

Chapter 2

The Korean Peninsula: North Korea's Rapid Succession of Power and the ROK's Changing Security Policy

In the Korean Peninsula, the new leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) has stressed the continuation of established policies, including Songun (military-first) politics and the building of a "strong and prosperous nation," following the death of Kim Jong Il in December 2011. Security issues surrounding North Korea remain the region's biggest concern. Since 2003, the Six-Party Talks dealing with North Korea's nuclear development program have repeatedly stalled because of provocative actions by North Korea. Direct talks between the United States and North Korea as well as meetings between North Korea and the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) have also stalled repeatedly, though with some modest advances, and there has been no sign of change in this pattern. As preparations for the succession of power gathered momentum in August 2008 after the health problems of Kim Jong Il, Chairman of North Korea's National Defense Commission (NDC), came to light, the country announced it had conducted a missile test and its second nuclear test in 2009. The *Cheonan* Incident (attack on the patrol vessel ROKS *Cheonan*) and the Yeonpyeong Incident (shelling of Yeonpyeong Island) followed in 2010.

While continuing to depend on China economically and in the area of international politics, North Korea has also taken steps to improve its relations with Russia, as witnessed by the visit of NDC Chairman Kim Jong Il to Russia in 2011. There has also been a gradual resumption of US-DPRK and ROK-DPRK contacts. These developments, along with the visits of senior Chinese officials to North Korea, reflect a gradual revival of diplomatic efforts towards restarting the Six-Party Talks, which have been stalled since December 2008. There is still no sign, however, of when the talks might resume and the outlook for a resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem after the resumption of talks remains unclear. North Korea could again use missile firings and nuclear tests as a card in its relations with the outside world. The security situation on the Korean Peninsula therefore remains as unpredictable as ever.

While insisting that there can be no progress in the North-South dialogue until North Korea apologizes for the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong incidents, South Korea's Lee Myung-bak administration indicated it was looking for ways to resume dialogue with Pyongyang in 2011. At the same time, it stepped up preparations designed to send a message that there would be no tolerance of further military provocations such as the aforementioned two incidents. In addition to efforts to

enhance South Korea's own ability to respond to military provocations by the North, it has moved to bolster the US-ROK alliance. However, the policy of emphasizing the US-ROK alliance could change depending on the outcome of the South Korea's presidential election in December 2012 and North-South relations might also improve. Such developments could change the strategic environment in East Asia.

1. North Korea—Leadership Succession and Continuation of Hard-line Strategy

(1) Power Succession and Ramped-up Efforts to Build a Strong and Prosperous Nation

In a special broadcast at noon on December 19, 2011, Korean Central Broadcasting Station announced the death of National Defense Commission (NDC) Chairman Kim Jong Il on December 17. Speculation had been rife for some time about Kim Jong Il's health problems. Nevertheless, news of his death had a big impact on the international community coming as it did on the heels of a series of events aimed at setting the stage for a transfer of power to Kim Jong Il's son Kim Jong Un, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and laying the ground for the establishment of a strong and prosperous nation. It also followed a flurry of summit meetings intended to strengthen North Korea's relations with Russia and China.

Looking back on 2011, on January 1, the three North Korean newspapers *Rodong Sinmun*, *Joson Inmingun*, and *Chongnyon Jonwi* published a joint New Year's editorial entitled "Bring about a Decisive Turn in the Improvement of the People's Standard of Living and the Building of a Great, Prosperous and Powerful Country by Accelerating the Development of Light Industry Once Again This Year." This was a retrospective on 2010 while also outlining a vision for 2011. As is obvious from the title of this joint editorial, North Korea's national slogan for 2011 was a repeat of that for 2010. Amidst ongoing economic dependence on China, it emphasized self-reliance while also referring to resolution of the state of confrontation between North and South Korea and the promotion of dialogue and cooperation.

On April 7, the fourth session of the Twelfth Supreme People's Assembly was held, but neither NDC Chairman Kim Jong Il nor Kim Jong Un attended. On that

day, they were on an onsite guidance tour in Chagangdo. Delegates to the Assembly session were briefed on major budget items, including government activities, and on national defense policies.

In a review of 2010, Premier Choe Yong Rim characterized the year as one that “ensured a continuation of the glorious achievements of the Juche Revolution” and spoke positively of the various events celebrated, especially the celebration of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the WPK. Referring to the economy, he hinted at an end to the hardship of foreign sanctions. The report presented to the previous year’s Supreme People’s Assembly session complained of the pain inflicted by sanctions and contained rhetoric criticizing them: “The struggles of our military and people to build an economically strong country are far from smooth and each advance has necessitated smashing the plots of imperialist reactionaries to impose sanctions. The imperialist reactionaries applied persistent pressure on progressive countries and on companies with which we have an economic and technological partnership, endeavoring not only to prevent us from fulfilling our trade agreements, but creating hundreds and thousands of embargoed products and impeding the delivery of products to our country. They even had the meanness to block delivery of the necessary reagents for a newly constructed nitrogen fertilizer plant on the pretext that they were for dual (civilian and military) use.” The report presented to the 2011 session, however, was more positive in its language: “In the struggle to achieve economic independence, Ryongsong Machine Complex, when denied delivery of certain equipment for use in Hungnam Fertilizer Complex’s gas project because of the mean sanctions imposed by imperial reactionaries, went ahead and produced the equipment by itself utilizing its own capabilities and technology, demonstrating clearly that no sanctions will have any effect on Songun Korea.” The phrase “ensured a succession of the glorious achievements of the Juche Revolution” was a sign that power transition to Kim Jong Un has been making steady progress. The report also suggests the country is gradually finding ways to overcome the sanctions imposed by the international community. However, while it is possible that North Korea’s economic woes have moderated, albeit temporarily, as a result of the economic assistance provided by China and Russia, there is little prospect of any major progress in achieving the objectives of “improving the people’s livelihood” and “self-reliance,” or of a solution to its chronic food shortages.

Regarding national defense policy, Vice Marshal Ri Yong Ho, chief of the

General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA), presented to the North Korean Central Report Meeting a report on April 8 stating, "National defense works are of the utmost importance for the establishment of a strong and prosperous nation and the immutable and fundamental stance of our party and nation is to place priority on strengthening our national defense." He went on to stress the country's intention to pursue the development of technology, especially home-grown technology, in "advanced fields, such as nuclear fusion technology." He also roundly criticized what he termed the "US and South Korean nuclear war drills."

The above suggests that, despite its economic difficulties, North Korea will not abandon its nuclear development program as it moves to bolster the foundations of the post-Kim Jong Il regime in its quest to establish a strong and prosperous nation in 2012 while overcoming sanctions.

Finally, as certain experts have pointed out, North Korea's strategic goals can be crystallized down to (1) the survival of the regime led by the Kim family, (2) the elimination of internal threats, (3) unification of North and South Korea in a manner that is advantageous to North Korea, (4) the maintenance and strengthening of the country's conventional forces, (5) improving capabilities in the fields of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missiles, and (6) upgrading deterrence against the United States and South Korea. There is no evidence to suggest any change in these goals since the start of the power succession process. As illustrated by the announcements concerning ballistic missile firings and the second nuclear test in 2009 as well as the *Cheonan* and *Yeonpyeong* incidents in 2010, if anything, the country has stepped up its efforts

to achieve these goals through hawkish and flagrant actions each year since it embarked on the process of transferring power. As of January 2012, the new leadership under Kim Jong Un, who assumed the position of supreme commander of the Korean People's Army upon the death of NDC Chairman Kim Jong Il, still talks of realizing the teachings of Kim Jong Il, continuing Songun politics, and completing

the process of establishing a strong and prosperous nation, suggesting these are likely to remain the country's goals for some time to come.

