
TOOLS FOR TRILATERALISM

*Improving U.S.-Japan-Korea Cooperation
to Manage Complex Contingencies*

James L. Schoff

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Introduction & Acknowledgments

One of the more successful innovations of the last six years in the area of U.S.-Japan and U.S.-South Korea alliance management has been the establishment and use of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) for developing common policies toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea). This series of regular meetings of high-level diplomats from the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK, or South Korea) has allowed the three governments to discuss together a range of options for dealing more effectively with North Korea, and it has provided a hitherto absent forum for coordinating policies on a regular basis. The benefits have included a better understanding among the three of each other's policy objectives and methods for achieving them, a lessening of concern if ends or means do not exactly correspond, a coordination of policies toward the North, and a more unified voice in dealing with the ruling regime in Pyongyang. As a result, the coordinating group became the first regular, successful trilateral process that provides some degree of substance to stand in for the missing "third leg" (the Japan-ROK connection) in the alliance structures among these three vital nations in the Asia Pacific region.

Since its formal introduction in 1999, however, the TCOG has changed a great deal, both in terms of how it functions and in terms of its role within a broader negotiating framework. Some have argued that the TCOG process has weakened over time and that it has been strained under the weight of conflicting views and interests

regarding appropriate North Korea policy. Others have countered that although the TCOG now meets less formally and less frequently, this has more to do with the underlying strength of trilateral relations, and the group simply requires fewer of the ceremonial trappings of trilateral diplomacy. The degree to which their policies and priorities differ will naturally change over time, the argument goes, but there exist certain core interests that all three parties recognize and understand, rooted in shared democratic and capitalist principles.

It would be hard to dispute that the countries' respective positions vis-à-vis North Korea have shifted quite dramatically over time, to the point where South Korea is practically playing the role of mediator between North Korea on one side, and the United States and Japan on the other. But, as this book demonstrates, each nation's policies toward North Korea have oscillated at one point or another over this short period of six years, and each has pressed for policy approaches that were at odds with those of the other two. As it seems unlikely that complete resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis will be reached during the present administration of any of the three countries, it would be premature to relegate the TCOG to the diplomatic waste bin.

The TCOG was a unique trilateral experiment, born out of need, but one that has potential utility in the future, not only with regard to North Korea policy, but also with respect to other aspects of America's relationships with its two key Asian allies. This book offers an assessment of the TCOG process and explores the opportunities for applying some of its attributes to issues beyond those of immediate North Korea policy. The first chapter describes the history of the TCOG, including its strengths and weaknesses, not only from the American vantage point, but also from the Japanese and South Korean perspectives. This discussion is the first attempt in the policy community to provide a narrative focused solely on the TCOG's evolution from the perspectives of all three countries. A thorough understanding of this evolution is essential in order to evaluate constructively the best ways to enhance trilateral policy coordination and cooperation, either as a potential model or a lesson from which to learn. The TCOG has proven itself to successive administrations in each of the three countries that it is valuable and worth maintaining (which is no small feat), but over the years

it has changed in a variety of ways, some promising and others discouraging.

The TCOG was originally established for a specific purpose: to consult on the development, and later to coordinate the implementation, of the so-called Perry Process, a 1999 official review of U.S. policy toward North Korea led by former U.S. Defense Secretary William J. Perry. The TCOG was led at the start by very senior representatives of the three countries, but over time it came to be managed at a more junior level. This was not necessarily an unwelcome development, but it has had important implications for the relative strength of the TCOG's policy formulation function (largely a bottom-up process) versus its implementation function (oversight from the top down), and it has placed greater demands on the process of interagency coordination, in particular in the United States and South Korea.

The TCOG has seen periods of intense activity, sometimes meeting every other month, while in 2005 there have been relatively few trilateral gatherings, and the group failed to convene (as it often had) before the latest resumption of multilateral talks with North Korea in September. Starting in 2003, the group began meeting less formally. It dropped its habit of issuing statements to the press, and it later stopped labeling the trilateral consultations as official TCOG meetings.¹ The participants have come to know each other quite well, but their ability to influence the decision-making processes in their countries is often not as strong as it was before.

In addition, the group is now operating within a broader, multilateral context, and it has taken on a new role as a sort of informal caucus among allies within the so-called six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons programs.² How effective is today's TCOG

1 Even though the three countries no longer refer to this North Korea trilateral policy coordination process as the "TCOG," this report, for the sake of simplicity, will use the term "TCOG" to include both the formal TCOG meetings (held before June 2003) and the regular, informal trilateral meetings that followed.

2 The six-party talks consist of China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the United States. For a discussion of the six-party talks and how they can be strengthened, see James L. Schoff, Charles M. Perry, and Jacquelyn K. Davis, *Building Six-Party Capacity for a WMD-Free Korea* (Herndon, Virginia: Brassey's, 2004), and related project materials at <http://www.ifpa.org>.

compared to before? Can it be made more effective? What does the TCOG teach us about how bureaucratic change affects continuity in foreign-policy making, especially in a complicated triangular arrangement? Is the TCOG in danger of being overtaxed, or might it, in fact, be underutilized at this moment? Do the three governments view the TCOG similarly, or are there gaps in perceptions and expectations?

Far from being an academic exercise, the exploration of these questions is the only way to evaluate objectively the efficacy and potential transferability of this unique policy coordination mechanism. Unfortunately, the policy makers involved in the TCOG rarely have time to review the process itself, and even when they do it is only from their own country's perspective. If the process is not functioning properly, it could harm policy making vis-à-vis North Korea and weaken these important alliance relationships. If the TCOG is working well, then it could be a model for further cooperation in other policy issue areas of concern to the three countries. Perry himself expressed this hope when he presented his report to Congress in 1999, predicting that "this tripartite cooperation will endure into the future, and be applied to other problems in the region, as well."³ To what extent, for example, can the TCOG model be used to encourage trilateral cooperation on important security issues beyond those directly linked to the DPRK, or, as this book explores in some detail, to facilitate cooperation when planning for and responding to a variety of regional crises? Building on the TCOG in this way can strengthen the two bilateral alliances and help to build connecting threads between them – a development that is seen as essential if existing alliance structures are to thrive in the future.

It is on these issues that the second chapter of this book focuses. A brief look at the current security environment facing the three countries is followed by an exploration of the opportunities for strengthening and expanding the TCOG process, with a particular emphasis on the opportunities to improve crisis contingency planning and response cooperation. The massive December 2004

3 William Perry, U.S. North Korea policy coordinator and special advisor to the president and the secretary of state, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C., October 12, 1999.

earthquake and tsunami that devastated parts of South and Southeast Asia present a vivid reminder of both the value of recent efforts to facilitate multilateral relief coordination, as well as how much room for improvement remains in this area. The damage and trauma caused by hurricane Katrina in the United States in August 2005 demonstrated how vulnerable even wealthy, modern societies can be, and the painful spikes in world energy prices that followed underscored the broad impact that these kinds of events can have. Knowing what we do from the TCOG experience, how could a trilateral dialogue on crisis response cooperation be structured? What are the opportunities, and what should be the priorities? How might a trilateral crisis response planning exercise relate to, or be coordinated with, broader multilateral initiatives?

In order to answer some of these questions, chapter 2 includes a detailed exploration of the tsunami relief effort from the perspectives of all three countries. The discussion focuses on three components of the multilateral response: diplomatic, military, and civilian/humanitarian. This is not to suggest that the three countries were somehow uniquely responsible for the overall relief effort, because that effort was in fact a broad multinational operation. Still, for reasons explained in chapter 2, the tsunami case study is a good opportunity to evaluate the potential utility and practicality of greater trilateral cooperation in this area, as well as how it relates to regional capacity building. Chapter 2 also includes a review of current and planned security policy reforms in the United States, such as the so-called global posture review and military transformation, and how they mesh with similar reforms in Japan and South Korea, which are important to consider if the study's findings are to be sufficiently forward looking.

From the 2004 tsunami response example, it seems clear that joint consultations, planning, and training and exercises can have a demonstrable, positive impact on the ability of countries to cooperate efficiently and effectively in times of crisis, as well as to assist in national stabilization and reconstruction missions. A number of these forums and exercises are explored in chapter 2, and they demonstrate that the tools for enhancing cooperation in these areas already exist to a large extent. There is a need, however, to make better use of these tools and to integrate them in a coordinated fashion. This is most likely where the TCOG lessons will

apply to managing complex contingencies, as officials from the three countries (and other nations in the region) come together to identify common objectives and to develop a constructive agenda for progress, despite the inevitable misalignment of priorities and interests.

It is also clear that military assets from around the region are indispensable for a timely and life-saving response to certain crises, especially those involving island nations like the Philippines or Indonesia where access can be limited, or when military communications, command, and control capabilities are vital to success. Given the unique nature of the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK military relationships, this suggests that there is something valuable to be gained by stepping up allied and regional consultations on the issue of crisis response planning, possibly in a loosely coordinated manner that weaves together bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral initiatives.

It is relatively easy to prescribe additional joint planning, training, workshops, and exercises as a way to improve multilateral military-to-military and civil-military cooperation in crisis response or disaster relief situations. But the reality is that all the national militaries, government and UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations are working with limited staffs and budgets, and they do not always share the same training priorities or political freedom of action. Putting together multilateral exercises is a time-consuming and complicated task, which only gets harder as more participants are added to the roster. Just one bilateral or multilateral military exercise, for example, can often involve five or six separate meetings among all the participants to develop the scenario, identify and agree upon training objectives, carry out initial planning, visit the exercise site, and then further consolidate and finalize the planning.

The mere fact that improving multilateral crisis response coordination is difficult, however, should not dissuade leaders in the region from pursuing this goal. All the hard work, interaction, and compromise that go into putting together a multilateral exercise (that is, what makes it difficult to achieve) is precisely what makes the effort valuable. The success of the overall tsunami relief effort was a direct result of the work that was done before at various workshops, exercises, and networking initiatives. The ability to co-

operate effectively does not just materialize out of nowhere. It is planned for and practiced.

In the trilateral context, the relatively small number of participants should make some logistical tasks simpler, but, as will be explained, there are several political and legal differences that complicate formal trilateral cooperation. For the United States, Japan, and Korea, therefore, trilateral cooperation on these fronts might need to be incremental and informal, but it can still be pursued deliberately and with a strong sense of commitment from the nations' leadership. There are at least three levels of potential focus for a series of conversations regarding crisis response planning: 1) understanding each other's processes and reforms (in both the civilian and military areas); 2) discussing how to respond in a trilateral fashion to certain contingencies; and 3) discussing how the three countries' trilateral interaction can mesh with others in the region as a core component of a broader, multilateral crisis response network.

The inspiration for this latter focus can be traced to the recent Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which brings together countries from around the world to discuss common approaches and to practice joint exercises for combating the illicit proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and other dangerous cargo. The PSI itself is problematic as an avenue for trilateral cooperation, mostly because of sensitivities in Seoul that the initiative can appear to be targeted primarily at North Korea, but it is appealing as a potential model for other activities. Proponents of the PSI praise its loose and flexible structure, emphasizing that the PSI is not a treaty or an organization but is instead a coordinated activity. Could a similar approach be developed to respond to regional crises (such as a crisis response initiative, or CRI)? If so, is there value in creating a special trilateral dialogue to help stimulate its development?

The short answer, at this point, to the final question above appears to be "maybe." The development of a CRI, and a TCOG-like caucus within that group, is simply an approach to take better advantage of the cooperative tools that are already available in Asia, and it is a means to help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral responses to large-scale crises. There is also an added benefit of building confidence and familiarity among the region-

al militaries, as well as improving their capacity to work together in a range of non-traditional security operations. Though many suggest that China will look at trilateral military cooperation suspiciously, the general idea of stepping up regional, non-traditional security cooperation is often promoted in Beijing, so trilateral activities should not cause significant problems, as long as they are not exclusive.⁴ U.S. military leaders have also expressed a desire to cooperate with China in these areas.⁵

This research project began in January 2004 and was a cooperative effort of three organizations in the TCOG countries, made possible in large part by a generous grant from the Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership (CGP). The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (IFPA) led the project in collaboration with the Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR) in Tokyo and Yonsei University's Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) in Seoul, with additional assistance from the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) and many generous and knowledgeable individuals.

The overall project objective was to strengthen the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK relationships, as well as to enhance regional stability by improving alliance management tools for the purpose of more effectively addressing important issues of concern to all three nations. America's bilateral military alliances with these two countries are unique, and together they form the cornerstone of the regional security architecture. These relationships are, however, also undergoing transformation, and in the absence of a functional multilateral security mechanism for East Asia, establishing new patterns of cooperation beyond the bilateral context could be an effective way to build confidence and lay the foundation for a new, regional security architecture.

The primary methods of research for this project were one-on-one or group interviews. These were supplemented by archival research, as well as one large public workshop held in Tokyo in

4 For an example of Chinese interest in regional, non-traditional security cooperation, see General Xiong Guankai, "Stand up to New Challenges Hand in Hand and Build Mankind's Happy Homeland with Joint Efforts," *International Strategic Studies*, no. 3, serial no. 77 (July 2005): 1-11.

5 Keith Bradsher, "U.S. Seeks Cooperation with China," *New York Times*, September 12, 2005.

November 2004. More than sixty current and former government and military officials from the three countries were interviewed for this report on a not-for-attribution basis. The author would like to thank all of those who gave their time in these interviews, participated in the project workshops, and generously assisted with follow-up questions. Among those we would like to thank (who agreed to be mentioned by name) are Stephen Bosworth, Ashton Carter, Choi Young-jin, Robert Eldridge, Ito Kenichi, Charles Kartman, Kawakami Takashi, Kim Dong-Shin, Kurata Hideya, Joseph Manning, Michishita Narushige, William J. Perry, Jack Pritchard, David Shear, Wendy Sherman, Song Keun-ho, Takagi Seiichiro, Takamizawa Nobushige, Yamaguchi Noboru, and Yoon Young-Kwan. There were many others.

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Chapter 1

The Evolution of the TCOG as a Diplomatic Tool

The Logic of Trilateral Cooperation

When North Korea ran afoul of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in early 1993, the United States, Japan, and South Korea began intensifying their coordination of policy toward the North through a series of ad hoc bilateral and trilateral meetings.⁶ A trilateral approach was attractive to the three countries, as each had been involved in bilateral discussions with the DPRK before 1993, and it was apparent to all that their negotiations with the North were inextricably linked with one another.

A senior official at Japan's embassy in Washington explained, "We always held a wider vision than that of simply managing our bilateral relations with North Korea...[and] realized that the issue involving the Korean Peninsula is first and foremost a matter for the two Koreas.⁷ We [must also] make sure that whatever we do with North Korea does not undermine the security arrangement with the United States...[and] these considerations result in close

6 One of the earliest trilateral meetings on the subject took place in New York on March 22, 1993, to discuss North Korea's March 12 announcement that it intended to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

7 Japan began a series of bilateral meetings with North Korea to discuss the potential for normalizing relations in January 1991. After eight meetings, the talks broke down in November 1992 and did not resume until April 2000.

policy coordination between and among the United States, South Korea, and Japan; the best example being the TCOG.”⁸ Although Japan was an economic powerhouse by the early 1990s, it was constrained in how it could respond to North Korean threats both militarily (by its constitution and World War II legacy) and diplomatically (lacking a permanent seat on the UN Security Council). By sticking close to Washington and Seoul, Tokyo strengthened its hand in dealing with Pyongyang and kept itself well informed of its partners’ overtures to the North.

South Korea, of course, had been involved in bilateral talks with the North on a variety of issues for years, but its negotiations with the DPRK became increasingly complex and influenced by outside events when Tokyo and Washington began their high-level meetings with Pyongyang in 1991 and 1992, respectively. At that time, Seoul worried when U.S.-DPRK relations seemed to be moving forward too quickly, and it strove to link progress in those talks with its own North-South dialogue. Seoul was also wary of any moves that could suggest a weakening of America’s security commitment to South Korea and the stationing of thirty-seven thousand U.S. troops in the country. At the same time, and reflecting the ROK’s delicate position, Seoul was also cautious when Washington wanted to upgrade defenses for its forces and the South Korean military as a hedge against a breakdown in negotiations – with, for example, the dispatch of a U.S. *Patriot* missile battalion to the ROK in 1994 – for fear of provoking Pyongyang.

Moreover, the loci of interests on Seoul’s diplomatic map were multiplying around this time, as it managed to normalize relations with the Soviet Union in 1990 and China in 1992. In addition, both South Korea and North Korea entered into the UN in 1991. These developments complicated South Korea’s foreign policy calculus and contributed to the appeal of trilateral meetings. The United States remained critical to Seoul’s foreign relations strategy, and though some ROK officials were less than thrilled to share Washington’s attention with Tokyo, Japan’s economic strength and clout at the

8 Yamamoto Tadachi, “Japan’s Role for Peace and Security in North-east Asia: North Korea’s Nukes, Missiles, and WMD,” ICAS Lectures, no. 2003-0214-TMY (February 14, 2003).

UN made it an increasingly important international player.⁹ All of this coincided with a strengthening of participatory democracy in South Korea in the late 1980s and early 1990s, coming on the heels of its first popular balloting for president since 1971. It was an electoral process in which Seoul's foreign relations with the DPRK, the United States, and its regional neighbors were becoming important domestic political issues and attracting greater interest from the executive branch.¹⁰

North-South relations had been on an upswing in late 1991, when the two governments finalized a nonaggression agreement and the North-South Denuclearization Declaration in December, but this all fell apart in the second half of 1992 and early 1993 because of ROK election-year politics and the North's tussle with the IAEA. Kim Young Sam defeated Kim Dae-jung in the ROK presidential election in December 1992, in part by painting his opponent as too conciliatory toward the North. Kim took office on February 25, 1993, right after Bill Clinton assumed the U.S. presidency in January and in the midst of a fierce DPRK-IAEA argument over nuclear inspections. Two weeks later, Pyongyang announced it was withdrawing from the NPT, touching off the first North Korean nuclear crisis and more than a year of tense standoffs and off-and-on negotiations. The United States and its allies developed and promoted a plan for sanctions at the UN when negotiations faltered, and the U.S. military began preparing for a possible violent North Korean reaction if sanctions went forward. The crisis did not subside until the United States and North Korea worked out the Agreed Framework in 1994, which froze the North's nuclear program in return for oil supplies, a U.S. promise to oversee the construction of nuclear reactors, and a sketchy roadmap for normalization.

9 The United States was the ROK's military ally in deterring and preparing to defeat a potential invasion from the North, as well as its guarantor of energy security and its largest trading partner at the time. Japan was South Korea's second-largest trading partner and a major source of direct investment. Though Japan lacked a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, it was the second-largest financial contributor to the UN and held a rotating seat on the council as often as procedures would allow.

10 For a discussion of the 1987 election, see Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, new edition (Indianapolis: Basic Books, 2001), 172-78.

As U.S. officials involved in the discussions later described, “Managing the North Korean crisis felt like playing a multi-tiered chess game on overlapping boards. It required dealing with the North, the South, China, Japan, the IAEA, the UN, the non-aligned movement, Congress, the press, and others.”¹¹ From the U.S. perspective, sitting down together with its two primary political and military allies in the region was one way that it could try to simplify the process. “Trilateral cooperation had been the cornerstone of American strategy for dealing with North Korea...[and] securing support from Seoul and Tokyo would be the first act in the unfolding drama of building a multilateral coalition supporting sanctions.”¹²

Underlying these diplomatic considerations were important strategic imperatives. If hostilities broke out on the peninsula, the American plan to defend the South and defeat the North rested heavily on cooperation and logistical support from Japan, as well as the quick deployment of U.S. forces and military assets stationed there (which included an aircraft carrier battle group and some twenty thousand marines). In addition, the evacuation of American and Japanese noncombatants from the peninsula during a crisis relied on close trilateral coordination, especially when the plan was updated in 1994 to accommodate the significant growth of that population over the previous decade. Effective trilateral policy coordination regarding North Korea was a prerequisite for successfully handling any serious problem that arose, whether it involved bolstering deterrence, offering economic incentives, threatening sanctions, or responding to crisis contingencies. All of this helps to explain the appeal of trilateral policy coordination.

The Political and Diplomatic Backdrop for the TCOG

Ad hoc trilateral cooperation among the three diplomatic bureaucracies helped to defuse the first nuclear crisis, though the United States clearly took the lead. Soon after the Agreed Framework was signed in October 1994, however, it became apparent to all that the road toward implementation would be a rocky one. Disagree-

11 Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 193.

12 *Ibid.*, 194.

ments, delays, mutual suspicions, charges, countercharges, and complaints were plentiful, such as U.S. accusations in 1996 and 1998 that North Korea was developing a nuclear program-related site at Mount Kumchangni.

Dissatisfaction with the agreement grew quickly in Washington, following the Republicans' historic victories in the 1994 mid-term elections when they took simultaneous control of the House and the Senate for the first time in forty years. The new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jesse Helms, and others criticized the Agreed Framework as a poor deal for the United States and were dubious about the DPRK's intentions. The Clinton administration was on the defensive at home with regard to implementation, since the money to buy heating oil for the North (as per the agreement) had to be appropriated each year by Congress.¹³ Many U.S. diplomats worried that it would be impossible to satisfy both the North Koreans and Congress at the same time.

Still, the United States and its partners pressed ahead with the Agreed Framework, carrying out shipments of fuel oil to the DPRK and setting up the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to begin planning and construction of the two light-water reactors (LWRs) promised to the North in the agreement.¹⁴ The three countries were the primary partners in the KEDO undertaking, which was led by an American executive director and two deputy executive directors from the ROK and Japan. South Korea and Japan provided the majority of funding for the reactor project, while the United States contributed an average of nearly \$35 million annually to support KEDO and the fuel oil deliveries.

The United States, Japan, and South Korea began more regular, trilateral diplomatic consultations on North Korea policy in 1996,

13 Congress made various attempts (sometimes successful) to place conditions or restrictions on the use of these funds as early as March 1995 (e.g., see *Authorization for Implementation of the Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea Act*, Public Law 104-6, 109, 104th Cong., 1st sess. (September 29, 1995)).

14 A key provision of the Agreed Framework was that the United States would supply North Korea with two "proliferation-resistant" nuclear reactors to support the North's pursuit of energy security. KEDO, created after the 1994 agreement, was the vehicle for providing the reactors. Its three original members were Japan, South Korea, and the United States; the European Union (EU) later became the fourth executive board member.

and the United States and South Korea were finally able to convince North Korea (and China) to join them in “four-party” talks in 1997.¹⁵ The main purpose of these talks was to discuss a possible peace treaty that could replace the uneasy armistice, which had persisted on the peninsula since 1953.¹⁶ Japan was not happy to be left out of the four-party negotiations, but it stayed on the sidelines and contributed when it could at the periodic trilateral meetings (and in its bilateral meetings with the United States and the ROK). The start of the four-party talks coincided with Kim Dae-jung’s election as ROK president in December 1997, which ushered in a new, more conciliatory South Korean policy of engagement with the North and altered the trilateral diplomatic dynamic.

The new Kim administration and its “sunshine” policy toward the North put additional pressure on trilateral policy coordination.¹⁷ Seoul became more willing than Washington or Tokyo to consider proposals for lifting sanctions on North Korea or providing it with additional aid and assistance. The Blue House (the ROK equivalent

15 The trilateral consultations came about as a result of a meeting among Foreign Ministers Gong Ro-Myung of the ROK and Kono Yohei of Japan and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, held on the side of the seventh Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) ministerial meeting in Osaka, Japan, in November 1995. The first of this series of senior-level meetings to coordinate policy toward North Korea was held in Hawaii in January 1996, followed by one on Cheju Island in May 1996, and later one in Japan. The talks were led by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord, ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Tae-ik, and Deputy Foreign Minister Yanai Shunji of Japan. Other meetings followed from 1997 to 1999, including a series of “defense trilaterals” involving representatives from the defense bureaucracies. None of these discussions, however, was as sustained or as formally structured as the TCOG later became.

16 Six rounds of the four-party talks were convened from December 1997 through August 1999, but they were plagued by insurmountable differences between North Korea and the United States over agenda setting, as Pyongyang kept insisting that a U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea be discussed.

