

The End of the Cold War, and Japan-U.S./ Japan-Republic of Korea Relations

Soeya Yoshihide

Introduction

The United States shows the most enthusiasm for Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK)-U.S. security cooperation. It signed the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in September 1951, which was revised and replaced in 1960 by the current Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. The latter treaty has subsequently been automatically extended every 10 years through the present. With the ROK, the United States signed the Mutual Defense Treaty in October 1953, which remains in effect indefinitely. From the U.S. perspective, the Japan-U.S. Alliance and ROK-U.S. Alliance are key pillars of its Asia strategy, and it goes without saying that it is desirable to the United States for both of these alliances to function in a connected manner.

Naturally, for that to happen, there must be normal relations between Japan and the ROK. This is the reason that the United States has been carefully pushing for improved Japan-ROK relations since the middle of the Korean War (Kimiya 2021, 51-52; Lee 2014, 146-150). Recently, in August of this year (2023), the United States invited the leaders of the two countries to Camp David to “institutionalize” trilateral cooperation.¹ However, it is well known that Japan-ROK relations have undergone many twists and turns between the Korean War and now (Kimiya 2021; Kimiya and Lee 2015; Lee, Kimiya, Isozaki, and Asaba 2017). In this process, the state of Japan-ROK relations has been the key to the progress of Japan-ROK-U.S. trilateral security cooperation.

From Japan’s perspective, this can be viewed as an issue of the interconnection between Japan-U.S. relations and Japan-ROK relations. Japan-U.S. relations have consistently been the foundation of Japan’s postwar foreign and security policy as well as the cornerstone of U.S. strategy in Asia. By examining the interconnection between Japan-U.S. relations and Japan-ROK relations, we can understand the position of Japan-ROK relations under the structure of Japan-ROK-U.S. relations.

This paper therefore takes a comparative look at Japan’s relations with the United States and the ROK from the end of the Cold War era in the 1980s to the post-Cold War era in the 1990s. Strictly speaking, the 1990s are not part of the Cold War era that is the focus of this forum. Rather, the decade is part of the post-Cold War era immediately after the end of the war and includes the birth of the new element of the democratization of ROK politics. By including the 1990s in this study, two different vectors of Japan-ROK-U.S. relations emerge. First, the

¹ The White House. “FACT SHEET: The Trilateral Leaders’ Summit at Camp David,” August 18, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/fact-sheet-the-trilateral-leaders-summit-at-camp-david/>.

reality of Japan-ROK-U.S. relations during the Cold War will be further clarified by contrasting them with the 1990s. Second, it enables understanding of the origin of today's complex Japan-ROK-U.S. relations which differ from the Cold War era, stemming from structural changes in Japan-ROK relations during the 1990s.

1. The 1980s

(1) Japan-U.S. Relations

During the Cold War, Japan was generally reluctant to become directly involved in the security of the ROK or the Korean Peninsula. However, from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, the United States attempted to shift its Cold War strategy in order to emerge from the Vietnam War, and this created structural pressures in international politics that encouraged Japan-ROK bilateral security cooperation (Cha 2003). The United States sought Japan's involvement in ROK-U.S. defense cooperation, and the ROK also attempted to reach out to Japan (Choi 2014, 37-44).

From the above perspective of international politics, when Prime Minister SATO Eisaku stated in the November 1969 Japan-U.S. joint statement that "the security of the Republic of Korea was essential to Japan's own security" (the "Korea clause"), it signified Japan's commitment to the ROK's security. However, as the international political transition involving the China-U.S. rapprochement, the Soviet-U.S. détente, and the end of the Vietnam War created momentum for the détente, Japan became more focused on diminishing the implications of the "Korea Clause" (Choi 2014, 212-218). Japan's passive stance toward the security of the Korean Peninsula created a deep gap with the United States' Asia strategy, and various "secret agreements" between Japan and the United States helped to bridge the gap (Hatano 2010).

However, the détente of the 1970s was short-lived. The normalization of China-U.S. diplomatic relations in January 1979 and the Soviet military's invasion of Afghanistan in December of the same year returned the United States and the Soviet Union back to the confrontation known as the "New Cold War." Under this new international political environment, the Cabinet of Prime Minister OHIRA Masayoshi, inaugurated in December 1978, called the Japan-U.S. relationship an "alliance"² while promoting the diversification and internationalization of Japanese diplomacy through the concepts of comprehensive security and Pacific Rim cooperation, and at the same time began providing Official Development Assistance (ODA) to China. The form of Japanese diplomacy established here was succeeded by Prime Minister NAKASONE Yasuhiro's diplomacy, which is synonymous with Japanese diplomacy in the 1980s (Soeya 2019, 162-167).