(2) Revision of WPK Rules and Leadership Generation Change

On February 2, 2011, the US government-operated Voice of America broadcast details of the Rules and Regulations of the WPK, which were revised at the WPK Congress in September of 2010. The North Korean constitution had already been revised in April of 2009 and the main aim of revising the WPK rules was to reconcile differences between the two and provide a firm legal basis for the establishment of the post-Kim Jong Il order. As with the new constitution, a key revision was the deletion of the term “communism.”

In the field of national defense, the party's authority has been strengthened with the addition of statements—referring to the WPK Central Military Commission—that “the Party shall organize and guide all programs of a military nature” and “the Party shall guide all programs related to national defense.” The new rules also spell out for the first time the authority of the political organs and committees that make up the party organization within the military and states that the General Political Bureau of the KPA will act with the same authority as the WPK Central Military Commission as an executive branch of the KPA Party Committee.

However, concerning the Songun ideology, which is given the same status as Kim Il Sung's Juche ideology as a national guiding ideology for North Korea, the new constitution merely states that the KPA is the “central military unit and the main force of the revolution taking the lead in upholding the party's Songun revolutionary leadership.” Rather, the emphasis is on “building a strong and prosperous socialist nation” and on the importance of mobilization and solidarity to achieve this goal. Behind this was probably a need to reconfirm the status of the KPA as subservient to the WPK with the duty to support the Songun revolution under the guidance of the WPK. It highlights again the fact that North Korea's Songun politics are intended to operate within a framework that ensures the party's superiority over the military.

There is also a significant generation change under way among national defense personnel. At the most recent Supreme People's Assembly session, Kim Jong Un was not appointed to any post within the NDC, contrary to speculation, but Jon Pyong Ho (85) was relieved of his membership of the NDC in what was described as a reassignment of duties, and Political Bureau Alternate Member Pak To Chun

(67), a powerful figure in the Munitions Industry Department, was elected. Gen. Ri Myong Su, director of the NDC Administration Department, was appointed minister of People's Security. Ju Sang Song (78), the previous minister of People's Security, was relieved of his position on March 16 on the grounds of ill health. It is only natural to assume that the aim of these generation changes was to install a team from the generation below NDC Chairman Kim Jong Il who enjoy the latter's trust to give them experience in assisting Kim Jong Un with the establishment of the post-Kim Jong Il regime.

In addition to the above generation change in what amounts to the emergence of North Korean "princelings" (the privileged children of senior civilian and military leaders), on April 13, 2011, Korean Central Broadcasting Station announced the promotion of O Il Jong (57), director of the WPK Military Department, to the rank of colonel general. According to the *Chosun Ilbo*, O Il Jong is the son of O Jin U, former minister of the People's Armed Forces and a right-hand man of the late Kim Il Sung. He is in charge of reserve forces totaling four million, including the Worker-Peasant Red Guards. Also promoted to the rank of colonel general was Hwang Pyong So, deputy director of the Organization Guidance Department of the WPK, while Ho Yong Ho, vice minister of People's Security, was elevated to the rank of lieutenant general. Col. Gen. O Kum Chol (former Air Force commander), son of former Guard Command Chief O Paek Ryong, was elected to the WPK's Central Committee at the WPK Congress in September 2010. It also appears that O Chol San, younger brother of O Kum Chol, is serving as a political committee member of the Korean People's Naval Command. Finally, Party Secretary Choe Ryong Hae (63), son of Choe Hyon, a former minister of the People's Armed Forces, has been promoted to the rank of general along with Kim Jong Un. Reports say he concurrently holds important posts that include party secretary, member of the WPK Central Military Commission, and alternate member of the WPK Political Bureau. The speed of generation change among military personnel at the central party level has not been especially fast, but reportedly there has been a rapid turnover at the front line among senior officials of the rank of divisional commander and below. This indicates that preparations were well under way within the military to usher in the Kim Jong Un era.

That does not mean, however, that the older generation has slipped out of sight. The list of names on NDC Chairman Kim Jong Il's state funeral committee was

headed by the young Kim Jong Un (reportedly aged about 30), vice chairman of the Central Military Commission and supreme commander of the KPA, but next came Kim Yong Chun, minister of the People's Armed Forces and vice chairman of NDC, Premier Choe Yong Rim, and Ri Yong Ho, chief of General Staff, all members of the old guard. Listed in fourteenth position was NDC Chairman Kim Jong Il's younger sister Kim Kyong Hui, director of the Light Industry Department and KPA general, with Kim Yang Gon, director of the United Front Department, listed in fifteenth position and Kim Kyong Hui's husband Jang Song Thaek listed in nineteenth position. Jang Song Thaek is viewed as fulfilling the role of regent to Vice Chairman Kim Jong Un. It is not clear how much the order on the name list reflects the power structure within the Kim Jong Un regime, but as is often pointed out, it is not hard to imagine that the individuals listed will play an important role in the running of the Kim Jong Un regime.

Apparent behind these personnel arrangements is North Korea's aim to secure not only the position of the supreme leader, but also to preserve the vested interests of the power elite in the party, military and political establishment that support him, and by passing on those vested interests to the next generation, to ensure the stable establishment and solidification of the post-Kim Jong Il regime.

North Korean Cyber Attacks

The *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong incidents in 2010 reflected intensification of North Korea's asymmetrical military power. North Korea's cyber attack on South Korea's Nonghyup Bank on April 12, 2011, can also be regarded as an example of this.

There have already been reports of numerous cyber attacks against multiple national institutions in South Korea. In addition to wide-ranging cyber terrorist attacks that include attempts to hack the website of the G20 Summit Preparatory Committee as well as the personal computers of National Assemblymen, South Korea's National Intelligence Service reported on October 28, 2010, that North Korea has a brigade of almost 1,000 hackers and maintains several hacking bases in China. The same report stated that there had been 48,000 cyber attacks on government institutions between January 2004 and October 2010, including roughly 9,200 in 2010 alone.

In 1986, North Korea established an educational institution (the current Pyongyang Automation University) designed to cultivate skills in executing cyber attacks. One hundred expert hackers are trained there annually, with graduates assigned to the General Bureau of Reconnaissance, an espionage organization established at the beginning of 2009. South Korean prosecution officials have identified this organization's Office 6 (Technical Office) as the leading suspect in

the cyber attack against Nonghyup Bank.

The attack on the bank resulted in major disruption to its computer systems, preventing depositors from withdrawing money. In May 2011, South Korean prosecutors concluded that the disruption was caused by North Korean cyber terrorism because one of the IP addresses used in the attack matched that used in another distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack carried out by North Korea in March. The attack stunned many people as it shut down bank services for three days. It has raised awareness among South Korean security experts about the asymmetrical threat posed by North Korea's cyber attacks. Researchers in the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses have started to worry that North Korea may acquire the ability to carry out a Stuxnet-type attack (use of a computer virus to subvert computers that control industrial infrastructure). Such a capability would extend the target of attacks beyond South Korea's general cyber assets and government websites to the operation of the country's real-world infrastructure.