17 The “sunshine” policy got its name from one of Aesop’s fables that suggested the power of persuasion was stronger than force. In the story, a more effective way to get a traveler to remove his coat was warm sunshine (*détente* and economic engagement) rather than to try and blow it off with a stiff wind (force). Kim Dae-jung was adamant that the South would not lower its guard, but he also intended to de-link politics from economics, respond more quickly with aid when appropriate, and encourage new, North-South interactions in areas of business and civil society.

of the White House) also urged Tokyo to move forward on normalization talks with Pyongyang and suggested that Japan could show more flexibility on the issues of abducted Japanese (by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s) and DPRK missiles. Trilateral coordination was becoming less focused than either the consultations regarding the Agreed Framework and KEDO or the more formal meetings experimented with in 1996. Officials from the three countries were still getting together in 1997 and 1998 to discuss North Korea, but the U.S. government was less actively leading the process overall and, more specifically, the White House was not coordinating America's North Korea policy as aggressively as it had before.¹⁸

In August 1998, six months into Kim Dae-jung's five-year term, however, North Korea tested a three-stage *Taepo-dong* missile that flew over northern Japan, hardening critics of engagement with the North. Japan was furious, dropping out of KEDO negotiations and suspending food aid to Pyongyang, but it was coaxed back to the table by the United States and South Korea, which were not yet prepared to risk a fatal blow to the Agreed Framework. In Washington, one result was a congressional demand that President Clinton name a North Korea policy coordinator to conduct a "full and complete interagency review of United States policy toward North Korea."¹⁹ Even though the Clinton administration was on board with

18 Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Political/Military Affairs Robert Gallucci filled the role of North Korea policy coordinator from 1994 to 1996 (as chair of the president's Senior Policy Steering Group on Korea), but no one specifically filled that role until William Perry became U.S. North Korea policy coordinator and started his review in November 1998.

19 This was an idea first raised in Congress back in January 1995 (see *Expressing the Sense of the Congress with Respect to North-South Dialogue on the Korean Peninsula and the United States-North Korea Agreed Framework*, HR 19, 104th Cong., 1st sess. (January 25, 1995)), not only for the president to "appoint a senior official to represent him in communicating directly with the North Korean government," but also "to consult with South Korea and other allies on these matters." Nearly four years later this "suggestion" became a stipulation and was included in an omnibus appropriations bill signed by President Clinton on October 21, 1998 (Public Law 105-277, title V, section 582 (e), 105th Cong., 2nd sess.). The law also required the president to certify that North Korea was complying with all provisions of the Agreed Framework and was making progress on implementation of the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which Clinton did in 1999 and 2000.

the idea of a policy review (and worked closely with Congress on the bill's text), it is questionable that such a formal and prominent review would have taken place without the missile test. In a very direct sense, therefore, the *Taepo-dong* missile launch subsequently helped launch the so-called Perry Process, which in turn led to the establishment of the TCOG.

When former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry took the job as U.S. North Korea policy coordinator and special advisor to the president and the secretary of state in November 1998, he was adamant that he be given the authority he needed to direct the policy process on North Korea. He did not want the traditional role of an outside policy reviewer who researched a situation, made recommendations, and left. Perry brought on his former assistant secretary of defense for international security policy, Ashton Carter, to help with the review process. They worked closely with Wendy Sherman (State Department counselor-ambassador), Charles Kartman (special envoy for the Korean peace talks), and other U.S. government officials for the next nine months to consider different policy options and determine an updated and comprehensive policy strategy toward North Korea.

Perry's review team consulted often with representatives from the ROK and Japan, but they were eager to create opportunities for all three countries to sit down together at one meeting. When the U.S. team raised the idea of a more formal and regular trilateral meeting format, the Japanese and ROK representatives were initially cautious. They agreed that it could be a useful forum, but they insisted that each be allowed to hold bilateral meetings first with the United States, prior to any trilateral gathering. As an American participant later recalled, "It wasn't until about the third meeting when enough trust was developed that all three could sit down together."²⁰

Perry believed strongly that "no U.S. policy can be successful if it does not enjoy the support of our allies in the region," and thus

20 Remarks made at "Japan-U.S.-Korea Dialogue: Future of the Korean Peninsula and Japan-U.S.-Korea Security Cooperation," public workshop co-sponsored by the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Global Forum Japan, Japan Forum on International Relations, and Yonsei University Graduate School of International Studies, held November 19, 2004, at the International House of Japan, Tokyo, Japan.

the TCOG became one of three key managerial components for Washington's North Korea policy. The goal of the TCOG was to "prepare frequent consultation on this issue between the President and the ROK President and Japanese Prime Minister."²¹ The other two managerial components of the new policy were 1) the creation of "a strengthened mechanism within the U.S. government for carrying out North Korea policy...chaired by a senior official of ambassadorial rank, located in the Department of State" and 2) a process for soliciting bipartisan input and support from Congress (perhaps similar to the Senate Observer Group of the mid-1980s that acted as an official witness to the arms reduction and control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union).²²

Perry kept his role as North Korea policy coordinator, but he tapped Wendy Sherman to head the interagency policy process and the U.S. TCOG delegation. A Senate observer group for North Korea never materialized, however, and the situation remained tense between the U.S. executive and legislative branches for the rest of Clinton's term. In fact, House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert appointed an all-Republican North Korea advisory group in 1999 to "examine [the] Clinton-Gore effort to buy good will," which released a very critical report in November of that year.²³

The Start of TCOG

The TCOG was officially launched at a trilateral gathering in Honolulu on April 25, 1999, as a means of institutionalizing the process of consultation and policy coordination on North Korean affairs that had begun several years before. The original intent was for the group to meet quarterly, but it ended up meeting more frequently,

21 William J. Perry, U.S. North Korea policy coordinator and special advisor to the president and the secretary of state, *Review of United States Policy toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations*, unclassified report (Washington, D.C., October 12, 1999).

22 Ibid.

23 House Policy Committee, "Policy Chairman Cox to Represent House Leadership on North Korea Advisory Group: Panel Starts Work; Will Examine Clinton-Gore Effort to Buy North Korea's Good Will," news release (September 2, 1999), http://policy.house.gov/html/news_release.cfm?id=71. For the report to the Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, by the North Korea Advisory Group, see <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/dprk/nkag-report.htm>.

driven by the hectic diplomatic schedule surrounding the North Korean nuclear issue. The first few meetings were conducted at a high level. William Perry, who had been appointed by President Clinton, led the U.S. delegation for the first three meetings. Similarly, the head of the ROK delegation, Lim Dong-won, worked for the executive branch and was a top foreign policy advisor to President Kim Dae-jung.²⁴ Japan, in contrast, was not in the habit of coordinating foreign policy out of the prime minister's office, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) took the lead. Japan's selection of Kato Ryozo as its TCOG representative, however, demonstrated the seriousness with which it approached this process, since Kato was well known and respected in Washington, and Japan believed that Perry would listen to him.²⁵ Kato had also previously headed the Asian Affairs Bureau, so he had personal experience with regional issues.

Within a few months Perry and Lim stood aside, and the TCOG became entirely a State Department-Foreign Ministry process. Counselor-Ambassador Wendy Sherman took over for the United States, and ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Jang Jai-ryong led the South Korean team.²⁶ Sherman was close to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and had the strong support of the White House. She had presidential authority to be a coordinator for North Korea policy, taking over daily coordination in 1999 and then replacing Perry officially in 2000, in a job that occupied roughly half of her time. She presided over sometimes weekly meetings dedicated to the issues

24 Lim was close to President Kim and was one of the principal architects of Kim's sunshine policy of engagement with the North. At the time, he was senior presidential secretary on diplomacy and national security. Within months of the launch of the TCOG, he was appointed unification minister.

25 At the time, Kato was the deputy vice minister for foreign policy and director general of the Foreign Policy Bureau. He later became deputy minister for foreign affairs and currently serves as Japan's ambassador to the United States.

26 Jang Jai-ryong was a former head of the North American Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) and also led a special ROK delegation to Geneva in October 1994 to consult with the U.S. team that was in a critical phase of negotiations with North Korea. The deputy foreign minister is the third-highest ranking diplomat (outside of MOFAT's trade portfolio) after the minister and vice minister of foreign affairs and trade.

discussed at the TCOG, which were attended by up to thirty officials from the State Department, the National Security Council (NSC), the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and other key offices. Government agencies with an interest in North Korean policy did not want to miss those meetings. Sherman and a handful of other top officials met almost every day.

A subset of representatives from State, NSC, OSD, and other relevant agencies participated in the actual TCOG meetings, often joined by the U.S. ambassador to Japan or the ROK, depending on location. Each country's delegation consisted of about twelve to fifteen people. The South Korean team also had a multiple-agency makeup, with representatives from the Blue House, the Unification Ministry, and occasionally the Ministry of National Defense (MND) joining Jang's colleagues from MOFAT. After Lim moved to head the Unification Ministry, the TCOG process in South Korea came to be led by MOFAT, in close consultation with the president and his advisors.

Japan's interagency challenge had more to do with communication within MOFA than it did among different ministries. The National Security Policy Division (of the Foreign Policy Bureau) was primarily responsible for the TCOG at the start, but the meetings also included officials from other divisions of the Foreign Policy Bureau, the Northeast Asia Division of the Asian Affairs Bureau, and various divisions in the North American Affairs Bureau. Later, in September 2001, a representative from the Japan Defense Agency began regularly attending the TCOG meetings (usually from the Defense Policy Bureau).

MOFA's Foreign Policy Bureau was established in 1993 to be a sort of "control tower" for foreign policy coordination among the bureaus and departments, but it has been criticized at times for not being effective enough in its mission. The most recent attempt to remedy these shortcomings came in July 2004, when Japan's Cabinet approved a measure to create a special policy coordination post within the bureau, among other MOFA reforms. Balancing the interests and perspectives of the North American Bureau and the Asian Bureau was a particularly tough challenge for MOFA's policy coordination team.

In the fall of 1999, an important leadership change took place in Japan's TCOG delegation. Takeuchi Yukio took over for Kato when

Kato became deputy minister for foreign affairs, disappointing some U.S. officials. Takeuchi, like Kato, was well known and respected in Washington (having just finished a stint as director general of the North American Affairs Bureau), but at least a few Americans involved in the process had hoped that Kato would take the TCOG portfolio with him upon his promotion.

The decision to tap Takeuchi also caused tension within MOFA between the Foreign Policy Bureau and the Asian Affairs Bureau, as the latter thought it the proper time for that office to reassert control over policy making for its region, now that the TCOG was becoming more institutionalized. For the time being, however, MOFA decided that it did not want to risk the perception that Tokyo was downgrading its commitment to the TCOG and chose to stand behind the selection of Takeuchi for the job.²⁷ For the first two years of the TCOG's existence, therefore, Japan would stick with a prominent MOFA "America hand" to lead the country's coordination on North Korea policy with the United States.

Despite the disappearance of Perry from daily leadership, the White House was confident that Sherman had the necessary clout to drive North Korean policy coordination and lead the TCOG, given her access to Albright and presidential imprimatur. With only a few misgivings in the U.S. delegation that the ROK and Japanese teams lacked the same level of seniority and policy-making influence, Sherman plunged ahead and pushed an ambitious agenda centered on U.S.-DPRK bilateral discussions regarding implementation of the Agreed Framework and the Perry Process, North Korean missile programs, and other diplomatic engagements with Pyongyang, including the resumption of Japan-DPRK talks in April 2000, a "North-South" summit in June 2000, and Secretary of State Albright's visit to North Korea in October of that year. In thirteen months the three partners held fourteen trilateral meetings.²⁸

27 One consideration, apparently, was the fact that the director general of the Foreign Policy Bureau also carries the title of deputy vice minister for foreign affairs, and MOFA decided that the inclusion of "minister" in Takeuchi's title was still an important message for Washington.

28 In an effort to emphasize the extent of their trilateral coordination effort, the three countries considered a trilateral meeting involving the foreign ministers and the secretary of state or the heads of state (usually on the sidelines of a multilateral gathering such as APEC meeting) as a "TCOG ministerial."

The Korea Desk at the State Department acted as the TCOG's secretariat in the beginning, and the meetings took on an air of formality (the meetings were numbered, and the three countries regularly issued a joint press statement afterwards). The early meetings were relatively productive, building matrices of policies and delegating assignments for further study. Generally, the three delegations met for a day and a half, holding separate bilateral discussions with each other (U.S.-ROK, U.S.-Japan, and ROK-Japan, each for about an hour and a half) before conducting a two-hour trilateral session the next morning. All three teams usually met for dinner after the first day, as well as a group lunch following the plenary session and a press briefing.

In the beginning, some U.S. officials feared that representatives of Japan and the ROK would hesitate to speak in front of each other during the plenary session, but that worry proved unwarranted. The Japanese and South Koreans not only contributed substantively to the plenary discussions, but they also took early advantage of their bilateral sessions. One American participant remarked, "The fact that the United States was the secretariat proved helpful, since it gave us something to do while the Japanese and Koreans talked at length amongst themselves. When there were occasional bilateral flaps, they could still get together and discuss issues unrelated to North Korea policy under the trilateral guise and insulated from a political backlash at home." In this manner, Japanese and South Korean diplomats used the TCOG to strengthen their relationship in modest ways.

Another American official noted, "The TCOG put Japan and the ROK at the same table as equals. That was a salutary development in and of itself. From the most mundane perspective, we always went way out of our way to make sure that the three tables for the three delegations were exactly the same size, that the flags were displayed in proper protocol order, and even that the angles of the tables ensured that there was no suggestion that the U.S. delegation was closer to any one of the two other delegations. The TCOG systematized consultation and became so regular that the players all became quite comfortable with one another. The most sensitive discussions often took place off line, on the fringes of the meeting. The casual events around the TCOG (such as the dinners and coffees) were very productive."

The United States was driving the TCOG agenda in 1999 and 2000, as it was anxious to avoid sending Pyongyang any mixed signals from each nation's separate discussions with North Korea. Early on, the most uncomfortable aspect of the consultations was the lopsided nature of the countries' interactions with the DPRK. One American noted, "During that period...we all had things going with the DPRK, and the Japanese had almost nothing...and the TCOG agendas always had an item on contacts with the DPRK. So [the Japanese] had little to brief on and were usually demanders for information. That was one kind of underlying tension in the process." This tension dissipated to some extent, however, when Japan resumed normalization talks with North Korea in April 2000.

Washington saw the TCOG as an opportunity to get Seoul and Tokyo involved in the U.S. policy-making process and on board with initiatives early, which was a recognized weakness of the process that led to the Agreed Framework in 1994.²⁹ A display of trilateral unity was important, from the U.S. perspective, to help isolate and pressure Pyongyang on Kumchangni and other issues, as well as to improve the chances for success on the back end of any agreement on missiles or a further diplomatic opening. The latter half of 2000 was particularly tricky, as all three countries had different negotiating priorities and tempos, and either a complete breakdown or surprising breakthrough in any one set of talks could adversely affect the other two.

Tokyo, for example, needed reassurance that the United States would not fail to address shorter-range DPRK missiles that could threaten Japan, if not the United States, during U.S.-DPRK missile negotiations. It also wanted to ensure that Washington continued to mention the issue of abducted Japanese to the North Koreans, lest it lose an important source of leverage in this very sensitive (for Japan) matter. These tensions reached a peak ahead of U.S. Secretary of State Albright's visit to Pyongyang late in 2000 and subsequent speculation regarding a possible follow-up visit by President Clinton. For its part, South Korea tended to worry that stagnation in the other two sets of talks would hamper progress

29 One of the perceived problems with implementing the Agreed Framework was that three of the five parties necessary for implementing the deal struck between Pyongyang and Washington were never involved in the original negotiation.

in its own negotiations. In the end, however, trilateral cooperation held firm, and although in many ways this united approach prevented a bold solution to any single issue, it did keep the three governments aligned in pursuit of a more comprehensive and mutually acceptable settlement.

The trilateral process was also helpful in preparing for (and reacting to) potential shocks to the engagement process, similar to North Korea's *Taepo-dong* missile test launch over Japan in August 1998. As a Council on Foreign Relations task force report noted in 1999, "In response to the first *Taepo-dong* launch...the three governments went in entirely different directions. Seoul downplayed the launch, Tokyo reacted viscerally, and Washington rushed to reestablish Pyongyang's bona fides before the Agreed Framework came under threat [from Congress]. As the three nations anticipate a possible second launch [in the summer of 1999], there is a far greater convergence of views."³⁰ Indeed, a display of trilateral unity, warning of fairly specific repercussions for a second launch, even by the more conciliatory Kim Dae-jung government, was the first significant test for the TCOG.³¹ The fact that North Korea did not follow through on a second launch suggests that the TCOG helped to deter this kind of provocative behavior by Pyongyang.

The TCOG was unable to prevent friction from developing among the three members, however, as the countries' sometimes conflicting strategic priorities and approaches would occasionally rise to the surface. A high-profile speech by Kim Dae-jung in March 2000 in Berlin was one example of how the partners could sometimes leave out relevant information from TCOG discussions, thereby frustrating the coordination process. Just four weeks after a Seoul TCOG meeting, President Kim surprised everyone with an announcement in Berlin of extensive new proposals for ROK assistance to the North, including highways, harbors, and electric and communications facilities. U.S. officials learned about the proposals just hours before

30 *U.S. Policy toward North Korea: Next Steps*, report of an independent task force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, Morton I. Abramowitz, and James T. Laney, co-chairs, Michael J. Green, project director (1999).

31 See U.S. State Department, "Transcript: U.S., Japan, Korea Press Conference on North Korea," from a press conference held at the Four Seasons Hotel, Singapore, July 27, 1999, <http://www.fas.org/news/dprk/1999/990727-dprk-usia1.htm>.

the speech, and Secretary of State Albright protested the lack of advance notice to the ROK foreign minister.³² Though the speech helped pave the way for the historic North-South summit in June, it demonstrated the limitations of how comprehensive and frank the trilateral consultations could be. This problem would recur in the TCOG, but it was never so prevalent that it undermined each country's basic confidence that it was getting close to full disclosure from its partners and that national policies would not divert significantly from their collectively agreed positions.

Another example of TCOG limitations was a U.S. effort in 2000 to replace one of the planned LWRs with the equivalent in conventional power generation (about 1000 megawatts). Washington argued that this approach could ease the DPRK's energy troubles more quickly, and at less cost, than the original scheme. It would also help assuage some U.S. critics who did not want to see any sort of nuclear program in North Korea. What is interesting is that U.S. officials made this proposal to the ROK bilaterally and not as part of the TCOG, despite Japan's involvement in the LWR project. An American official recalled, "We would have eventually taken the proposal to Japan and the European Union (EU), but Seoul did not want to proceed. The ROK was necessary, if not sufficient, to make it all work. It was a bilateral issue at the start." The concept of what constituted "bilateral issues" and "trilateral issues," therefore, was often in the eye of the beholder.

Overall, what made the TCOG unique was how it formalized and established routines for trilateral policy consultations on the North Korean issue, as well as how it connected the three-party discussions to a high-level interagency process in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in South Korea and Japan. The frequency of the meetings was remarkable, as was the periodic elevation of the TCOG concept to the ministerial and presidential level. All of this, of course, is a testament to the seriousness with which each nation viewed the issue and the extent to which the countries' security interests overlapped. Moreover, all three had something to contribute toward a solution.

Despite all of these common interests, however, it is important to note what the TCOG did not achieve. There were enough differ-

32 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 428.

ences in the three countries' strategic and political priorities that the TCOG never attempted to become a common negotiating platform vis-à-vis North Korea. It generally succeeded as a forum for trying to coordinate each nation's bilateral initiatives with Pyongyang and, to some extent, with each other, but it did not develop into a mechanism for developing joint proposals that the TCOG could present to the North Korean leadership as a truly corporate position. This was neither practical nor desired by the three countries at the time.

Initially, the TCOG's most important role was its public display of trilateral solidarity toward North Korea, and it effectively ensured that no one country got ahead of its partners (or at least not too far ahead) in its overtures to the DPRK. It also contributed to the relatively smooth operation of KEDO and the provision of fuel oil, despite delays in the LWR construction schedule. As will become clear later on, however, the TCOG's role would change with a new U.S. administration in 2001 and with the advent of the multilateral, six-party talks in 2003.

By the end of 2000, in any event, the Clinton team ran out of time trying to achieve a settlement with the North on missiles that could satisfy all parties, and it had to hand over a fragile Agreed Framework to a new, more skeptical, Republican administration. The political landscape in South Korea was changing as well. Whereas before Seoul sought to slow down Washington's push for a diplomatic breakthrough with Pyongyang, it now worried that a hard-line approach by the United States and Japan could stymie progress on North-South reconciliation efforts. The most visible signs of discontent were found in the younger and more liberal segments of South Korean society, who felt that their country's priorities were being sacrificed for American and Japanese security concerns. KEDO and the LWR project were falling further behind schedule, prompting North Korean threats to nullify the Agreed Framework if KEDO did not pick up the pace.

The TCOG had gotten off to a fast start and was beginning to feel like an institution, but it was still less than two years old, and countless Washington initiatives with longer and more impressive legacies had failed to survive political transitions in the past. In a June 2004 interview with the author, Wendy Sherman observed that "policy mechanisms [like the TCOG] are empty vessels without

authority, leadership, policy coherence, and a hell of a lot of hard work.” Except for the “hard work” part, the most important mechanism for trilateral policy coordination was about to face major changes in these components with the inauguration of President George W. Bush in 2001.

The TCOG in Transition

President Bush entered office with a stated emphasis on U.S. bilateral alliances with Japan and South Korea. There was some speculation at first as to what this implied for the future of trilateral coordination. When Secretary of State Colin Powell met with his counterpart from the ROK, MOFAT minister Lee Joung-binn, in February 2001, the two agreed to set up a regular channel of dialogue on North Korea at the assistant minister level. The Korean press quickly noted a change of tone and quoted a MOFAT official as saying, “We need to launch further negotiations on whether to hold a three-way meeting with Japan following a bilateral meeting or invite Japan to the next occasion.”³³ Clearly, some at MOFAT were angling for enhanced bilateral discussions at the expense of the TCOG, as another unnamed official later suggested: “The Bush administration is set to change the name of the group as part of its policies centering on bilateral dialogue, although the three-way channel...on North Korea policies will be maintained.”³⁴

Not much changed in the near term, however, and the Bush administration’s first TCOG meeting was held in March 2001 following a U.S.-ROK presidential summit in Washington and a meeting twelve days later between President Bush and Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro. For the time being, the TCOG would remain, and despite predictions to the contrary, the U.S. team did not push for a change in name or format. The new administration was in the process of reviewing its North Korea policy, and the TCOG was a convenient way for Washington to solicit input from its allies and discuss new approaches under consideration. The group followed up its March meeting with another trilateral session in May 2001, just before the Bush administration wrapped up its DPRK policy review.

33 “Future of TCOG Uncertain,” *Korea Times*, February 13, 2001.

34 “Schedules of Korea-U.S. Dialogue Take Shape,” *Korea Times*, February 27, 2001.

During the policy review, ROK officials were giving their U.S. counterparts a hard time over what they detected was a shift in the U.S. approach to the Agreed Framework and missile negotiations with the DPRK. North Korea had picked up on this shift and was using U.S. statements about the need to “improve” the Framework and enhance verification as an excuse to slow down the North-South dialogue and possibly drive a wedge between Seoul and Washington. Pyongyang correctly perceived that segments of South Korean society would blame the Bush administration for Korea’s failure to realize the hope of more stable and peaceful North-South relations, which was kindled at the Kims’ historic summit a year earlier.

At the same time, some ROK officials were disheartened at their inability to sway U.S. officials. One complained that “this can be interpreted as the United States’ practically having scrapped the ‘Perry Process,’” and that the “principle of comprehensive reciprocity,” proposed by President Kim during his meeting with President Bush, was hardly reflected in the process of reviewing U.S. policy toward North Korea.³⁵ Seoul also tried suggesting that Washington should consider addressing the issue of removing North Korea from the U.S. list of terrorist-sponsoring countries and allowing it to join international financial organizations, as an incentive for Pyongyang.

The new U.S. team, however, was determined to correct what it viewed as shortcomings in the previous administration’s approach. Bush officials had doubts that North Korea was abiding by the agreement, and they sought more publicly to replace the LWR project with one based on conventional power plants. Some Americans felt they had an ally in Japan, since Japan was anxious to see the North Korean nuclear and missile issues dealt with resolutely and harbored as well some reservations about the potentially disruptive aspects of a speedy North-South reconciliation. U.S. officials might have thought that discussing LWR replacement in a trilateral setting could help convince South Korea to sign on. When the issue was finally addressed, however, Tokyo’s position was staked

35 Pu Kyong-kwon, “Bush Administration’s North Korea Policy; DPRK-US Relations Practically Return to the ‘Starting Point,’” *Seoul Tong-a Ilbo* (in Korean), 0948 GMT May 27, 2001, translated in *FBIS Publications* (CD-ROM), May 2001-June 2001, disc 33.

in the middle ground between Seoul's and Washington's. Some in the ROK actually believed that the trilateral dynamic offered a better chance to help soften the Bush team's harder line. Early in the Bush administration, the TCOG was beginning to take on characteristics of a trilateral negotiation process rather than simply a means to coordinate bilateral policies.

