THE SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
IN THE CONTEXT OF NORTHEAST ASIAN
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

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Introduction

Any careful observer of the modern history of Korea cannot help but feel sympathy for the Korean people. As if destined by some uncontrollable forces, all the factors that seem to make contemporary international political issues insoluble converge on the Korean peninsula. Korea is a small nation divided into two parts. Over the small peninsula the vital interests of four out of the five major world powers—the United States, the USSR, China, and Japan—intersect for its geo-strategically important location. Although initially divided against the will of the Korean people by outside forces, South Korea and North Korea have developed in the past forty years, different socio-economic and political systems in which people of each side have profound stakes. Both Koreas maintain huge armed forces and face each other with deep suspicion and hostility. The bloody war of the early 1950s and the ideological confrontation between the East and West further deepen the cleavages between the two Koreas.

In view of continued convergence of interests of external powers, the maintenance of stability and peace on the Korean peninsula has been a prerequisite or “necessary condition” to keeping the regional peace and security in Northeast Asia. Conversely, the breakdown of stability in the region or the eruption of a dangerous imbalance of power among the four powers, possibly emanating from the shifting power configuration among them, is likely to seriously affect the local situation on the Korean peninsula. In this regard, Mor-
ton Abramowitz, a prominent American career diplomat/scholar, once made quite a poignant comment: "Korea is internationally bound up with the structure of peace in East Asia and cannot be viewed in isolation from that structure. What happens in Korea is crucial to the development of U.S.-Japanese relations, U.S.-Chinese relations and perhaps most importantly for Asia in the long run."

It is indeed in this context that President Chun Doo Hwan of the Republic of Korea has repeatedly stressed that stability on the Korean peninsula is pivotally related to peace and stability in Northeast Asia, thereby being directly linked to that of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. Moreover, in the light of a growing shared conviction that the issue of security is becoming increasingly *indivisible* in our interdependent world, a stabilization of the precarious "power keg" situation on the Korean peninsula seems to be a really serious challenge for us to met in order to maintain a peaceful world. The mere fact that Northeast Asia, including the Korean peninsula, is the world’s most militarized region, with armaments exceeding even those concentrated in the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation area in Europe demonstrates that the above statement is not a mere rhetoric.

From the security perspective of the Republic of Korea (ROK), the security environment in Northeast Asia may be analytically composed of the following several complex global, regional, and local subsystems:

1. the global American-Soviet rivalry;
2. the global and regional great-power triangle between/among the USA, the USSR, and the PRC;
3. the Northern triangle between/among North Korea, the USSR, and the PRC;
4. the Southern triangle between/among South Korea, the USA, and Japan;
5. South and North confrontation in the Korean peninsula.

The security of the ROK may be grasped as a direct or indirect function of complicated interaction and linkages between/among the subsystems above which constitute the regional security environment of Northeast Asia and of course, that of ROK. Against this backdrop, the following research questions are attempted in this paper:
(1) What is the nature of security threat facing the ROK as a small state surrounded by the great powers from both historical and contemporary perspectives?

(2) How has been the security of the Korean peninsula structurally interlinked to the strategic environment in Northeast Asia in recent years?

(3) What would be the security perspective of the ROK to cope with its inherent security vulnerability?

**Historical Review of Korea’s Security Problem**

The Korean peninsula’s geographical location makes it vital to the interests of other major powers. Historically, therefore, Korea has been sensitive to the changing-power configuration in its international environment, but as a small nation it has never come to possess enough power to influence the outcome of power conflicts of others over the area. That Korea had maintained its territorial integrity and cultural identity for almost 2,000 years is largely due to the traditional Chinese perspective of foreign relations: the tributary system. By paying symbolic tribute to China, Korea managed to have China tolerate an independent Korea. Even now both Koreas have enough military capability to destroy each other but not enough to disentangle the web of conflicting interests of outside forces.