The "New Cold War" was in the backdrop for why Japan-U.S. relations came to

² Prime Minister Ohira referred to "close and productive partnership with the United States, our irreplaceable friend and ally" during his visit to the United States in May 1979. In addition, the Japan-U.S. Joint Communique by Prime Minister SUZUKI Zenko and President Ronald Reagan, released on May 8, 1981, stated that "the alliance between the United States and Japan is built upon their shared values of democracy and liberty," marking the first time the word "alliance" was used in a joint statement between the leaders of the two countries.

be called an “alliance.” Under the “New Cold War,” the Japan-U.S. Alliance underwent qualitative changes in two senses. First, Japan’s development of its defense capabilities came to be regarded as contributing to U.S. strategy. Specifically, significance was given to the improvement of “defense capabilities in Japanese territories and in its surrounding sea and air space” in the logic of “division of roles” with the United States. Second, Japan-U.S. security cooperation expanded beyond the bilateral framework into the realm of global security based on shared values such as democracy. The formation of the alliance in Japan-U.S. relations signified qualitative changes in the above two areas (Soeya 2019, 169).

Prime Minister Nakasone (in office from November 1982 to November 1987) clearly promoted the Japan-U.S. Alliance immediately after his inauguration. Just before his visit to the U.S. in January 1983, there was a Cabinet decision on a policy to allow provision of weapons technology to the United States on an exceptional basis, serving as a souvenir for his visit. At the Williamsburg Summit in May of the same year, Nakasone strongly insisted that the security of Europe and Asia were indivisible, which was expressed in a “political statement.” This had a role in preventing the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), which were to be reduced on the European front due to Soviet-U.S. INF negotiations, from being redeployed in Asia (Nakasone 2012, 339-341).

In this way, Japan-U.S. security relations in the 1980s embarked on a course of “integration” between Japan’s defense and security policies and the U.S. strategy through formation of the alliance against the backdrop of the New Cold War.

(2) Japan-ROK Relations

The 1980s for the ROK began with the inauguration of President Chun Doo-hwan in September 1980 after the assassination of President Park Chung-hee in October 1979.³ U.S. President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in January 1981 and the Nakasone Cabinet was formed in Japan in November 1982. Thus, Japan, the ROK, and the United States all had conservative governments at around the same time. President Chun, on the basis of the “anti-communist” platform common to the administrations of all three countries, tried to extract enormous economic support from Japan, which elicited a positive response from Prime Minister Nakasone.

During his visit to the United States in February 1981, President Chun secured from President Reagan promises of economic and military support for the ROK, and mentioned a plan to ask Japan for economic assistance equivalent to the cost of maintaining two military divisions stationed in the ROK. After March of the same year, under the pretext of defense efforts against North Korea, President Chun began asking the SUZUKI Zenko Cabinet to

³ When President Park Chung-hee was assassinated by Central Intelligence Agency Director Kim Jae-gyu during a dinner at the Central Intelligence Agency banquet hall, Chun Doo-hwan, who held the position of head of the Defense Security Command, took control of the situation, staged a military coup in December, and took power. Chun took over the presidency on September 1, 1980, after using force to suppress a massive protest movement in Gwangju, Jeolla Province in May 1980 (the Gwangju Uprising). After a subsequent constitutional amendment, Chun was once again inaugurated as president in March 1981 under the constitution of the fifth republic.

provide a security-related loan to the ROK.⁴ In response, as Foreign Minister SONODA Sunao stated that the ROK's request was "not difficult but impossible," the Suzuki Cabinet's attitude was basically backward-looking, although it agreed to negotiations at the working level with the encouragement of the United States.

In contrast, Prime Minister Nakasone addressed Japan-U.S. relations and Japan-ROK relations as soon as he took office (Nakasone 2012, 305-309). He described his diplomacy, which included a visit to the ROK before the United States, as "a new way of thinking that places importance on Asian diplomacy and considers U.S. diplomacy based on the achievements" (Nakasone 2012, 309). To make his visit to the ROK possible, Nakasone reached a basic agreement with the ROK side in December 1982 through behind-the-scenes negotiations by SEJIMA Ryuzo (advisor to C. Itoh & Co., (now known in English as ITOCHU Corporation)) on the issue of assistance to the ROK.⁵ Nakasone then paid a sudden visit to the ROK in January 1983. This was the first official visit by a postwar Japanese prime minister to the ROK. An agreement of \$4 billion over seven years was announced on the issue of assistance to the ROK. The Japan-ROK Joint Statement of January 12 stated that "it is in the interest of both peoples that Japan and the ROK maintain and develop close cooperative relations with each other as neighboring countries pursuing the common ideals of freedom and democracy," wherein Nakasone stated that "the defense efforts of the ROK ... contribute to maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula, which is highly appreciated."