As a result, the limitations of the TCOG were once again evident. At the broadest level, the TCOG was not seen as an effective means to enforce policy continuity from one U.S. administration to the next, and the Bush administration's policy review underscored the fact that trilateral policy coordination remained vulnerable to policy changes in the individual countries. At best, the TCOG could be a mechanism for the partners to try to manage their own evolving policy differences vis-à-vis North Korea and to maintain a united public front. The process reflected as well the relative strength of the three countries, and the United States was generally strong enough for the Bush administration to get a lot of what it wanted. Still, it is important to note that while the TCOG might bend to the force of contending national pressures, it would not break. In the final analysis, the ties that bound the United States to its allies were strong enough to keep the TCOG together during this transition.

The outcome of the U.S. policy review, therefore, contained elements of a compromise. Washington expressed its support for the North-South dialogue and the Agreed Framework, but it wanted "improved implementation of the Agreed Framework...verifiable constraints on North Korea's missile programs and a ban on its missile exports, and a less threatening conventional military posture."³⁶ South Korea was less than pleased with the introduction of these new agenda items, but the fact that it stuck with the TCOG shows that the ROK government still viewed the trilateral mechanism as a valuable tool for its own policy-making process and an important component of its alliance with the United States. Indeed, former MOFAT minister Yoon Young-Kwan later recalled in a May 2004 interview, "TCOG was the starting point of dealing with the nuclear issue. It was the most important basis for implementing policy toward North Korea."

36 Statement by President George W. Bush, the White House, June 13, 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/06/20010611-4.html>.

Still, although the Bush administration carried on with the TCOG – even while it dropped nearly every other legacy of Clinton-era policy – it changed the way it managed the interagency process in support of the trilateral meetings, with significant implications for the TCOG’s operation. President Bush never named a replacement for Wendy Sherman, so the post of North Korea policy coordinator disappeared.³⁷ Jack Pritchard, the senior director of Asian affairs at the NSC under Clinton, became America’s special envoy for negotiations with North Korea, replacing Chuck Kartman. Pritchard handled most of the informal discussions with the North via the DPRK’s UN mission in New York (the so-called New York channel), and he reported to Jim Kelly, who had been appointed assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Kelly was designated the new U.S. point person for the TCOG.

Unlike Sherman, however, Kelly did not have the authority to oversee the interagency process, so he had less control over how U.S. positions would be conveyed at TCOG gatherings. Instead, the NSC “refereed” interagency meetings, where officials from NSC, OSD, JCS, and different State Department offices hammered out “scripts” for Kelly to follow. Some complained that the NSC was not playing a strong enough coordination role, since it tended to meld together positions that trickled up from the different offices, some of which confused the allies, rather than impose a uniform policy from the top down. At one such interagency meeting in the White House situation room ahead of a TCOG meeting, a U.S. official recalled, “We were arguing over adverbs.”

Consequently, Kelly had a weak hand in the trilaterals, according to some U.S. officials, since the United States did not have a coherent policy at the time, and Kelly was given little freedom to explore different options at TCOG meetings. Kelly, himself, grew uncomfortable with the interagency approach, as well as with the formality that seemed embedded in the TCOG, such as always issuing press statements and sometimes conducting press conferences. The TCOG, as a result, became less connected, and arguably less important, to the U.S. policy-making process. Trilateral meetings were only held four times in 2001, compared to six meetings the

37 Presumably the requirement for a North Korea policy coordinator, as called for in Public Law 105-277, was never meant to be permanent, though the law’s language is ambiguous on this point.

year before and eight in 1999. Instead, the State Department supplemented the trilaterals with less formal bilateral meetings.

America's allies noticed the difference. One Japanese official remarked, "The United States persisted not to hold the TCOG meeting because of friction between [State] and [OSD]. This illustrated the difficulties in U.S. decision making, and because of these reasons we recognized how domestic difficulties in each country adversely impact the flexibility of the TCOG." A South Korean official noted, "The U.S. government has clearly been riven by internal disputes that hampered good use of the TCOG. The TCOG always worked best when the U.S. was leading. Japan and the ROK have developed some good ideas and can push them forward to some degree, but we really need the United States to take the lead to get things done."

There were changes in the South Korean and Japanese teams as well. The new ROK deputy foreign minister, Yim Sung-joon, replaced Jang, and Japan shifted the TCOG leadership altogether to the director general of MOFA's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, who at that time was Makita Kunihiro. This was a victory for the Asian Affairs Bureau, which had long believed that it deserved the TCOG portfolio. Officials from the Foreign Policy Bureau and the North American Affairs Bureau continued to attend TCOG meetings, and both the ROK and Japan had a habit of also including the top political counselor from their embassies in Washington, regardless of where the meeting was held. Nonetheless, the shift was a slight downgrading to a regional bureau, in much the same way that the Bush administration delegated responsibility to the State Department's East Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau. Moreover, Makita's career did not suggest that he was as qualified as his predecessors to manage the U.S.-ROK dynamic. His only stint in the North American Affairs Bureau was in the early 1980s, and he had never been posted in the United States or South Korea (although he had worked extensively in, and with, China).

To complicate matters for Makita, ROK-Japan relations were in turmoil in the summer of 2001, when Japan refused to order revisions or stop the publication of controversial middle school textbooks, which critics claimed whitewashed Japanese crimes during its colonial rule of Korea from 1910-1945. That led South Korea to cut military ties and postpone economic liberalization with Japan, among other measures, steps that were followed by

an escalation in tensions when Prime Minister Koizumi visited the controversial Yasukuni shrine in August. The TCOG meetings in September and November of that year were just about the only opportunities Japanese diplomats had to interact with a South Korean counterpart as senior as Yim. When Makita was due to be promoted toward the end of 2001, MOFA made sure that the new chief at Asian Affairs had extensive U.S. experience. Tanaka Hitoshi, the new head of Japan's TCOG delegation, had formerly held, among other posts, those of director general of the North American Bureau and consul general in San Francisco, and at one time he had led the Northeast Asia Division.

On top of all of this TCOG tension, the new faces, the interagency squabbles in Washington and a more demanding U.S. approach, the textbook controversy, and further delays with the LWR project, a new problem was beginning to emerge. By August 2001 at the latest, the United States had apparently informed South Korea of its suspicions regarding a North Korean highly enriched uranium (HEU) program.³⁸ To what extent these suspicions contributed to the harder line toward the DPRK that emerged from Washington's policy review is unclear, but the HEU issue eventually became the trigger for the second North Korean nuclear crisis in 2002. One relevant point is that the United States never used the TCOG as a forum for airing these suspicions with its allies before Kelly's Pyongyang visit. Instead, Washington used bilateral channels to convey that information. Last, but not least, the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington vaulted nuclear proliferation concerns even higher up the list of America's top foreign policy priorities, concerns that could only have been sharpened by the news that the DPRK might be developing a covert capacity to produce (and perhaps export) weapons-grade nuclear material.

Despite the above difficulties, the three countries worked with what they had and brainstormed strategies to try to jump-start bilateral contacts with the DPRK. Although Washington clearly stated that it would meet the North Koreans without preconditions, Pyongyang interpreted America's policy review results as a new, de facto agenda for high-level talks and lambasted the United

38 Doug Struck and Glenn Kessler, "Hints on North Korea Surfaced in 2000," *Washington Post*, October 19, 2002.

States. Over the course of three TCOG meetings between November 2001 and April 2002, the partners continued to look for an opening. The situation was more difficult after President Bush labeled North Korea as part of an “axis of evil” in his January 2002 State of the Union speech, as well as following his decision about two months later not to certify DPRK compliance with the Agreed Framework.

During this time, only South Korea was engaged in dialogue with the North, which enhanced Seoul’s status at the TCOG. When the ROK’s special presidential envoy, Lim Dong-won, traveled to Pyongyang in early April 2002, he went not only to help improve North-South relations but also to push the Kim Jong-il regime to resume bilateral talks with Washington. The results of Lim’s trip were quickly discussed a few days later by the TCOG in Tokyo, and all agreed that the signs were positive. Pyongyang seemed open to a visit by Jack Pritchard as a first step, but preparations were painfully slow. Pritchard finally had a chance to discuss the issue with North Korea’s UN ambassador in New York on June 14, 2002; these talks were followed four days later by another TCOG meeting in San Francisco.

The TCOG was still considered a useful forum for the three countries to share information following such important meetings and to discuss reactions and interpretations, saving a great deal of time and minimizing potential misunderstandings. “The TCOG is not a decision making body,” said one U.S. official, “but it offers a ‘real time’ check on the feasibility and viability of different ideas. It gives people deadlines and forces the development of talking points.” It was at the June 2002 trilateral that South Korea pushed Kelly and his team to consider raising the seniority level of America’s planned delegation to Pyongyang, from Pritchard to possibly Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, or at least to someone of Kelly’s rank. The United States eventually decided on Kelly himself.

During the same June 2002 TCOG meeting, Japan dropped its first hint that Prime Minister Koizumi was considering a visit to North Korea to meet with Kim Jong-il. The hint was vague enough, however, that the announcement regarding Koizumi’s planned trip to Pyongyang in September 2002 still took almost everyone by surprise, and it underscored how the TCOG was not a forum

for discussing such sensitive information. These events also coincided with the strengthening of U.S. convictions regarding the existence of a significant HEU program in North Korea. Less than three weeks after Koizumi's summit with Kim Jong-il, Kelly made his long-delayed trip to Pyongyang, and he confronted the North Koreans with accusations regarding their HEU program. What followed was a series of claims, counterclaims, and demands that led to the suspension of KEDO fuel oil deliveries to the North, the DPRK's effective withdrawal from the NPT, and its overt pursuit of a nuclear weapons program. This marked the first of two important turning points for the TCOG in the Bush era.

Since President Bush's inauguration, the TCOG had functioned primarily as a means to help *manage the gaps* in and between each country's North Korea policy, and events developed relatively slowly. After the events in the fall of 2002, however, no one had a policy in place for the series of changes that were taking place. Japan, for example, thought that its resumption of a dialogue with the North would just be a supplement to U.S.-DPRK talks, but instead the stakes were higher when those talks faltered, and some feared that Pyongyang would try to drive a wedge between Japan and its allies by courting Japan.

Not since the start of the first nuclear crisis in 1993 had the choice seemed so stark for South Korea and Japan between acquiescing to Washington's priority of pushing the nuclear issue to the brink of sanctions (or possibly war) and advancing their own agendas. Moreover, the ROK political environment had changed in the past nine years, and a growing number of South Koreans were less likely than before to fear the North and more apt to doubt the United States. The U.S.-ROK alliance appeared particularly fragile.

Almost by default, therefore, the TCOG started functioning as a way to coordinate strategies *within the context of different policy approaches*, which is a subtle, but important, difference. The gaps separating national policies were still too big for a single, common approach to the situation to be forged, but the three countries (as a group) had some important decisions to make, and the need to do so tested the limits of trilateral policy coordination. As a result, the group met more often: four times in five months in late 2002 and early 2003, four months in a row in 2003, and five times in seven months from the very end of 2003 through mid-2004.

The first major decision, discussed in November 2002, was whether and when to halt fuel oil shipments to the North. One shipment was already en route at the time, and, against the better judgment of South Korea and Japan, the three decided to turn that delivery around and send it back to Singapore. At the next TCOG meeting in January 2003, more differences surfaced. The United States began to press for an early suspension of the LWR project, while the ROK pushed the U.S. delegation to consider offering a nonaggression pledge to the North Koreans in return for their agreement to dismantle the nuclear program. Kelly had no room to explore adjustments to U.S. policies decided in Washington, and so he stuck to his script. One Japanese senior official remarked, “The basic procedure of the trilateral dialogue [at that time] is that South Korea produced policies based on its own domestic matters, which the United States ultimately refused. Meanwhile, Japan attempted to present different policy options to the United States, but the United States is not able to decide on anything.”

The situation reached a critical point at the June 2003 TCOG meeting in Hawaii. By now the ROK and Japan delegations each had new leadership. Japan’s new director general of Asian affairs, Yabunaka Mitoji, had taken over at the January 2003 meeting, and the ROK had a new deputy foreign minister by June, Lee Soo-hyuck. Since February 2003, South Korea also had a new president, Roh Moo-hyun, who mentioned after his election that he was “skeptical” of the U.S. approach to North Korea. For its part, the United States had just finished participating in a first-ever three-way dialogue, held in Beijing in April 2003, on the nuclear issue with North Korea and China, signaling a new willingness on Pyongyang’s part to address nuclear matters in a multilateral (as opposed to bilateral) format. Just four months later, in August 2003, the Beijing talks evolved into the six-party dialogue, bringing in the ROK, Japan, and Russia, and sparking a series of more complex and detailed policy coordination problems.

At the April 2003 Beijing meeting, North Korea reportedly submitted an eight-point plan aimed at easing tensions, including offers of a freeze on its nuclear program and experimental launches of ballistic missiles in exchange for concessions from the United

States.³⁹ The U.S. delegation apparently labeled the proposal a “non-starter,” but it opened up a new set of challenges for the allies. The ROK and Japan came to the June 2003 TCOG meeting with definite (though not unified) opinions about which proposal had merit, what the United States might consider offering in return, and how the talks could be expanded to include themselves. The U.S. team had its own ideas about scrapping the LWR project and considering a containment strategy to limit DPRK sources of hard currency, such as drug trafficking and missile sales. As a result, the TCOG agenda was getting longer, and the reports of policy divergence were becoming more public.

The second major turning point for the TCOG came a few weeks after the June 2003 meeting, when the three allies decided to gather for “informal consultations” in Washington (or what one reporter called a “non-TCOG TCOG meeting”). The State Department spokesman downplayed the significance of the meeting, suggesting that these were just “informal consultations between allies who talk to each other all the time...that not every time the allies get together do they come out with some big announcement or press statement.”⁴⁰ The inference was that TCOG meetings would continue, but that less formal get-togethers might be sprinkled in between. The fact is, however, that the TCOG never met again under that name, and it was essentially replaced by this new, unnamed process.

The difference between the old and new TCOG meetings was almost imperceptible. Aside from dropping the name, the informal consultations involved the same people, the same agenda, and the same meeting format (three bilaterals and a trilateral). The only significant change was the decision not to issue a joint press statement or hold a press briefing afterwards. Pre-meeting announcements also became very low key, or disappeared altogether. The net result was a desired one: less media attention.

Contributing to this desire for greater informality, at least on the part of the Americans, was a coexisting sense of both comfort and uneasiness. The comfort stemmed from a judgment that pub-

39 “Peace Process: Japan Push for U.S. to Heed North Korea’s Eight-Point Plan,” *Asahi Shimbun*, June 13, 2003, <http://www.asahi.com/english/international/K2003061300382.html>.

40 U.S. Department of State, daily press briefing, Richard Boucher, spokesman, Washington, D.C., July 2, 2003.

lic displays of trilateral unity were simply less necessary than they were before. The TCOG had had a transforming effect on trilateral relations, at least publicly, and at a certain base level the solidarity of America's allies on the North Korean nuclear issue was now generally beyond doubt. Uneasiness was rising, however, as squabbles over the details about how to resolve the current crisis became more apparent. In addition, according to one U.S. official, "The issuance of a joint statement after each session, whether there was any message to convey publicly or not, was a particular pain and often a waste of time." Without a joint statement, the three delegations had more time to discuss pertinent issues, and there was the added benefit of lowering the stakes and taking some of the pressure off the U.S. interagency process.

Given the conflicting positions of the three countries at the time, these small changes to the TCOG probably saved trilateral policy coordination from failure. America's allies still had complaints about the U.S. position and its overall lack of direction, but the spotlight shone less intensely on this aspect. A Japanese senior official remarked, "The United States is ill-prepared for the TCOG meeting. Compared with the six-party talks held in February [2004], China prepared a concept paper for the working group. Each state handed in its comments on the concept paper, but the United States did not. Also, in July 2003, the discussion was diffused even in the working-level discussions among the three before the trilateral session. Nothing would proceed."

But the allies also found virtue in the informal TCOG sessions, especially as they contributed to some degree of consensus building ahead of multilateral meetings. A South Korean official noted, "The TCOG has worked well when it could help advance a common position on concrete issues, such as [DPRK nuclear dismantlement] and approaches to it. The discussions have helped flesh out agreement among the three on what coordinated steps might be taken in response to North Korean [dismantlement] steps. It could help get clarity on how we want North Korea to initiate 'complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement' [CVID]." Another South Korean official said, "TCOG is now doing more work related to real problems. It has grown beyond its earlier public relations role."

The description of current problems as "real" was echoed in other project interviews across all three nationalities, though this char-

acterization would no doubt draw protest from officials involved in earlier TCOG meetings. The problems were just as “real” back then, but the advent of multilateral negotiations altered the TCOG’s role in the process to some degree. Interagency coordination in Washington was now focused on the six-party talks and dealt with the nuclear issue in a broader context. As a result, the trilateral sessions tended to feed into the U.S. interagency process more than being directly affected by those discussions. In this sense, the informal TCOG consultations were transforming into a de facto allied caucus within the multilateral dialogue framework.

The TCOG in a Six-Party Context and Beyond

The current, informal TCOG has found a tenuous stability in its role as a forum for trilateral discussion and consensus building ahead of six-party plenary sessions and working-group meetings. The TCOG agenda is usually obvious, as it derives directly from preparing for, and comparing notes after, a six-party gathering, and it is becoming increasingly concrete and technical. But the TCOG and the six-party process, in and of themselves, are not sufficient to mitigate the differences between the countries when it comes to their North Korea policies. The TCOG has come under increasing pressure since 2004, as the gap between South Korea and its partners has widened, and it is unclear how long the caucus role of the TCOG can remain viable. In addition, each country’s delegations came under new leadership in early 2005, requiring the teams to get to know each other once again.

As an example of the concrete nature of current TCOG discussions, starting in December 2003 the group agreed to a broadly worded set of principles to end North Korea’s nuclear program with “coordinated steps.” It has also apparently agreed that the North’s HEU program must be investigated, and it has identified other common platforms to serve as a basis for negotiation at the six-party talks. Trilateral policy coordination is not about simply trying to keep the group in lock step with regard to North Korea, however, as the process allows South Korea and Japan to move a comfortable distance ahead of the United States in certain areas, such as offers of economic assistance in a nuclear freeze scenario. In the near term, Washington has ruled out any direct assistance

from the United States, but it would not object to aid extended by its allies. ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young made an energy supply offer to Kim Jong-il in June 2005, for example, amounting to roughly 2 million kilowatts of electricity annually as a replacement for the LWR program, and this proposal emerged as key to restarting six-party talks.

Most of the previous points of tension among the three remain, since the misalignment of policy priorities has not improved (and in some cases has actually worsened), but the friction is better managed in an informal atmosphere by people familiar with each other. The Kelly-Yabunaka-Lee trio of delegation leaders held the “honor” of serving the longest as a team in TCOG history, with ten meetings in fifteen months, compared to the previous record holders (Sherman-Takeuchi-Jang), who met seven times over eleven months. Officials from all three countries remarked in interviews about how comfortable the participants feel with each other. A Japanese official explained, “We’ve come to know each other very well. When someone is out of the room and a certain question is raised, we can all laugh about how we know how that delegate would respond if he was present.”

Inevitably the players rotate, however, and an entirely new leadership team took over during the early part of President Bush’s second term. Jim Kelly’s replacement at the State Department was Christopher Hill, who had been serving as U.S. ambassador to the ROK since 2004, following a number of foreign service postings in (and related to) Southeastern Europe.⁴¹ In Japan, Sasae Kenichiro replaced Yabunaka as the new director general of the Asian and Oceanian Bureau. Song Min-soon became South Korea’s new deputy foreign minister in late December 2004, succeeding Lee Soohyuck.⁴² There is always a chance that the trilateral chemistry will change to some degree, when new participants are introduced, but

41 Christopher Hill was the U.S. ambassador to Poland from 2000 to 2004, ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia from 1996 to 1999, and special envoy to Kosovo from 1998 to 1999, among other postings. He was specially recognized for his contributions as a member of the U.S. negotiating team in the Bosnia peace settlement.

42 Song Min-soon previously served as director of planning and management at MOFAT, ROK ambassador to Poland (around the same time as Hill’s term there), director general of the North American Affairs Bureau, and director of the Security Policy Division, among other positions.

this is not the most important factor determining success or failure. As one ROK participant observed, “The limitations we face are not so much the formula or the forum, it’s the substance.”

Still, there are indications that the change in personnel, particularly in the United States, has made a difference to some degree. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has a stronger personal relationship with President Bush, compared to her predecessor, and a large portion of NSC staff remaining at the White House used to report to her. As a result, Rice has more authority to direct the day-to-day tactics toward the six-party talks than did former Secretary of State Powell, and she has delegated a good deal of that authority to Hill. In effect, the Bush-Rice-Hill relationship on North Korea policy more closely resembles the Clinton-Albright-Sherman relationship during the 1990s, and it has allowed for greater U.S. negotiating flexibility, which contributed to the resumption of six-party talks in July 2005 and the agreement on a joint statement in September. As the ROK participant observed above, however, it is ultimately the substance behind the policy making that will decide how much progress is made in the talks, as well as how trilateral policy cohesion fares in the future.

With regard to the TCOG process itself, a few officials in Japan and South Korea still believe that there is a continued role for more formal meetings in the trilateral coordination process. A senior ROK official commented, “You need the informal meetings and exchanges to get the texture of things, and it provides the flexibility delegations need to size up counterparts. But you also need the formal process to approve and endorse positions, and to establish a common record of what is and is not agreed.”

For the time being, however, it appears that the informal process will continue as it has, though it is possible that TCOG technical working groups could be formed to mirror a similar structure at the multilateral level, should that develop. Another idea that has been discussed at the TCOG is the possibility of holding an intensive TCOG-based brainstorming session or a type of “retreat” that would allow the three delegations to explore new ideas for dealing with the nuclear issue, beyond the constraints of current national policies. This could be particularly appealing in the event that the six-party talks reach an impasse or actually break down, since the group could be venturing into relatively uncharted territory.

China, despite some discomfort with the TCOG caucus, seems content to accept and to work with the trilateral dynamic, rather than rail against it. As a Japanese official explained, “During one six-party session, when all member states were scrutinizing a proposed terms of reference, China offered the United States, Japan, and South Korea to work together, and it did not attempt to seize the initiative over those three states.” China has also had relatively numerous bilateral discussions with the ROK in recent years, and it may see the TCOG as a way to inject some of its views into the trilateral talks, via the ROK and even Japan, as a supplement to its own bilateral meetings with U.S. officials.

There is much that the three countries can be proud of when considering the efficacy of trilateral consultations, but the process requires consistent attention and constant effort, and it can only make as much progress as the countries’ leaders are willing to allow. The TCOG should not be taken for granted, and there will always be opportunities for improvement. While U.S. policy approaches will continue to frame the debate for TCOG discussions for the foreseeable future, Washington must listen to and accommodate its allies’ positions in order to secure reciprocal support and to enhance the effectiveness of its own policies. All three countries need to remain flexible and try to be as open and upfront as they can in TCOG meetings, recognizing that there will always be some issues of concern that are dealt with via different channels.

Regardless of how the six-party process evolves, U.S.-Japan-ROK policy coordination will continue to be an important diplomatic tool in all three capitals. Progress on North Korean nuclear dismantlement, if achieved, will likely require implementing a carefully calibrated set of incentives, verification measures, and steps toward diplomatic normalization. If technical working groups are formed in the six-party multilateral setting to help carry out an agreement, the U.S., Japanese, and ROK members of those groups ought to gather trilaterally, perhaps in parallel TCOG-like meetings on the margins of general TCOG sessions.

Potential Japan-DPRK normalization, in particular, will need to be well integrated into a broader deal on the nuclear issue, given the potential for large aid flows from Japan, in part as a form of compensation for damage and hardship inflicted during the colonial era. The TCOG can play a vital role in coordinating aid and

energy assistance, which should be a tool to reinforce compliance, improve the lives of North Koreans, and punish agreement violations. This might be especially valuable if KEDO either falls apart for lack of support or transforms into a six-party version of itself, by taking on China and Russia, in addition to the United States, Japan, the EU, and South Korea.