In 2004, South Korea set up a National Cyber Security Center within the National Intelligence Service. In 2009, it strengthened the Center's functions and role by formulating a Comprehensive National Cyber Crisis Initiative and at the same time, established a Cyber Command. The South Korean military has also been active in strengthening collaboration with the US military in the cyber defense field. An example of this was joint US-ROK cyber defense drills carried out as a tactical map exercise in 2008.

Growing dependence on IT has increased the risk of cyber attacks. North Korean cyber attacks represent an important security problem, which Japan needs to address by bolstering its own preparedness while cooperating more closely with the United States and South Korea.

2. North Korean Nuclear Weapons Issue—Revival of Diplomatic Efforts to Resume Six-Party Talks

(1) Growing Expectations for Resumption of Six-Party Talks and Start of US-DPRK Meetings

The Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program have been suspended since December 2008, but starting in the latter half of July 2011, there was a revival of diplomatic efforts to resume the talks, which continued until just before the death of NDC Chairman Kim Jong Il in December. In mid-April 2011, Kim Kye Gwan, North Korea's First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced North Korea's intention to accept inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of its uranium enrichment facilities and also showed a positive stance on bilateral talks between North and South Korea and between the United States and North

Korea. Following this, there was a revival of diplomatic efforts to resume the Six-Party Talks, with momentum building up especially from the latter half of July. On July 22, at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held on the Indonesian island of Bali, the foreign ministers of North and South Korea expressed common interest in striving to restart the Six-Party Talks when they met for the first time in three years since the previous ARF held in Singapore in July 2008. This was followed by talks between Stephen Bosworth, US Special Representative for North Korea Policy, and Vice Minister Kim Kye Gwan in New York on July 28–29.

Events relating to US-DPRK relations in 2011 included a visit to North Korea by The Elders, a group led by former US President Jimmy Carter, from April 26 to 28. This visit led to the release of Edi Jun, who was being held by North Korea, but also included talks centering on food aid to North Korea. On May 20, the US announced that it would send a food assistance investigation team led by the special US envoy for human rights in North Korea from May 24 to 28. This was followed on August 11 by the announcement of plans to provide 1.8 million tons of food assistance to North Korea. At the same time, expectations of progress in US-DPRK relations and a resumption of the Six-Party Talks received a boost by Pyongyang's indication of its willingness to allow visits to North Korea by members of separated families living in the United States. In December, there were reports about North Korea ending its uranium enrichment program and holding talks with Washington, but since the announcement of the death of NDC Chairman and supreme leader Kim Jong Il on December 19, the prospect for the US-DPRK talks and for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks has clouded.

(2) No Easy Solution to North Korean Nuclear Problem— Impediments to Resumption of Six-Party Talks

In tackling the North Korean nuclear problem, much will depend on US-DPRK relations and on US policies towards North Korea. Differences in the political stances of each country will affect the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. First among these is North Korea's reaffirmation of its position that it will not relinquish its status as a nuclear-weapon state. Second is the United States' avowal at the July 2011 talks between the US and North Korean foreign ministers of no change in its stance on negotiations with North Korea. Third is the stalemate in North-South relations, with North Korea stating after the death of Kim Jong Il that it will not negotiate with the Lee Myung-bak administration, despite earlier attempts at

contact between the two countries.

Regarding North Korea's stance on the nuclear problem, the country's representative to the United Nations Disarmament Commission declared on April 4, "Our republic will always faithfully discharge its obligations to the international community as a responsible nuclear weapons state." He continued, "The nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula is a result of the nuclear threat imposed on us by the United States in stationing nuclear weapons in South Korea for over half a century. Any resolution of the nuclear confrontation on the Korean Peninsula will necessitate, first and last, resolving the confrontation between the United States and North Korea." As already mentioned, in his report on April 8, Vice Marshal Ri Yong Ho, chief of the General Staff of the KPA, stated that North Korea would seek to develop "nuclear fusion technology" and stressed North Korea's vigilant posture against "nuclear war drills by the United States and South Korea." All this indicates that North Korea is again reaffirming its position that (1) it will not abandon its status as a nuclear-weapons state, and (2) that the nuclear problem is one between the United States and North Korea.

Meanwhile, on July 25, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated said, "We do not intend to reward the North just for returning to the negotiating table. North Korea must do more to show its sincerity. Specifically, it should take steps to improve relations with its neighbor in the south." Kurt Campbell, US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, also affirmed that the talks between Special Representative Stephen Bosworth and First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Kye Gwan were no more than preparatory and were not necessarily a step towards the resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

For North Korea, the top diplomatic and security priority has always been an "end to the United States' hostile policies towards North Korea," meaning improved relations with the United States. It has pursued other diplomatic relations, including improvement in North-South relations, as long as it felt they would contribute to fulfilling this objective. Consequently, any resumption in the Six-Party Talks will depend on developments in DPRK-US relations. It is conceivable that North Korea could return to the Six-Party Talks with the aim of securing some kind of assistance, but even in that eventuality, without some incentive for the North to make a real concession towards resolving the nuclear problem, the Six-Party Talks seem likely to become a dead letter.

Apart from the problem of securing an end to North Korea's uranium enrichment

program, pending issues relating to the resumption of the Six-Party Talks include how to link that issue to the resumption of the Six-Party Talks (whether to make North Korea's agreement a precondition for resuming the talks) or how to treat this issue in the negotiations following the resumption of the talks. North Korea has engaged in repeated acts of provocation, partly to appeal to a domestic audience as a way to enhance national prestige, but also with the aim of demonstrating to the rest of the world its military capabilities and to press for assistance from the international community. The ability to use missile firings and nuclear tests not merely for purposes of demonstration, but to secure rewards in the form of assistance from other countries, is one of the few cards left to North Korea. It is hard to escape the view, therefore, that the road towards a solution of the North Korean nuclear problem remains anything other than rocky.

(3) Nuclear Weapons and Ballistic Missile Problems Becoming More Acute

Despite the revival of diplomatic efforts regarding the Six-Party Talks, the North Korean nuclear problem is growing ever more serious. First, there are reports North Korea may have succeeded in miniaturizing its nuclear weapons so that they can be carried by ballistic missiles. Second, the discovery of its uranium enrichment activities has made it harder to clarify the entire picture of its nuclear weapon development plans. Third, it appears North Korea has been working to extend the target range of its ballistic missiles used to deliver nuclear and other WMD and to improve the stability and mobility of its mobile launchers. These developments further threaten the peace and stability of the Northeast Asian area.

In June 2011, Kim Kwan-jin, South Korea's minister of defense, informed his country's National Assembly that North Korea may already have succeeded in miniaturizing its nuclear weapons. To justify this claim, he cited the significant lapse of time since North Korea's "success" in testing a nuclear weapon. He also

estimated North Korea's plutonium holdings at around forty kilograms. However, this was merely a restatement of the view held by the South Korean government since 2008, not a new opinion. For example, in October of 2008, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Kim Tae-young, told the South Korean National Assembly that he thought North Korea possessed around forty kilograms of plutonium, enough to make six or seven nuclear warheads.

