



Background

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THE KOREAN PENINSULA MILITARY BALANCE

INTRODUCTION

In mid-April 1983,¹ defense chiefs from the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) convened at Fort McNair in Washington for the 15th annual U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting. They discussed the growing North Korean military threat to South Korea, force modernization programs of the U.S. and the ROK, U.S. security assistance, and the activities of the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command (CFC).

Earlier this year, the gravity of the North Korean threat was well illustrated with the defection of North Korean Air Force Captain, Lee Ung-pyong. In a news conference upon landing in the South, Lee disclosed that the communist regime of 71-year-old Kim Il-sung was systematically preparing for an invasion of the South. "The final step before triggering war,"² is how Captain Lee described it.

How valid Lee's warning is may be questioned. What cannot be disputed, however, is North Korea's growing capability to launch such an attack at very short notice. North Korea's continuous expansion and modernization of its offensive military capabilities over the past two decades far exceeds any reasonable defensive requirements. By nearly every measurable factor of combat strength,

¹ April 14-15, 1983. On Wednesday, April 13th, the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. and the ROK--Gen. John W. Vessey and Gen. Kim Yoon-ho--chaired the 5th annual Military Committee Meeting (MCM). The MCM, formed in 1978, is the executive body that provides policy guidance and strategic direction to the CFC.

² On March 4, 1983, a lengthy press conference was held at the Sejong Cultural Hall (Seoul) in which Capt. Lee elaborated upon conditions in North Korea and the preparations being undertaken for an invasion of the South. Details are reported in FBIS, Daily Report (Asia & Pacific), 7 March 1983, pp. E1-E8.

the North maintains today a significant numerical advantage over the South. This buildup has been accompanied by strident rhetoric and persistent hostility toward the ROK. The major deterrents to an invasion from the North have been the qualitative superiority of ROK forces, the solidly anti-communist commitment of the more than 39 million South Koreans and the close relationship between the United States and South Korea, cemented by the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty and the presence of 39,000 American soldiers on ROK soil.

Despite the alarming buildup of North Korea's arsenal and escalation of its rhetoric, the U.S. Congress and Reagan Administration have yet to acknowledge--as U.S. defense and intelligence officials have--the serious military imbalance on the peninsula and the threat that this poses to strategically crucial Northeast Asia. As a first step, the Administration should determine and report to Congress "what it would require in the way of ROK defense outlays and U.S. aid to close the gap between North and South Korean military capabilities over a specific period of time."³ In the meantime, the U.S. should continue upgrading the American forces deployed in South Korea, and Congress should approve the Administration's FY 1983 supplemental request for \$70 million and the FY 1984 request for \$230 million in Foreign Military Sales (FMS) guaranteed credits to the Republic of Korea.

South Korea likewise must look hard at the threat from the North. Seoul must determine whether its present force structures and modernization programs are well suited to meet the offensive challenge from Pyongyang. American and Korean planners, meanwhile, must decide how to counter the 100,000-strong North Korean commando force.

Japan also must reassess the situation on the Korean Peninsula and redefine its role in the defense of South Korea. The challenge posed by North Korea is a threat not only to the South, but ultimately to the national security interests of both Japan and the United States.

THE VIEW FROM PYONGYANG

Since the end of World War II, the Korean Peninsula has been artificially divided between the Republic of Korea in the South and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North. While the government and people of the South tacitly accept the division as real and acknowledge the existence of "two Koreas," there is no such acceptance or acknowledgement in the North. North Korea, in fact, is today ruled by the same man who started the Korean war in 1950. He perceives his and the nation's ultimate

³ Cf. Report of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 1983.

mission to be what he calls the "liberation" of the South from "American imperialism, feudal oppression and exploitation."⁴

North Korea's belligerent policy toward South Korea and the U.S. is directly related to its military strategy. In December 1962, the fifth plenary session of the fourth Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) adopted the "four major military line." This called for arming the entire northern population, turning the entire land into fortifications, "cadre-izing" all members of the armed forces, and modernizing the military. As North Korean military outlays began to swell sharply in the mid-1960s, so did its aggressive actions against the South and the American forces stationed there. From 1965 to 1981 alone, there were at least 125 major provocative actions.