As long as the six-party process continues and shows some signs of promise, it is impractical to expect the TCOG to resume its previous pattern of strong, centralized U.S. leadership, public press statements, and regular meetings of the foreign ministers and the secretary of state. The fact is that the TCOG now plays only a supporting role to the six-party process, and this situation will continue as long as the multilateral negotiations remain viable. Though there were problems at the start of the Bush administration with the relatively weak link between U.S. policy making and the trilateral consultations, it now appears that the TCOG has found a zone of comfort where it can work productively in a manner that feeds into the policy debates in Washington. America's allies' positions are not always accommodated, but they are heard and seriously considered. In the six-party context, it is appropriate that the TCOG should be a more informal mechanism for exchanging information and coordinating positions ahead of (and after) multilateral meetings.

That said, even in its current format, there is notable interest in Japan and South Korea (and among some in the United States) in holding more-formal sessions from time to time, perhaps at the ministerial level, as a way to strengthen the link between the TCOG and actual decision making in each capital. In contrast to his predecessors in the Clinton administration, former Secretary of State Colin Powell did not lead a formal trilateral session on North Korea policy of any consequence, and neither has his successor. Moreover, if the six-party talks show signs of breaking down, the United States should give serious consideration to again naming a high-level North Korea policy coordinator close to the White House to help manage what will surely be a very difficult and contentious domestic, trilateral, and multilateral discussion about how to contain and pressure a nuclear North Korea. After all, Assistant Secretary of State Hill has the rest of Asia in his portfolio, and there could come a point where he can neither spend the bulk of his time on

North Korea issues nor delegate the responsibility to someone of a lower rank.

The three countries should also explore the opportunities for expanding trilateral consultations beyond the North Korean nuclear issue, and it is on this area that the next chapter of this book focuses. It is clear that the North Korean nuclear issue has commanded the allies' collective attention in a way that no other single issue probably can. The prospects for initiating a regular, open-ended, and high-level trilateral policy dialogue on environmental concerns, trade rules, or the like are not strong. Still, a finite set of meetings to discuss certain issues, such as coordinating crisis management strategies and capabilities in the region, could be productive. Although sporadic trilateral defense meetings have taken place, security cooperation is predominantly a bilateral issue, especially when high-level officials and alliance relations are involved. Given that the TCOG has demonstrated that the three partners are able to overcome political obstacles for common benefit, this same type of vehicle might provide a way to approach the element of disconnectedness among the three countries' security and military establishments in a trilateral context. While there are various political and historical reasons why this situation persists, the disconnectedness is particularly discouraging when one considers the common interests the three share and the opportunities for enhancing interoperability, increasing effectiveness, and possibly rationalizing procurement. The TCOG's relationship to the six-party talks also suggests that trilateral policy discussions can be a useful supplement to a broader regional dialogue, and that it need not necessarily be seen in zero-sum terms by important neighbors such as China and Russia.

Chapter 2

Security Policy Reforms & a Crisis Response Planning Opportunity

Trilateral Cooperation beyond the TCOG

Chapter 1 presented the logic and history of trilateral cooperation in the North Korean context, but what about formal cooperation on policy issues beyond North Korea? In fact, the record is quite thin in this area. Japan and South Korea only normalized relations in 1965, and throughout the Cold War there were few, if any, trilateral initiatives in either the political, economic, or security arenas. This was due to a variety of factors, stemming largely from the economic and military asymmetries that existed between the nations, which led each country to address issues of concern or opportunity in a bilateral format. Of the three bilateral relationships, the Japan-ROK connection has traditionally been the weakest, given the lack of a direct security link, as well as for historical and other reasons. Instead, the two U.S. alliance relationships have been the primary mechanisms for coordinating policy among the three, though the relative strength of America's bilateral ties has fluctuated over the years. In fact, Japan-ROK cooperation has appeared to be strongest during times when U.S. engagement seemed to waver.⁴³

The trilateral relationship began to change with the close of the Cold War, however, and the North Korean nuclear and missile challenges in the 1990s became an irritant around which the pearl of trilateral coordination formed. Such trilateral tendencies

43 Victor D. Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The U.S.-Korea-Japan Security Triangle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

then began to appear in other, related situations, albeit in a modest way. In 1994, the United States worked on updating its procedures for evacuating Americans from Seoul in case of a crisis, which involved significant support from (and consultation with) Japan, among other interactions. Then, in the second half of the 1990s, the U.S.-Japan negotiations on revising their Guidelines for Defense Cooperation were accompanied by trilateral dialogues that included South Korea in both official and unofficial forums.

The foray into trilateral consultations came at a time when regional dialogues in Asia more broadly were mushrooming, and thus it did not seem like any great new innovation. One of the first, regular multilateral gatherings in the region was the Western Pacific Naval Symposium that started in 1988, followed by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1989, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in 1994, and the ASEAN+3 (with Japan, China, and South Korea) in 1997. There was a particular emphasis on cooperation on maritime issues, in part for geographical reasons and due to the explosive growth of regional trade, but also because the Law of the Sea Treaty was revised in 1994 and later ratified by key nations in Northeast Asia (ROK, Japan, and China in 1996; Russia in 1997), which clarified to some extent the overlapping exclusive economic zones. In addition, Russia-ROK (1990) and China-ROK (1992) normalization made U.S.-Japan-ROK cooperation seem less “containment oriented” in a Cold War sense, even though the American military presence did not see any significant reductions in either Japan or South Korea.

The departure of U.S. forces from the Philippines in 1992 and the persistent threat from North Korea contributed to a shared desire among the three countries for strong and stable security relations. North Korea, in particular, was a catalyst for a series of informal trilateral security-related dialogues in the latter half of the 1990s, and although China and Russia were not thrilled with this development, they understood that it was not targeted at them specifically. These so-called defense trilaterals involved defense officials at the assistant secretary level and convened periodically to discuss broad regional security issues. The official trilaterals were supplemented by occasional non-governmental or semi-governmental forums and exercises, such as a series of trilateral naval conferences in the late 1990s and a trilateral workshop organized

by IFPA in 2000 on military responses to nuclear, biological, and chemical contingencies.⁴⁴ During this time, South Korea and Japan were also stepping up the frequency and quality of their official and unofficial interactions on security-related issues, particularly after Kim Dae-jung's visit to Tokyo in 1998 and the signing of the Japan-ROK Joint Declaration for a new partnership in the twenty-first century.

For all of the factors bringing the three countries closer together on security and related matters in the 1990s, however, there are many persistent reasons why the growth of this kind of cooperation has been slow, and why it might have bumped up against a ceiling above which it simply cannot grow. These include Japanese constitutional restrictions on the use of its military, South Korean historical sensitivities regarding Japan's armed forces from its colonial era, slightly divergent threat perceptions, a lingering territorial dispute, tight budgets on all sides that limit opportunities to design special trilateral exercises, and varying levels of tolerance for alarming China or Russia with stepped-up security cooperation.

One key question for this study is whether or not the situation is sufficiently different today than it was during the 1990s to allow for a broader array of trilateral cooperation initiatives, particularly in the security arena. Is there any reason why the three countries should actively pursue such a course, or are the potential rewards simply not enough to warrant the extra effort required to overcome legal, cultural, historical, and strategic hurdles? Can "trilateralism" be a useful, even necessary, evolutionary step toward a broader, multilateral security framework for the region, or is the geopolitical dynamic such that the sprouts of trilateralism will more likely give way quickly to bilateral traditions and multilateral trends?

The answers to these questions are not clear cut, but a number of recent developments suggest that the United States, Japan, and South Korea may yet find common causes that will benefit from a uniquely close trilateral relationship. Overarching changes include the U.S. global posture review (GPR) and military trans-

44 The trilateral naval conferences were co-organized by the Center for Naval Analyses in the United States, the National Institute for Defense Studies in Japan, and the Korean Institute for Defense Analyses.

formation, which could shake up traditional roles and missions for the allies in the region, particularly in the area of crisis response. The global war against terrorist organizations is another potential point of trilateral cooperation. Although many past arguments for building up regional security cooperation focused on somewhat vague objectives of regional stability, transparency, and greater confidence, there exists today a potentially powerful unifying theme of counterterrorism and counterproliferation that can sharpen the attention of political leaders and military planners in the three countries. Indeed, a new paradigm among U.S. military professionals in the Pacific theater is that “exercises and training operationalize the war on terrorists.”⁴⁵

This is not to suggest that counterterrorist functions will become the primary rationale for the U.S. alliance relationships in the region. In the case of the ROK, for example, counterterrorist functions will remain only supplementary to the defense of South Korea and the central tenets of the Mutual Defense Treaty. The same is true for Japan and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Moreover, these countries understandably do not view the war against terrorist groups with the same primacy as does the United States, and they have their own priorities that can be accommodated in their alliances with Washington. Indeed, one country’s counterterrorism mission can be another country’s relief or development mission, and in some cases these efforts are combined so as to be inseparable. Some U.S.-led counterterrorism support missions in the Philippines, for example, combine military operations with the provision of medical and dental clinics for local populations.

There are also important reforms underway with respect to Japan’s and South Korea’s own security policies, which could have a significant impact on the development of trilateral security cooperation, depending on how the reforms are implemented and how they mesh with U.S. military transformation. Although Japan and South Korea are each making substantively different security policy adjustments, they are both to some degree pursuing greater “jointness” in the armed forces, the ability to operate off-island or off-peninsula to defend a more broadly defined set of national

45 U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, “Marines in the Pacific,” unclassified briefing (November 29, 2004).

interests, and “enhanced combined operational capabilities” with the United States, which suggests either a convergence (or a potential conflict) of interests that could benefit from direct, trilateral dialogue. There is even the potential for greater compatibility in military capabilities over time, as South Korea builds up a blue-water navy, for example, and Japan develops an expeditionary ground capability.

In addition, new multilateral forums are emerging in the region for which a trilateral component could become an important cornerstone. The most obvious example is the six-party talks, where the TCOG is already playing a unique role as an informal caucus. Might the same be possible some day within the PSI, or perhaps a similar initiative to improve the region’s ability to respond to crises, such as the devastating 2004 tsunami in South and South-east Asia? The tsunami relief case study is particularly useful as a means to understand the three countries’ attitudes toward, and mechanisms for, responding collectively to large-scale regional crises. This area of cooperation is probably the easiest way for the three to work together jointly on security-related issues, and the tsunami relief effort provides valuable lessons in this regard.

Why should the three countries even bother to invest time and money to improve cooperation in these non-traditional security areas? As described in this chapter, there is an increasing complexity and lack of clarity when designing (and combining) military and civilian operations for war, peace enforcement, peace keeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, country stabilization, and crisis management. The United States, Japan, and South Korea have already cooperated in the tsunami relief effort, as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan, among other locations, and similar challenges will no doubt arise in the future, be they natural disasters, health epidemics, failed states, or nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) events.

Moreover, despite the degree to which many Koreans would like to ignore or discount the possibility, a large-scale humanitarian, environmental, or military crisis involving North Korea is still a distinct possibility in the foreseeable future, perhaps triggered by a nuclear accident, or a collapse of the economy or of governmental control in the North. Therefore, improving trilateral and multilateral civil-military cooperation in the region more broadly

is probably the only politically acceptable way that the three countries can effectively prepare for a range of Korean contingencies, in the areas of civilian evacuation and medical treatment, search and rescue, refugee management, command-and-control (C2) issues, or other related activities. This could be particularly important now that it appears U.S.-ROK joint planning for such contingencies might not be as strong an official alliance activity as was earlier conceived.⁴⁶

In each of these examples, it is unlikely that the United States, Japan, and South Korea will become the sole agents of counterterrorism, counterproliferation, crisis response, or consequence management. There are many other capable and interested countries in the region. The fact remains, however, that the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliances are unique in the region in terms of their history, the large presence of American troops and equipment, the frequency and level of joint training and interoperability, and the degree to which they share common economic and political values. The only other U.S. relationship that comes close in this regard is probably its relationship with Australia. The alliances, therefore, can be a useful core for any inclusive regional activity that involves the deployment of military and economic assets.

The potential of this trilateral relationship remains to be explored, developed, and tested. It requires that the three countries look beyond the crisis of the moment and work to build patterns of coordination and planning that are appropriate, constructive, and long lasting. The TCOG can serve as a useful model if they decide to make this effort, but policy makers will need to consider the changes that are taking place today in all three countries and how they might take advantage of opportunities to strengthen the trilateral relationship in the future. For a variety of reasons (some

46 In 2005, the ROK NSC suspended development of a joint U.S.-ROK plan to cope with various North Korean contingencies. On April 15, it said in a press release, "We have terminated the U.S.-South Korea Combined Forces Command's efforts to map out a plan, code named 5029, because the plan could be a serious obstacle to exercising Korea's sovereignty. We reached the conclusion in January and informed the Combined Forces Command through the Ministry of National Defense." For more details, see Kim Min-seok, "Seoul Halts Joint Plan for North Collapse," *JoongAng Daily*, April 16, 2005, <http://joongangdaily.joins.com/200504/15/200504152203130939900090309031.html>.

mentioned before and others explained in this chapter), it is likely that any effort to strengthen trilateralism will be informal, low-key, and non-exclusive. That does not mean, however, that it should not take on some type of structure and be guided by a clear purpose.

Impact of U.S. Military Transformation and Related Reforms in Japan and Korea

One of the important changes occurring today in East Asia, as noted above, is the adjustment in the composition, location, and to some extent the roles and missions of U.S. military forces in the region, as part of the GPR and military transformation. In this context, the term “transformation” is defined rather broadly to encompass more than simply the impact of revolutionary military technologies. For this report “transformation” includes the way in which U.S. forces are positioned around the world, how the United States works with its allies and partners, and even what types of missions (including “stability operations”) its soldiers are trained to conduct. Some of these changes were pondered by the Bush administration before the September 11 terrorist attacks, but the global war against terrorist groups has influenced the urgency and character of this effort. As Douglas Feith, then U.S. under secretary of defense for policy has explained, “A key facet of transformation is realigning our global defense posture [including] updating the types, locations, numbers, and capabilities of our military forces, and the nature of our alliances.”⁴⁷

Moreover, this is not simply a matter of how military posture adjustments in one country (principally, the United States) will affect the other two allies, but how all three countries can best manage and coordinate what is really a fairly simultaneous process of strategic review and transformation in each country. One or two may be transforming at a faster pace than one or two of the others, and each has unique motivations and incentives, but all three are indeed transforming in response to the post-September 11 security environment. So this is not a case of one country forcing the other two to change, but a question of how best to navigate

⁴⁷ Douglas J. Feith, U.S. under secretary of defense for policy, “Transforming the U.S. Global Defense Posture,” speech before the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., December 3, 2003.

together the transition to new, more appropriate national and alliance postures.

The U.S. GPR and Military Transformation

The U.S. GPR and transformation initiative is the result of a Defense Department planning effort that has spanned more than four years and has its intellectual roots in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review and the 2002 National Security Strategy, both of which called for a new approach to defense planning that emphasizes capabilities-based planning over traditional threat-based planning. The basic idea is that in this new post-Cold War and post-September 11 world, the United States cannot know precisely where, when, or even whom it might need to fight, but Washington does have a pretty good idea of the types of challenges it might confront – namely, terrorism, WMD proliferation, failed states, piracy, and the like. Thus, the wisest course is to focus on fielding those capabilities that would be needed to address this more likely range of risks.

Because many of these new risks are fairly distant from U.S. overseas bases built for Cold War threats in Europe and Northeast Asia, Washington believes that it needs to move from the fairly static basing arrangements of the past, in which U.S. troops were deployed where they were expected to fight, to a more flexible, expedition-oriented posture that will allow U.S. troops to move quickly from forward bases to more distant trouble spots. At the same time, access to a wider array of support facilities and infrastructure near or en route to likely areas of concern and instability are also being sought.

While the primary alliances of the United States – certainly those with Japan and South Korea – remain critical to this new global posture, especially to maintain stability and security on and around the Korean Peninsula, U.S. and even allied forces may not be optimally positioned to support this new and increasingly important off-island, off-peninsula expeditionary orientation. This has led the United States to press for some relocation and reconfiguring of its forces to meet its goals, which resulted in an agreement with South Korea to reduce the U.S. troop count by roughly 12,500 and the number of U.S. bases there by about half, to relocate the Yongsan Garrison headquarters out of Seoul, and to transfer ten U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) missions to ROK forces by 2006. U.S.

discussions with Japanese officials on possible U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) adjustments are anticipated to be concluded by the end of 2005, though in the USFJ case, the changes might be less extensive, as this is already a relatively mobile and flexible force.

With regard to U.S. force structure, the direction is toward fielding units that are more agile, deployable, and deadly but with fewer forward-deployed forces, which has the added benefit of yielding a less intrusive footprint in host countries overall. This should be achieved by using new technologies and modes of organization that will allow more tailored operations to exploit speed, stealth, long reach, precision, knowledge, and lethality. The emphasis here is less on numbers of forces and more on capabilities available and effects delivered. One result of keeping forward-deployed forces relatively light is a greater dependence on reaching back to U.S. command-and-control and other assets in places like Guam, Hawaii, and the mainland as they are needed. In this case, when ROK forces and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) work with U.S. forces, they will essentially be reaching back to the same place, with important implications for interoperability (both bilaterally and trilaterally). This could be particularly true if a new U.S. Army command being contemplated for Camp Zama in Japan is assigned regional control over allied forces in the event of an emergency on the Korean Peninsula.⁴⁸

In moves related to these bilateral consultations on base and force realignment, the allies have also negotiated adjustments to the way they cooperate in certain missions, generally expanding the legal basis for providing each other with goods and services connected to their militaries' operations. The United States and Japan in 2004, for example, agreed on updates for their Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement to facilitate the cross-military provision of supplies and services in new types of operations, notably disaster relief and international peace and security missions.⁴⁹ A similar U.S.-ROK agreement was struck in time for South Ko-

48 "New U.S. Command in Japan Would Handle Korean Emergency," *Chosun Ilbo*, August 1, 2005.

49 Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, exchange of notes concerning modification of Annex 2 of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between Japan and the United States, July 29, 2004, <http://www.infojapan.org/announce/announce/2004/7/0729-2.html>.

rea's participation in the international reconstruction efforts for Afghanistan and Iraq.

It is worth keeping in mind that while changes in the near and medium term may be more extensive in one country than the other – and here it would seem that South Korea will, for a number of reasons, face more changes sooner than Japan – what happens in one will inevitably have a major impact on the other and on the U.S. forces they both host. A relevant example is a recent U.S.-Japan discussion about a potential rotational U.S. Marine Corps presence in South Korea, drawn from Okinawa-based units. There is also the presence of multiple U.S. *Aegis* destroyers off the coast of Korea as part of a missile defense system to protect Japan and USFJ, which is another near-term issue involving all three countries (though not directly with regard to command and control).

All of these points underscore the collective, collaborative dimension of alliance transformation, and the fact that this transformation will likely push all three countries, not just the United States, toward the acquisition of lighter, more responsive and deployable military capabilities, able and poised to participate in a wider range of regional and global contingencies, often as part of a broader coalition.

Security Reforms in Japan and South Korea

For the last two years, Japan has been carrying out its own formal process of introspection and consultation regarding military transformation and security policy reforms. This process was in part spurred independently by the same factors that drive the debate in Washington (that is, technological innovation and the post-September 11 security environment), but it was also prompted and shaped by the U.S. GPR itself and the bilateral Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) talks. The debate covered a variety of national defense and international security policy reforms, from statements of principles for Japan's security policy to concrete plans for SDF force structure and military procurement initiatives. Policy makers, Diet members, scholars, and the media discussed such issues as Japan's right of collective self-defense, the interpretation of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty's geographic applicability (the so-called Far East clause), the SDF role in international peace-building efforts, Japan's weapons export ban, its C2 and crisis

management process, and greater investment in Japan's intelligence infrastructure.

The direction for these policies began to take concrete shape with the March 2004 release of a report by the Liberal Democratic Party's Defense Policy Studies Committee (National Defense Division) of the Policy Research Council, followed by a special report of the prime minister's Council on Security and Defense Capabilities in October 2004 and culminating in the Cabinet's approval of the National Defense Program Guideline (NDPG), FY2005,⁵⁰ and the Mid-Term Defense Program, FY2005-2009, in December 2004.⁵¹

From the strategic point of view, Japan has shown through this process that it is moving incrementally toward a more capability-based approach to defense planning, although Tokyo remains wary about traditional threats in the region and will prepare accordingly. Japan has also begun to recognize a need to counter "new threats," including the proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles, as well as international terrorist activities. To some degree it has even embraced the concept of preemption, at least in the context of an imminent missile launch from North Korea, but overall Japan has no intention to abandon its defensive orientation, and it continues to limit strictly the military's ability to participate in collective defense. Instead, given the new threats Japan faces, the NDPG signals that Japan will, "*on its own initiative, actively participate in international peace cooperation activities...in the region spreading from the Middle East to East Asia [emphasis added],*" a region that will assume a higher mission priority for the SDF in the future.⁵² Japan still places great importance on its security relationship with the United States, and future steps to

50 Government of Japan, National Defense Program Guideline, FY 2005, http://www.jda.go.jp/e/index_.htm.

51 Government of Japan, Mid-Term Defense Program, FY 2005-2009, http://www.jda.go.jp/e/index_.htm.

52 One could argue that by "inextricably" linking the "peace and stability of Japan" to "that of the international community" and then reasoning that Japan should thus "actively participate in activities that nations of the world cooperatively undertake to enhance the international security environment," the theoretical wall preventing collective defense has essentially been breached (since Japan is not the only country whose peace and stability are presumably so linked). In practice, however, Japan will continue to differentiate between such international peace cooperation activities and other, more direct forms of collective defense (see Japan's NDPG, FY 2005).

buttress that link are a key subject of the DPRI strategic talks between the allies.

Operationally speaking, Japan will make a number of adjustments to the SDF in line with its strategic tinkering. The SDF will develop less-heavy and more-mobile ground forces over the next ten years, add lift capability to its maritime and air forces, invest heavily in intelligence and missile defense infrastructures, and enhance its C2 abilities while emphasizing greater “jointness” among its services. In fact, a strengthened Joint Staff Office (JSO) is scheduled to unify command of the military services in March 2006. Some of the key goals in this regard are to improve the SDF’s ability to respond quickly to international crises and sustain operations, as well as to protect against perceived threats from North Korea, such as small-scale incursions via spy boats or missile attacks. Japan also wants to be able to protect its interests in the East China Sea, given China’s rapid modernization of its naval forces and the lingering disputes over islands, rocks, and their differing interpretations about the line dividing their exclusive economic zones.

Inevitably, as Japan revamps its own operations and capabilities, this will affect how it trains and operates with U.S. forces. The NDPG states that Tokyo plans to strengthen U.S.-Japan security arrangements and to promote intelligence exchange and “operational cooperation,” but how this will evolve is still not completely clear. Will they have a horizontal relationship, working side by side, or will the relationship be more vertical, with Japan largely working in support of the U.S. military in the region? Could their effort to enhance operational cooperation eventually include other regular partners, such as South Korea or Australia, for certain missions? For the time being, Japan-ROK military cooperation will probably remain limited to joint search-and-rescue drills, military exchanges, and the like, but it might be possible to expand upon this narrow base in a trilateral fashion in the future, particularly in the area of crisis response planning and search and rescue. The two countries are looking to sign a bilateral agreement on military exchange and cooperation in the near future.⁵³

53 “Japanese Defense Chief Verifies Report,” *JoongAng Daily*, August 27, 2005, <http://joongangdaily.joins.com/200508/26/200508262242532009900090409041.html>.

In South Korea, the process of security policy reform has been less formalized than in Japan, but Seoul is nonetheless contemplating a new orientation for its military forces and its own concept of national security. Because South Korea essentially “went first” in the sequence of America’s military realignment in the region, it has had to focus rather heavily on the direct and practical implications of the GPR, as opposed to the longer-term effect on its security policies. As a result, Seoul has been preparing to take over the missions scheduled for transfer and adjusting not only to the departure of some U.S. forces, but also to the introduction of new USFK capabilities made possible by some compensating investments in helicopter upgrades, anti-missile batteries, and other systems. Moreover, it is important to remember that given the nature of the North Korean threat, the U.S. and ROK militaries have a joint, combined forces command, unlike the parallel command structure in Japan. This joint command structure improves interoperability but can also complicate the domestic policy-making process, in the sense that certain decisions need to be made together with the United States.

