungche Shinmun, Segye Ilbo, Kookmin Ilbo, Hankyoreh, Naeil Shinmun, Herald Kyungche, Seoul Kyungche and Financial News
## North Korea’s Nuclear Threat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Worried</th>
<th>Not worried</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>Kyeonghyang Shinmun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Segye Ilbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Hankuk Ilbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>Dong-A Ilbo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Possibility for North Korea to wage war or provocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Do you think there is a possibility of war in the Korean peninsula?</td>
<td>Korean Overseas Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Do you think the possibility of war in the Korean peninsula is gone?</td>
<td>Dong-A Ilbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Unification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unification is the must</th>
<th>Should be Cautious</th>
<th>Survey Institute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>Sejong Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>Chicago Council on Foreign Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unification is possible (Dong-A Ilbo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Public Preference between China and the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chose China (%)</th>
<th>Chose America (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006*</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Public Opinion on China and the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chose China (%)</th>
<th>Chose America (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 This table is compiled with two sources. For the data result between 1996 to 2000, see Chung, “South Korea between Eagle and Dragon: Perceptual Ambivalence and Strategic Dilemma,” 785. For 2006 data, see a Global Survey conducted by East Asia Institute in Korea and Chicago Council on Global Affairs in 2006. Partial information is available in “Dong Asia Yon, Mikwan Kongdong Chilkaekuk Chosa [Survey on the Public Opinion in Seven Countries Conducted by East Asia Institute and Chicago Council on Global Affairs],” *Jungang Ilbo*, December 13, 2006.

2 For 2005 data, see Hyun Ho Seok, ed., *Hankuk Jonghap Sahwae Chosa 2005 [Korean General Social Survey 2005]*. For 2006 data, see Korean Institute for Defense Analysis Survey, April 2006. 2005 question was “which country do you feel the most friendly?” 2006 question was “which country is the most helpful for South Korea?” * A 2006 survey was not a choice between America and China. Instead, the number represented a preference level out of one hundred full scales that respondents.
### South Korea’s Export Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number 1</th>
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<th>Number 3</th>
<th>Number 4</th>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>America</td>
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<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
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</tr>
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## Appendix B-2  South Korea’s Import Partner

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Number 1</th>
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<th>Number 3</th>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>America</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>China</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>America</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>America</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>America</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>America</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>America</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>America</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Arab E</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>Arab E</td>
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<td>China</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>America</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Appendix B-3] South Korea’s Trade with China
Million Dollars

ROK’s Export to America, China and Japan

Million Dollars

ROK’s Import from America, China and Japan

Source: Figures are based on the data in the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). Accessible via http://www.kita.org/
[Appendix B-5] South Korea’s Investment to China and the United States
Million Dollars

Source: This figure is based on the data available in the Korea Exim Bank. Accessible via http://www.koreaexim.go.kr/
[Appendix B-6] South Korea’s Official Development Assistance to China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (Thousand US Dollars)</th>
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<td>305</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>153</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>537</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2,296</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>4,047</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,755</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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Source: This figure is based on the data available in the Korea Exim Bank. Accessible via http://www.koreaexim.go.kr/
[Appendix C] A comparison of military expenditure in South Korea and China

Source: Data gathered in the National Bureau of Asia Research, http://www.nbr.org
### [Appendix D-1] Foreign Ministers’ Meetings, 1992-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ROK Foreign Ministers to China</th>
<th>Chinese Foreign Ministers to ROK</th>
<th>Meetings in Third Countries**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Lee Sang Ok</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Han Sung Joo</td>
<td>Qian Qi Chen</td>
<td>Paris, Bangkok, Singapore, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>*Han Sung Joo</td>
<td>June Han Sung Joo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Kong Roh Myung</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Yoo Chong Ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Park Jung Soo</td>
<td>*Hong Soon Young</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tang Jia Xuan</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Lee Jung Bin</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Choi Sung Hong</td>
<td>Tang Jia Xuan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Yoon Young Kwan</td>
<td>*Yoon Young Kwan</td>
<td>Li Zhao Xing</td>
</tr>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Ban Ki Moon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ban Ki Moon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Ban Ki Moon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur, Helsinki</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Foreign ministers had meetings with Chinese counterparts during the South Korean leaders’ state visits to China

** This does not include ministerial meetings that happened during the UN, ASEAN, ASEM and APEC annual meetings.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ROK President to China</th>
<th>Chinese President to ROK</th>
<th>Other Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Roh Tae Woo for a state visit (The Chinese call official visit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>(Leader Change)</td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Kim Young Sam for a state visit</td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jiang Ze Min for a state visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>(Leader Change) Kim Dae Jung for a state visit</td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC, UN</td>
</tr>
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<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Leader Change)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>(Leader Change) Roh Moo Hyun for a state visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>APEC, ASEAN +3</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<td>Hu Jin Tao for a state visit and the APEC Meeting*</td>
<td>APEC in ROK Moscow Meeting (May 9)</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Roh Moo Hyun for a working visit</td>
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<td>APEC</td>
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</table>

* Chinese President Hu Jin Tao visited North Korea before he came to Pusan, South Korea in order to attend the APEC meeting.

Source: This table is made based on the data available in the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Beijing, China. Accessible via [http://www.koreaemb.org.cn/](http://www.koreaemb.org.cn/) I have also examined the website of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessible via [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/).
[Appendix E-1] Number of Occasions in Educational Exchange of Military Personnel

<table>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number in the table does not represent the number of people. Instead, it means the number of occurrences. This table is based on the data provided by the ROK Ministry of Defense upon author’s request.
## Appendix E-2 Exchange of Military Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>South Koreans’ Visit to PRC</th>
<th>Chinese Visit to ROK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Along with President’s state visit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Along with President’s state visit) Head of policy and public affairs division of MND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Assistant defense minister for policy</td>
<td>Chief of foreign affairs bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Director of policy and public affairs division of MND Assistant vice defense minister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Assistant vice defense minister for policy Vice defense minister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Director general of the MND policy planning bureau</td>
<td>Deputy chief of the general staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td><strong>Minister of national defense</strong> Director of policy and public affairs division of MND Director general of the MND policy planning bureau</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chief of Naval Operations</td>
<td><strong>Defense minister</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Army chief of staff <strong>Minister of national defense</strong></td>
<td>Commander of Air force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Air force chief of the general staff President of Korea national defense university Vice minister of national defense</td>
<td>President of defense university Political Commissar of Jinan military command Chief of the general staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Director of policy and public affairs division of MND</td>
<td>Deputy chief of the general staff Vice president of defense university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>President of Korea national defense university Chief of naval operations Assistant defense minister for policy</td>
<td>Shenyang military Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td><strong>Minister of National Defense</strong> Air force chief of the general staff Commanding general of defense security command</td>
<td>Commander of Guangzhou military command State security minister</td>
</tr>
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</table>

This table is compiled with report from newspapers and public announcements in the Ministry of National Defense.


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