The strategic importance of Korea has been amply demonstrated in history. As a small peninsula attached to the eastern tip of the vast Asian land mass, it has been regarded as an outlet for Chinese influence as well as an invasion route for outside forces to the Chinese continent. Ancient Chinese civilization spread through Korea to Japan. When the Mongols established their dominance in the Asian continent, they used Korea as a front post for their military campaign against Japan. Thus since Korea was located 110 miles from Japan, Japan regarded Korea as a dagger pointed at its heart. After bringing an end to the civil wars among the Japanese feudal lords, Hideyoshi used the restless warrior class to invade Korea in order to conquer China. Feeble as the Ming court was, it was obliged largely out of security concerns to send troops to aid
Korea. After the Meiji restoration, the frustrated warrior class in Japan again clamored for invading Korea, and Japan, feeling confident enough about its newly acquired military power, tried again to extend its influence over the peninsula. Understandably, it came into conflict with the traditional claims of China, resulting in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894. The defeat of China in the war brought about a fundamental change in the power configuration of the region; while Japan obtained exclusive rights over Korea, the Ching dynasty in China eventually collapsed. Meanwhile, Imperial Russia looked at Korea as an enticing base as well as a southward corridor in its search for warm-water ports. When Russia obtained concessions from China in Manchuria, it also perceived controlling Korea to be vital because it was located between Manchuria and its maritime province. The conflicting claims of Russia and Japan were settled by the 1905 war. Victorious Japan proceeded to colonize Korea, whereas defeated Russia subsequently began to revitalize itself through the Bolshevik Revolution.

Using Korea as its front base, Japan embarked on its ambitious plan of establishing the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere by invading deep into the heartland of China. This military expansion of Japan understandably came into conflict with the interests of the United States which had by then become a full-fledged Pacific power. Japanese-U.S. rivalry eventually led to Pearl Harbor and U.S. entry into World War II. When the Japanese surrender became imminent, the leaders of the allied nations decided that the United States and the Soviet Union would occupy each half of the peninsula to disarm the Japanese forces. Although originally taken for military convenience, the decision was a fateful one for the Korean people as the subsequent Cold War made the division a permanent one.

Probably with the acquiescence of at least Stalin, Kim II-Sung of North Korea challenged the partition of Korea by invading South Korea. Regarding it as a proxy war of the communist bloc against the free world, the United States sent military forces under the flag of the United Nations. When the U.N. forces victoriously approached the Yalu River, the newly established Beijing regime, seeing the advance as a threat to itself, sent the Chinese Voluntary
Forces, risking an all-out confrontation with the most powerful nation. The Korean War was, however, contained and ended in a stalemate. Nonetheless, it had profound regional and global ramifications. The war further intensified the confrontation between the two blocks. Though successful in saving North Korea, the PRC earned condemnation as an aggressor in the international community, thus facing no alternative but to become more dependent on the Soviet Union. It took more than two decades to end the Sino-U.S. hostility largely created by the Korean conflict, and when the two nations normalized their diplomatic relations, the global bipolar system also came to an end.

Basically from the 1970s on, for the security of the ROK, a sort of ‘multipolarity’, especially predicated in terms of the five subsystems mentioned in the previous section, has worked on, although some may be more influential than others, depending upon different issue areas or varying situations. As discerned in past patterns and recent trends in the strategic environment in Northeast Asia, among the five subsystems, the inter-Korean relationship appears largely to be a critical component *inter alia* of the security of the ROK, not to mention the regional security in Northeast Asia.

It is in this context that the Korean peninsula serves not only as a ‘dagger’ pointing at Japan and as a U.S. base in the Western Pacific but also as a potential ‘knife’ poised at the PRC’s back.

In order to come to grips with the current vulnerable security aspect, faced by the ROK, it may be useful, first of all, to examine the shifting strategic environment in Northeast Asia, particularly in recent years, which may have direct bearing upon the inter-Korean relationship. Then, it seems to be in logical order to look into the basically unchanged ‘cold war’ situation on the Korean peninsula.

**The Shifting Strategic Environment in Northeast Asia**

Especially from the ROK perspective, the so-called four-power interstate system (the United States, the Soviet Union, the PRC, and Japan) in Northeast Asia has been regarded as a kind of balance of power or equilibrium in which the four powers constantly interact and adjust their relationships, each trying not only to maintain and improve its position but also to prevent a dangerous new imbalance from emerging.
Since the late 1970s, however, the strategic environment of the region has been undergoing a fundamental transformation with the rapprochment between the United States and the PRC. This development has moved in the direction to cooperation, in varying degrees, among the United States, Japan, and the PRC on the one hand, and resulted, in effect, in an emerging loose coalition, which has revealed an anti-Soviet nature, on the other hand.

The rapprochement between the United States and China has been generally favourably viewed, for the Soviet military expansion has been singled out as the main source of threat. Particularly for the Koreans, the PRC has been expected to exert a restraining influence on North Korea's basic aggressive posture to unify the Korean peninsula by military means, which is diametrically opposed to its aspiration to keep "the peaceful and quiet environment" for pursuing its vigorous "four-modernization" drive.