Still, Seoul has begun to articulate its own vision for South Korea’s national security strategy. In March 2004, the Blue House agreed upon a set of national security strategic directives that helped launch the concept of pursuing “cooperative, self-reliant defense,” whose aim is to achieve a balance between the ROK-U.S. alliance and development of a self-reliant defense posture. The concept of self-reliant defense is apparently based on a number of suppositions including the expectation that counterterrorism and counterproliferation will continue to color the international strategic environment and that South Korea will be called upon to contribute in these efforts – not unlike Japan’s “new threats.”⁵⁴ Later, at the October 2004 annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) between the two countries, Defense Minister Yoon Kwang Ung expressed the ROK commitment to coordinate its cooperative self-reliant defense plan with U.S. transformation efforts. One could wonder if, in the future, the “cooperative” part of “cooperative self-defense” in the ROK might eventually include other

54 Cha Du-Hyeogn, “The Future of the ROK-U.S. Alliance: Toward the Evolution of a Strategic Cooperation Alliance,” KIDA Papers no. 7 (December 2004).

countries besides the United States. To some extent, this is already happening via ROK deployments to join multinational operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Interestingly, the drive by South Korea to become more self-reliant in military terms does not mean that the ROK armed forces will increase in size, though the effort is having an effect on the nation's military procurement plans. The Ministry of National Defense is striving to develop itself into a more elite and efficient force, but given tight budget constraints it is actually reducing the number of troops in order to help free up funds for investment in new systems for surveillance and reconnaissance, real-time command and control, and long-range strike ability. The MND's military structural reform trimmed 10,000 troops from its ranks in 2004, and it plans additional reductions in the overall active military force (mostly in the army), from 681,000 to 500,000 by 2020, while increasing its defense budget by 11 percent annually until 2015.⁵⁵ The fact that both South Korea and Japan are planning significant investments for intelligence gathering and C2 systems suggests that some level of trilateral consultation might be advisable to enhance interoperability, or at least to avoid incompatibility.

Both South Korea and Japan have also been changing the way that they organize themselves (politically and bureaucratically) to respond to various types of crises beyond those of a military or national security nature.⁵⁶ Each country faced slightly different challenges that caused it to pursue these reforms, but a central theme running through both efforts is a desire to improve the information flow between and among ministries in certain situations and to centralize the decision-making process. In the case of Japan, the Cabinet Secretariat now plays a critical coordinating role in managing Tokyo's response to a domestic or international crisis, be it a natural disaster or a terrorist incident of some kind.

55 On September 13, 2005, the MND announced its fifteen-year military reform plan, which is focused on restructuring "the country's manpower-intensive force into a smaller but stronger one, suitable for the warfare of the future." Jung Sung-ku, "Seoul to Boost Defense Budget," *Korea Times*, September 14, 2005.

56 For a discussion of Japan's crisis management reforms and their potential impact on U.S.-Japan crisis management cooperation, see James L. Schoff, *Crisis Management in Japan and the United States: Creating Opportunities for Cooperation amid Dramatic Change* (Herndon, Virginia: Brassey's, 2004).

In South Korea, the Blue House established the National Security Council Crisis Management Center (NSC-CMC) in March 2003 as its first step in a process of reform that links what had been disparate systems dealing with conventional security crises on the one hand, and natural or man-made disasters on the other.

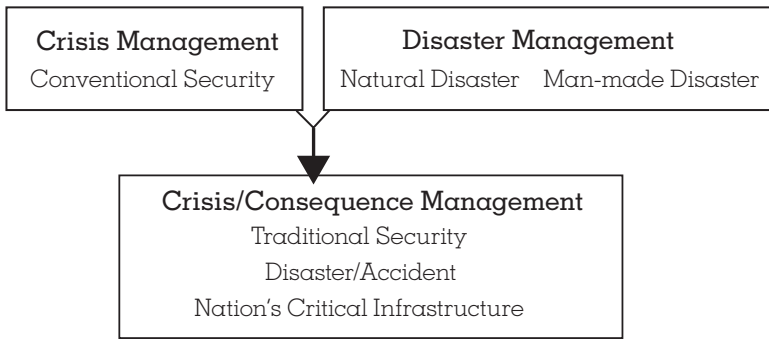
On September 9, 2004, the ROK's NSC-CMC presented the Crisis Management Basic Guideline, which detailed the structure of a new crisis management system. "We adopted a comprehensive security concept in defining national crisis, rather than confining it to the conventional security. Under the new concept, a national crisis refers to situations that have the potential to undermine national sovereignty and core elements and values in the nation's political, economic, social and cultural systems. The crisis management guide is being provided for the first time since the establishment of the government [in 1948], and clearly defines responsibilities and roles of related government agencies to prevent any vacuum or overlap on crisis management," explained Col. Ryu Hee-In, head of the NSC-CMC.⁵⁷

The Basic Guideline classified crises into three categories: conventional security, disaster, and the nation's critical infrastructure. Then, it clarified the highest-level decision-making mechanism for each category by identifying the NSC for conventional security and the prime minister for disasters and the nation's critical infrastructure. The prime minister has been responsible for managing non-military crises in South Korea since the enactment of the Civil Defense Law in 1975.

In addition to the Basic Guideline, the NSC-CMC also published a set of crisis management manuals. The thirty-manual set comprises eleven on traditional security areas, including inter-Korean conflicts; eleven on disasters; and eight on the nation's critical infrastructure. The manuals specify the responsibilities and roles of related ministries and agencies, step-by-step procedures, and primary countermeasures in various cases. For example, when responding to the 2004 tsunami crisis in Southeast Asia, the ROK government followed procedures detailed in two of the manuals, *Earthquake* and *Protection of Overseas Koreans*. The NSC-CMC is

57 Seo Hyun-Jin, "Security Panel Issues Crisis Management Manuals," *Korea Herald*, September 9, 2004, <http://www.koreaherald.co.kr>.

Changing Approach to Crisis Management in South Korea after 2004



currently drafting two more manuals on South Korean troop dispatch abroad, and all of these response guidelines will be followed up by more detailed procedures developed in the related ministries and agencies over the course of 2005.

In addition to the Basic Guideline and crisis management manuals, South Korea has also begun to discuss creating an emergency relief and response unit in the military since its recent participation in the tsunami relief efforts. “It is necessary to prepare a special unit for emergency relief in order to better respond to major disasters at home and abroad,” said ROK Prime Minister Lee Hae-Chan at a hearing in the National Assembly on February 14, 2005.⁵⁸ Members of the National Assembly, who visited Indonesia and Sri Lanka in January 2005, recommended organizing an independent capability in the military for rapid dispatch after disaster strikes.⁵⁹

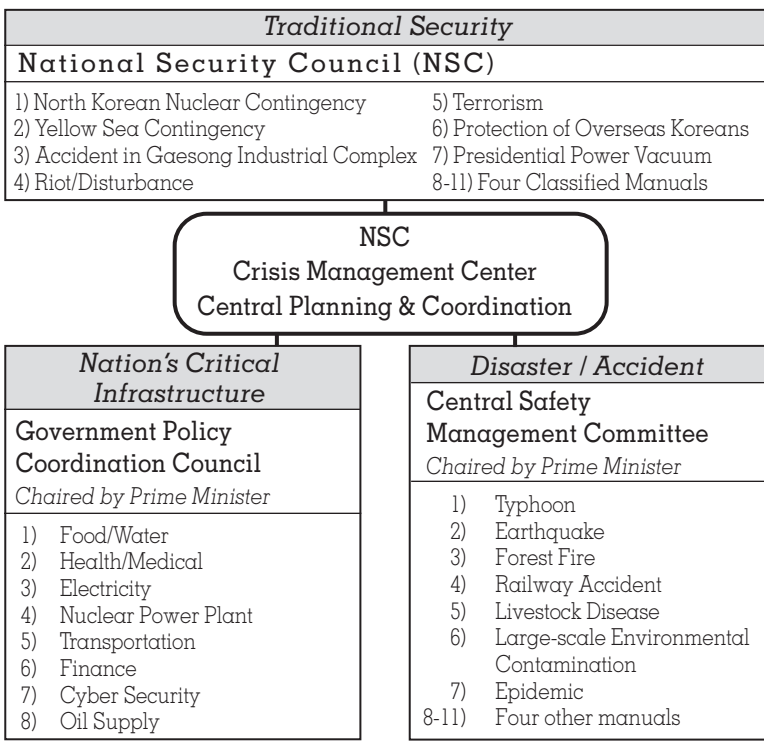
In its report to the National Assembly Defense Committee on April 18, 2005, the NSC also stated, “We are talking with the related ministries over dispatching a standby unit to UN Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) as well as to major overseas disasters.”⁶⁰ According to the MND report presented to a defense policy workshop at the National Assembly, though it is still preliminary, two battalion-sized units (roughly eleven-hundred soldiers) – composed of army, navy

58 “A Special Military Unit Is Necessary for Disaster Relief,” *YTN News*, February 14, 2005.

59 Kim Myung-Ja, ed., “Report of National Assembly Delegates’ Visit of Affected Nations” (in Korean), report to the National Assembly, February 13, 2005.

60 “Crisis Management Practice Manuals Will Be Prepared within This Year,” *Yonhap News*, April, 18, 2005.

ROK's Crisis Management System and Manuals



and air force – will be trained for PKO and emergency relief missions and will be dispatched either to assist in a regional conflict or to affected nations at the request of a host government or the UN.⁶¹ Once organized, this standby unit will operate according to procedures developed in the newly prepared crisis management manuals.

Interestingly, unlike the United States, where the military's development of a more rapid and integrated emergency response capability is being made as part of the broader GPR process, South Korea's approach toward creating an emergency relief and response function in the military is rather independent of its military transformation planning. This is evidenced by the recent MND document,

61 This plan includes infantry, medical, engineering, military police, and helicopter units in the army; LST, sea rescue, and explosive disposal units in the navy; and air transportation (C-130) units in the air force. For more information, see ROK Ministry of National Defense, "Plan for PKO Standby Unit Organization" (in Korean), report presented to a defense policy workshop at the National Assembly, April 21, 2005.

“Four Objectives of National Defense Policy in 2005.” In this document, pre-designating a PKO unit with disaster response capability was listed as one of the sub-objectives under “Realizing the National Defense with the People,” which mostly pertains to activities of military support for the Korean public. It was not listed under “Building a Future Oriented Defense Capability,” where policy objectives for force structure improvement and command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence systems were proposed in light of USFK’s relocation.⁶² In contrast with the United States and Japan, South Korea views national defense transformation as distinct from reforms targeted at international military contributions.

The overall result is that both Japan and South Korea are now better prepared to respond in conjunction with other nations when necessary, although there are still a number of unanswered questions in this area. In the case of South Korea, the government is only just now beginning to seriously consider how to respond to off-peninsula crises, given its traditional domestic focus and preoccupation with the threat from North Korea. The ROK’s involvement in such activities as peacekeeping abroad, the reconstruction of Iraq, and the relief response for tsunami victims is a relatively recent phenomenon, and so its policies for crisis management in an international context are still being developed.

To some extent, this can be seen in the fact that South Korean legislators have begun to discuss pre-designating PKO units and responding to foreign crises only recently in light of concerns about constitutional restrictions. Article 60 of the ROK constitution, which grants the National Assembly the right to consent to the dispatch of armed forces to foreign countries, has inhibited and delayed proper responses by the military to overseas crises in the past. It was not until the ROK’s recent participation in the tsunami relief effort that the National Assembly began discussing a simplified course of legislative approval for the dispatch of armed forces, within certain limits.⁶³ In many ways, the channels for communication and

62 ROK Ministry of National Defense, “Four Objectives of National Defense Policy in 2005” (April 28, 2005), http://mnd.news.go.kr/warp/webapp/news/view?_id=p_sec_4&id=14b8edo7f5702ba1df4e2630.

63 For more information, see ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Improving Domestic Procedures for Korea’s PKO Participation” (in Korean), report presented to a defense policy workshop at the National Assembly, April 21, 2005.

coordination among the United States, Japan, and South Korea in times of crises have yet to be established.

Potential Areas for Trilateral Consultation

As all three countries make the transitions now underway, they will need to grapple, singly and together, with a number of political, legal, operational, and even budgetary questions raised by the GPR and related security reforms. Clearly, the bulk of the work on all of the above issues needs to be carried out at the national and bilateral levels. However, given the fact that U.S. and national posture shifts in Japan and Korea will have obvious impacts on one another (and on regional perspectives more generally), closer consultations at the trilateral level do make some sense, and they could be of considerable value. Some areas that might benefit from trilateral consultations are outlined below.

Understanding Japan's and South Korea's overall comfort level with regard to a regional operations focus. Here, the situation in Japan may be a little more mature than in South Korea, given the regional thrust of the 1997 revision to the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation, the pre-existing expeditionary posture of a good portion of the USFJ, and the trend toward greater involvement of the SDF in international missions, as outlined in Japan's newly revised NDPG.

Until recently, the focus in South Korea has been relatively local and Korea-centric, with a good deal of concern as well over China's possible reactions to regional operations by the USFK. Some ROK policy makers see America's push for "strategic flexibility" for the USFK as a net negative for South Korea, because they fear either abandonment or entanglement if USFK assets are deployed to regional conflict areas, with Taiwan as the most sensitive potential location. But there might be some room for a more prominent off-peninsula role for the USFK, depending on the circumstances and the level of prior consultation. At the 2004 SCM, for example, the U.S. defense secretary and the ROK minister of national defense reconfirmed "the continuing importance of USFK's strategic flexibility" and agreed to initiate the ROK-U.S. Security Policy Initiative (SPI) from 2005 in order to contemplate restructuring the USFK as well as the roles and missions of the ROK-U.S. alliance. Washing-

ton and Seoul are still trying to resolve this issue, but many ROK officials remain wary of USFK off-peninsula missions.

Seoul has also been hesitant to participate formally in small, multilateral military exercises with the United States, such as the Cobra Gold exercise in Thailand or similar activities. The ROK MND has generally been interested in pursuing such opportunities, but Blue House officials are reportedly reluctant, apparently fearful that its participation in trilateral or other “mini-lateral” exercises might run counter to its stated desire to play a balancer (or stabilizer) role in the region.⁶⁴ The balancer role is intended to promote harmony and peace among all players in the region under the principles of non-discrimination and openness, as a means to help overcome confrontational bloc diplomacy. Thus, the Blue House is concerned that its involvement in such mini-lateral security frameworks might be perceived as exclusive or even offensive to non-participants, particularly China, thereby undermining its proposed course of balancer diplomacy. In this way, the ROK’s balancer concept has acted to some extent as a brake on any kind of overt trilateral security cooperation.

Weighing the impact of any realignment of USFK and USFJ forces on ROK and Japanese capability needs. Given the scale of near- to mid-term changes in USFK posture, avoiding any capability gaps for self-defense and understanding what a greater focus on regional operations means for future procurement priorities will be an important issue for South Korea. Japan, too, will have concerns on this front, as USFJ units could move to different parts of the country (perhaps triggering the need for SDF adjustments) and as steps are taken to move toward acquiring the military systems and platforms advocated in the NDPG. Basically, the question here is how

64 At a graduation ceremony of the Korea Third Military Academy on March 22, 2005, President Roh Moo-hyun explained his vision of Korea’s new role as a balancer (or stabilizer) in Northeast Asia. He said, “We should play a balancing role not only on the Korean Peninsula but also for the peace and prosperity of Northeast Asia. ... The power equation in Northeast Asia will change depending on the choices we make.” For more details, see Cheong Wa Dae, “Address at the 40th Commencement and Commissioning Ceremony of the Korea Third Military Academy,” March 22, 2005, <http://english.president.go.kr>.

U.S. transformation does or does not mesh with national plans, budgets, and priorities.

Assessing potential adaptations to headquarters and command-and-control arrangements. This whole area of concern includes questions with regard to headquarters reorganization, such as the potential conversion of the Combined Forces Command in South Korea into a more flexible combined joint task force (JTF) structure, the possible transfer of all or part of the U.S. Army I Corps headquarters to Camp Zama in Japan, and even the possible creation of a Northeast Asian command. In addition, there will be questions with regard to command authority, such as whether South Korea should assume wartime operational control in the event of conflict with North Korea, as well as questions with regard to technology sharing and innovation – especially in the information technology realm – to facilitate connectivity, a common operational picture, and better integrated command and control in key common mission areas (such as missile defense and sea lane patrol).

Providing regular updates among the three on national and bilateral initiatives, thereby reducing the prospects of any misconceptions and misunderstandings and increasing the potential for cooperative and reinforcing measures. Such updates, perhaps on a biannual cycle, would be a good way to promote a more integrated discussion of national transformation plans and the two major bilateral efforts – the U.S.-Japan DPRI effort and the U.S.-ROK SPI talks. In terms of process, one approach might be to convene a trilateral defense exchange on the margins of a TCOG session, as defense officials from all three countries generally attend these sessions, and to follow the more informal structure now preferred by TCOG attendees, so as to avoid overly official, bureaucratic exchanges. In time, a dialogue along these lines could evolve into a more routine transformation-focused exchange, either at the defense bureaucracy level and/or involving the uniformed services. One of the noticeable benefits of the TCOG is that it facilitated strong relationships among the participants and promoted continuity, even when new people were rotated into new positions. It also allowed the ROK and Japan to meet during times when it was politically difficult to do so bilaterally, such as during diplomatic disputes.

Facilitating a lessons-learned dialogue on defense planning and operational issues of common interest, as each country has unique experiences to share that could be valuable to the others. For example, Japan's experiences in crafting the 1996 U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security and the 1997 Defense Guidelines revision might be of considerable value to South Korea as it contemplates a similar effort with the United States. South Korea's experience as a longtime member of an integrated, combined command could be of great interest to Japan as Tokyo moves toward a more joint and combined planning approach. In addition, the experiences of both in recent regional and global operations (such as support efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, peacekeeping operations, anti-smuggling/anti-piracy missions, consequence management, and PSI activities) could constitute a database of immense value to all. Similarly, for certain mission areas where it may have greater experience and expertise (as in the areas of missile defense operations, homeland security, and managing NBC weapons contingencies), the United States could use such a dialogue to help jump-start allied planning efforts that might not be as advanced.

Sponsoring and encouraging a cooperative strategic planning exercise to include:

- A joint risk assessment and survey of likely contingencies in the region.
- An assessment of capabilities needed and available, such as in the area of reconnaissance and intelligence sharing, given the deployment of new unmanned aerial vehicles (the *Global Hawk*) in the ROK; that is, can the three countries invest more rationally in satellite and unmanned aerial vehicle technology as a group, rather than independently?
- Discussion of possible divisions of labor regarding certain missions (or within missions).
- The identification of niche capabilities among ROK and Japanese forces that might allow them to take the lead in certain circumstances or to complement U.S. forces usefully. Such capabilities might include PKO assets, maritime surveillance

(perhaps as part of a regional maritime security initiative), and NBC-related medical support.

- The exploration of leap-ahead/breakthrough technology areas where all three could more effectively coordinate their research and development efforts, together with a discussion of better ways to exploit such technologies.

Here it is worth recalling that, despite the many, oft-repeated differences between Europe and Asia, the initial strategic planning review process begun by NATO after the Cold War might hold useful lessons to draw upon with regard to allied risk assessments, capability-based planning, and the development of a shared but updated vision for the future. The fact that new strategic planning initiatives are underway at the bilateral levels makes the idea of a trilateral variant or adjunct all the more sensible.

Developing and coordinating public diplomacy and education campaigns on transformation activities, both for national audiences and for other partners and neighboring countries. Given limited time and other pressing priorities, it is easy to overlook the value of such campaigns, but recent public debates – often not well informed – in South Korea and Japan in the wake of U.S. GPR-related announcements confirm that public diplomacy and education efforts will be important, and that they need to be part of the process early on, not an afterthought or end-of-project affair. As recent experience has also demonstrated, properly informing and exchanging views with the legislative leaderships in all three countries will be a key piece of the puzzle, and a little advance planning on how best to do this among the three could be very productive. The public diplomacy campaign might also involve China and Russia – in order to prevent misunderstanding or suspicion – in addition to the domestic audiences in Japan and South Korea.

Creating a platform for a wider regional dialogue when and where appropriate. Perhaps more as a result of these types of initiatives than as a targeted activity in and of itself, trilateral exchanges along the lines discussed, together with the TCOG sessions, could help to create useful opportunities for expanding the dialogue to allow other key regional powers to participate, including other established partners and allies, such as Australia, Singapore, and the

Philippines, as well as potential partners and collaborators in specific policy arenas and mission areas, such as China and Russia. Such was the case recently when Russia agreed to join the NATO operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean.

To draw on another European example, it often takes the concerted efforts of a small core group (like the core group in the EU that helped establish the European Monetary Union) to push along the prospects for wider multilateral cooperation, and it is not beyond the realm of imagination that the type of trilateral security cooperation being proposed here could lead to broader regional dialogue and security cooperation, just as the TCOG has in some ways established what appears to be a very productive “trilateral caucus” within, complementing, and forwarding the six-party process.

The Example of NATO and the Partnership for Peace (PfP)

An appropriate model for such a broader, regional arrangement could be NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative launched in 1994, which has served to further enhance NATO’s crisis management capabilities. PfP has enabled NATO to increase its partnerships around the world in furtherance of a stronger crisis management network. An attractive feature of this model, which is also part of the PSI model discussed later, is its loose organizational structure that allows states to contribute and participate as little or as much as they like. Although the PfP was originally seen as a step toward membership in NATO, it has since evolved into an initiative that includes states that have no desire for membership but see the benefits of a cooperative initiative geared toward crisis and consequence management. Of course, in the Asian context, there are no institutional structures as strong as NATO from which to launch a regional initiative. Nonetheless, there are some aspects of PfP worth exploring.

Although NATO’s inclusion of crisis management on its agenda is not new, the global order following the end of the Cold War allowed NATO to sharpen its focus in this particular area. The enhancement of NATO’s crisis management sector began with the New Strategic Concept in 1991, followed by the Partnership for Peace initiative developed in 1994, and the Washington Summit in April 1999.

In 1991, NATO, recognizing that the world order had changed with the end of the Cold War, highlighted the importance of crisis management in its New Strategic Concept. The Alliance then strengthened its commitment to crisis management through the development of the Pfp in 1994. The Pfp “provides a framework for enhanced political and military cooperation for joint multilateral crisis management activities, such as humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping.”⁶⁵ In essence, this partnership laid the groundwork for the development of a strong network of states, both NATO and non-NATO, that shared this commitment to coordinating and cooperating in crisis situations. In 1999, the Washington Summit propelled the initiative forward by stating that the Pfp “provided scope for strengthening the ability of Partners and allies to deploy together in future crisis response operations through the Operational Capabilities Concept.”⁶⁶

Originally designed with the intention of broadening NATO membership and providing a way for states seeking entrance to NATO to begin the process, the Pfp allowed non-NATO countries to establish ties with NATO members with whom they had not previously had a cooperative relationship. The targets of this initiative were nations that had been a part of the Warsaw Pact, and key objectives included facilitating transparency in national defense planning and budgeting processes and maintaining the capability and readiness to contribute to crisis response operations under the UN and other international organizations.⁶⁷

The Pfp works through a series of agreements between aspiring partner countries and NATO. “Once a country has joined the Pfp, it submits a Presentation Document to NATO explaining what resources it will contribute to Pfp activities and the steps that it will take to meet Pfp political goals, such as democratic control of the military.”⁶⁸ This allows for NATO and partner countries to estab-

65 “NATO Fact Sheet: Partnership for Peace (Pfp)” (March 1996), http://www.fas.org/man/nato/natodocs/fact_pfp.htm.

66 Isabelle François, “Partnership: One of NATO’s Fundamental Security Tasks,” *NATO Review* (spring/summer 2000): 28.

67 U.S. General Accounting Office, “NATO U.S. Assistance to the Partnership for Peace,” report to congressional committees (July 2001), 3.

68 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, “Fact Sheets: NATO, Partnership for Peace, OSCE, and NATO Information Sources,” *Dispatch* 6, no. 23 (June 5, 1995): 483-87.

lish a set of goals and commitments to the partnership in writing that may serve as a guide for all parties to the arrangement.