When President Chun visited Japan as a state guest in September 1984, Nakasone, in his address at a luncheon on September 7, went so far as to acknowledge Japan's "fault" as a perpetrator, saying, "At one time in this century, Japan caused great suffering to your country and your people," and, "The government and our people deeply regret this fault." In response, President Chun expressed determination that the two countries should move toward "an era of true good neighborly relations."

Later, the TAKESHITA Noboru Cabinet was inaugurated in November 1987 in Japan, while in the ROK, President Roh Tae-woo took office in February 1988 after the country's first democratic presidential election. In the United States, President George H.W. Bush was elected in January 1989. At this time, the world was gradually beginning to see the emergence of a "post-Cold War" trend that would continue into the 1990s, as if led by the reform policies of Mikhail Gorbachev, who became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1985.

(3) Analysis

In retrospect, it is extremely significant that the formation of the alliance from the Japan-U.S.

⁴ Chun Doo-hwan himself made a request for security-related economic cooperation to Foreign Minister ITO Masayoshi, who attended the presidential inauguration ceremony in March 1981. In April, the figure of a total of \$10 billion over five years was indicated through Ambassador SUNOBE Ryozo, and there was later a formal request for a five-year yen loan amounting to \$6 billion at the Japan-ROK foreign ministers' meeting in August.

⁵ The content of the loan, which was agreed to by Chun Doo-hwan, amounted to a total of \$4 billion, including \$1.85 billion worth of yen loans and \$2.15 billion in loans from the Export-Import Bank, for a period of seven years with interest rates in the 6% range.

security relationship began in the 1980s. The Japanese government's approach, which signified Japan's defense efforts as contributing to U.S. strategy and viewed the Japan-U.S. Alliance as a value-based global strategic relationship, has consistently expanded and developed to the present day.

The Nakasone administration at the time probably felt no great discomfort toward the security logic put forth by the Chun administration, which also took an anti-communist stance, in serving as a bulwark against North Korea. The same would have been true of the Reagan administration's support for this logic. There was de facto cooperation between the conservative administrations of Japan, the ROK, and the United States.

Nevertheless, this cooperation was limited to Japan's economic assistance to the ROK and never developed into coordination of specific security policies, not to mention military aspects. Nor did public opinion, the political community, and society in both countries necessarily support political cooperation between conservative administrations. In Japanese politics, the Suzuki Cabinet, between the Ohira and Nakasone administrations, was also a typical moderate administration in postwar Japan, and was rather negative toward the Chun administration's requests from Japan.

Japan-ROK relations and Japan-ROK-U.S. relations in the 1980s entailed cooperation between anti-communist conservative administrations in the historic context of the New Cold War. Furthermore, Japan-ROK relations during the administrations of Nakasone and Chun demonstrated the important role of political leadership in bilateral relations, which sometimes involve emotional and complex elements. In particular, Nakasone's approach of prioritizing Asian diplomacy over Japan-U.S. relations "launched triangular diplomacy linking Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul" (Okonogi 2001, 206), and this brought depth to Japanese diplomacy, which tended to be unwaveringly focused on the United States if left unattended. In effect, cooperative relations between Japan, the ROK, and the United States were formed.

However, the Chun administration in the ROK was a de facto military dictatorship. It was not until the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, that the variable of the democratization of ROK politics emerged as an important element in Japan-ROK relations.

2. The 1990s

(1) Japan-U.S. Relations

The 1990s began just after the declaration of the end of the Cold War by President Bush and General Secretary Gorbachev at their December 1989 meeting in Malta. Then, in August 1990, Iraq, under the dictatorship of President Saddam Hussein, suddenly invaded and declared its annexation of Kuwait. At the end of November, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 678, which effectively authorized the use of force by member states, and on January 17, 1991, the U.S.-led multinational forces began their attack on Iraq.

More than 40 UN member states provided military contributions for the first Gulf War, and the status quo in Kuwait was restored in a little over three months. However, Japan failed to make a meaningful contribution in terms of personnel, let alone the participation

of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). OKAMOTO Yukio described this as “the greatest failure of postwar Japanese foreign policy,” and “the unfair treatment of Japan by the United States subsequently cast a long shadow over the Japan-U.S. Alliance.” (Okamoto 2022, 199)

In fact, the United States had a harsh view of the KAIFU Toshiki administration at the time. Finance Minister HASHIMOTO Ryutaro visited the United States immediately after the outbreak of the Gulf War, and in a meeting with Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, unconditionally accepted the U.S. demand for Japan to pay a \$9 billion share of expenses. In the end, the Japanese government settled for a contribution of \$13 billion.