However, in recent years, the so-called four power interstate system in Northeast Asia has been visibly showing a state of flux, together with marked uncertainty and fluidity. Notably the Soviet Secretary-General Gorbachev, who came to power in March 1985, has put an added momentum in this regard by taking the initiative in enhancing the Soviet political and diplomatic influence in Asia and the Pacific, including the Northeast Asian region, through his multi-dimensional peace offensive in the region, as revealed in his Vladivostock address on July 28, 1986.

Gorbachev has renewed the Soviet call for an 'Asian Security Forum' similar to the Helsinki-type accord in Europe. However, it should be noted, regarding Gorbachev's concept of an Asian security conference originally transpired in a summit meeting with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in May 1985 in Moscow, that he has intended to mainly contain the U.S. influence in Asia in his conception of an Asian security scheme. This reveals a striking contrast to the previous Brezhnev's proposal of the "Asian collective security" scheme which seemed to have intended in great part to control Chinese influence. This line of intention the part of the new Soviet peace offensive in Asia and the Pacific, particularly Northeast Asia,
may suggest us a crucial implication that the U.S.-Soviet rivalry in Northeast Asia is likely to continue, although some progress being assumed to be made globally in such fields as arms control and other issues in Geneva negotiations.

Given the Soviet attitude to take for granted its tremendous military buildup as a *fait accompli* and at the same time to aim at increasing its political and diplomatic influence, perhaps commensurate with its military power in the region, it is obvious that the U.S.-Soviet power rivalry seems likely to reinforce.

On the other hand, however, a significant move to rapprochement has appeared in Sino-Soviet relations, due in large part to the new Soviet peace offensive. There have been frequent high-level contacts as well as rapid expansion of trade and cultural exchanges. Furthermore, Soviet attitude toward China on media commentary has also changed considerably, becoming more conciliatory and respectful. In particular, Gorbachev's announcement of a limited troop withdrawal from Afghanistan by the end of 1986, his suggestion for partial withdrawal of troops from Mongolia and willingness to negotiate reductions of troops along Sino-Soviet border might well be regarded as a significant gesture addressed to two of China's so-called three obstacles to closer political relations.

The responses of Chinese leadership to these Soviet overtures seem to be not neglected. Although they do not fail to attach some reservations, the general tenor of the Chinese response, welcoming the new elements there, seems to be rather positive enough to suggest that China is likely to look forward to exploiting the forthcoming Soviet attitude.

Both the Soviet Union and China seem to have sufficient reasons to be interested in seeking improved relations. In recent years, since the Soviets have become more worried than before about the ever-strengthening U.S.-Chinese relations, it is likely, therefore, that they feel compelled to check the continuing developments of the strategic cooperation between the U.S. and China. On the other hand, China needs a peaceful environment in Northeast Asia to continue to pursue its modernization programme without hindrance. To ensure a peaceful environment on its border, China needs improved
relation with the Soviet Union, so that the latter would not pose a security threat.

However, despite some likely new developments favourable toward reconciliation of the Sino-Soviet relations, the prospects for substantial improvement in their relations are still doubtful. China continues to urge that Soviet Union should put pressure upon Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia. Moreover, China seems not so naive as to take for granted that the flexible attitudes toward Afghanistan and Mongolia as shown in Gorbachev’s Vladivostok speech could be translated into concrete actions satisfactory to its purport. Also, Gorbachev regime has made some progress in reinvigorating Japan-Soviet relations. The Foreign Minister Shevardnadze’s visit to Tokyo in January in 1986, the first by a Soviet foreign minister to Japan in ten years, marked the resumption of regular consultations at the foreign ministerial level, and considerably contributed to the prospects of improved relations between the two countries. The subsequent visit by the-then Japanese Foreign Minister Abe to Moscow in May in the same year and reported visit of Gorbachev to Japan in early 1987 are indications of positive development in the Japan-Soviet relations. In his Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev again placed emphasis on the need and willingness to improve the Soviet relations with Japan, particularly in the field of economic cooperation.

Although it is recognized that the general atmosphere surrounding Soviet-Japan relations will considerably improve if Gorbachev’s visit to Japan could be realized coupled with increased cooperations in trade and economic exchange between the two countries, the issue of northern territories will remain as a critical hurdle to the substantial progress in their relations.