The next step in the process is for the country wishing to participate to develop a document stating its goals and objectives under this partnership. "A unique Individual Partnership Program (IPP) is then agreed to with the alliance. IPPs set forth shared objectives and list activities planned to meet those objectives. Partners can assign personnel on a full-time basis to NATO headquarters in Brussels and to the Partnership Coordination Cell at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium. Partners may participate in an optional defense planning and review process designed to evaluate and enhance a partner nation's interoperability with NATO. Participating states work with NATO to develop interoperability objectives, which can be used to help refine IPPs."⁶⁹

Those countries that are part of the PfP are also presented with the Partnership Work Program. "The Partnership Work Program is developed by NATO as a 'menu' of potential cooperative activities, from which PfP Partners may select according to their specific, individual interests."⁷⁰ The partners therefore know what activities are going on under the PfP and may participate in as many or as few as they would like. Other PfP countries may even be willing to sponsor another member's participation.

A major component of the PfP is the exercises that take place among partners. These exercises are used to start the cooperative process and to practice responding to crisis situations before they actually occur. For example, Finland hosted "two military crisis management exercises...the NATO maneuver Cooperation Knowledge 2003 and the joint Nordic Peace."⁷¹ Many exercises for crisis management among partners take place on an annual basis.

There were promising gains at the beginning of the initiative: "The interoperability achieved in the first years of the Partnership was an early dividend and an important factor in the successful integration of Partner forces in IFOR and SFOR."⁷² As time passed and

69 Ibid.

70 "NATO Fact Sheet," March 1996.

71 Asia Africa Intelligence Wire, "NATO Exercises on 8-19 September to Test Finnish System for Crisis Management," September 4, 2003.

72 Charles J. Dale, "Towards a Partnership for the Twenty-first Century," *NATO Review* (summer 1999): 31.

the progress of PFP continued, “NATO has recognized the progression of the PFP program and recently called for a more operationally focused partnership, allowing more vigorous training.”⁷³

The success of both Partnership exercises and the Partnership as a whole has led to activities said to take place “in the spirit of PFP.” “NATO encourages allies to develop activities in the spirit of PFP, which offer partners increased opportunities to get acquainted with the militaries, governments and educational process of the member states.”⁷⁴ These exercises are meant to enhance relationships and increase cooperation among states in the development of crisis management, but they offer even more political, procedural, and budgetary flexibility than formal PFP activities.

Another example of “in the spirit of” activities is a program developed between countries and individual U.S. states. “The State Partnership Program links twenty-one U.S. states with the newly independent democracies of Europe and Central Asia. This program establishes broad and far-reaching ties between U.S. State Governors and their National Guard forces with the Defense Ministries of partner nations and all levels of government.”⁷⁵ This is a unique program done “in the spirit of PFP,” which creates a broader network of state/country partnerships.

Again, it should be emphasized that a PFP approach is not a practical option for Asia as a specific program, since the circumstances surrounding the creation of that program were unique (that is, the collapse of competition between well-structured security blocs), and there is no Asian organization comparable to NATO. The various components of PFP, however, such as the Operational Capabilities Concept, IPPs, and specific PFP exercises, can be useful models for similar initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, the “spirit of PFP” concept can also be useful when political or bureaucratic hurdles make more formal or institutionalized cooperation difficult. In fact, there are already some similar initiatives being carried out in Asia, which are discussed below, though they are not as ambitious and could probably ben-

73 “Transforming Joint Exercises and Readiness,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 33 (winter 2002/2003).

74 Lt. Colonel Michael Fleming, “The State to State Partnership Programme,” *NATO Review* (May 1997): 22.

75 *Ibid.*

efit from greater attention and investment. The discussion that follows focuses on the multilateral tsunami relief effort and the cooperative tools that underpinned that operation, looking at how all of these factors come together: the GPR, national security and crisis management reforms, and efforts at regional crisis management capacity building.

The December 2004 Tsunami and the Case for Trilateral Crisis Response Planning

On December 26, 2004, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the western coast of Northern Sumatra, Indonesia, setting off a series of tsunamis that devastated parts of India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Northeastern Africa. The diplomatic and military response to this disaster made evident some of the benefits that might accrue from expanding the role of the TCOG (or a TCOG-like process) to issue areas beyond North Korea. While there was limited coordination as a trilateral group during the crisis response, established U.S. relationships with these two allies, and with other partners in the region (such as Thailand, Australia, and Singapore), dramatically improved the speed and efficiency of the relief effort. It is instructive to examine the details of this effort and the lessons learned in order to understand how these relationships might enhance regional cooperation for crisis management, and how the different components of such a response (diplomatic, military, and civilian) come together.

The Diplomatic and Military Response by the TCOG Three

The immense devastation caused by the tsunami resulted in roughly 250,000 deaths, one million displaced persons, and an estimated \$10 billion worth of damage across twelve countries. The northwestern coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, was particularly hard hit. This was one of the worst natural disasters in modern times, and it stimulated an historic mobilization of diplomatic, military, and civilian relief activity.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ An estimated five hundred thousand were killed by a massive earthquake in Tianjin, China, in 1976, and at least three hundred thousand died in widespread floods in Bangladesh in 1970. These examples exclude drought and famine.

In the United States, embassies in the affected nations reached out immediately to both the State Department's Operations Center in Washington and U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) in Honolulu. The State Department is the government's lead agency for dealing with non-military incidents abroad, and its office for crisis management support quickly set up a department-wide JTF led by the East Asian and Pacific Affairs regional bureau.⁷⁷ The deployment of military assets during such incidents, however, is ordered by the Secretary of Defense, and so an intense period of consultation ensued among the embassies, State, PACOM, and OSD to try to determine the extent of the operation and the optimal military deployment, which was formalized in a written State Department request submitted to the Pentagon.

The State Department's JTF was staffed by people from the Operations Center and the Bureaus of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Political-Military Affairs, Consular Affairs, Diplomatic Security, and Public Affairs, among other relevant offices, such as the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The Defense Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) established similar, parallel JTFs, and they were all linked together with the White House and other agencies at the State Department's crisis management center, a small room in the Harry S. Truman Building packed with computers, phones, and faxes. The crisis management center operated twenty-four hours a day for seventeen days, with over 280 people rotating through in shifts. The NSC also chaired a daily video conference with the various JTF heads that focused on operational issues, led by the NSC's director for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the International Economic Affairs section.⁷⁸

Overarching the efforts to coordinate operations on the ground, a high-level political/donor dialogue was launched in the first few days that proved critical to ensuring a quick and coordinated initial

77 The State Department's lead-agency role for non-military incidents was confirmed in Presidential Directive/NSC-27, January 19, 1978.

78 This approach to the management of a "complex contingency operation" is similar to that outlined in the May 1997 Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, in which the deputy secretaries of relevant departments established appropriate interagency working groups (normally an executive committee at the assistant secretary level) to supervise the day-to-day management of the operation.

response.⁷⁹ This regional core group emerged rather spontaneously, and it included the United States, Japan, India, and Australia. Then-Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman, the department's third ranking official, represented the United States in the group and essentially chaired the group's daily conference calls. The UN's lead official for the crisis, Jan Egeland, under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, joined the phone calls on the group's third day, and about five days later effectively took over political responsibility for the overall relief effort.

The core-group concept was controversial from the start, as it was, by its nature, exclusive. In an interview with the author, one official from the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade complained that "we never received an explanation as to why our government was not invited to join." Other governments and international organizations expressed similar criticisms. But the core group filled a potentially dangerous void, since it was almost a week before the UN was prepared to oversee such a large operation, and most parties involved were willing to accept the core group's contributions as long it was clearly aiming at a quick transition to UN leadership. This is an important lesson for the United States and its Northeast Asian allies. Forming a core group within a broader, cooperative endeavor will almost always be controversial, but it can play a unique and vital role when speed and quick decision making are crucial to a successful operation.

The U.S. military response to the tsunami disaster was named operation Unified Assistance (OUA), and it commenced in the early morning hours of December 27. PACOM took charge of OUA and began planning within twenty-four hours, as it communicated directly with ambassadors and senior military leaders in Southeast Asia, as well as the State Department's crisis management center and the Pentagon. Disaster relief assessment teams were ordered to Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka within forty-eight hours as military assets were mobilized to the region.

PACOM Commander Admiral Thomas Fargo also established his own interagency coordination group in Hawaii, which communicat-

79 President Bush announced the existence of this core group in a discussion with reporters at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, on December 29, 2004.

ed with other government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to synchronize activities. The military units involved in the relief effort would interact at all levels with USAID and OFDA, though it was made clear that the military's mission was to work *in support of* USAID/OFDA to provide humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) to the host governments, which had ultimate control (at least nominally) of all activities within their borders.

Managing all of this relief activity was certainly complex, with many different layers of management overlapping one another alongside a confusing array of reporting lines and accountability trails. What helped to make it all work was the fact that the devastation so clearly overwhelmed the affected countries' abilities to respond, combined with the apolitical and one-time nature of the disaster (that is, in general this was not an unfolding or escalating crisis with controversial political origins, as perhaps a serious avian flu pandemic or other event could be). There was a unique sense of camaraderie and unity of purpose, which pushed aside (for the most part) the usual preoccupations of determining exactly who is in charge of what.

The host countries had nominal control over the local relief effort, but they relied heavily on the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and emergency relief coordinator Jan Egeland, along with other UN agencies such as the World Food Program (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and many more. The UN operation, in turn, accepted an unprecedented amount of logistical help from OUA, and ceded a good deal of decision-making authority in the process. OUA was clearly led by the U.S. military, and although the numerous other contributing governments did not formally place their militaries under U.S. command, they in effect volunteered to work under U.S. coordination to help maximize efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, although the concrete logistical challenges involved in quickly helping victims were daunting, the political environment for multilateral cooperation was about as good as could ever be expected.

By December 28, two days after the earthquake struck, a forward command element composed mainly of personnel from the Okinawa-based III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) had already arrived in Thailand. The III MEF's job was to set up the command, control, and communication structure for the incoming U.S. joint task force, called JTF 536, which received permission from Thai au-

thorities to operate from their air force base in Utapao.⁸⁰ JTF 536, led by Lieutenant General Robert Blackman of the III MEF, was “to prevent further loss of life and human suffering by expeditiously applying resources to the overall relief effort.” A PACOM spokesman also stated that, once operational, the task force would take the lead in coordinating on-the-ground efforts of the U.S. military, USAID, the host nations, and humanitarian relief organizations, and would be supported by the core group operating in Washington.⁸¹ General Blackman’s primary responsibility was to take an inventory of military assets, relief supplies, and personnel, and to facilitate an efficient mode of operation for the distribution of those resources to where they were most needed. Clearly, at the very beginning, this was a U.S.- and core-group-dominated operation, with a heavy military character. They were the only ones able to respond that quickly. Within a few days, however, the character changed significantly, becoming more multilateral and UN centered.

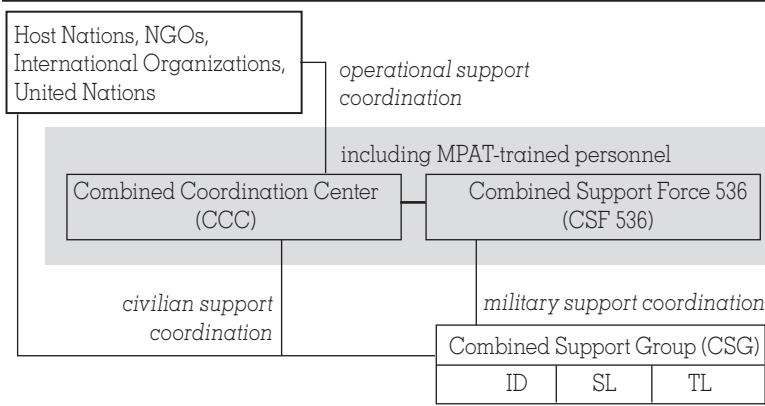
By January 5, 2005, JTF 536 had become Combined Support Force (CSF) 536, reflecting the increasingly multilateral nature of the relief effort. As more representatives from several nations, UN agencies, and even some NGOs congregated at the Utapao hub, CSF 536 began to function as the primary organizational core of the multilateral tsunami response. At this point, a parallel organization developed at Utapao, known as the Combined Coordination Center (CCC), since with the addition of civilian components the relief effort was no longer only a “force.” The CCC and CSF 536 were officially distinct, but they worked together extremely closely. CSF 536 eventually grew to involve thirty-three foreign militaries, twelve of which were represented at the base in Utapao. Alongside CSF 536, the broader CCC team included the main UN agencies, such as OCHA, WFP, WHO, and the UN Joint Logistics Center (UN-JLC), as well as USAID/OFDA and some NGO representatives.

On paper, the CCC was the lead civilian operation with CSF support, but the reality was a bit different. Given the central logistical role that OUA was playing in the early part of the relief effort, it

80 The III MEF set up a sizable set of facilities involving dozens of temporary structures, state-of-the-art communications equipment, and accommodations for hundreds of personnel from dozens of countries and international agencies.

81 PACOM press briefing, January 2, 2005.

Tsunami Relief: Civilian-Military Coordination

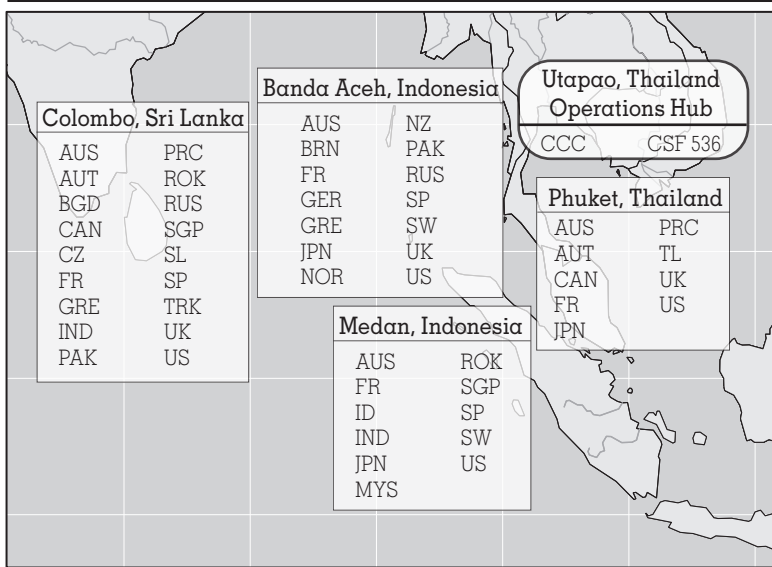


was General Blackman who usually led the daily group meetings, surrounded at the table by representatives from all of the different organizations. Rather than a vertical relationship, in which CSF 536 took direction from the CCC, the two groups really worked side by side, with the CCC focused on interfacing with host nations and the NGO community, while CSF 536 managed the day-to-day operations, especially in the very beginning.

To connect coordination and planning with on-site functionality, CSF 536 was overseeing three combined support groups (CSGs), each headed by a one-star general, operating out of Colombo in Sri Lanka, Phuket in Thailand, and Medan in Indonesia. These groups were officially military elements, but they coordinated closely with other U.S. government and UN agencies on the ground. Additionally, a temporary forward operating base was established in Banda Aceh, also under the purview of CSF 536.

An unpublished report from U.S. Marine Forces Pacific provides an interesting, micro-scale view of day-to-day operations at the CSG in Sri Lanka (CSG-SL). Certain U.S. military officials were assigned as liaison officers (LNOs) to foster effective communication between the CSGs and the U.S. embassies. This job allowed for close military-to-military coordination between American troops and those of the host country. At CSG-SL, two Sri Lankan officers – one from the navy and one from the air force – proved essential for overcoming certain bureaucratic obstacles to efficient multilateral disaster relief. Their thorough knowledge of the Sri Lankan military and government provided U.S. officers with immediate access to information about the needs and capabilities of the host nation.

National Militaries Operating in Disaster Area



CCC includes	OCHA	WFP	WHO	UNJLC	USAID/ OFDA	NGOs and others
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CSF 536 includes	US	JPN	ROK	AUS	CAN	FR	SGP	TL	UK	others
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Daily coordination meetings were held at the CSGs to discuss what was happening and to circulate plans for the following day. The preferred option was to try to fulfill needs locally, but when that proved too difficult, requests for assistance were sent on to the CCC at Utapao. The local CSG meetings included representatives from the host and assisting militaries, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN, and several NGOs. These multilateral meetings discussed not only the victims' needs themselves, but also different ways that the responders could help each other help the victims, such as a request by the British military of the Americans to carry a helicopter engine to the HMS *Chatham* for use in repairs.

The primary U.S. military assets deployed to the tsunami-affected region included the USS *Abraham Lincoln* carrier strike group, coming from Hong Kong, and the USS *Bonhomme Richard* expeditionary strike group, coming from Guam (see table on the facing page for a more detailed list of the U.S. and other military assets that surged to the affected region). These strike groups included multiple ship platforms that did not need to operate as a single unit – they could be deployed as needed around the disaster area.

Selected Tsunami Relief Assets Deployed by Country

AUS	Australia	HMAS <i>Kanimbla</i> , 1 Boeing 707 aircraft, 6 C-130 aircraft, 4 Iroquois, 2 <i>Sea King</i> helicopters, medical team, field hospital
AUT	Austria	1 C-130, medical team
BGD	Bangladesh	2 ships, 2 C-130s, 3 helicopters, medical team, engineering team
BRN	Brunei	1 CN-235 aircraft, 2 HH-60 helicopters, field hospital
CAN	Canada	Medical team, engineering team, disaster assistance response team, forensic team
FR	France	<i>Georges Leygues</i> frigate, <i>Jeanne d'Arc</i> helicopter carrier, 1 C-160 aircraft, 6 helicopters, field hospital, medical and engineering teams
GER	Germany	<i>Berlin</i> , <i>Bundeswehr</i> hospital ships, medical team, Army advance team
GRE	Greece	2 C-130s, medical team
ID	Indonesia	28 ships, 15 fixed wing aircraft, 2 helicopters
IND	India	8 ships, 2 aircraft, 6 MI-17 helicopters, medical team, field hospital
JPN	Japan	3 ships; 1 C-130; 3 CH-47, 2 SH-60, 2 UH-60 helicopters; medical team
MYS	Malaysia	1 ship, 2 C-130s, 1 CN-235, 2 helicopters, medical and engineering teams
NOR	Norway	2 C-130s
NZ	New Zealand	1 C-130, medical team
PAK	Pakistan	4 ships, 3 C-130s, field hospital, 2 engineering teams
PRC	China	1 Boeing 747 aircraft with relief supplies, medical team
ROK	South Korea	2 ships, 1 C-130, 10 HH-60s, disease control and prevention team
RUS	Russia	1 Antonov-124 aircraft, 4 IL-76 aircraft, 1 BO-105 helicopter
SGP	Singapore	RSS <i>Endurance</i> , RSS <i>Persistence</i> , 5 C-130s, 3 CH-47s, 4 <i>Super Puma</i> helicopters, medical team, field hospital
SL	Sri Lanka	12 ships, 5 aircraft, 13 helicopters
SP	Spain	2 C-130s, 3 CN-235s, 6 AB-212 helicopters, field hospital
SW	Switzerland	3 <i>Puma</i> helicopters
TL	Thailand	7 ships, 1 C-130, medical team
TRK	Turkey	Medical team, relief workers
UK	United Kingdom	HMS <i>Chatham</i> , RFA <i>Diligence</i> , 1 C-17 aircraft, 2 <i>Lynx</i> helicopters
US	United States	1 carrier strike group; 1 expeditionary strike group; C-5, C-17, C-130 aircraft; 3 KC-135 aircraft; 9 P-3 Orion surveillance aircraft; 8 CH-47, 6 CH-53D, 20 HH-60 helicopters; USS <i>Mercy</i> hospital ship

In addition to the *Abraham Lincoln* and the *Bonhomme Richard*, six pre-positioned supply ships were deployed. Other assets included six C-130 cargo planes and nine P-3 *Orion* surveillance aircraft. The hospital ship USS *Mercy* was also deployed to serve as an operations hub for humanitarian relief organizations. By January 7, General Blackman reported that there were close to thirteen thousand U.S. troops in the region (most of them offshore), seventeen navy ships, one coast guard cutter, and about ninety aircraft.

In the trilateral context, it is worthwhile noting the military assets that came directly from USFJ and USFK, and the communication that took place to mobilize those assets. The U.S. Army command in South Korea sent eight CH-47 *Chinook* helicopters, and roughly 350 troops. It seems that when the decision was made to increase helicopters operating in the tsunami response from

forty-six to ninety, many of them came from bases in South Korea. Additionally, two teams of rapid-response civil engineers were deployed from the 554th Red Horse Squadron at Osan Air Base. As for communication within the U.S. military before the relief effort began, Admiral Fargo conferred with General Leon LaPorte, commander of the USFK and U.S.-ROK combined forces (and with senior ROK commanders), before deploying any forces. The prevalent concern here was whether or not deployments in support of OUA would have an adverse effect on allied deterrence vis-à-vis North Korea.

From Japan, USFJ dispatched eight portable hospitals, six C-130 cargo planes capable of delivering food, water, medicine, and emergency supplies, and a tanker airlift control element, all from Yokota Air Base. The USS *Essex*, the USS *Fort McHenry*, and the *WestPac Express* were sent from Sasebo Naval Base (although before taking up its position off the Indonesian coast to support the relief effort, the *Essex* was in the Persian Gulf supporting operations in the Middle East). Additionally, 150 airmen of the 353rd Special Operations Group were dispatched from Okinawa. Three KC-135 refueling aircraft and one C-130 aircraft also flew out of Kadena Air Base.

As for how the Japanese government responded, MOFA does not have the equivalent of the State Department's crisis management center to coordinate a government operation, but it did establish a JTF similar to the one at State when word of the disaster came in from Japan's embassies. MOFA's task force was also led by the relevant regional bureau, the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, but a key role was played by the Economic Cooperation Bureau, which manages Japan's overseas development and humanitarian assistance programs, and houses the Overseas Disaster Assistance Division (similar to USAID). As noted above, Japan was one of the four initial core group members, though its representation on the daily calls kept shifting, demonstrating, perhaps, an element of uncertainty with regard to how such a unique diplomatic interaction should be handled within MOFA. Economic Cooperation Bureau director general Sato Shigekazu was Japan's first representative for the group, followed by Deputy Director Tsuruoka Koji of the

Foreign Policy Bureau, and then the Asian Affairs Bureau director general, Yabunaka Mitoji (of TCOG fame).⁸²

It is interesting to note that, despite the crisis management reforms since 2001, the Cabinet Secretariat and its Office for National Security and Crisis Management were only indirectly involved in the management of Japan's relief contributions. The main reasons for this seemed to be MOFA's proactive approach to dealing with the challenge, the apolitical nature of the event, and the continuing demand of operations in Iraq and the Indian Ocean. The response would probably be quite different if a Japanese embassy or Japanese nationals were endangered by civil unrest in another country, a terrorist threat, or an outbreak of disease. Instead, in the tsunami case, MOFA largely managed Japan's contributions.

MOFA was the first to set up an emergency liaison office, on December 26. A day later the Cabinet Secretariat established a prime minister's liaison office, which was quickly upgraded to an emergency response headquarters. Within a few days, however, at an inter-agency meeting on January 4, it was decided that the foreign affairs section of the Cabinet Secretariat, rather than the Office for National Security and Crisis Management (which blends the JDA, MOFA, and the National Police Agency), would manage policy coordination for the relief operations. The Cabinet Secretariat helped to collect information from different ministries and agencies for the prime minister's office, but MOFA had its own channel to the prime minister, so the Secretariat's role was supplemental to MOFA.

The JDA and SDF quickly understood the scope of OUA as it was being ramped up in Honolulu, since a Japanese liaison officer is permanently stationed at PACOM. The United States was seeking Japanese participation in OUA, and the JDA was keen to join. The JDA could immediately order three Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) ships, which were in the region already, to assist with rescue operations, but it needed a request from the host country to enable deployment within sovereign borders, and that required help from MOFA. In addition, the SDF could not be dispatched without a request to the JDA chief by the foreign minister, as per Japan's Disaster Relief Team Law.⁸³

⁸² Author interview with MOFA official.