Regarding its uranium-based nuclear development program, in November 2010, the North Korean authorities showed Siegfried S. Hecker, former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), its uranium enrichment facilities in Nyongbyong. Dr. Hecker stated that the facility had 2,000 centrifuges. Meanwhile, on November 30, 2010, North Korea's *Rodong Sinmun*, in an article about the production of fuel for nuclear power stations, mentioned that uranium enrichment facilities equipped with several thousands of centrifuges are in operation. Dr. Hecker also commented that North Korea has the capacity to produce forty kilograms of enriched uranium annually. If these estimates are correct, it means North Korea is capable of producing just over one-and-a-half nuclear weapons annually.

It is reasonable to assume that North Korea maintains the preparedness to conduct a third nuclear test following its October 2006 and May 2009 tests. There have been reports from Britain, South Korea and elsewhere stating that North Korea is making preparations to conduct a nuclear test. For example, South Korea's *Yonhap News*, in a February 20, 2011 article attributed to South Korean government sources, stated that North Korea has constructed several new underground tunnels at the Punggye-ri facility in North Hamgyong Province, where the past two nuclear tests were conducted. Referring to the possibility of a nuclear test by North Korea, Won Sei-hoon, director of the National Intelligence Service, told the South Korean National Assembly in April that the North had the ability to carry out a test at any time, but that there was no sign it was preparing for one yet. Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin expressed a similar view in August in answer to a question in the National Assembly.

North Korea is also continuing to develop the ballistic missiles needed to deliver WMD. South Korea's *National Defense White Paper* published in December 2010 expressed the view that North Korea had deployed the Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), with a range of more than 3,000 kilometers, in 2007. If correct, this means the target range of North Korea's

ballistic missiles has widened beyond the Japanese archipelago to as far as Guam. In January 2011, then US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates expressed concern about North Korea's growing ballistic missile capabilities. He also mentioned a specific timeframe, stating that North Korea was likely to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) within five years.

Regarding the missile sites, there were reports in 2011 that North Korea was completing a long-range missile site in Tongchang-ri in the northwest of the country, in addition to the existing Musudan-ri site in the northeast. Speaking to the South Korean National Assembly in June, Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin admitted that the Tongchang-ri site was in the finishing stages. This site is located about eighty kilometers south of the border with China, facing the Yellow Sea. Compared to the Musudan-ri site, from which North Korea fired long-range missiles in 1998, 2006, and in 2009, and which faces the Sea of Japan, the Tongchang-ri site is close to China, making it harder for South Korea and others to mount a strategic attack, according to South Korea. There have been recent reports that North Korea may have already started developing mobile ICBMs, which could emasculate existing antimissile systems and render strategic attacks more difficult.

Further advances in the North's ability to miniaturize nuclear warheads and mount them on ballistic missiles as well as enlargement of its ballistic missile target range could pose a major threat to Japan, the United States, and South Korea.

Reports of signs that materials and equipment associated with nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and related technology are proliferating from North Korea to other countries continue to emerge. In September 2011, for example, the IAEA noted that North Korea is purchasing materials from the "nuclear black market" and might also be supplying countries such as Libya and Syria with materials and technology. At the end of May, a cargo vessel loaded with what is assumed to be missiles turned back while on its way from North Korea towards Southeast Asia. Furthermore, it was reported that North Korea tested a KN-06 surface-to-air missile in June. Immediately after this, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin told the National Assembly he understood the test had been successful. In a June 8 article, Yonhap News reported that the KN-06 extended the range of the KN-01/02 missile (120 kilometers) and had been modified for use as a surface-to-air system. Deployment of this missile would give North Korea the capability to constrain US and South Korean air-force maneuvers from the demilitarized

zone south, including South Korean air space.

Along with North Korea's ongoing development and proliferation of ballistic missiles, the nuclear problem continues to grow in seriousness.

3. South Korea—Review of North Korea Policy and Defense Policies

(1) Softening of Policy towards North Korea

In 2011, the Lee Myung-bak administration maintained its basic stance of demanding the denuclearization of North Korea and an apology for the sinking of the corvette *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, but at the same time, showed a willingness to resume dialogue with North Korea. On the diplomatic front, it took steps to cement its alliance with the United States while also engaging in military diplomacy with China.

President Lee Myung-bak wasted no opportunity to demand North Korea to end its nuclear weapons development and issue an apology for the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong incidents along with a commitment to prevent such incidents in the future. At the same time, however, he stressed that his administration was prepared to engage in dialogue and provide economic assistance to the North. In his New Year address on January 3, 2011, for example, he demanded Pyongyang to “discard its nuclear weapons and military adventurism,” but also stated that “if the North exhibits sincerity, we have both the will and the plan to drastically enhance economic cooperation together with the international community.” On May 9, during a visit to Berlin, he called on National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong Il to attend a nuclear security summit scheduled for March 2012 in Seoul on condition the North promised to give up its nuclear weapons and to apologize for the *Cheonan* sinking and other incidents.

Since March 31, 2011, the government in Seoul has allowed private South Korean groups to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea and in September it allowed South Korean religious groups to visit North Korea. In November, it gave approval for the World Health Organization (WHO) to use funds furnished by South Korea to supply drugs and medical equipment to the North. These exchanges and assistance for North Korea were the first since May 2010, when the South Korea-led investigation of the *Cheonan* Incident concluded that North Korea was responsible for the sinking of the vessel. They were presumably aimed at finding

a way to restart the process of improving relations with the North. Nonetheless, South Korea has still not offered any major government-level food assistance. This is probably because of its stance of insisting on an apology from North Korea as a precondition.

Several factors underlie the more positive approach, however modest, of the Lee Myung-bak administration towards improving relations with North Korea. Although the South Korean public is angry with the North because of its nuclear weapons development and events such as the Yeonpyeong Incident, there is also a desire for better relations with North Korea and dissatisfaction with the Lee administration because of its failure to deliver in this area. Against this backdrop of public opinion, certain sections of the governing Grand National Party (now renamed the New Frontier Party) and the Cheongwadae (the presidential office) hope to use some dramatic development in relations with the North, such as a North-South summit meeting, to their advantage in the general election for the National Assembly and the presidential election due to be held in 2012, and President Lee Myung-bak probably felt the need to respond to these sentiments in some form. There are also reports that the US government urged the Lee administration to speed up efforts to initiate a North-South dialogue because of its desire to resume negotiations with the North concerning its nuclear program. If US-DPRK talks or the Six-Party Talks were to start in the absence of any dialogue with North Korea, it might intensify the Korean public's criticism of the Lee administration.