THE MILITARY BALANCE ON THE PENINSULA

Since the 1953 Armistice Agreement, North and South Korea have been locked in close confrontation across the 2.5-mile wide, 155-mile long Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Despite its smaller population (18.6 million) and troubled economy,⁵ North Korea fields a numerically superior military force to South Korea. While visiting the U.S. in 1981, South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan told a Washington press conference that the military superiority of the North posed a grave threat to Asian stability.

Indeed, as shown in the chart below, North Korea's armed forces exceed those of the ROK in almost every significant aspect.⁶

1) Ground Forces

During the past decade North Korea has built up its military forces massively, consuming nearly 25 percent of its annual Gross National Product. During this period, North Korea's ground forces have more than doubled. In 1970, the North Korean Army stood at 350,000; today it is estimated at about 750,000. Similarly, its inventory of major ground force weapons systems also has at least doubled.⁷

⁴ General R. G. Stilwell, USA (Ret.), "Threat Perceptions and Vulnerabilities: A View from Seoul," Paper prepared for Conference on Security and Development in the Indo-Pacific Arena at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, April 24-26, 1978, p. 8.

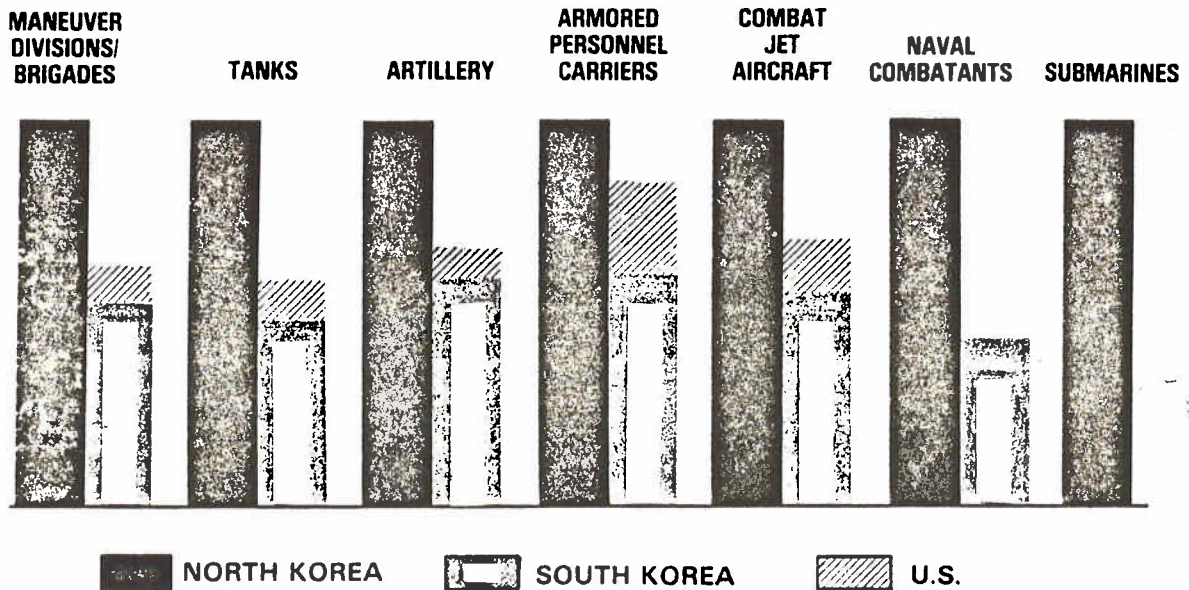
⁵ In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, General Robert W. Sennewald, USA, Commander-in-Chief UN Command/Combined Forces Command and Commander of U.S. Forces in Korea/Eighth U.S. Army, highlighted some of the problems in the North Korean economy. Many of its present problems can be attributed to mismanagement, stagnant agricultural production, the already tight supply of timber, coal, steel and electric power, and an inadequate labor force (March 8, 1983, p. 5 of prepared text).

⁶ U.S. Military Posture for FY 1983, The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 43.

⁷ Cf. testimony by Gen. Sennewald, op. cit., p. 4.