⁸³ MOFA did send civilian disaster relief teams to the affected area within two days of the disaster. These are pre-registered, volunteer civilian

MOFA, meanwhile, was initially focused on the health and safety of Japanese nationals affected by the tsunami, as opposed to the broader relief effort, so there was a brief period of disconnect before the Ground SDF on-call unit and other assets were mobilized. It did not help matters that the MOFA task force did not include personnel from the North American Bureau or the National Security Division in the Foreign Policy Bureau, which are the two offices with the most frequent interaction with the JDA and maintain the strongest interpersonal contacts there. It did not take long, however, for the JDA to dispatch some of its own people into MOFA's Economic Cooperation Bureau for the duration of the operation.⁸⁴ And overall, MOFA moved relatively quickly to engage the JDA. On December 28, Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka formally requested the SDF's assistance (via the JDA) for the relief effort, even if actual deployment took some additional time.

Although Japan's military leadership has had plenty of experience with overseas missions and peacekeeping operations before, the speed and complexity of OUA presented new challenges. "It was also very difficult to get comprehensive and reliable information about the situation on the ground regarding local conditions, needs, and available infrastructure," said one JDA official. The JDA's deputy director for operations and a JSO major were dispatched to Utapao early on to help gather information, followed by an advance team of about twenty officers from all three services.

This kind of a joint operation was a first for the SDF, which, as noted above, is preparing for an integrated command system in 2006. The JSO was eager to test its plans and ideas, so the three services voluntarily lined up behind one commander to simulate the future arrangements. The JSO lead and the head of JDA operations worked together to manage Japan's participation in OUA, in support of MOFA's task force and the Japanese government's overall contribution to the relief effort.

Japan responded to the tsunami by pledging \$540 million, donating twenty thousand tons of rice, sending a medical team, and deploying its largest-ever disaster relief contingent. More than eight hundred defense personnel were sent to the affected coun-

teams of medical and search-and-rescue professionals who are prepared to be dispatched anywhere in the world within forty-eight hours.

84 Author interview with JDA official.

tries, including three senior military officers (from the JSO) tasked with helping to organize the aid effort on the ground. A C-130 cargo plane was also sent to Indonesia with forty SDF personnel to transport relief supplies. To coordinate with the U.S. military and other governments in OUA, Japan sent about twenty individuals to CSF 536 at Utapao.

Japan's response demonstrated many positive capabilities and was generally well appreciated, but the Japanese mission in South-east Asia also exposed some limits and problems with this kind of overseas deployment. The MSDF was able to respond quickly, since it had ships in the area on their way home from an antiterrorism drill in the Indian Ocean. But the Indonesian government did not request Japan's assistance until January 3, and then Japan waited until an advance team reported back on January 7 before it began mobilizing the bulk of its relief units.⁸⁵ Most of the equipment and supplies went by ship, highlighting the SDF's limited airlift capacity, which meant that Japan's OUA contribution was not fully operational until January 27, a full month after the tsunami struck. As mentioned earlier, however, these shortcomings are generally recognized by the Japanese government, and the newest NDPG lays out a plan for improving the SDF's ability to carry out similar missions in the future.

The South Korean government also found itself on untrodden ground as it contemplated the best way to contribute to the relief effort. Similar to other outside countries, its initial focus was on trying to determine the extent of the catastrophe and the fate of its citizens, and, like other nations, the ROK set up a task force within its foreign ministry on **December 26 to help coordinate the government's response**. Instead of assigning the lead role to its regional bureau, however, MOFAT had the International Economic Affairs Bureau take charge, working as part of a broader team effort that included the ROK NSC and the prime minister's office. Many of these initial steps were outlined in the new NSC-CMC crisis management procedure manuals, mentioned earlier. "In the past, MOFAT and the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs often bickered over the relief responsibility to the overseas disasters. This time,

85 "SDF Joint Mission in Full Swing but Tsunami Relief Exposes Flaws in Overseas Deployments," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, February 8, 2005.

the government immediately followed standard manuals preparing cooperative network between MOFAT and related ministries and agencies,” said one NSC official.⁸⁶

In response to the huge scale of the disaster, President Roh ordered the establishment of an interagency working group on December 30, **led by Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan. The prime minister** – an advisor to the president and responsible for supervision of government ministries – chaired this impromptu working group that decided on overall policy parameters for the response, with input from MOFAT, the NSC, and MND.⁸⁷ MOFAT worked with the NSC to carry out the working group’s directives, with support from MND. During the first interagency working group meeting held on January 4, the overall scale of grant aid was decided, together with the budget assignment among the related ministries. The second and third meetings were held on January 13 and March 4.

The early South Korean diplomatic response included an offer of \$50 million in direct aid over three years to the tsunami-hit region. By February 13, 2005, \$20.6 million – \$1.5 million in cash, \$1.1 million in relief supplies, and \$18 million in reconstruction support – had been provided to Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand. In addition, the ROK government has decided to provide \$50 million in loan assistance – by way of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund – to finance infrastructure projects in the affected nations.

Involving the Korean armed forces in an international relief effort, however, is not as clear cut as it is in the United States and Japan. As noted earlier, the ROK constitution has been interpreted as clearly requiring National Assembly approval for the deployment of any ROK troops abroad, for virtually any purpose. Thus, faced

86 “Crisis Management Standard Manuals Applied in the Aftermath of Tsunami,” *Kukmin Ilbo*, December 30, 2004.

87 The Korean name for the working group was Min-gwan Jong-hap Ji-won Hyup-ui-whae (Inter-ministerial and Comprehensive Assistance Meeting), and it was attended by the prime minister, representatives from the Korea NGO Council for Overseas Cooperation (KCOC), the president of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the ministers of MOFAT, MND, health and welfare, finance and economy, construction and transportation, and government administration and home affairs. For more details, see MOFAT, “Background Briefing: Inter-ministerial and Comprehensive Assistance Meeting,” January 4, 2005, http://www.mofat.go.kr/mofat/mk_a006/mk_b038/mk_c066/1167753_636.jsp (in Korean).

with an emergency situation that required a rapid response, the ROK government **had to choose between quick but limited military involvement** (not enough to raise objections in the National Assembly that the president was overstepping his authority), or slower, more substantial military involvement that was formally considered by the legislature. Not surprisingly, Seoul chose not to seek National Assembly approval and dispatched instead only transportation vehicles among MND assets, **after consulting informally** with the ruling Uri Party at the National Assembly on December 30.

On December 31, the government initially sent an air force C-130 military cargo plane carrying seven tons of medical supplies to Sri Lanka. On January 14, South Korea also sent a forty-three-hundred-ton landing ship to the region with medical supplies and other emergency relief goods, provided by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and several Korean NGOs. On January 18, the ROK sent a seven-person disease control and prevention team to Sri Lanka to fight the outbreak of various epidemics such as malaria and dengue fever. The navy also sent a second landing ship to Sri Lanka on January 27 with the capacity to deliver eighty-eight tons of relief supplies including medicines and bottled water. In addition, the ROK Ministry of National Defense dispatched a navy commander to serve as liaison at CSF 536 on January 23.

The delayed Japanese mobilization and the fact that it was almost three weeks after CSF 536 was established that a South Korean LNO arrived in Utapao suggest that, even though the international relief effort was effective and probably helped to save thousands of lives, there is still significant room for improvement with regard to domestic preparedness and rapid response planning in multilateral situations. Some of these improvements can only be made at the national level. Another effective way to facilitate an even quicker, coordinated reaction is to plan for different scenarios with partners ahead of time, and then to practice together as much as possible.

The speed and efficiency of OUA and the U.S. response were greatly enhanced by Washington's well-developed multilateral relationships with Thailand and other nations in the region, built up through frequent joint exercises and from America's experiences in past missions, such as operation Sea Angel in 1991 to assist Bangladesh in the aftermath of a terrible cyclone and flood. In an

example of the emerging U.S. global force transformation strategy, the United States also has been using pre-existing facilities in Singapore and the short-term rotation of troops under the new “places, not bases” framework. U.S. officials have had similar conversations with their Thai counterparts about integrating Utapao into the GPR for use in emergencies. Both cases show the global-force strategy’s emphasis on placing forces when and where they are needed, facilitated by pre-negotiated agreements.

Moreover, since 1982, Thailand has been hosting annual military exercises with the United States that have expanded to include Singapore, the Philippines, Mongolia, and Japan.⁸⁸ Known as Cobra Gold, these exercises include field training and humanitarian assistance projects across all four branches of the armed services. They emphasize peace operations rather than war fighting – a model with clear relevance for future trilateral military exercises through the TCOG, especially considering Japan’s legal impediments to conducting collective security operations.

Cobra Gold training took place in May 2004, just seven months before the tsunami. One training exercise conducted during that round of Cobra Gold included a joint mass casualty evacuation drill “to prepare would-be first responders to better work with U.S. and Royal Thai Army medical evacuation teams.”⁸⁹ One participant in the exercise noted the role of joint preparation in overcoming the language barrier between U.S. and Thai forces, stating that “since we are deployed so often and work closely in non-English speaking areas, the more times we do this in countries outside our own, the better we get at working together.”⁹⁰ During a tsunami relief press briefing on January 5, 2005, PACOM spokesman Captain Roger Welch summed up the benefits of Cobra Gold:

In Thailand, it was very quick because we’ve done lots of work in Thailand – Cobra Gold exercises, et cetera, so we fell right in on an existing structure...We haven’t had as much of a structure to fall in on in Indonesia, and that’s taken the longest time, especially up in Aceh.

88 The Philippines and Mongolia participated officially for the first time in May 2004, Japan in May 2005.

89 Staff Sgt. Mikey Niman, “CGo4 Medevac Drill Prepares Troops for Operations,” Asia-Pacific Area Network (May 24, 2004), <http://www.apan-info.net/cobragold/fullstory.asp?id=48>.

90 Col. H. Quigg Davis, quoted in Niman, 2004.

At a January 4, 2005, special Defense Department briefing on U.S. relief efforts for tsunami victims, Admiral Thomas Fargo stated:

It's important to point out that [the relief effort] likely could not have happened without our ongoing security cooperation efforts designed to strengthen our alliances with Thailand and all the countries of this region, and the fact that we've been able to build enduring habits of cooperation over a long period of time.

PACOM integrated multinational planning and planners into its headquarters in Hawaii, at CSF 536 in Utapao, and at each CSG. Japan and South Korea, for example, have LNOs permanently stationed at PACOM in Hawaii. This integration was made possible, in part, by the ongoing program of multinational planning, training, and exercises, including Cobra Gold and Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC).

Another program that was credited by many as enabling an effective multilateral response was the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team (MPAT), which was established in early 2000 and has grown to involve over thirty countries from the region and around the world.⁹¹ An officer in operations at PACOM said in an interview, "The relationships developed as a result of MPAT made [OUA] work." An OCHA official who was stationed at the CCC echoed that sentiment, noting that "as a result of MPAT, I had already met many of the people I ended up working with at Utapao."

MPAT is made up of a cadre of experienced military planners, capable of rapidly augmenting a multinational force headquarters to plan and execute multilateral military operations, primarily at the lower end of the spectrum of conflict. Since 2000, MPAT member countries have voluntarily sent military officers to workshops at various locations to jointly develop common operating procedures to facilitate multilateral non-combat operations. The resulting document, Multinational Force Standing Operating Procedures, belongs to no single country and requires no signature, memorandum of understanding, or other formal indication of governmental acceptance. The participants then meet at least

⁹¹ MPAT participating nations include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Vietnam, among many others.

once each year to practice these procedures in a scenario-driven planning event and to consider improvements. One of the unique features of MPAT is that it combines representatives from UN agencies and international organizations with military officers who would rarely, if ever, train together. All non-U.S. military liaison officers working at CSF 536 in Utapao were MPAT trained, as were the representatives from OCHA, WFP, UNJLC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and USAID.

One additional tool bears mentioning with regard to multilateral security cooperation and MPAT: the Asia-Pacific Area Network (APAN), which is a website “offering information resources and a collaborative planning environment as a means to greater defense interaction, confidence building and enhanced security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.”⁹² APAN contributors and users include regional militaries, such as the Thai army, the Philippine air force, the Mongolian armed forces, and PACOM. APAN is a way for interested parties to quickly and easily share unclassified information, and it is “operational” in the sense that users can exchange information and collaborate with other users via the site.

Although access to many of APAN’s content areas is restricted to registered users and authorized participants in specified exercises or operations, it can be an invaluable tool for military personnel who are trying to organize and implement a multilateral activity. Like MPAT, APAN is funded, in part, out of PACOM’s J7 directorate (training and exercises), along with contributions from other participants. It is, in some ways, a military-security counterpart to OCHA’s ReliefWeb resource, providing value to its users during “quiet” periods of training and preparation, as well as in times of crisis.⁹³

Factoring in the Civilian/NGO Response and Civil-Military Cooperation

A discussion of the tsunami relief effort or any other large-scale HA/DR operation would not be complete without mentioning the role of NGOs, and coordinating the civilian and military aspects of

92 Asia-Pacific Area Network, “What is APAN?” <http://www.apan-info.net/about.asp>.

93 Relief Web can be accessed at <http://www.notes.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf>.

the relief operation proved to be one of the biggest challenges for CCC and CSF 536. More than 370 international NGOs responded to the disaster with an unprecedented level of funding from private donations, international organizations, and national governments. With private contributions exceeding \$5 billion for Indonesia alone, a number of NGOs such as Catholic Relief Services and Oxfam informed donors that they no longer needed contributions.⁹⁴ NGOs helped avoid further loss of life by quickly responding to the plight of those afflicted nations to overcome the immediate and longer-term consequences of the disaster. In so doing, they joined hands with disaster relief officials from international organizations, national governments, and military services.

OCHA took the lead for overall coordination with the NGO community, and it developed humanitarian information centers (HICs) in both Indonesia and Sri Lanka to facilitate information exchange among all humanitarian actors, including UN agencies, national governments, militaries, and NGOs.⁹⁵ The HICs put together databases that tried to indicate what each organization was doing and where it was active, as well as provide the participating NGOs' contact information. The civil-military coordination structure was based on the presence of the CCC at CSF 536 headquarters in Utapao, along with liaison officers at the CSGs in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. **In addition to the civil-military coordination** going on at Utapao, therefore, daily coordination meetings were also held at the CSGs between national militaries and civilian entities, including representatives from several NGOs. These two levels of coordination – CCC/CSF 536 and CSGs – were connected, as CSF 536 allocated resources between the CSGs.⁹⁶

NGOs based in the United States played an important role in America's initial response to the tsunami. With unprecedented pledges of private donations, they made a substantial difference

94 Bill Canny, "A Review of NGO Coordination in Aceh Post Earthquake/Tsunami" (April 8, 2005), <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/sumatra/reference/assessments/doc/other/ICVA-ReviewOfNGOCoordinationInAceh-080405.pdf>.

95 UN/HIC, "Humanitarian Information Centers and Partners," <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org>.

96 UN OCHA, "Earthquake and Tsunami: Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka," OCHA Situation Report, no. 20 (January 20, 2005), <http://www.undp.org/bcpr/disred/documents/tsunami/ocha/sitrep20.pdf>.

to the lives of thousands of tsunami survivors. As of March 26, 2005, 67 of the 70 U.S. NGOs responding to the tsunami disaster had reported a total of \$1.48 billion of donations in cash and gifts-in-kind, according to the American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction), a coalition of 160 U.S.-based NGOs for relief and development. Of that total, InterAction members spent \$254.2 million in the first ninety days.⁹⁷

The U.S. government assisted the NGOs' tsunami relief activities. As of January 1, 2005, USAID/OFDA provided \$4.9 million in emergency grants to NGO relief activities in affected areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India.⁹⁸ With USAID/OFDA support, CARE provided \$1.94 million in emergency relief supplies and water system rehabilitation to Sri Lanka, for example, and it provided hygiene improvement kits to internally displaced persons camps in Indonesia.⁹⁹

Despite the vital contributions of the NGOs, various complications arose. The influx of so many NGOs into the tsunami region and their competition for private donations went beyond an optimal level and at times added to the confusion. "It is problematic when scores of aid groups rush into areas where other groups are working effectively. There is no reason to have fifty NGOs in a country if ten or fifteen are already there," said Stephen Commins, senior human development specialist for the World Bank.¹⁰⁰ In a June 2005 interview, one U.S. NGO worker bluntly recalled the situation in Banda Aceh, to which numerous medical NGOs flocked but then had trouble moving farther out into the devastated rural areas because of limited available transportation. "At times," he said, "the doctors were fighting over patients."

As indicated above, coordinating the civilian and military components of international HA/DR activities has almost always

97 InterAction, "InterAction Member Tsunami Response Accountability Report" (May 31, 2005), <http://www.interaction.org/library/detail.php?id=3987>.

98 USAID, "Indian Ocean: Earthquake and Tsunamis," fact sheet (January 1, 2005), http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/indian_ocean/et_index.html.

99 USAID, "Indian Ocean: Earthquake and Tsunamis," fact sheet (May 6, 2005).

100 The Aspen Institute, "Responding to the Tsunami Disaster: Challenges for Charities and Donors," 3.

proved to be a difficult challenge. Even if they are undertaking roughly the same mission, the two communities have very different cultures and priorities, they operate under different codes of conduct (or rules of engagement) and with different organizational philosophies, and they are subject to different types of international law. Yet at the same time, according to an OCHA-led group of NGOs and international organizations, because of the “changing nature of modern complex emergencies,” the humanitarian community and non-UN militaries find themselves operating more closely together than ever before. “These developments, together with cases of military interventions claimed to be for ‘humanitarian’ purposes, have led to an erosion of the separation between the humanitarian and military space.”¹⁰¹

What has happened, since the end of the Cold War, is that the United States, Europe, and a few other nations have been increasingly willing to use their militaries as a tool to help ameliorate conflict or alleviate suffering, compared to before, when the use of military assets by NATO or Warsaw Pact members involved a great deal more strategic and geopolitical baggage than is now usually the case. Operation Restore Hope in 1992 was one of the first such examples, when a U.S.-led coalition of troops was sent to Somalia to protect relief workers and to help restore a major UN relief effort there. Similar operations have been (or are being) carried out in Bosnia beginning in 1995, Kosovo in 1998, East Timor in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003, along with other disaster relief activities that involved significant military deployments. From a military perspective, “The strategic goals for which the wars are fought can only be achieved if the follow-on mission leaves an occupied territory more stable and democratic than before. Civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) is the key to achieving such stability.”¹⁰²

This phenomenon has challenged military planners to adjust their procurement and training strategies, and it has also confronted UN agency and NGO managers with new realities. Working

101 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, “Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies,” an IASC Reference Paper (June 28, 2004).

102 Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., foreword to *Civil-Military Relations in Peace Operations: The Case of Kosovo*, by Thomas R. Mockaitis (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, October 2004).

alongside national militaries, as opposed to blue-helmeted UN peacekeepers, is clearly a different experience for them. The NGO staffs are used to working in conflict areas and dangerous situations, but they could generally rely on their clear neutrality and impartiality (and UN mandate) for sufficient protection. Now they have found themselves arguing with their national military counterparts as to whether or not the two groups could work together to distribute relief supplies or provide medical services, if the soldiers could wear civilian clothing, with side arms or not, and other difficult questions.

In disaster relief operations like OUA, the NGOs recognize the contributions made by national militaries, but, as one NGO executive put it, they would generally prefer that the militaries restrict their role to providing logistical support and otherwise “leave the relief work to the professionals.” The soldiers, however, who are usually not specifically trained for these operations, tend to try to fill what they see as a leadership vacuum and seek to plug NGO resources and capabilities into their overall operation. Moreover, seemingly mundane issues of military contracting and cross-servicing, bureaucratic approvals, liability, and rules governing classified information and networks can frequently frustrate otherwise productive collaboration.

For the last several years, OCHA and other UN agencies, along with national militaries and NGOs, have conducted sporadic training workshops and seminars to try to familiarize one another with their doctrines and capabilities, and to work out common procedures to facilitate cooperation. The MPAT program, mentioned above, is one example, but there are other, albeit limited, programs that address these types of issues. The U.S. government has been particularly aggressive in addressing these issues in recent years, and in July 2004 the State Department created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization to help prepare for post-conflict situations, which involves acting as an intermediary between the NGO community and the U.S. military to improve their working relationship.

Japanese NGOs have relatively little experience working closely with national militaries in conflict areas, but this is slowly changing as Japanese NGOs strengthen their capabilities and expand their resource base. Japan has had a legal framework for providing

emergency aid since 1987, when the Law Concerning Dispatch of a Japan Disaster Relief Team (JDR Law) was enacted. In 1992, the JDR Law was revised to enable SDF participation in order to facilitate the dispatch of larger relief teams, enable teams to conduct operations in disaster areas in a more self-sufficient way, and upgrade the means of transportation. After the Kosovo experience, government officials believed that insufficiently funded Japanese NGOs could not effectively and independently conduct their activities in such an international setting, so they created an institution called Japan Platform that works closely with MOFA. Japan Platform is an organization that pre-registers certain Japanese NGOs to receive grants for overseas emergency relief activities and to facilitate joint planning, preparation, and logistical support for such missions.

Japan Platform was swift to respond in the wake of the tsunami disaster in 2004. It decided to dispatch its member NGOs on December 26, and on the following morning an initial response mission left Japan to the tsunami-hit countries to conduct field surveys on the situation and the victims' needs. Based on the results of the survey, Japan Platform completed its aid plan on January 6, after receiving a pledge of support from the government to the tune of approximately \$90 million. For example, Humanitarian Medical Assistance provided medical service for approximately 9,000 victims in Sri Lanka, the Japan Center for Conflict Prevention and World Vision Japan each provided temporary housing, and several other NGOs such as ADRA Japan, JEN, Save the Children Japan, and Peace Winds Japan supplied food, drinking water, and other daily necessities for over 160,000 victims throughout the affected area.

Japanese NGOs generally are not yet sure how to respond when difficult CIMIC questions are raised, though the issue is less controversial for disaster relief operations than it is for humanitarian assistance in conflict areas. Several Japanese NGOs are active in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, where they have refused to accept even small grants from the U.S. military to carry out certain projects, for fear of being too closely identified with the U.S.-led coalition there. In addition, although Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko said Japan should contribute to Iraqi development on an "all Japan" basis, utilizing the government, SDF, NGO, and private corporations, many Japanese NGOs opposed the dispatch of the SDF on the grounds that involvement of the military

in development and humanitarian assistance would jeopardize the neutrality of the NGOs' activities.¹⁰³ As one Japanese NGO manager explained in a July 2005 interview, "Some of our supporters don't even approve of the SDF's existence, let alone our cooperation with them, so we have to decide our basic position first before discussing the boundaries of CIMIC with the JDA and MOFAT."

The final report of a prime-minister-appointed security and defense committee in 2004 emphasized the need for "the contribution of personnel and various types of human resources acting in close collaboration with each other, including the SDF, the police, government administrators, Official Development Assistance related organizations, private enterprises, NGOs, and others." The report also urged the Japanese government to "establish guidelines that clearly delineate what is expected of the SDF and what is expected of civilian agents."¹⁰⁴ The Japan Association of Corporate Executives' study group on Iraqi Issues also finished a report on Japan's future development assistance framework, pointing out the need to clarify roles for the SDF and the private sector in international aid activities. The report concluded that Japan should establish a Japanese equivalent of CIMIC, and as a start Japan should promote communication among the SDF, police, coast guard, and civil organizations including international NGOs, because their interface is too limited at the moment.¹⁰⁵ The issue of CIMIC in Japan, therefore, is only beginning to be discussed seriously, but it will be an increasingly important topic for consideration in domestic and multilateral forums.

Korean NGOs are generally a few steps behind their Japanese counterparts when it comes to international relief work, but like

103 "Report on the Situation for the SDF in Iraq," Asia Press Network, http://www.asiapressnetwork.com/depths/library/20041228_01_01.html (in Japanese).

104 Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, "The Council on Security and Defense Capability Report –Japan's Visions For Future Security and Defense Capabilities" (in Japanese) (October 2004), 70, <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ampobouei/dai13/13siryuu.pdf>.