Meanwhile, the Cambodian peace process was underway in Indochina.⁶ The Kaifu Cabinet, which had failed to contribute during the Gulf War, saw a Cabinet decision on the Draft Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (September 19, 1991) to deploy the SDF in UN peacekeeping operations in Cambodia. The MIYAZAWA Kiichi Cabinet took over the handling of the act, and after a stormy Diet debate, the Act on Cooperation with United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations was passed on June 15, 1992. From September of the same year to September 1993, a total of 1,200 SDF personnel were dispatched to Cambodia to do work such as repairing roads and setting up polling stations under the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

Through the above experiences, the Japanese government and experts recognized the importance of multilateral security in the post-Cold War era. However, this ironically led to a shakeup of the Japan-U.S. relationship, and the emergence of nuclear suspicions about North Korea led to a process of “reaffirmation” of Japan-U.S. security relations.

The UNTAC-monitored general elections were implemented successfully in Cambodia in May 1993, and August 1993 saw the formation in Japan of the non-Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) coalition government of HOSOKAWA Morihiro. The Advisory Group on Defense Issues, established in February 1994, submitted “The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: The Outlook for the 21st Century” (commonly known as the “Higuchi Report”) to the MURAYAMA Tomiichi Cabinet in August 1994. The report advocated that Japan should have an “active and constructive security policy” consisting of the following three elements: “First, promotion of multilateral security cooperation on a global and regional scale; secondly, enhancement of the functions of the Japan-U.S. security relationship; and thirdly, possession of a highly reliable and efficient defence capability based on a strengthened information capability and a prompt crisis-management capability.”⁷

Immediately after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Bush administration began reducing the number of forward-deployed forces. In April 1990, the Department of Defense showed

⁶ As could also be seen during the Gulf War, the end of the Cold War revitalized the functions of the UN. As a result, the permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5) played a central role in ending the Cambodian conflict, and the “Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict” and related documents were adopted at a meeting in Paris in October 1991. This was followed by UN Security Council Resolution 745 on February 28, 1992, which established the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

⁷ Advisory Group on Defense Issues. “The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: The Outlook for the 21st Century.” August 12, 1994. <https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/JPSC/19940812.O1J.html>.

a policy of reducing U.S. forces in the Far East in three phases over ten years. However, in September 1991, the Philippine Senate rejected ratification of the newly signed RP-U.S. Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace, which led to the return of Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base to the Philippines. Around the same time, suspicions emerged that North Korea was developing nuclear weapons (discussed later in this paper).

The Clinton administration, which was formed in January 1993, envisioned a strategy on two fronts of simultaneously fighting wars in Iraq and North Korea, and put forth a policy of maintaining a 100,000-strong force in East Asia. In September 1994, Joseph Nye, an international political scientist at Harvard University, was appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense. In February of the following year, Nye compiled the United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region (commonly known as the “Nye Report”).⁸ It used a metaphor stating that security is like “oxygen,” and confirmed the policy of maintaining 100,000 U.S. troops in East Asia. It also clearly expressed the U.S. view of prioritizing the Japan-U.S. Alliance, considering multilateral security as being complementary to bilateral alliances.

Thus, the Japanese government’s first revision of the National Defense Program Guidelines in 20 years proceeded in harmony with the new U.S. East Asia strategy. The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 1996 and Beyond (New National Defense Program Guidelines), approved by the Cabinet on November 28, 1995, brought to the fore the importance of the Japan-U.S. Alliance in the defense of Japan. Then, against the backdrop of heightened concern about a second Korean War over suspicions of North Korea’s nuclear development in 1994, the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation enacted in 1978 were revised and the Act on Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Perilous Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan (hereafter “Act on Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan”) was developed.

The three areas envisioned by the “Guidelines” formulated in 1978 were “posture for deterring aggression,” “actions in response to an armed attack against Japan,” and “Japan-U.S. cooperation in the case of situations in the Far East outside of Japan which will have an important influence on the security of Japan.” However, cooperation in the event of “situations in the Far East” in the third area was never given substantial consideration due to legal, political, and social constraints in postwar Japan.

The Japanese government’s sense of crisis about such a situation rose with the 1994 Korean Peninsula crisis, which stemmed from suspicions about North Korea’s nuclear development.⁹ As the United States actually prepared for war, there was concern that the Japan-U.S. security alliance could not be maintained if Japan took no action. TANAKA Hitoshi wrote that “Japan’s flaws came out endlessly” when Japanese government ministries and agencies examined the country’s response and legal issues under three scenarios: economic

⁸ Office of International Security Affairs, Department of Defense. “United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region.” February 27, 1995. <https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/JPUS/19950227.O1E.html>.