The North Koreans have taken both a hard line and a soft line in their response to the South's initiatives. An example of the softer line was the North's agreement to engage in at least some kind of dialogue with South Korea. On January 21, 2011, Kim Yong Chun, minister of the People's Armed Forces, proposed talks between senior military officials of the two countries with an agenda of "clarifying a view on the *Cheonan* case and Yeonpyeong Island shelling and defusing military tension on the Korean Peninsula." South Korea accepted this proposal and participated in colonel-level talks at Panmunjom on February 8–9. Regarding the nuclear issue, the chief delegates of North and South Korea to the Six-Party Talks held discussions in Bali on July 22 and in Beijing on September 21 (as stated earlier, the foreign ministers of the two countries also held discussions in Bali in July). These were the first meetings of delegates to the Six-Party Talks in two years and seven months since the breakdown of talks in December 2008. North

Korea's aims in agreeing to a dialogue with the South were twofold. First, it saw the dialogue as a step towards resumption of US-DPRK talks and the Six-Party Talks. This is because the United States, out of consideration for its South Korean ally, had indicated that it would engage in discussions with North Korea only after the start of a North-South dialogue. The other likely aim was to secure economic assistance through talks with the South.

Despite the above dialogue initiatives, North Korea maintained its hard-line stance against the South. In the colonel-level talks in February, for example, it refused to admit responsibility for the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong incidents. Regarding President Lee Myung-bak's proposal made in Berlin in May, the North's National Defense Commission, while revealing that there had been secret contacts with the Lee administration, stated on June 1 that there was no need for the country to apologize for something it had nothing to do with. It also rejected out of hand the invitation to participate in the nuclear security summit. The North thus stuck to its position of refusing to negotiate with South Korea regarding the nuclear issue or to apologize for the Yeonpyeong and other incidents.

On the diplomatic front, President Lee Myung-bak succeeded in cementing the alliance with the United States in a number of ways. First, he established a good personal relationship with President Barack Obama. His official visit to the United States in October 2011 provided an opportunity to show off that relationship. Between October and November, the two countries strengthened their economic relationship by ratifying the ROK-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which had been sitting on the shelf since its signing in 2007 during the Roh Moo-hyun administration. Noteworthy was the effort made by President Lee to meet the expectations of President Obama by forcing through the ratification against the fierce objections of opposition parties and certain citizens' groups. In the area of security, he succeeded in 2011 in obtaining a promise from the United States for a joint response to local provocations by North Korea in addition to the United States' repeated commitments to strengthen efforts to deter further provocation and maintain US troop levels in South Korea.

Regarding relations with China, during a visit to that country in July 2011, Minister of National Defense Kim Kwan-jin obtained Chinese agreement for the two countries to conduct an annual dialogue at the vice-ministerial level on security strategy. China and South Korea agreed to establish a strategic cooperative partnership in 2008 and the South Korean side wanted a regular military dialogue

at an equivalent level. For South Korea, having such a channel with Beijing was important for its relations with North Korea given China's close ties with the North. China's willingness to agree to this probably reflects a desire to maintain some kind of check on the US-ROK alliance. If true, it probably means that the Lee Myung-bak administration's moves to strengthen ties with the United States played a role in stirring China into action. China's Chen Bingde, chief of General Staff, criticized the United States in front of Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin, revealing, albeit in an indirect manner, Beijing's irritation at the strengthening US-ROK alliance.

Turning to relations with Japan, the importance of bilateral collaboration between Japan and South Korea and of trilateral collaboration involving these two countries and the United States with respect to the North Korean nuclear problem was emphasized at every opportunity. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and President Lee Myung-bak, for example, confirmed this policy at their summit meetings in Seoul in October and in Kyoto in December 2011. Japan and South Korea also recognize the importance of this in the field of defense cooperation. In January and again in June, then Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa held meetings with South Korea's defense minister, Kim Kwan-jin, the first in Seoul and the second in Singapore. During these talks, the two countries agreed to exchange opinions regarding the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) dealing with United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO) and search and rescue drills. Prime Minister Noda and President Lee also exchanged views on the importance of exchanging military information at their meeting in December. However, because the ROK government has to be mindful of deep-rooted mistrust of Japan among certain sections of the South Korean public, it apparently plans to proceed cautiously and gradually in promoting defense cooperation with Japan.

The autumn of 2011 marked the start of South Korea's "political season," which comes around once every five years. It saw a gradual ramping up of activities both inside and outside of the world of politics in the run-up to the presidential election in December 2012. In the Seoul mayoral election held in October, which is regarded as a prelude to the presidential election, the leader of a citizens' movement joined forces with progressive parties to defeat the candidate of the ruling Grand National Party (now the New Frontier Party). Citizens' movement campaigners not belonging to the ruling party together with reformist parties

gathered support on a platform of boosting welfare against a backdrop of growing criticism of the Lee Myung-bak administration for widening social disparities through its economic and social policies as well as its inability to improve the unemployment rate. Except for the ROK-US FTA, foreign policy, security and policies vis-à-vis North Korea have so far not emerged as major election issues. However, traditionally, progressive parties have tended to call for a more independent line from the United States and for improved relations with North Korea, in contrast to conservative parties, which have attached utmost importance to the relationship with Washington. Depending on the outcome of the presidential election, the US-ROK alliance could face some headwinds or the North and South could draw closer together, which would likely impact the security environment in East Asia.

(2) Announcement of Defense Plan through 2030

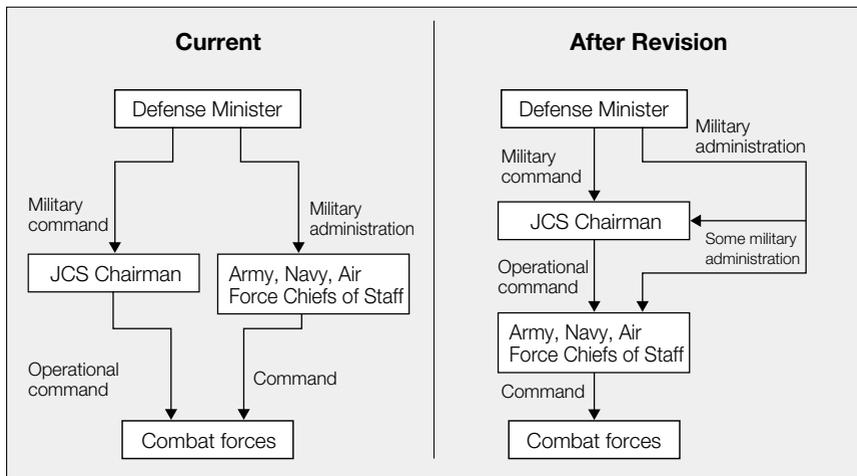
On March 8, 2011, South Korea's Ministry of National Defense unveiled its Defense Reformation Plan 11-30 (hereinafter, "11-30 Plan"), outlining national defense policies through the year 2030 (when initially announced, this was referred to as the "307 Plan"). The plan calls for strengthening joint operational capabilities and securing active deterrence capabilities.

In June 2005, the previous Roh Moo-hyun administration drew up its "Defense Reform 2020" plan (hereinafter "2020 Plan"), which called for strengthening South Korea's defense capabilities through the adoption of advanced technology while reducing troop numbers from 680,000 in 2005 to 500,000 in 2020, the last year of the plan. (In June 2009, the Lee Myung-bak administration eased the target to 517,000.) The 11-30 Plan follows the same basic line as the 2020 Plan, with the following notable additions.