CHART I

COMPARISON OF U.S. / SOUTH KOREAN FORCES AND NORTH KOREAN FORCES



AS OF 1 JANUARY 1982

The North Korean Army comprises 35 infantry divisions, three mechanized (motor rifle) divisions, two armored divisions, five armored brigades, four infantry brigades, two independent tank and five independent infantry regiments, 250 artillery battalions, 80 rocket battalions, five surface-to-surface missile (SSM) battalions with 54 FROG (Free Rocket Over Ground), five river crossing regiments (13 battalions) and over 20 commando/special forces brigades (numbering in excess of 100,000).

These forces are more than capable of saturating South Korea. Rhee Sang-woo, Professor of Political Science at Sogang University, estimates that "North Korea can fill every square kilometer of South Korean territory with seven soldiers, and, if rugged mountainous areas are excluded, then she can fill it with more than 20 soldiers per square kilometer."⁸

⁸ Rhee Sang-woo, "Calculated Cooperation: A Reflection on Military Relations," in Reflections on a Century of United States-Korean Relations, published by the Academy of Korean Studies and The Wilson Center (1983), p. 292.

TABLE I
DPRK GROUND FORCES (1970-1982)⁹

	1970	1982
Personnel	350,000	750,000
Artillery (tube)	2,200	4,100
Multiple Rocket Launchers (MRL)	700	2,000
Tanks	900	2,825
Armored Personnel Carriers (APC)	100	1,140

By comparison, the ROK has a 520,000-man army, 20 infantry divisions, two armored brigades, 30 artillery battalions, two SSM battalions, two surface-to-air (SAM) battalions, two infantry brigades, seven special forces brigades, two anti-aircraft artillery brigades, and seven tank battalions. In terms of numbers of battle units, North Korea has an edge of nearly 2:1 over the South.

In major weapon systems for ground forces, North Korea also has a decided edge.

TABLE II¹⁰
COMPARISON OF ARMY STRENGTH

Classification	South Korea	North Korea
Tanks		
Main Battle Tanks (MBT)	1000 M-47/48 (incl. A5)	300 T-34 2200 T-54/-55/-62 175 Type-59
Light Tanks	--	100 PT-76 50 Type-62
Armored Personnel Carriers	500 M-113/-577 350 Fiat 6614	1000 BTR-40/-50/ -60/-152, K-3
Guns/Howitzers	2104	4100
Mortars	5300 81mm & 107mm	11000 82mm, 120mm & 160 mm
Anti-aircraft (AA) guns	106	8000
Missiles	12 Honest John SSM 80 HAWK SAM 100 Nike Hercules SAM	54 FROG-5/-7 SSM ? SA-7 SAM

⁹ For 1970 figures, cf. Donald R. Cotter and N. F. Wikner, "Korea: Force Imbalances and Remedies," Strategic Review, Vol. X, No. 2 (Spring 1982), p. 65. The figures for 1982 are taken from the International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1982-1983 (London, 1982), p. 88.

¹⁰ Figures compiled from The Military Balance 1982-1983, pp. 88-89. Most of the above figures are estimates.

2) Naval Forces

While Seoul has nearly 16,000 more men assigned to its naval forces than Pyongyang,¹¹ North Korea enjoys a near 5:1 advantage in combat vessels (see TABLE III). During the past decade, the North Korean Navy dramatically has improved its offensive capabilities. Since 1971, "the number of missile attack boats has increased by a third, coastal patrol craft doubled, submarines more than tripled, and amphibious warfare craft more than quadrupled."¹² North Korea continues to strengthen its highly versatile force of over 500 combatant vessels. Combined Forces Command General Robert Sennewald told the House Armed Services Committee on March 8, 1983:¹³

Their large force of submarines is capable of interdicting shipping and of offensive minelaying in the approaches to ROK ports. They have an impressive

TABLE III¹⁴

COMPARISON OF NAVAL STRENGTH

Classification	South Korea	North Korea
Personnel	49,000 (incl. marines) ¹⁵	33,000
Submarines	0	19
Destroyers	11	0
Frigates	8	4
Corvettes	3	4
Guided Missile Patrol Boats	11	18
Patrol Boats	36	184
Torpedo Boats	0	180
Amphibious Warfare Craft	28	99
Minewarfare ships	9	0

¹¹ If reserves are factored in, South Korea would still enjoy numerical superiority. North Korean reserves are estimated at 40,000, while the ROK has nearly 85,000. Of the latter, Marine reserves are estimated to be 60,000.

¹² U.S. Military Posture for FY 1983, p. 43.