⁹ Upon his return from the Japan-U.S. summit meeting in February 1994, Hosokawa wrote in his diary, “According to U.S. intelligence sources, ... there is more than a 50% chance of an armed invasion by the North in the time span of the next six to 18 months.”

sanctions, maritime inspection and maritime interdiction actions, and armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula (Tanaka 2009, 64).

Fortunately, the crisis subsided quickly, but the core of Japan's issues was truly the issue of its support for the United States in "situations in areas surrounding Japan." Thus, efforts to formulate "New Guidelines" began in May 1996. The items to be considered largely followed the framework of the 1978 Guidelines, and included (1) cooperation under normal circumstances, (2) actions in response to an armed attack against Japan, and (3) cooperation in situations in areas surrounding Japan that will have an important influence on Japan's peace and security (situations in areas surrounding Japan).

Of particular importance was the third item, response to "situations in areas surrounding Japan." Thus, the "New Guidelines" agreed to in September 1997 stipulated in detail responses to "situations in the Far East" as "situations in areas surrounding Japan," which had been put off at the time of the enactment of the Guidelines in 1978. In May 1999, the Act on Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan was enacted.¹⁰

At the time, China's 1992 Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone defined the Senkaku Islands and their waters as Chinese territory, and China's aggressive maritime expansion had gradually heightened wariness of China in Japan. However, there was not an exceptionally high sense of crisis about a Taiwan contingency among policy makers who were working on the revision of the Japan-U.S. Guidelines and the development of the Act on Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan. It was the above-mentioned situation in which there was serious concern about a contingency on the Korean Peninsula that triggered a keen awareness by Japan and the United States of the need for a joint response to "situations in areas surrounding Japan." In other words, the logic and reality of de facto Japan-U.S.-ROK security cooperation existed as the backdrop for the "New Guidelines" and the Act on Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan.

(2) Japan-ROK Relations

After President Chun stepped down, the Roh administration was inaugurated in February 1988 following a democratic presidential election. President Roh oversaw the successful completion of the Seoul Olympics held in the fall of the same year, and took advantage of the momentum created by the end of the Cold War to aggressively pursue "Northern Diplomacy." He also achieved the normalization of diplomatic relations with Eastern European countries one after another,¹¹ and established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and China in September 1990 and August 1992, respectively.

In the meantime, in response to the Gulf War that broke out in January 1991, the Roh

¹⁰ The act defines situations in areas surrounding Japan as "situations that will have an important influence on Japan's peace and security, including situations that, if left unattended, could result in a direct armed attack on Japan." It defines rear area support for the United States as "support measures, including the provision of goods, services, and conveniences, given by Japan in rear areas to the U.S. Forces conducting activities that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in situations in areas surrounding Japan."

¹¹ The ROK normalized its diplomatic relations with Hungary in February 1989, Poland in November 1989, Yugoslavia in December 1989, and Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania in March 1990.

administration dispatched a medical aid mission (154 personnel) to Saudi Arabia in January and an air force transport convoy (160 personnel in five C-130 transport planes) to the United Arab Emirates in February. The largest opposition party, the Peace Democratic Party (led by Kim Dae-jung), agreed to the government's measures on the condition that no combat troops be deployed, and there was no significant backlash in public opinion (Murooka 2011).

The Roh administration, promoting Northern Diplomacy, urged Japan and the United States to improve relations with North Korea and announced a policy of "cross-recognition." In Japan, Chief Cabinet Secretary OBUCHI Keizo of the Takeshita Cabinet announced in July 1988 a policy of beginning direct dialogue with North Korea. North Korea had become increasingly isolated in international affairs since the end of the Cold War, and had good reason to seek an outlet by improving relations with Japan. In September 1990, there was a visit to North Korea by a joint delegation of the LDP and the Japan Socialist Party, led by KANEMARU Shin of the LDP and Socialist Party Vice Chairman TANABE Makoto. This led to eight rounds of negotiations for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea between January 1991 and November 1992.

As described above, as the Cold War was ending across Northeast Asia, Defense Agency Director General ISHIKAWA Yozo visited the ROK in December 1990. This was the second official visit to the ROK by a director general of the Defense Agency since YAMASHITA Ganri in July 1979, at the end of the Park Chung-hee administration. Director General Ishikawa and ROK Defense Minister Lee Jong Koo agreed to "promote military exchange and security cooperation between Japan and the ROK within the triangular security system of Japan, the ROK, and the United States" (Togashi 2017, 54-55). In April 1994, Defense Minister Lee Byung-tae became the first ROK defense minister to visit Japan. Then, Defense Agency Director General ETO Seishiro visited the ROK in September 1995 and agreed with the ROK side to make the Japan-ROK defense summit meeting a periodically-held consultation. Subsequently, Japan's Director General of the Defense Agency and the ROK's Defense Minister of the Ministry of National Defense, as well as Japan's Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff and the ROK's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regularly engaged in reciprocal country visits. In September 1996, the first visit of Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels to the ROK was realized, and in August 1999, the first joint search and rescue exercise between the MSDF and the ROK Navy was conducted (Yamamoto 2012, 24-26).