First, it incorporates a major change in South Korea's perceptions of the threats that it faces. The 2020 Plan envisaged a gradual reduction in threats from North Korea during the life of the plan and the realization of potential threats from China and Japan, which were expected to exceed the North Korean threat. The 11-30 Plan, however, puts priority on addressing existing threats from North Korea. It ranks the threats that South Korea should prepare for in the following order: (1) regional provocations and asymmetric threats, (2) all-out war, and (3) potential threats. Not surprisingly, the sinking of the *Cheonan* and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010 played a decisive role in this change of perceptions.

Under the new threat perceptions, the main challenges identified in the 11-30 Plan are: (1) enhancing jointness, and (2) securing active deterrence capabilities. The Plan sees a reorganization of the upper command structure as indispensable. Currently, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) has operational control (OPCON) over the combat forces of the Army, Navy and Air Force in peacetime, while the Army, Navy and Air Force chiefs of staff each exercise authority in matters relating to personnel and supply for their respective forces. Under this arrangement, there is a division between military command and military administration (Figure 2.1.). However, when the *Cheonan* incident occurred, the commander in the field gave priority to reporting to the Navy chief of staff rather than the JCS chairman. In the wake of Yeonpeong shelling, South Korea failed to conduct an effective counterattack using a combination of different military forces. In light of this, the 11-30 Plan aims to strengthen joint operations by combining military command and military administration in the following manner: (1) the JCS are to exercise operational control through the chiefs of staff of each branch of the military; (2) the chairman of the JCS is to have responsibility for certain areas of military administration, such as supervision of supplies and mobilization of personnel required to wage war; and (3) the headquarters of each branch of the military supporting the respective chiefs of staff is to have military

Figure 2.1. ROK military upper command structure revisions



Source: Compiled from ROK Defense Ministry materials

command as well as military administration functions. Explained simply, the concept aims to ensure that the orders of the JCS chairman are communicated to all sections of each branch of the military by placing the Army, Navy and Air Force chiefs of staff under the command of the chairman.

The upper command structure revisions are intended to prepare for the transfer of wartime OPCON. Currently, if there is a contingency in the Korean Peninsula, operational control of South Korean combat forces is transferred from the South Korean JCS chairman to the commander of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command (CFC) (U.S. four-star general who concomitantly serves as commander of the United Nations Command and commander of the US Forces Korea). US-ROK negotiations over the transfer of wartime OPCON to the South Korean side gathered pace during the Roh Moo-hyun administration under the slogan of independent defense. In February 2007, the two sides agreed to implement the transfer in April 2012. If there is a contingency such as full-scale invasion of South Korea by North Korean forces after the transfer, South Korea's JCS chairman is to take charge of battle operations, with the commander of US forces in South Korea providing support. Among the challenges to facilitating the new arrangements are the need for the South Korean JCS to acquire capabilities in C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) instead of relying on the US forces as they have in the past and the creation of the institutional foundations to ensure the smooth exercise of command by the chairman. Various ideas were put forward and later withdrawn regarding these institutional aspects, including one in which the JCS chairman would serve concurrently as joint forces commander directing the operations of the three military branches in a unified manner. This prompted concern in South Korea about an early transfer of OPCON while these issues remained unresolved and, in the wake of the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong incidents, President Lee Myung-bak and President Barack Obama agreed at a meeting in June 2010 to postpone the timing of the transfer to December 1, 2015.

The upper command structure revisions proposed in the 11-30 Plan ran into direct opposition from organizations of retired flag and general officers (especially the Navy and Air Force) and National Assemblymen and was not implemented in 2011. There were various reasons for opposing it, but the following two were the most important. First, in South Korea, the Army eclipses the Navy and Air Force in terms of both troop numbers and political influence. If the Naval and Air Force

chiefs of staff were to be placed under the chairman of the JCS, who by tradition, is appointed from the ranks of Army generals, the Navy and Air Force would find their power curbed even further. Second was the opinion that there should be time to run trials in the form of joint US-ROK exercises to see if the new system would work in an emergency. The relevant bills were introduced into the National Assembly in May, but because the Assemblymen could not reach a consensus, a final decision was held over until 2012.

Another key issue in the 11-30 Plan is active deterrence capabilities. This is explained as “taking active steps to deter the enemy’s willingness to commit provocations and having the capability to drive back the enemy and punish or retaliate in the event of enemy provocation.” It means having the ability to deal with regional provocations, such as the *Cheonan* Incident, and asymmetric threats in the form of missile or chemical weapons attacks, as well as potential future threats.

Especially important in this context is preventing local provocations by North Korea. Hitherto, the South Korean military has cooperated with US forces to deter a full-scale invasion from North Korea using conventional weapons. This has been done by deploying large numbers of troops and tanks along the demilitarized zone as well as the use of modern air power. However, they have not been able to stop local provocations by the North. The main provocations have occurred in an area facing the Yellow Sea northwest of the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which is dotted with South Korean islands only a short distance from North Korean territory. The *Cheonan* and *Yeonpyeong* incidents of 2010 occurred in this very area. To prevent these types of limited armed actions from escalating into full-scale war, it had been the policy of the US military not to intervene directly. That is one reason why there was a perceived need to improve the ability of South Korea’s military to deal with them by itself. However, because of the importance attached to potential threats, as discussed earlier, this had not been treated as a priority. The 11-30 Plan, however, envisages the South Korean military acquiring the ability to punish North Korea as a way to deter local provocations by the North.

A specific action taken by South Korea in line with this objective was the establishment of the Northwest Islands Defense Command in June 2011. The commander of the Northwest Islands Defense Command also serves as commandant of the ROK Marine Corps (lieutenant general). The staff under him

comprises officers of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. In the event of a military provocation by North Korea targeting the islands near the Northwest NLL, the commander of the Northwest Islands Defense Command will take steps to defend the islands using the Marines with reinforcements supplied by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Another objective is to launch punitive strikes instantly against the enemy's base of provocation. As part of this initiative, South Korea is taking steps to increase its capability to identify the enemy's battery positions and to boost the number of K-9 self-propelled 155-millimeter howitzers and multiple rocket launchers stationed in the area. It is also introducing precision strike guided weapons and attack helicopters capable of attacking the enemy's artillery hidden in tunnels. South Korea also regards attack helicopters as effective in attacking North Korea's air cushioned landing craft, mentioned earlier. As of 2011, many of the South Korean military's attack helicopters are older models, such as the AH-1 Cobra and MD500, but the military appears to be studying the possibility of importing the state-of-the-art AH-64D Apache Longbow.

Officials in South Korea's Defense Ministry have said the country would not hesitate to punish local provocations by North Korea. In December 2010, for example, Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin stated that "if there is another enemy provocation, we will exercise the right of self-defense to punish the enemy forcefully until his willingness to commit provocations is eliminated." In October 2011, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Jung Seung-jo (at that time a candidate for the chairmanship) expressed the same view, stating that South Korea should deploy fighter aircraft in the event of another incident like the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. Concerns have been expressed in both South Korea and the United States that these types of comments, along with South Korea's preparedness to use active deterrence, could escalate the situation. However, the fact that South Korea's military is under strict civilian control ensures a cautious approach. Furthermore, as discussed later, the United States



The first two E-737 Peace Eye airborne early warning and control aircraft were delivered to the South Korean military in 2011. A total of four aircraft will be delivered to strengthen surveillance capabilities. (Copyright © Boeing)

indicated at a Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) in October that it was now prepared to act jointly with South Korea to respond to local provocations, thereby strengthening deterrence against local provocations by the North and providing a sense of relief to the South. This has likely been effective in diminishing the probability of further provocations.