¹³ Sennewald, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁴ Figures compiled from The Military Balance 1982-1983 and other sources.

¹⁵ Marines (2 divisions, 1 brigade) number 24,000.

force of high-speed landing craft, boats armed with multiple rocket launchers and gunboats which are ideally suited for carrying out amphibious raids and shore bombardment operations against airfields and other installations near the ROK coast. The fastest growing capability in the North Korean Navy is in ship-borne surface-to-surface missiles. Forward-basing of some of these boats near the UNC [United Nations Command] controlled northwest islands poses an immediate threat to friendly shipping and defensive patrols in that area.

3) Air Forces

The North Korean Air Force has improved its effectiveness and increased its inventory of aircraft in the past decade. The number of fighters and bombers has increased by about 20 percent, while transports and helicopters have almost tripled.¹⁶ The North's

TABLE IV¹⁷

COMPARISON OF AIR STRENGTH

Classification	South Korea	North Korea
Bombers	0	70 Il-28
Fighters	250 F-5A/B/E 70 F-86F 60 F-4D/E 24 OV-10G (some A-37) 10 RF-5A 20 S-2A/F	20 Su-7 290 MiG-15/-17 192 MiG-19 120 MiG-21
Helicopters	10 Hughes 500 MD (armed) 6 UH-19 20 UH-1B/H	20 Mi-4 20 Mi-8
Transports	10 C-54 20 C-123J/K 12 HS-748 6 C-130H	180 An-2 40 An-24 5 Il-14 4 Il-18 1 Tu-154
Missiles	AAM: Sidewinder, Sparrow	4 SAM bdes (12 bns, 40 btyes) with 250 SA-2 in 40 sites

¹⁶ U.S. Military Posture for FY 1983, p. 44.

¹⁷ Figures compiled from The Military Balance 1982-1983. In his testimony before Congress, Gen. Sennewald noted that the North Korean Air Force has further increased its numerical superiority over the ROK with the addition of between 25 and 50 F-7 fighters, which are Chinese-built copies of the MiG-21 (p. 5).

Air Force is estimated at 51,000 men with more than 700 combat aircraft. The South Korean Air Force, by contrast, has 32,600 men and 424 combat aircraft, plus ten armed helicopters.

4) Mission of the Armed Forces

A comparison of military strength must take account of the mission and orientation of each of the armed forces, the quality of personnel, and the equipment assigned to each service branch. Most military analysts agree that there is a basic difference in the doctrinal orientation between the North and South. Edward Luttwak, Senior Fellow at Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Steven Canby of C & L Associates recently highlighted this difference:¹⁸

The armed forces of the ROK are largely oriented toward "attrition" warfare, in which primary reliance is placed on firepower to destroy the enemy piecemeal. The North Koreans by contrast seem to be primarily maneuver oriented, in both the Soviet style for armor, and the Chinese for the light infantry. Instead of attrition, the North Koreans place primarily reliance on shock and infiltration in order to set the stage for penetrations and envelopments--to be achieved after the preliminary moves to confuse the enemy command, demoralize his troops, and disrupt the coordination between forces in forward positions and their artillery fire support.

This basic difference is reflected in the respective force structures. The North Korean army has twice as many maneuver battalions as the South; although these are smaller than comparable ROK battalions, their overall firepower is roughly equal. North Korea also deploys more than twice as many battle tanks and more anti-tank weapons than the ROK; the two sides are comparable in light artillery, but the North has twice as much larger caliber artillery and three times as many heavy mortars. In terms of multiple rocket launchers the North also maintains a near 3:1 advantage.¹⁹