As defense exchanges between Japan and the ROK progressed in this way, negotiations for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea came to a standstill amid suspicions about North Korea's nuclear development. Ironically, this meant that nuclear weapons were another source of leverage for isolated North Korea. This emerging new security factor of North Korea's nuclear development prompted further defense exchanges between Japan and the ROK.

Amid deepening suspicions about its nuclear development, North Korea signed a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in January 1992. However, the IAEA's inspections of North Korea's nuclear facilities were limited, which intensified suspicions that North Korea was developing nuclear weapons. In February 1993, North Korea rejected a special inspection by the IAEA, and in March 1993, it announced its

withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In May 1993, North Korea launched its first medium-range missile, the Nodong-1, toward the sea off the Noto Peninsula.¹²

When the Clinton administration began to consider sanctions against North Korea amid the situation, North Korea claimed that economic sanctions would mean a declaration of war, and at the North-South working-level consultations in March 1994, North Korea threatened that Seoul would become a “sea of fire” if war broke out. As the situation quickly became tense, the United States made military preparations for the worst-case scenario and the Korean Peninsula crisis reached its peak.

Ultimately, North Korea accepted a visit by former President Jimmy Carter in June, Kim Il Sung announced a freeze on its nuclear development program, and the expulsion of IAEA inspectors was withdrawn. As a result, talks between the two countries began in July, leading to the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework in October, which was centered on support for the construction of light-water reactors by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Thus, the Korean Peninsula crisis, which had been triggered by suspicions about North Korea’s nuclear development, was temporarily settled.

Under the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework, policy consultations between Japan, the ROK, and the United States officially began. Prime Minister MURAYAMA Tomiichi, President Kim Young-sam, and President Bill Clinton met during the APEC Leaders’ Meeting in Jakarta in November, marking the first informal meeting between the leaders of Japan, the ROK, and the United States. Subsequently, in July 1996, the first Japan-ROK-U.S. trilateral foreign ministers’ meeting was held in Jakarta during the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the first official Japan-ROK-U.S. Trilateral Summit Meeting was held between Prime Minister OBUCHI, President Kim Dae-jung, and President Clinton during the APEC Leaders’ Meeting in New Zealand in September 1999 (Lee 2015, 153-154).

In the 1990s, concurrently with the above-mentioned development of the North Korea issue and the progress of Japan-ROK defense exchanges and policy discussions, the historical issue centered on comfort women arose between Japan and the ROK. This was triggered by a former comfort woman in the ROK who came forward in August 1991 and filed a lawsuit in the Tokyo District Court in December 1991. The MIYAZAWA Kiichi Cabinet immediately launched an investigation into the issue in December (Tanino 2015, 239-242). When Prime Minister Miyazawa visited the ROK in January 1992, he apologized to President Roh, expressing “heartfelt feelings of apology and remorse” for the comfort women and the intention to “clarify the facts wholeheartedly.” This yielded the so-called “Kono Statement” of August 4, 1993 (Tanino 2015, 242-246), and the establishment of the National Fund for Asian

¹² The Miyazawa Cabinet’s Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary ISHIHARA Nobuo announced information provided by the United States that the missile’s range was 1,000 km and included Osaka.

Peace and Women (Asian Women's Fund) in June 1995.¹³

Following this, Prime Minister MURAYAMA Tomiichi, who had formed the coalition government of the LDP, the Japan Socialist Party, and the New Party Sakigake, saw the cabinet decision on the Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the War's End (the so-called "Murayama Statement") marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II on August 15, 1995. The Murayama Statement has since become established as a foundational document expressing the recognition of history of successive Japanese governments, although it has often been challenged by conservative views of history within Japan.

Although there was a backlash in ROK public opinion and progressive forces in the political community who viewed Japan's response as inadequate, the ROK government generally responded positively to the Japanese government's handling of the situation. This was partly due to Prime Minister Hosokawa's clear apology premised on Japan being a perpetrator during the Japan-ROK summit meeting in Gyeongju in November 1993.¹⁴ When the Asian Women's Fund was established in 1995, the Kim Young-sam administration also made it clear that there would be no further financial demands toward Japan and that the comfort women issue was settled (Tanino 2015, 246, 252).