Regarding threats posed by North Korea's nuclear program and WMD, South Korea is basically covered by US extended deterrence. The 11-30 Plan, however, also calls for South Korea to strengthen its own surveillance capability and ability to attack launching sites. This capability is also essential to destroy North Korea's long-range artillery—which threatens the Seoul metropolitan area—in an emergency. Specifically, the plan envisages South Korea obtaining the next-generation F-X fighter jet and high-altitude surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles at an early stage. This is not the first time South Korea has talked about strengthening its surveillance and strike capabilities, but what is different this time is the reference to protecting key command and control facilities against North Korea's electromagnetic pulse bombs. Concerning missile defense, discussed later, the plan merely calls for strengthening this, but provides no specifics.

The 11-30 Plan also envisages bolstering South Korea's ability to respond to threats from North Korean submarines and to cyber threats. It refers to the need to improve the survivability of patrol vessels and other naval craft against submarine threats. In what seems like anticipation of this, South Korea launched its first *Incheon*-class frigate (2,300 tons), which has greater antisubmarine capabilities than the *Cheonan*, in April 2011. This class is equipped with antiship missiles, torpedoes, point-defense anti-air missiles, and sonar, and can carry one antisubmarine helicopter. The plan is for these vessels to be deployed in coastal defense in place of the *Cheonan* type. Regarding cyber threats, South Korea had already established a Cyber Command within the Defense Intelligence Agency in January 2010, but in July 2011, this was upgraded to a Defense Cyber Command reporting directly to the defense minister. Reports say it employs roughly 400 personnel. As stated earlier, South Korea has endured cyber attacks apparently launched by the North. There have also been attempts to interfere with the GPS (Global Positioning System) used by the South Korean military.

(3) Efforts to Strengthen Deterrent Power of US-ROK Alliance

Along with laying the ground for the transfer of wartime OPCON in 2015, as agreed upon by Presidents Lee Myung-bak and Obama, efforts are under way to strengthen the US-ROK Alliance in terms of both the institutional and operational framework, so as to be better prepared to respond to North Korean military provocations recognized as asymmetrical threats. At the same time, however, the situation regarding cooperation in the field of missile defense remains unclear.

As stated in the joint communiqué of the Forty-third US-ROK SCM on October 28, key items agreed upon in 2011 through bilateral consultation between the partners in the US-ROK Alliance were recognition that North Korea's nuclear program poses a threat to the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia and to the world, and that it is important to draw up plans to facilitate an immediate response to provocations by North Korea. The two sides also confirmed their intention to improve the quick reaction capability of the United States and South Korea near the NLL and the Northwest islands. Also reported was agreement that in the initial stages of executing the plan, the South Korean military would respond based on its right to self-defense, but that the United States would provide support using US forces stationed outside of South Korea, including US Forces Japan and US Pacific forces. This communicated a clear message both at home and abroad that the framework of the US-ROK Alliance was being strengthened. President Obama also revealed the United States' intention to maintain its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region at a time when the country is studying ways to shrink its defense spending in light of the mounting budget deficit. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, while in South Korea for the SCM, also stated that the United States would maintain troop levels at the current 28,500.

In terms of the institutional framework, there was agreement for the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee (EDPC) to draw up a multi-year working plan aimed at devising a tailored bilateral extended deterrence strategy for the future, including tabletop exercises (TTX) focused on extended deterrence, given the need to strengthen deterrence against the threat posed by North Korea's WMD. There was also agreement to establish the Korea-US Integrated Defense Dialogue (KIDD) in the form of policy consultations between the South Korean deputy minister of national defense for policy and the US under secretary of defense for policy and to start bilateral strategic policy consultations regarding cyber security. With respect to TTX, on November 8 and 9, the United States conducted

scenario-based deliberations on strategies to deter the North Korean nuclear threat. Several working-level discussions of the EDPC were also held to address the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and other WMD, with full meetings being held twice—in March and in September 2011. Behind these initiatives to strengthen the institutionalized framework was probably a strong need to improve the reliability and credibility of the US-ROK Alliance's deterrence by sharing and discussing information related to extended deterrence.

The joint military exercises frequently conducted by the United States and South Korea also deserve mention for their contribution to strengthening the operational side of the US-ROK Alliance. The US-ROK joint military exercises held in the Yellow Sea from November 28 to December 1, 2010 and the annual US-ROK command post exercise “Key Resolve” along with the “Foal Eagle” exercise, which were held with the participation of the USS *Ronald Reagan* on February 28, 2011, drew attention in the wake of the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island on November 23, 2010. Foal Eagle, which is based on OPLAN 5027, included drills envisaging local armed clashes and WMD attacks by North Korea. The “Ulchi Freedom Guardian” (UFG) exercise, held on August 16, 2011, covers a range of scenarios, from local provocation to all-out war as well as removing and securing nuclear weapons from nuclear-related facilities in the event of an emergency involving North Korea. The United States and South Korea also held joint live-fire military exercises, envisaging a military provocation by North Korea, on September 1 and September 30 in Pocheon, Gyeonggi-do, and carried out their first inflight refueling drills in South Korean airspace during September 16–30. The various joint exercises described above not only boost the deterrent power of the US-ROK Alliance, they are also seen as sending a strong message to North Korea for diversion.

While steps have been taken to bolster extended deterrence, there was no

mention in the 2011 SCM joint communiqué about South Korea's participation in the US Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), a pending issue. South Korea has been carefully studying ways to upgrade its missile defenses to counter the threat posed by North Korea's ballistic missiles, but for various political and military reasons relating to its participation in the BMD, the future of US-ROK cooperation in this area remains unclear. While South Korea has proceeded with R&D on its own new long-range guided surface-to-air missile with twice the firing range of the United States' Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missile as part of its program to create by 2015 a three-stage air defense system (Korea Air and Missile Defense or KAMD) capable of countering North Korea's Scud missiles, KN-01/02 short-range missiles and Nodong missiles, there are also reports that it is still considering introducing the PAC-3. In September 2010, the US Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) signed a memorandum of understanding on joint research and the two bodies held discussions on the North Korean missile threat in April 2011. South Korea's Ministry of National Defense has stressed, however, that these actions are not intended to lay the ground for South Korea's participation in BMD. According to South Korean media reports, the South is pressing ahead with the upgrading of its missile defense capabilities focused on dealing with North Korean ballistic missile attacks and aircraft incursions relying primarily on low-altitude defense of less than one hundred kilometers using PAC-2 surface-to-air missiles and the Iron Hawk-II surface-to-air missile, whereas the US BMD is mainly concerned with intercepting ballistic missiles at a high altitude of 5,500 kilometers or more.