As a cursory review of the so-called four power system reveals, it has been in recent years in a state of flux, showing marked uncertainty and fluidity, as already suggested above.

Under these circumstances, our foremost concern in the revitalization of the Soviet policy towards Asia is its intensified cooperation with North Korea. The exchanges of high-level visits have been considerably increased since North Korean President, Kim Il-Sung’s
visit to the Soviet Union in May 1984 and again in October 1986. As a result of these, the Soviets and North Korea have significantly strengthened their diplomatic, economic and military ties recently. Particularly, military cooperations have been conspicuous and alarming. The Soviets have begun to supply to North Korea sophisticated weapons, including MIG 23s, SAM-3, and SCUD missiles, North Korea, in return, has permitted Soviet warplanes to overfly across its territory and the Soviet warships to use its ports facilities.

Quite understandably, North Korea, on its part, desperately may need Soviet assistance in the efforts to modernize the military capability and to improve its economy which continues to be in an unprecedented trouble. Also, North Korea is badly wanting the Soviet support for the smooth process of its internal power transition, for the restoration of its crumpled position in international community after Rangoon atrocity, and also for its campaign to disrupt '88 Seoul Olympics. North Koreans may have concluded that these multiple needs for them could be more effectively met by the Soviets rather than by the Chinese, who are preoccupied with their own modernization programmes.

It is generally viewed that the closer ties between the Soviet Union and North Korea are likely to continue for a considerable period of time to come, given that the Soviet strategic interest coincides with the North Korea’s need for Soviet assistance at present.

Since North Korean goal of communizing the whole peninsula and their aggressive behaviors remain unchanged, it is a matter of grave concern that the Soviet military assistance to North Korea, in particular, will further tip the military balance on the Korean peninsula in North Korea’s favour, and might encourage North Korean adventurism.

Despite North Korea’s recent tilting toward the USSR, there has been little sign of change in the traditional ties of friendship between the PRC and North Korea. However, China has watched with keen interest a series of new development involving the Soviet Union and North Korea. While maintaining that closer military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow will not constitute a grave threat to the security of the PRC, China appears deeply concerned that North Korea
has permitted Soviet warplanes to make flights over its territory and naval vessels to use North Korean ports.

In view of the structurally unstable nature of the four power relations in the strategic environment in Northeast and of growing strains discernable among the so-called Northern triangle, namely, North Korea, the PRC and the Soviet Union, the recent security environment surrounding the Korean peninsula specially ROK, has been getting more precarious in recent years. Particularly our grave concern is with the structurally vulnerable aspect of the Northern triangular relationships. North Korea has been able to maintain an independent stance by adroitly capitalizing on the persisting rivalry between Moscow and Beijing which are competing each other for Pyongyang’s favour. Because of North Korea’s geostrategic importance as a valued Communist neighbour, no one can be sure that either the PRC or the Soviet Union could restrain Pyongyang with an effective measure, if and when it got out of control and decided to take military adventurism against the South.

The Current Situation on the Korean Peninsula:

Inter-Korean Relations

During the last decade, the Korean problem has been, in fact, localized to some extent, and an inter-Korean dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang began in an atmosphere of worldwide detente. From the mid-1970s onward, however, Kim Il-Sung’s Communist regime in the North, suspending unilaterally the dialogue, has ever intensified its military preparedness to take over the South. Why did North Korea abruptly suspend the inter-Korean dialogue during this period? What were their real intentions or motives? The following three facts may betray their “honne” (real intents), as opposed to “datemae” (official reasons).

First, the North demanded highly political and unacceptable preconditions of the South for the mutual visits of separated families in the Red Cross talks, which the North had suspended much later than the political talks, including (1) abolition of the anti-Communist laws in the South and (2) ban on anti-Communist activities and dissolution of anti-Communist organizations in the South. These demands are
actually tantamount to demanding the abolition of the South Korean government so that the North may freely instigate internal communist revolution within the South.

Second, it was a well-known fact that North Korea was digging invasion tunnels under the DMZ during this period. The two of the three tunnels that have been located so far are capable of passing a division of armed men an hour. Taking into account the fact that the first tunnel was discovered in November 1974 and it would take at least a few years to complete several tunnels, the North Koreans must have begun to dig the tunnels during the very period when the first inter-Korean dialogue began in the early 1970s. This was actually confirmed by a North Korean defector who disclosed that the North Korean Workers’ Party’s order to dig tunnels came down in September 1971 just 12 days after North Korea had agreed to hold Red Cross meetings.