When President Kim Dae-jung was inaugurated in February 1998, relations between Japan and the ROK developed dramatically. During President Kim's visit to Japan in October of the same year, Prime Minister Obuchi agreed to document an apology for Japan's colonial rule in a joint statement, and the Japan-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration: A New Japan-Republic of Korea Partnership towards the Twenty-first Century was released on October 8.¹⁵ In his speech at the Japanese Diet, President Kim spoke highly of Japan's security policy and role in the international community following World War II, without mentioning colonial rule. Upon his return to the ROK, Kim took steps for the acceptance of Japanese popular culture in the country, which had long been restricted after the war. For some time thereafter, Japan-ROK relations were unmistakably at their best in the postwar period, including a trend of appreciation for each country's popular culture with the Korean Wave in Japan and the

¹³ The Asian Women's Fund widely raised funds from the Japanese public, and provided the Philippines, the ROK, Taiwan, the Netherlands, and Indonesia with two million yen per person in atonement money and 1.2 to three million yen worth of medical and welfare projects. The fund activities were accompanied by letters of apology signed by successive prime ministers (HASHIMOTO Ryutaro, OBUCHI Keizo, MORI Yoshiro, and KOIZUMI Junichiro). As for the ROK, a delegation from the Fund visited the ROK in January 1997 and handed a letter of apology from the prime minister to seven former comfort women. Since then, the number of Korean former comfort women who have received atonement money from the Asian Women's Fund (remitted by Japan) has risen to 61.

¹⁴ In his opening remarks at the joint press conference following the November 7 summit meeting, Prime Minister Hosokawa stated, "I would like to express my deepest regret and apology from the bottom of my heart for the unbearable suffering and sorrow that the people of the Korean Peninsula have experienced in various ways as a result of Japan's colonial rule in the past, including being deprived of opportunities to learn their native language at school and having their family names changed to the Japanese style."

¹⁵ "Looking back on the relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea during this century, Prime Minister Obuchi regarded in a spirit of humility the fact of history that Japan caused, during a certain period in the past, tremendous damage and suffering to the people of the Republic of Korea through its colonial rule, and expressed his deep remorse and heartfelt apology for this fact."

Japanese culture boom in the ROK.

(3) Analysis

The 1991 Gulf War, triggered by the collapse of the Cold War structure, was a major incident that shook Japan's security policy and, in particular demanded that Japan make a visible contribution through the participation of the SDF. As previously mentioned, the Japan-U.S. security relationship began to take the form of an alliance in the 1980s, but this did not extend to a military role for the SDF in areas other than Japan's defense. In this context, the experience of the failure to make a meaningful military contribution during the Gulf War left Japanese policymakers with so-called "Gulf trauma." On the other hand, the ROK had dispatched a medical aid mission and an air force transport convoy without much domestic turmoil. This contrast highlighted the limitations of Japan's postwar security policy, which was backward-looking in the military domain.

The same issue was demonstrated in the Japan-U.S. Alliance amid the North Korean nuclear development suspicions and the Korean Peninsula crisis. In the 1980s, Japan's defense efforts began to be assessed in the logic of their contribution to U.S. strategy. However, it became apparent that Japan was completely unprepared for what kind of supportive action it would be able to provide should the U.S. military actually engage in combat operations on the Korean Peninsula. This led to the initiation of the revision of the "Guidelines" defining the SDF's role in "situations in areas surrounding Japan."

Needless to say, the ROK-U.S. Alliance is a military alliance entailing a commitment to fight together in the event of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. In this aspect as well, the experience since the end of the Cold War has concretely demonstrated that there is a clear gap between Japan and ROK, in the same way as the response to the Gulf War.

However, it was also true that Japan's security policy showed some important changes within its limitations during the post-Cold War era, such as the first postwar deployment of the SDF overseas to participate in peace operations in Cambodia and the revision of the Japan-U.S. "Guidelines" while under the threat of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. The fact that such changes on the part of Japan went hand in hand with the promotion of defense exchanges between Japan and the ROK indicated that the two countries became closer during the period of shifts in international politics at the end of the Cold War. The changes in Japanese security policy met with resistance within Japan, and there were also political and social concerns expressed in the ROK. However, broadly speaking, Japan-ROK cooperation entered a new realm.

The same can be said of the historical issues symbolized by the emergence of the comfort women issue. The foundation of Japan's postwar diplomacy was based on a mixture of different forms of logic based on the post-World War II process and response to the Cold War. The end of the Cold War meant that the logic of the postwar process, which had been overshadowed by the reality of the Cold War, was freed from the logic of the Cold War. Therefore, it was rather natural for the Japanese government to directly tackle historical issues in the 1990s. There was also still a certain understanding of the Japanese government's efforts during the presidencies of Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung. In particular, President Kim Dae-jung's

policy toward Japan and Prime Minister Obuchi's response, while in a different international and domestic political environment than in the 1980s, again demonstrated the importance of political leadership.