The United States, for its part, has actively explored BMD cooperation with South Korea. Its Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR) published in February 2010 states that South Korea has interest in a land- and sea-based missile defense capability, early-warning radar and command and control systems. The two countries have been studying the specifications required for future BMD, and the prospect of their being able to strengthen defenses rapidly against North Korean missiles if these deliberations bear fruit has fueled expectations of progress in coordinating operations and cooperating in BMD. The aforementioned report also makes the point that by using Patriot missiles and AN/TPY-2 X-band radar, as well as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), which is due to come into operation soon, it should be possible to respond fully to regional threats from short-range and intermediate-range

ballistic missiles. On the South Korean side, meanwhile, Defense Minister Kim Tae-young stated on October 22, 2010 that Seoul is carefully studying the possibility of participating in BMD. On December 3, 2010, South Korean military personnel participated as observers in joint land, sea and air exercises by Japanese and US forces, which included ballistic missile defense.

South Korea's participation in the United States' BMD in Northeast Asia would be effective from the perspective of dealing with intermediate-range ballistic missiles fired from North Korea, but could also deliver a variety of future benefits, such as strengthening the US-ROK Alliance and deepening cooperation among Japan, the United States and South Korea in the area of security cooperation, including the sharing of information. On the other hand, out of consideration for China's fierce opposition to the United States' BMD, South Korea might decide to limit its missile defense to KAMD only and not to participate in the United States' BMD given its potential impact on China's ballistic missile program. There are also concerns within South Korea that participating in the United States' BMD will sharply increase outlays on missile defense as a percentage of the national defense budget. In view of the various political and military factors involved, a final decision on South Korea's participation in BMD will probably depend on progress with joint US-ROK research on KAMD and the results of deliberations by the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee.

(4) Nuclear Umbrella and Redeployment of US Tactical Nuclear Weapons

In connection with the US-ROK Alliance's extended deterrence, the new nuclear policy of the Obama administration calling for a "world without nuclear weapons" and the debate within South Korea concerning the so-called nuclear umbrella also deserve mention.

The Joint Vision for the Alliance of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea signed by the two countries in June 2009 reconfirmed that the United States would provide extended deterrence, including the US nuclear umbrella, to South Korea. This shows that there is still a strong need for a nuclear umbrella in the Korean Peninsula, where the cold war paradigm persists. Meanwhile, the stance adopted in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) announced by the United States in February 2010 is to strengthen US extended deterrence in close consultation with allies and partners through ongoing

involvement in the nuclear umbrella, on the premise of reducing the role of nuclear weapons, in addition to a forward presence by the United States and use of conventional forces, including missile defense, as a new, regionally tailored deterrence architecture. The Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) Report of April 2010 further sets out in more specific terms the policy of reducing the role of nuclear weapons while the United States maintains a reliable nuclear deterrence until such time as nuclear weapons are finally eliminated from the earth.

From the perspective of reducing the role of nuclear weapons, one issue is how to realize the notion of limiting the sole purpose of nuclear weapons to retaliation against a nuclear attack on one's own country or on those of allies or partners as well as negative security assurance (NSA), which means not conducting a nuclear attack on non-nuclear-weapon states as defined by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). However, to date, there has been no commitment by the US-ROK Alliance regarding the sole purpose of nuclear weapons or no first use of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the NPR report states that North Korea, which does not comply with the NPT, is not covered by NSA.

Against this background, South Korea newspapers prominently reported the view stated by Gary Samore, Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation, and Terrorism, that if there was a request from South Korea for the United States to redeploy tactical nuclear weapons, as a way to overcome the current deadlock over the denuclearization of North Korea, the United States would probably agree to South Korea's request.

In response to this, the White House immediately announced that the United States has no plans to redeploy tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea. Seoul also maintains a cautious stance regarding the form of deterrent power, as reflected in Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin's April 2011 statement rejecting the possibility of a preemptive strike or redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons, while maintaining that South Korea would respond decisively to any provocations by the North based on its strategy of active deterrence. Furthermore, Gen. Walter Sharp, Commander of the US Forces Korea and ROK-US Combined Command, stated in June 2011 that the United States' extended deterrence was sufficient to deter a nuclear attack by North Korea and that there was no need for redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea.

While the two countries are likely to continue refining their view regarding

extended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella at a high level, there are also reports that many South Korean politicians still believe in the need for redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons. If there was another provocation by North Korea's Kim Jong Un regime in the form of a third nuclear test or a resumption of ballistic missile testing, it might well rekindle debate among the South Korean public about the nuclear umbrella and the pros and cons of redeploying tactical nuclear weapons. If opinion was in favor of redeploying tactical nuclear weapons, not only would it likely have a major impact on the regional security environment, it might also affect the Obama administration's nuclear policy.

For that reason, as the United States and South Korea continue their discussions in the EDPC forum, it will be important to communicate widely messages about the reliability of extended deterrence not only to provide psychological reassurance to the people of South Korea, but also to enhance the credibility of deterrence in the eyes of the outside world. Given the need to establish effective deterrence aimed at discouraging military provocations by North Korea ahead of the transfer of wartime OPCON to South Korea in 2015, the challenge for South Korea and the US-ROK Alliance will again be to prevent any escalation to ensure that retaliation against local armed clashes or asymmetrical attacks does not lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

Debates Leading up to Seoul Nuclear Security Summit

The second Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Seoul in March 2012 is seen as a valuable opportunity for countries to strengthen nuclear security, specifically by developing a shared view of nuclear security, ensuring the safety of so-called loose nukes throughout the world by 2013, and dealing with the risks associated with theft of nuclear weapons and fissile material as well as terrorist attacks targeting nuclear power facilities and fissile material in transit. It is hoped that this Nuclear Security Summit will provide an opportunity to review best practices for protecting nuclear materials that can be directly diverted for use in nuclear weapons and securing radioactive materials, as well as review management and physical security of fissile material using modern accounting methods, training of personnel responsible for protecting nuclear-related facilities, emergency response and measures to protect fissile material in transit, and border controls and prevention of the smuggling of nuclear-related materials. In light of concerns about cross-border nuclear disasters and the problem of nuclear-related facilities vulnerable to major natural disasters, as highlighted by the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011, some also view the summit as a potential forum for a broad discussion on the wider issues of nuclear security, such as new approaches to nuclear safety and international responses in the immediate aftermath of nuclear disasters. The strong expectations of the international community are therefore riding on this summit.

The previous summit in 2010 focused on strengthening nuclear security in each country, but some in South Korea, the host country, feel the agenda for the upcoming summit should include the North Korean nuclear threat and problems of nuclear proliferation. This has triggered a debate among experts in the diplomatic and security fields.

Related to the North Korean nuclear problem, on May 9, 2011, President Lee Myung-bak announced that he had invited National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong Il to the summit on condition the North promised to accept denuclearization and to apologize for the sinking of a South Korean patrol vessel and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. On May 13, the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland rejected the invitation out of hand, stating that the proposal was a plot to disarm and invade North Korea. Most observers think North Korea is unlikely to respond positively to such invitations by South Korea as long as they are tied to requests for an apology. However, in addition to measures to counter nuclear terrorism, the focus of the summit, how to respond to accidents resulting from major natural disasters at nuclear-related facilities and secure nuclear safety is an issue of growing importance, and North Korea is no exception to this. The challenge from the security perspective is to convince North Korea of the importance of nuclear security as well as denuclearization and nuclear nonproliferation. The countries concerned, therefore, must continue to press this issue after the transition to the new Kim Jong Un regime.