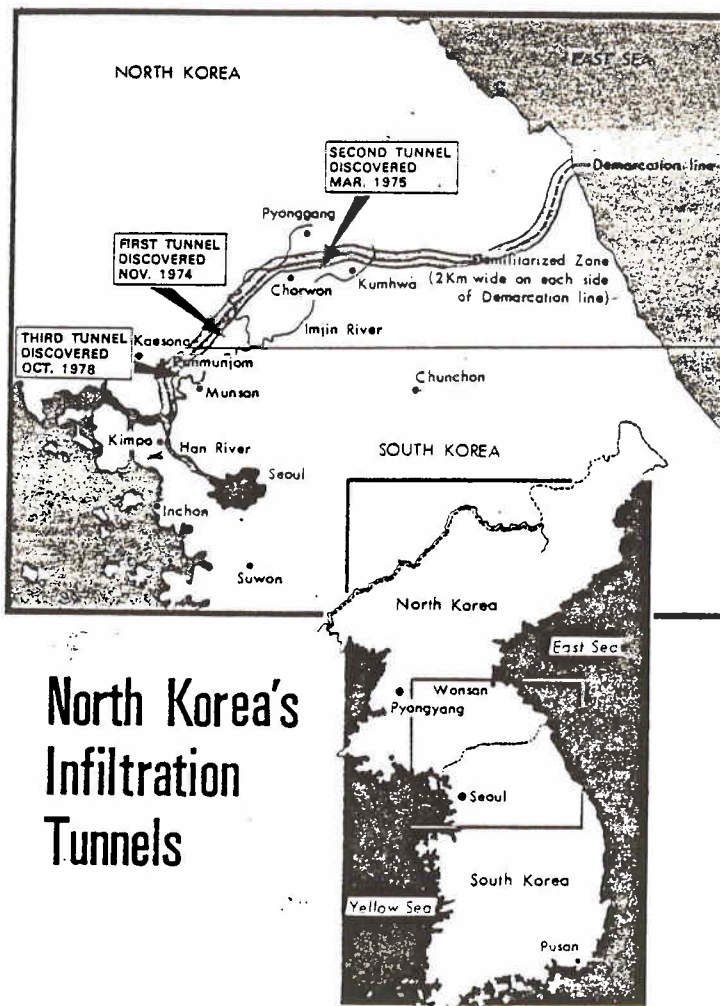
Particularly menacing to the South is the North's huge special combat/commando force, to be used behind the South's lines. While 70,000 of these forces are attached to the Army, the Air Force and Navy each have about 15,000. The majority of these elite units will assist the regular army units in attempting to break through the ROK forward defense system, while navy units will operate against coastal facilities, major ports, fuel depots, and communications sites. Units assigned to the Air Force will be lifted

¹⁸ Edward N. Luttwak and Steven L. Canby, "The Defense of Korea," in Robert L. Downen, ed., Northeast Asia in the 1980s: Challenge and Opportunity (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 1983), pp. 22-23.

¹⁹ Ibid.

via AN-2 transports, targeting airfields, aircraft, air control centers, communications and intelligence centers, major roads (such as the Seoul-Pusan highway) U.S. missile installations, fuel supplies, and pipelines.²⁰

Of serious concern, too, is the elaborate tunnel network from the North to the South. This can enable thousands of troops to cross the DMZ in a relatively short time. Three tunnels have been discovered (see Map), and up to another twenty may be under construction.²¹



North Korea's Infiltration Tunnels

The first tunnel, discovered in November 1974, was 4 feet wide, 4 feet high, and 1½ miles long. It housed a narrow-gauge railway capable of transporting a regiment and its equipment under the DMZ in an hour. Less than a year later, a second tunnel was

²⁰ Cotter and Wikner, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

²¹ Claude A Buss, The United States and the Republic of Korea: Background for Policy (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), pp. 45-46.

found; it was 3.1 miles long, approximately 6 feet high and 6 feet wide. This tunnel could handle a division in an hour. The third tunnel, discovered in October 1978, was roughly the same size as the second, but contained a small narrow-gauge railway system.

THE SOUTH KOREAN RESPONSE

For more than 25 years following the Second World War, South Korea relied almost exclusively upon the United States for a significant share of its defense. Following the U.S. decision to withdraw the 7th Division from the ROK in December 1971 and the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, however, South Korea initiated a series of long-range military programs designed to make itself more self-reliant.

In December 1971, the government proclaimed a "state of national emergency" calling for, among other things, the domestic production of military equipment. The development of a strong defense industry was deemed essential to a self-reliant national defense and a self-supportive economy. Two years later, the Law on Military Supplies instituted measures to foster and support defense industries. The steps included the creation and operation of a support fund, provision of subsidies to defense industries, tax privileges, contractual favors, and a defense fundraising drive. With the collapse of South Vietnam in 1975, a special defense tax was levied to speed the development of defense capabilities and industries.