Third, Kim Il-Sung visited China in April 1975 and East European countries in May-June 1975. It should be noted that a peace treaty between North Vietnam and the United States was signed in January 1973 and that the political talks between South and North Korea were suspended in August 1973. Considering such a series of events during this period, it can be safely concluded that North Korea must have felt time was ripe for North Korea to “liberate” the South in view of the fact that the United States was not likely to get involved in another “civil war” and that the Soviet Union and China would not refuse to provide military assistance to North Korea. Later, it was reported that Kim Il-Sung went to China to request Chinese support for his plan to liberate the South but China refused to comply. He also wanted to see Brezhnev but Brezhnev refused to see him.

This interlude of peace negotiations in the former part of the 1970s reveals the following facts about the complex inter-Korean relationship and its impact on the Northeast Asian security system. (1) Changes in the big power triangle led to changes in the inter-Korean relationship. Specifically, the U.S.-Soviet detente and the U.S.-China detente provided a favourable environment for the South-North dialogue. (2) North Korea was interested not so much in peace negotiations
with South Korea as in the political penetration of South Korea. (3) North Korea's perception of U.S. commitment to the defense of South Korea was directly related to its policy toward South Korea. Specifically, when the North Korean leaders believed that the U.S. defense commitment was firm, they resorted to a peace offensive. However, when they believed that the U.S. defense commitment was not certain, they reverted to their militant posture. (4) particularly when both allies refused to give their support, North Korea stopped its plan to liberate the South. Finally, the three big powers tacitly supported the South North dialogue but did not play any intermediary role. On the other hand, when the South-North dialogue broke down, the Soviet Union and China restrained North Korea’s militant policy.

These hindsights derived from actual North Korean behavior toward the South in the early 1970s reveal not only clear, albeit complex, linkage patterns between the North's behavior and the big power triangle, as mentioned above, but also the persistent nature of its basic objective, namely to "liberate" the South, although the North appears often to resort to shifting tactics according to varying situations.

Thereafter, the situation in the Korean peninsula has remained militarily tense with all contacts and dialogue suspended. Basically the inter-Korean relationship seems to be in such a precarious situation that even a minor provocative move could trigger full-scale hostilities on the peninsula.

In October 1983 North Korea undertook actions tantamount to instigating another fratricidal war on the Korean peninsula by launching a two-pronged offensive against the South: a combination of violent and non-violent methods. It attempted to kill the head of state of South Korea a day before it proposed peace talks with South Korean and the United States.

Another observation drawn from the North Korean perpetration at Rangoon and their simultaneous peace offensive against the South is that the North Korean leaders intend to resort mainly to "people's war" tactics in the 1980s, as opposed to a military invasion for the mid-1970s. North Korea's use of different tactics could be again accounted for largely in terms of its calculated assessment vis-a-vis the big power tri-
angle surrounding the Korean peninsula, notably the firm American defense commitment to South Korea. In other words, North Korea perceived that in the mid-1970s the U.S. commitment to the defense of South Korea was uncertain in the wake of the U.S. debacle in Indochina, whereas in 1983 there were strong U.S.—Korean security ties under the Reagan administration, thus leading to different tactics to be used against the South, as noted above. The people’s war tactics aim to undermine the anti-Communist regime in South Korea through subversion and infiltration, with a view to, first, toppling the anti-Communist regime by supporting the anti-government forces within South Korea, and then eventually establishing a pro-Communist regime in the South. The North Korean political leaders may have intended the Rangoon attack, to ferment political chaos and disorder in South Korean society allowing their people’s war tactics operate in the fertile ground.

The Rangoon incident, resulting in the diplomatic isolation of North Korea, however, must have been a traumatic experience for the North Korean leaders. Against this backdrop, North Korea continues to advocate the so-called tripartite talks. North Korea might have hoped that the United States, alarmed by North Korea’s “bold adventurism,” would feel an urgent need to contact it directly and discuss ways to maintain peace on the Korean peninsula. The real intent of North Korea’s proposal to hold tripartite talks could have been to escape from its international predicament in the wake of the Rangoon incident, open a direct contact channel with the United States, and finally, induce the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Korean peninsula. As already suggested above, this peace offensive on the part of North Korea is merely the non-violent tactics of its basic strategy, “liberating” the South.