However, the fact that the process in the 1990s did not necessarily progress smoothly was in part influenced by the democratization of ROK politics from the end of the 1980s. When considering Japan-ROK relations, the factor of democratization in the ROK should be seen as an intermediate factor from the perspective of how it interacted with the international political changes brought about by the end of the Cold War. As for the relationship between historical issues and democratization, as discussed above, the end of the Cold War brought unresolved post-war settlement issues to the forefront, which elicited responses in the democratized ROK's public opinion and politics.

As democratization progressed in the ROK, leftwing liberal actors reacted to the response to the comfort women issue and the Murayama Statement on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, claiming that the Japanese government's response was inadequate. By contrast, in Japan, rightwing nationalists began to oppose the Japanese government's diplomatic response and the protests from the ROK. These diametrically opposed reactions in the political societies of the two countries would complicate not only their respective domestic political environments but also the management of Japan-ROK relations.

Conclusion

The signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty (September 1951) as well as the end of Japan's occupation (April 1952) all occurred during the Korean War (June 1950 to July 1953). The primary mission of U.S. forces stationed in Japan under the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was the defense of the ROK, which had an integral role in the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty signed in October 1953. In other words, the security relationship between Japan and the ROK was inherent in the logic and dynamics of security cooperation between Japan, the ROK, and the United States from its inception.

However, diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK were not normalized until 1965. And as this paper has shown, it was not until the 1980s that there was realization of cooperation in the name of security between Japan and the ROK. However, the Park Chung-hee administration became increasingly isolated in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the Nixon administration's foreign policy was drastically changed. The administration then began to consider defense cooperation with Japan and welcomed Japan's role under the security relationship with the United States (Cha 2003, Choi 2014). It can be said that the contours of Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation had already begun to substantially emerge with this. However, Japan's reaction was still backward-looking.

As this paper has shown, Japan's approach changed drastically during the Nakasone administration in the 1980s. The key factor behind this change was the formation of the alliance in Japan-U.S. relations initiated by the Ohira Cabinet and developed by the Nakasone Cabinet. In other words, Japan began to explicitly define the Japan-U.S. security relationship

as a contribution to U.S. strategy and to see a regional and global role for Japan-U.S. relations beyond the framework of bilateral relations. This naturally led to the emergence of the importance of relations with the ROK, another key U.S. strategic ally in Asia.

Following the end of the Cold War in 1989, the ROK pursued “Northern Diplomacy” and Japan moved toward normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea while stepping into the realm of multilateral security. However, in the process, suspicions about North Korea’s nuclear development emerged, and for a time the Korean Peninsula crisis came close to the brink of war. Amidst this, the Japan-U.S. security relationship was “reaffirmed” and defense exchanges between Japan and the ROK were further developed. At the same time, democratization progressed in ROK politics and society in the 1990s, and historical issues resurfaced with the collapse of the Cold War structure, opening an era of complicated and difficult political management of Japan-ROK relations (Kimura 2014; Kimura, Tanaka, and Kim 2020).

Of course, Japan-ROK relations during the Cold War era up to the 1980s were also rocked by political conflicts due to differing recognitions and interpretations of the colonial period in the ROK. However, ultimately the administrations at the time attempted to solve them through political decisions. It was of particular significance that the ROK was under the de facto dictatorship of Park Chung-hee during the process of normalizing Japan-ROK diplomatic relations and throughout the 1970s, and then under the dictatorship of Chun Doo-hwan during the 1980s.

Although successive LDP administrations continued in Japan during that period, the way security relations with ROK were perceived differed according to the different approaches of the administrations at the time toward security policy centered on Japan-U.S. security relations. The realization of Japan-ROK cooperation in the 1980s, which entailed economic assistance yet also put security implications at the forefront, was largely due to the security policies of the Ohira and Nakasone Cabinets under the new Cold War.

In other words, the key factors that led to the de facto security cooperation between Japan, the ROK, and the United States in the 1980s were the existence of a conservative administration in the ROK that emphasized the North Korean threat and the formation of the alliance based on Japan-U.S. security relations in Japan. However, from the 1990s onward, the new domestic situation in the two countries, including the ROK’s democratization and the political fluidity following the collapse of the 1955 system in Japan, began to have a significant impact on Japan-ROK relations and, by extension, on the nature of Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation. Although the logic and structure of Japan-ROK-U.S. security cooperation that emerged in the 1980s was basically carried over into the subsequent post-Cold War era, the management of Japan-ROK relations became an extremely complex diplomatic undertaking in light of further changes in post-Cold War international politics and the domestic political climates in the two countries.

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