In August 1975, the ROK government announced initiation of a Forces Improvement Plan (FIP) to completely modernize South Korean defenses. The FIP is financed primarily by the national defense tax. The principal ingredients of the plan were an increase in military hardware, the expansion of defense facilities, and the development of a national defense industry. A second modernization program (FIP II), covering the period FY 1982-1986, is now in operation.

FIP I emphasized improvements in ground force capabilities. Among other things, "the artillery assets of the ROK ground forces were increased both in number and range; anti-tank weapons and munitions were improved; and mobility of the forces was enhanced through acquisition of both tracked and wheeled vehicles and fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft."²² The ROK Navy acquired its first Korean-built frigate and coproduction with the U.S. of the F-5E/F aircraft was instituted. During the seven years of FIP I, more than \$1 billion per year was spent on weapons acquisition. Most of this was acquired from the United States using Foreign Military Sales (FMS) credits. FIP II continues emphasizing equipment needs.

²² Congressional Presentation, Security Assistance Programs FY 1983, p. 72.

South Korea's defense industries have made impressive strides. Though South Korea was unable to produce even rifles until the early 1970s, today it is producing significant amounts of ammunition and sophisticated military equipment including howitzers, rocket launchers, AIM-9 missiles, and F-5 fighter aircraft.

While ROK armed forces have grown quantitatively and qualitatively over the past decade (see TABLE V), there remains a serious military imbalance on the Korean peninsula. In short, despite its efforts, South Korea has not caught up. North Korea probably will retain significant advantages over the South in most areas of combat strength for the remainder of the decade, but current U.S. and ROK military programs should eliminate the present asymmetry by 1990.²³ Until this time, South Korea must depend on U.S. military assistance and support.

TABLE V
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
ROK ARMED FORCES 1974-1982

Classification	1974	1982
Defense expenditures (estimates in US\$)	\$558 million	\$3.97 billion
Defense expenditures as percentage of GNP (estimates)	4.1%	6.29%
Armored Personnel Carriers	400	850
Navy personnel	40,000	49,000
Destroyers	6	11
Air Force personnel	25,000	32,600
Combat aircraft	210	434
Specific aircraft:	30 F-4D 100 F-86F 70 F-5A	60 F-4D/E 70 F-86F 250 F-5A/B/E

Source: IISS, Military Balance 1974-1975 and Military Balance 1982-1983.

²³ Cf. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 12-13, and Rhee Sang-woo, op. cit., pp. 294 and 305.

AMERICAN MILITARY SUPPORT

The U.S. has been committed to the security of the Republic of Korea for more than three decades. At times, American-Korean security relations have not been harmonious. Misunderstandings, frustrations and periodic strains characterized the relationship during the 1970s. With the Reagan administration, however, a more cooperative and smooth relationship has once again emerged. Relations are thought to be at an all-time high.

The 1971 withdrawal of the U.S. 7th Division from Korea had a decidedly negative impact on U.S.-Korean security. It pales in comparison to the March 9, 1977, announcement by Jimmy Carter that he planned to withdraw, in three stages, all U.S. ground troops from the ROK within four to five years.²⁴ The remaining residual force was to include the 314th Air Division and a ground support contingent of about 7,000 army personnel.²⁵ To soften the impact of this decision, the Administration took "compensatory measures." These included a pledge to provide Korea with about \$2 billion in arms and military equipment over the disengagement period, a promise to strengthen U.S. air power in the ROK, and an agreement to establish a U.S.-ROK combined military command.

Almost immediately, widespread resistance to Carter's withdrawal scheme had developed within Congress and the military. Support was limited almost exclusively to the White House. By April 1978, the Administration modified its original plan; 6000 troops were to be withdrawn by the end of 1979 instead of during 1978. But before any U.S. soldiers were pulled out, the withdrawal was suspended entirely. The reason: U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command and the Defense Intelligence Agency released a report estimating that North Korean ground forces were about one-fourth larger than previously reported and that the North's armor and firepower also vastly exceeded prior estimates.²⁶ In July 1979, the Administration announced a suspension of the withdrawal scheme until a satisfactory North-South military balance was achieved.