The recent inter-Korean dialogue, resumed in such various forms as the Red Cross, economics, interparliamentary, and sports talks, beginning with in Fall 1984, has been suspended again by North Korea about one year after it started. The latter may have thought of applying similar tactics it had used in the former part of the 1970s.

Moreover, recently North Korea has been constructing a super scale Keum Kang San dam, whose maximum water storage volume will reach 20 billion metric ton, on the upper reaches on the Han River, by
mobilizing hundreds of thousands of army soldiers, clearly with its military purpose against the South. If the dam will be broken either by accident or on purpose, the heart of the middle area of the ROK, including Seoul, will suffer a flood catastrophe to such a devastating extent. North Korean attempt to construct the Keum Kang San dam creates, thus, a grave threat to the security of the ROK.

All in all, from the standpoint of the Republic of Korea, the next two to three years can be considered a vitally critical period to cope with the security threat from the North for the following reasons. Firstly, the widening economic gap between South and North is likely to be source of greater tension. By 1988, Korea's GNP is expected to exceed 100 billion, which will be six times as much as that of the North. At the same time, the military gap will tend to close. To keep on enjoying its military superiority, North Korea would have to put more than 36 per cent of its GNP into military expenditures. We are deeply concerned for this very reason that the North could be tempted to wreak havoc on the South before it becomes too late.

Secondly, North Korea is becoming increasingly irritated, because of Korea's growing international reputation and status. Notably Korea's hosting of the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics might tempt the North to commit violent actions to counter the South's success.

Last but not least important, North Korea's domestic politics surrounding the hereditary succession issue might produce greater tensions on the Korean peninsula. Kim Il-Sung is deeply concerned with the succession of his son. After Kim Il-Sung's death, or conceivably during his life, a struggle could take place within power circles. Certain factions within the North Korean leadership might be tempted to pursue adventurism against the South as a means of strengthening their own claims.

If the ROK vigilantly and successfully maintains its national security for the coming two to three years, then the probability that the North might resort to a military option would be greatly reduced because of its recognition of the impossibility of a military solution on the Korean question, thereby contributing greatly to peace and security in Northeast Asia.
In order to prevent another fratricidal war and to structure a durable peace on the Korean peninsula, the Republic of Korea will continue to exert its utmost efforts. For the ROK, the essence of security is the maintenance of peace, constituting a precondition essential to realizing its other major goals of continued economic, political and social development, which in turn greatly contribute to its supreme goal of national security.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the ROK, in order to establish durable peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, endeavors to build up a self-reliant defense capability and strengthen security ties with its allies to meet any sort of military challenge from North Korea, on the one hand (I call it "security strategy"). On the other hand, it continues to call for North Korea to join the inter-Korean dialogue to solve the Korean question, albeit seemingly appearing like a "glacier," with a firm conviction that a "thaw" will surely come to move the glacier ahead (I call it "peace strategy"). The following two aphorisms may epitomize major contours of the two above strategies of the ROK: to wit, "the vigilance is the price of freedom" is for its "security strategy" whereas "all things on earth (perhaps including even the North) eventually change" fits its "peace strategy."

Notes

3. For a detailed discussion on how the inter-Korean dialogue began and why it was abruptly suspended, see Dong-Bok Lee, "The South-North Coordinating Committee of Korea: An Analytical Review of How It Was Originally Designed to Function and How It

4. The first tunnel was discovered on November 15, 1974. This tunnel was 4ft. wide and 4ft. high, with concrete walls and ceiling. A narrow railway was built which was capable of transporting a regiment and its equipment under the DMZ in an hour. On March 13, 1975, the second tunnel was found. This was twice the size of the first one, being 6ft. wide, 6ft. high, and 3 miles long. Experts estimated that it took two years for completion. It was high enough for small vehicles, artillery pieces, and larger numbers of troops to pass through. It is said that through this tunnel two divisions could have been infiltrated across to south of the DMZ in an hour. Besides these two, by the end of 1975 American and South Korean engineers had identified an additional 16 suspected tunnel sites along the DMZ.

5. For a detailed discussion on why the ROK considers the next two to three years, particularly around the time of the Seoul Summer Olympics, to be a critical period, see Kim Kook-Chin, "Korean Politics in the 1980s : Challenges and Opportunities," an unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Security in Northeast Asia sponsored by IFANS and the Hoover Institution at Stanford, November 18-20, 1984.