²⁴ As early as January 1975, Carter favored removing all U.S. forces from Korea. See Don Oberdorfer, "Carter's Decision on Korea Traced to Early 1975," The Washington Post (June 12, 1977), p. A15. By mid-1975, Carter was persuaded to limit withdrawal to ground forces, lest "a strong South Korean air force might make a preemptive strike against the north. For a critical analysis of the Carter Scheme, see Jeffrey B. Gayner, "Withdrawal of U.S. Ground Forces from South Korea," The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder, No. 16 (June 15, 1977).

²⁵ See Larry A. Niksch, "Korea: U.S. Troop Withdrawal and the Question of Northeast Asian Stability," Congressional Research Service, Issue Brief No. IB79053 (updated April 1980), p. 1. See also U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Troop Withdrawal from the Republic of Korea, 95th Cong., 2d sess., 1978, more commonly referred to as the Humphrey-Glenn Report.

²⁶ See John H. Cushman, "The Military Balance in Korea," Asian Affairs, July-August 1979, pp. 359-369.

Though the contentious withdrawal issue was resolved temporarily, Korean-American relations continued to deteriorate during the remaining years of the Carter presidency. Following the assassination of President Park Chung Hee on October 26, 1979, the U.S. Administration became increasingly critical of the role that the military was playing in the governance of the ROK. Reacting to what it perceived as "excessive" political force following the Kwangju riots and the imposition of martial law in May 1980, the Carter administration "froze" relations with South Korea. Military relations were affected immediately. Carter refused to schedule the annual "Security Consultative Meeting" involving the defense ministers of the two countries. By late 1980, American-Korean relations had ebbed to their lowest point since World War II.

Ronald Reagan has reversed this. Two weeks after taking office, he welcomed South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan as the first foreign head of state received by the new Administration. Reagan stated categorically that the U.S. would "remain a reliable Pacific partner" and would "maintain the strength of our forces in the Pacific area." With specific reference to the Korean peninsula, a joint communiqué was issued on February 2, 1981, which:

- o Pledged to uphold the mutual obligations embodied in the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty.
- o Assured that the U.S. has no plans to withdraw U.S. ground combat forces from the Korean peninsula.
- o Pledged to strengthen U.S.-Korean cooperation in deterring and defending against aggression.
- o Confirmed that the U.S. will make available for sale appropriate weapons systems and defense industry technology necessary for enhancing Korea's capabilities to deter aggression.
- o Reaffirmed that the ROK must be a full participant in any United States negotiation with North Korea.
- o Announced immediate resumption of the full range of consultations between the two governments, including security, economics, and policy planning.

These statements and subsequent events provoked a sigh of relief throughout Asia and especially the ROK. It was felt that the U.S. would maintain and upgrade its forces in the Pacific (including South Korea) and was firmly committed to defend South Korea.

Subsequently, during the 13th Annual Security Consultative Meetings held in San Francisco in April 1981, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger not only reiterated America's commitment to the security of South Korea, but explicitly promised to assist Seoul

in its Force Improvement Program. Included in the pledges of support were: the sale of 36 F-16s (which had been previously denied by the Carter Administration), the "Stinger" air defense system, 1000 M55-1 light tanks, 34-pound anti-aircraft missiles for ground troops, and other military materiel. The total amount pledged was approximately \$729 million over a five-year period.

During the past two-and-a-half years, the Reagan Administration has supported strongly the improvement of U.S.-Korean relations--especially in the security field.²⁷ In a May 1983 letter to Chun, Reagan reaffirmed the strong U.S. defense commitment to the ROK, and said that in the event of aggression by North Korea, consultative mechanisms and command arrangements existing between the ROK and U.S. "would permit us to respond appropriately and effectively."²⁸

In addition to agreeing to sell specific military equipment to the ROK, the Reagan Administration also has upgraded significantly its security assistance program for Seoul. Under the FY 1981 and 1982 security assistance programs prepared by the Carter Administration, the ROK was scheduled to receive more than \$162 million and \$167 million, respectively. In contrast, the Reagan Administration proposed for FY 1983 and FY 1984 approximately \$212 million and \$230 million, respectively.

The Reagan Administration also has taken significant steps to augment and modernize U.S. forces stationed in Korea. Total U.S. forces currently number about 39,000. Of these, about 28,000 are assigned to the Eighth U.S. Army, which includes the 2d Infantry Division, the 19th Support Command, supporting aviation and engineer groups, and various smaller support units. The other major component of U.S. forces is the 314th Air Division, which includes the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing (Kunsan AB), 51st Tactical Fighter Wing (Osan AB), the 497th Tactical Fighter Squadron (Taegu AB), and the newly arrived 25th Tactical Fighter Squadron (Suwon AB).

Among the main improvements completed or initiated are:²⁹

- o In March 1982, the two-squadron complement of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing completed its transition to the F-16s (Fighting Falcon).
- o In March 1982, the 25th Tactical Fighter Squadron arrived with their A-10 (Thunderbolt II) tank-killing aircraft.
- o During FY 1982, under the Eighth U.S. Army Modernization Program, the AH-15 TOW Cobra and the M198 155-mm Towed

²⁷ Cf., for example, the visit of Vice President George Bush to the ROK in April 1982 and the February 1983 visit of Secretary of State George P. Shultz to Seoul.

²⁸ "Reagan reassures ROK support," The ROK Herald, May 29, 1983, p. 1.

²⁹ Cf. testimony of Gen. Sennewald, op. cit., pp. 9-12.

howitzer were fielded, and a military intelligence battalion in the 2nd Infantry Division was activated.

- o Several Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence (C³I) system improvements are underway, including a hardened combat operations intelligence center at Osan Air base, an automated data processing-assisted intelligence system, and two major programs to improve communications capability and interoperability.
- o A comprehensive program is underway to correct deficiencies in petroleum stockage levels.
- o A major effort is being made to improve the survivability of the Trans-Korean pipeline.
- o In the area of strategic lift, recent signed agreements commit selected ROK flag air and sea assets to augment U.S. forces during contingencies.
- o A program to upgrade contingency airfields has been initiated.
- o Over the next few years, the Eighth U.S. Army Modernization Program has plans for the introduction of 180 new equipment systems, including counterfire radar, MLR system, Viper, Blackhawk helicopters, improved TOW, M60A3 tanks, Tacfire direction, and DIVAD (Division Air Defense) guns. Also underway is the conversion of the 2d Infantry Division mechanized and tank battalions to new heavy "Division 86" design.

CONCLUSION

Over the past two decades, North Korea has expanded and modernized its armed forces far beyond its defense requirements. This has created a serious and dangerous military imbalance on the Korean Peninsula. To redress this military imbalance by the end of the decade requires: (1) the successful completion of the current ROK Force Improvement Program; and (2) the continued modernization and augmentation of American armed forces stationed in Korea.

Since the Force Improvement Program was initiated in 1975, the ROK armed forces have improved dramatically. The current ROK defense budget is approximately \$4.4 billion, roughly 6 percent of GNP and 32.8 percent of the national budget. Nearly a third of the defense budget is earmarked for the Force Improvement Program. To help fund this, Seoul has asked Washington for more Foreign Military Sales credit loans. The Reagan Administration has responded favorably to such requests. For FY 1983, the Administration proposed a security assistance package of approximately \$212 million; the current FY 1984 budget request is approximately \$230 million.

Yet, the amount authorized by Congress last year fell short of what was anticipated and required. Previous shortfalls in the FIP should be quickly redressed. This could be accomplished if Congress were to:

- o approve the Administration's FY 1983 Supplemental Budget, which earmarks an additional \$70 million in FMS loans to South Korea; and
- o fund the Administration's request for \$230 million security assistance to the ROK in the FY 1984 budget.

Another integral component of the Force Improvement Plan is the ROK's indigenous defense industry. Though capable and productive, the defense industry base faces some critical problems. In part, they relate to the haste with which the defense industrial base moved after 1976. Today, many defense firms suffer from excess capacity. Thus, greater consideration should probably be given to the utilization by U.S. armed forces of Korean industries for the maintenance, overhaul, and improvement of U.S. equipment deployed not only in Korea but throughout the Pacific.

Continued support by the Administration and Congress for the modernization and augmentation of American armed forces in Korea is essential for maintaining peace and security on the Korean peninsula. The modernization program of the Eighth U.S. Army over the next few years will further improve U.S. force deterrent capabilities.

Any diminution of support for either the ROK Force Improvement Plan or U.S. Force Modernization will prolong the military imbalance on the Korean peninsula and increase the likelihood of armed conflict. If both programs are broadly and promptly supported and funded, the military imbalance will be redressed and the likelihood of peace and stability on the Peninsula will be measurably increased.

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