105 Japan Association of Corporate Executives and the Council on Iraqi Issues, "Report of the Council on Iraqi Issues – Building a Framework of New Safety Assurance and Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance after Warfare, Formulating a General Law and Establishing 'Japanese CIMIC'" (in Japanese) (November 2004), 4-7, http://www.doyukai.or.jp/policyproposals/articles/2004/pdf/041124_02.pdf.

those in Japan, Korean NGOs are quickly strengthening their capabilities and activism in international operations. As late as the early 1960s, South Korea was one of the region's poorest countries, but the country has grown quickly and now ranks as the eleventh largest economy in the world. With this economic success came a greater awareness in Korea of its corresponding responsibility to the international community, and Korean NGOs focused on international development and cooperation began to emerge in the 1990s.¹⁰⁶

Two Korean NGOs – Good Neighbors and Korea Food for the Hungry International – dispatched their first medical relief teams to Rwanda in August 1994, and the Korea NGO Council for Overseas Cooperation (KCOC) was founded in 1999 as an association of NGOs for development aid and emergency relief, now boasting thirty-nine member organizations. Meanwhile, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), mandated by MOFAT, was established in 1991 to implement the government's grant aids and development activities for developing countries. Like Japan, Korea has transformed itself from an aid-recipient nation to one of the region's major donors in just a few decades. Between 1995 and 2005, government support to Korean NGOs for international cooperation projects increased over eleven-fold.¹⁰⁷

It is worth noting that Korean NGO activities in North Korea have developed on a separate track from the international front, which has important implications if CIMIC ever becomes an issue with respect to DPRK contingencies. Korean NGOs began directly supporting North Korean citizens in 1995, when severe floods hit the North and Pyongyang asked for international help. In the beginning, domestic NGOs' relief activities were restrained by the Kim Young Sam administration's single-channel policy, which directed that all aid

106 These NGOs include Good Neighbors, founded in 1991 and deeply involved in the Rwandan refugee situation in 1994; Korean Foundation for World Aid (KFWA), founded in 1991 and focused on providing humanitarian assistance to North Korea and other poor or war-torn countries; Join Together Society (JTS), a relief and development organization founded in 1994; and Good People World Family (GPWF), founded in 1999 to provide emergency relief and development programs.

107 Korean government support increased from roughly \$500,000 in 1995 to over \$5.6 million in 2004, not including any long-term assistance projects for tsunami-stricken areas; see KOICA, <http://www.koica.go.kr>.

to the North must be sent through the Red Cross Korea. As a part of Kim Dae-jung's sunshine policy initiative in 1998, however, the government started to encourage North-South cooperation through civil society, **allowing ROK NGOs to hold public events for fundraising**, as well as to carry out cooperative projects with counterparts in the North. In February 1999, the government diversified the ROK's channels to the North, and some qualified NGOs began to provide relief and to monitor their relief projects independently.

In October 1999, the Ministry of Unification decided to help fund NGOs that wanted to assist North Korea (KOICA is not involved), and it provided \$3.36 million in support to nine NGOs in 2000. This support was greatly increased, to \$8.77 million, in 2004. NGO-government cooperation was further deepened with the establishment of the Civil-Government Consultation Group for North Korea Support in September 2004.¹⁰⁸ In a series of meetings presided over by the deputy minister of unification, government officials and NGO leaders have discussed coherent and systematic measures to deal with North Korea's shortage of food supplies and medical facilities, and they have established both short- and long-term plans for development projects. They are also jointly preparing emergency relief manuals, in which responsibilities and roles of related ministries and NGOs will be specified for coping with disaster situations in the North. Because the ROK government views North Korean contingencies as primarily a domestic issue, the interface with international contributors will be quite different from emergencies overseas, and the ROK government might not be adequately prepared to coordinate activities with other nations.

On the international front, however, the ROK bureaucracy and NGOs have accumulated a good deal of experience. In the wake of the tsunami disaster, for example, fourteen Korean NGOs provided medical and basic relief assistance to the affected people while focusing on fundraising. World Vision Korea sent a team of volunteer medical personnel to northeastern Sri Lanka, and Join Together Society (JTS) dispatched twelve student volunteers and forty-four staff members for relief activities in that country. Glob-

108 The Civil-Government Consultation Group for North Korea Support is composed of representatives of thirty-three NGOs and government officials from the Ministry of Unification, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

al Care dispatched fifty doctors to Indonesia. Good People World Family (GPWF) and Korean Foundation for World Aid (KFWA) also sent medical teams and relief funds to Sri Lanka. As of March 25, 2005, ROK NGOs responding to the tsunami disaster had reported a total of \$23.5 million in private donations. The Red Cross Korea raised over \$1 million in donations, in addition to in-kind gifts such as clothing, powdered milk, blankets, and medical supplies.

Some Korean NGOs participated in the multilateral coordination efforts. Both Good Neighbors and GPWF registered their relief activities at OCHA HIC for Sri Lanka, through which they shared information with UN agencies and international NGOs. They also sent their representatives to OCHA-led coordination meetings, as well as meetings with the host government. Moreover, the Singapore and French militaries operating in Indonesia helped to deliver Good Neighbors' relief supplies via cargo plane and helicopter.

The ROK government, and KOICA in particular, however, was not prepared to contribute special funds directly to the NGOs' relief efforts during the emergency phase, as it had no budget available for that purpose. Instead, on December 28, 2004, the deputy minister of MOFAT convened an emergency meeting, where representatives from related ministries and NGOs were included, and discussed how to reduce duplication of efforts and bring appropriate relief supplies to the right places. It was the first coordination meeting between government agencies and NGOs in the history of Korea's responses to off-peninsula crises or disasters. In addition, as noted above, the prime-minister-led interagency working group also met on January 4 and decided on certain steps involving cooperation with NGOs, including:

- The active participation of NGOs in government-led fundraising efforts.
- The Ministry of Construction and Transportation agreed to give a 75 percent discount on airline tickets and to increase the cargo weight limit for NGO workers who carry heavy relief supplies.
- The MND agreed to prepare tank-landing ships to deliver relief goods from the government and NGOs, and later contributed a cargo aircraft.
- The Ministry of Health and Welfare proposed to dispatch a civil-government joint medical team to

Sri Lanka and Indonesia, which eventually provided medical care to over six thousand affected people.

- NGOs and relevant ministries discussed how to reduce duplication of efforts and bring appropriate relief supplies to the right places.

Despite these positive efforts, overall cooperation between Korean NGOs and the government and military was quite limited. Except for the measures agreed at the interagency meeting on January 4, there were no relief projects or initiatives implemented in partnership between NGOs and government/military. “I could not find any role of coordination by the ROK government on the scene of the disaster,” said Kwon Yong-Jin, a medical team member of the Doctors’ Association.¹⁰⁹ The National Assembly representatives who visited Banda Aceh from January 5 to 9 also reported that “Korean NGOs are working by themselves and are experiencing logistical hardships due to the lack of government support.”¹¹⁰ Even those projects implemented jointly – for example, by dispatching a civil-government medical team – suffered from inadequate coordination. “Government and NGOs could not fulfill their own roles,” said Kim Sae-Gon, a vice president of the Doctors’ Association. “It seems to me that building an effective cooperation system will be difficult,” he added.¹¹¹

Insufficient cooperation was the result of a number of deficiencies, perhaps most importantly the lack of a standing system for civil-government/military coordination during an overseas crisis. The prime minister’s interagency working group was not prepared to manage civil-government/military cooperation for this scale of disaster, and government agencies and NGOs tended to execute their own plans based on their own assessments of the situation. “Most NGOs were ignorant of assessment information. The government should prepare a relevant budget and a standing system for overseas disaster response,” said one NGO representative.¹¹² The National Assembly members also suggested the enactment of an

109 Bum Hyun-Joo, “How Was Tsunami Disaster Relief Effort?” (in Korean) *Nae-il Shinmoon*, February 4, 2005.

110 Jung Byoung-Gug, “Press Release: Grand National Party Members’ Visit of South Asia,” January 9, 2005, <http://www.byounggug.co.kr>.

111 Bum, “How Was Tsunami Disaster Relief Effort?” February 4, 2005.

112 Umh Ki-Young, “Systemic Approach Necessary for Domestic NGOs,” *Kukmin Ilbo*, January 12, 2005.

official development aid basic law, together with specific manuals for responding to foreign disasters, in which a civil-government/military cooperation system is clearly defined.¹¹³ Perhaps as a result, MOFAT is currently preparing such a bill for consideration by the Assembly.

A Good Neighbors representative recommended a division of labor between civilian workers and the military. “Disaster relief efforts require robust supply of heavy equipments and specially trained personnel. On the other hand, Korean NGOs can easily secure relief goods, medical teams, and workers for children’s protection. Thus, if the military helps NGOs with its construction units and Special Forces, it will surely exert a synergistic effect in disaster relief operation,” she said in a July 2005 interview. Many of these shortcomings and recommendations – a standing system for joint response, policy coordination procedures, emergency relief manuals, and so on – have been addressed in the North Korean case by establishing a civil-government consultation body, as described above. This can serve as a model for institutionalizing Korean civil-government/military cooperation for off-peninsula crisis response as part of a multilateral framework.

Key OUA Lessons Learned

Although the scale of military support in the tsunami relief operation was unprecedented and largely successful, several areas for improvement were identified regarding the level of coordination among the foreign militaries, as well as on the CIMIC front. The May 2005 Cobra Gold exercise and other domestic and international events have provided an opportunity to examine such areas by capturing lessons learned from the tsunami disaster relief effort. At one Cobra Gold 2005 workshop, for example, participants drew lessons that were fairly representative of those mentioned at other forums regarding military-to-military cooperation:¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Jung, “Press Release,” January 9, 2005.

¹¹⁴ “Section II: Workshop Discussion and Observation,” *Executive Summary Report*, from the Cobra Gold 2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster Relief Workshop, May 8, 2005, https://ares.apan-info.net/QuickPlace/drw/Main.nsf/h_Toc/4DF38292D748069D0525670800167212/?OpenDocument. Additional recommendations were drawn from the “Summary by the Chair,” from the Japan Defense Agency’s Tenth Tokyo Defense Forum, June 29, 2005, http://www.jda.go.jp/e/index_.htm.

Militaries need a better understanding of the mission statement and the operational plan for disaster relief activities. One of the most difficult tasks that foreign militaries faced was the simultaneous implementation of assessment, deployment, execution, and redeployment in a multilateral situation. In order to streamline these tasks, General Blackman proposed to develop a clear mission statement that better defines HA/DR operations of immediate need. He suggested that, once the mission is defined, the service components will be able to develop operational plans that specify resources, duties, and training necessary to accomplish the mission. General Boonsrang Niumpradit, chief of staff, Royal Thai Armed Forces, recommended the preparation of a regional plan that incorporates all members' plans and capabilities. Participants in the Tenth Tokyo Defense Forum, held in June 2005, also expressed the need for further developing standard operating procedures among countries in the region to facilitate initial responses to disasters.

Multi- or bilateral agreements with regard to the status of foreign military deployments greatly enhanced the speed of mobilization during OUA. There continues to be room for improvement in this area, such as the use of standardized templates for status-of-forces agreements or memoranda of understanding that cover essential aspects of foreign military deployments. Key issues include basing rights, port rights, status-of-forces agreements, overflight approval, and simplified visa and entry approvals. Rapid response of the U.S. military made possible by the Forward Operating Site agreements with Thailand and Singapore was a good example of enhanced mobility.

Timely and reliable information-sharing is critical to collaboration and coordination among foreign militaries. Nevertheless, in OUA there was no common standard under which disaster assessments were made, nor was there a shared mechanism for organizing the information to project a common operational picture. Of equal importance was the need for establishing an effective system of distributing relevant information to national military forces. The internet is the most expedient means of exchanging information, though the militaries might need to relax the primacy of information security during disaster relief operations. Linguistic skills are also an important element for success in such exchanges. Tokyo

Defense Forum participants suggested discussing information-sharing practices and keeping contact points up to date in between emergencies.

Militaries need to identify local capabilities of nations vulnerable to disasters. After disaster strikes, foreign militaries' support should be tailored to the needs of the disaster-afflicted country, considering its local capabilities in order to bring help to places where it is most needed. For this, General Blackman proposed to "map the logistical and infrastructural capabilities (i.e., airfields, ports, fuels, etc.) of the nations in specified areas of interest," which could be done by each country itself according to an agreed-upon format.

Preparing for relief operations should include chemical, biological, and radiological threats. William Lake from the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency explained that "exposure to chemical, biological, and nuclear materials may not come from WMD or terrorist acts [only]. Natural disasters can also create exposure to such risks, and relief organizations need to be prepared to deal with them."

It is important to operationalize the above lessons through multi-national exercises. Years of preparation and exercise through Cobra Gold and other programs paid off in joint disaster relief, even though no specific training for a tsunami was conducted. Most participants agreed that a coherent and periodic multilateral training and exercise program focused on relief efforts would be beneficial.

Creating a regional cooperative regime that provides assistance to disaster-afflicted countries should be further explored. General Niumpradit proposed the establishment of a regional organization with committed standby resources. Tokyo Defense Forum participants introduced the concept of "framework organizations" for relief efforts. In a recent post-tsunami lessons-learned report, the Indonesian government also recommended establishing regional logistics hubs with pre-positioned stocks of relief supplies.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Government of Indonesia, "Post-Tsunami Lessons Learned and Best Practices Workshop," report and working groups output (May 16-17, 2005), 5.

Among the lessons noted for improved civil-military cooperation were the following:

There is a need for better understanding between military and civilian relief agencies. The most serious weakness in civil-military cooperation was the lack of understanding of one another's capabilities, characteristics, and missions. While the military did not understand the humanitarian approaches used by NGOs, civilian agencies frequently lacked awareness of the military's security concerns and chain of command. Furthermore, civilians operate on the principles of neutrality and impartiality, whereas the military is an instrument of national policy. As a way to improve CIMIC, Randall Hyer from the WHO proposed developing better knowledge of each other's capabilities through joint planning. Ambassador Victor L. Tomseth (Ret.) recommended building awareness through joint training and exercise. "The personal relationships, the mutual understanding and familiarity with doctrine, and the trust that had been developed [in the course of Cobra Gold exercises] proved invaluable," he said.

Militaries must share information with NGOs. Mr. Anthony N. Banbury of the WFP indicated that it was difficult to get information from the military because of classification issues. His recommendation was to develop procedures to share declassified information on a timely and regular basis. Colonel Masuda Junichi, chief of the 2nd Operation Section, JSO of Japan's SDF, suggested that information regarding initial assessments be shared in order to avoid the duplication of supplies and to allow an effective prioritization of relief efforts. Difficulties were also encountered with differing military and civilian criteria for assessing and organizing information. Ambassador Tomseth indicated the need to standardize the way relief requirements are assessed, and how the information from such assessments is distributed both to military and to civilian organizations.

Transition from military to civilian control should be a continuous process. The primary mission of the military is to mobilize critical capacities and resources in the initial stage of disaster relief. This allows civilian relief agencies the time to prepare their long-term

recovery efforts. The goal of transition is the smooth withdrawal of military forces with no gaps in relief support. On the other hand, civilian organizations' objective is to sustain relief efforts to the point where disaster-hit countries can manage the recovery and reconstruction phase by themselves.

Finally, joint exercises should include civilian participation. The most effective means of applying these lessons in practice is to take greater advantage of joint training where representatives from civilian organizations participate. Once again, General Blackman emphasized “[the importance of] joint and multi-national exercises that include robust non-military participation.”

These lessons suggest that there is much room for improvement in civil-military cooperation and coordination during the disaster relief efforts. “The [civil-military] cooperation was inadequate,” said Rear Admiral Robert Hufstader, command surgeon, PACOM. “But the management of something this overwhelmingly complex – thirty militaries, UN agencies, and hundreds of NGOs – had never been attempted before,” he added.¹¹⁶ Given the lessons learned from the tsunami relief efforts, it seems clear that joint consultation, planning, and exercises between militaries and civilian agencies in a multilateral or mini-lateral framework can greatly enhance the capacity for regional crisis/disaster response. The same can be said for humanitarian assistance or stabilization missions. The challenge, however, is how to make this work in a practical manner.

It is relatively easy to prescribe additional joint planning, training, workshops, and exercises as a way to improve multilateral military-to-military cooperation and CIMIC in crisis response or disaster relief situations. But the reality is that all the national militaries, government and UN agencies, and NGOs are working with limited staffs and budgets, and they do not always share the same training priorities or political freedom of action. Putting together multilateral exercises is a time-consuming and complicated task, which only gets more difficult as more participants are added to the roster. Just one bilateral or multilateral military exercise, for example, can often involve five or six separate meetings among the

¹¹⁶ Reuters, “Tsunami Provokes Radical Change in Crisis Response,” May 6, 2005, <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/BKK28471.htm>.

participants to develop the scenario, identify and agree upon training objectives, carry out initial planning, visit the exercise site, and then further consolidate and finalize the planning.

The mere fact that improving multilateral crisis response coordination is difficult, however, should not dissuade leaders in the region from pursuing this goal. All the hard work, interaction, and compromise that go into putting together a multilateral exercise (that is, what makes it difficult to achieve) are precisely what make the effort valuable. The success of OUA and the overall tsunami relief effort was a direct result of the work that was done before at MPAT, Cobra Gold, APAN, and other initiatives. The ability to cooperate effectively does not materialize out of nowhere. It is planned for and practiced.

In the trilateral context, the relatively small number of participants should make some logistical tasks simpler, but, as noted earlier, there are several political and legal differences that complicate formal trilateral cooperation. For the United States, Japan, and Korea, therefore, trilateral cooperation on these fronts might need to be incremental and informal, but it can still be pursued deliberately and with a strong sense of commitment from the nations' leadership. This book has outlined many reasons why such a commitment would be beneficial to each country and to the region. The final section, below, explains how various bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral tools can be utilized to enhance regional security and stability.

Tools for Trilateralism and Broader Collaboration

Conducting a discussion of multilateral military and crisis management cooperation usually requires wading through a sea of acronyms and references to a multitude of arcane committees, initiatives, and forums. Unfortunately, this tends to discourage non-specialists from joining the conversation and from pondering ways in which these initiatives can reinforce one another to enhance regional collaboration and stability more dramatically. This is particularly true in Asia, where the physical and cultural distances between countries are relatively large, and where regional institutions are lacking in strength, such that mini- and multilateral forums frequently operate in isolation of each other and often miss synergistic opportunities.

One can only wonder where North Korean nuclear diplomacy would be without the legacy of the TCOG, however, or how the tsunami relief effort or OUA might have been realized without initiatives such as MPAT, APAN, Cobra Gold, and RIMPAC to help lay the groundwork. More often than not, these types of tools prove their worth, despite the inevitable political, scheduling, and budgetary pressures under which they operate. The Asia-Pacific region is not ripe for the application of formal, legalistic multilateral cooperative structures that are common in Europe and elsewhere, but there are opportunities to take better advantage of the tools at hand. The U.S.-Japan-ROK triangle is not the only, and perhaps not even the primary, vehicle for capitalizing on regional cooperative behavior, but it can form a useful base upon which to build and contribute positively to a broader effort.

As noted earlier, the crisis management process is undergoing change in both Japan and South Korea. This is in conjunction with current and pending changes in the allies' force posture, C2 adjustments, intelligence capabilities, and related procurement plans. From the 2004 tsunami response example, it seems clear that joint consultations, planning, and training and exercises can have a demonstrable, positive impact on the ability of countries to cooperate efficiently and effectively in times of crisis. It is also clear that military assets from around the region are indispensable for a timely and life-saving response to certain crises, especially those involving island nations like the Philippines or Indonesia where access can be limited, or when military communications and C2 capabilities are vital to success. Given the unique nature of the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK military relationships, this suggests that there is something valuable to be gained by stepping up allied and regional consultations on the issue of crisis response planning, possibly in a loosely coordinated manner that weaves together bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral initiatives.

Also, as mentioned earlier in this book, there is a discouraging element of disconnectedness among the three countries' security and military establishments in a trilateral context, when one considers the interests they all share and the opportunities for enhancing interoperability, increasing effectiveness, and possibly rationalizing procurement. Although sporadic trilateral defense meetings have taken place, security cooperation is predominant-

ly a bilateral issue, especially when high-level officials and alliance relations are involved. Crisis management cooperation offers a way to help overcome this disconnectedness.

In the trilateral context, there are at least three levels of potential focus for a series of conversations regarding crisis response planning: 1) understanding each other's processes and reforms (in both the civilian and military areas); 2) discussing how to respond in a trilateral fashion to certain contingencies; and 3) discussing how the three countries' trilateral interaction can mesh with others in the region as a core component of a broader, multilateral crisis response network. The inspiration for this latter focus can be traced to the recent Proliferation Security Initiative, which brings together countries from around the world to discuss common approaches and to practice joint exercises for combating the illicit proliferation of WMD and other dangerous cargo.

The PSI Model and the Possibility of a Crisis Response Core Group

The PSI itself is problematic as an avenue for trilateral cooperation, mostly because of sensitivities in Seoul that the initiative can appear to be targeted primarily at North Korea, but it is appealing as a potential model for other activities. As described in the PSI statement of principles, "The PSI builds on efforts by the international community to prevent proliferation of [WMD], including existing treaties and regimes. [It] seeks to involve in some capacity all states that have a stake in nonproliferation and the ability and willingness to take steps to stop the flow of such items at sea, in the air, or on land. The PSI also seeks cooperation from any state whose vessels, flags, ports, territorial waters, airspace, or land might be used for proliferation purposes by states and non-state actors of proliferation concern."¹¹⁷ Proponents of the PSI praise its loose and flexible structure, emphasizing that the PSI is not a treaty or an organization but is instead a coordinated activity. Could a similar approach be developed to respond to regional crises (such as a

117 For an explanation of the PSI and the principles underpinning its formation see White House, "Proliferation Security Initiative: Statement of Interdiction Principles," White House fact sheet (September 4, 2004), <http://www.state.gov/t/np/rls/fs/23764.htm>.

crisis response initiative, or CRI)? If so, is there value in creating a special trilateral dialogue to help stimulate its development?

The short answer, at this point, to the final question above appears to be “maybe.” As noted earlier, the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-ROK alliance relationships are unique in the region, and to the extent that a regional CRI includes a military component, it would seem logical to explore how the three countries’ C2 arrangements, intelligence capabilities, joint exercises, and even some procurement plans could be augmented to help boost efficiencies in a CRI context. One could also argue that countries like Australia, Singapore, and possibly even the EU should be involved to some degree as part of a core group, given their experience with these types of situations and the substantial assets that they can apply to crisis management and disaster relief. It would also be important not to exclude China or Russia. Although this is all true, it is probably better to keep the initial core group small, in order to facilitate decision making and the coordination of joint activities. The PSI, after all, benefited to a great extent from the G7/G8 framework as a facilitator of multilateral dialogue on the topic. Since a comparable organization does not exist in Asia, a small core group made up of the TCOG countries might be a good place to start. Similar to the way that the TCOG acts as an informal caucus in the six-party talks, so might a crisis management TCOG serve as a *de facto* caucus in a regional CRI.

A regional CRI could be multifaceted. It might prepare to respond to major oil spills, submarine or ship accidents at sea, terrorist incidents or piracy, disease pandemics, and large-scale natural disasters. The CRI could be loosely structured. It could tap into existing channels of crisis management communication and cooperation, so as not to create a new layer of bureaucracy, but it would monitor joint exercises and help tie together parallel efforts in a way that facilitates rapid decision making and the delegation of coordinated activities. Such an initiative should include all of the major nations in the Asia-Pacific region: Australia, China, New Zealand, Russia, ASEAN members, and perhaps even the EU, Great Britain, and India. Managing the contributions of so many nations, however, is an arduous task, and this is why a core group like the TCOG that trains together on a regular basis might have an important role as part of a CRI.

When assessing the PSI model in a CRI context, it is important to distinguish the content and objective of PSI from the way in which it operates. The PSI does not represent an organization but rather a loose network of individual states working together to combat proliferation issues. "It is best understood as a set of partnerships that establishes the basis for cooperation on specific activities, when the need arises. It does not create formal 'obligations' for participating states, but does represent a political commitment to establish 'best practices' to stop proliferation-related shipments."¹¹⁸ In order to provide a framework for this initiative, the member states drafted a statement of interdiction principles on September 4, 2003.

Seventeen states make up the membership of the PSI, fifteen of which are considered core members: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The non-core members are Denmark and Turkey. In addition to the official membership, many other states have lent their support to this initiative, including some that have signed PSI ship-boarding agreements. In her remarks marking the second anniversary of the PSI, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated, "Now, over sixty countries support PSI and participation in the PSI is growing in every region of the world."¹¹⁹

The PSI ship-boarding agreements are another way to enhance cooperation among states in stemming proliferation of WMD. These agreements, signed between the United States and willing partners, are reciprocal agreements that provide for detailed information sharing regarding vessels registered in their countries, as well as the ability to request permission to board, search, and even detain certain suspected ships. To date, the following states have signed ship-boarding agreements with the United States: Croatia, Liberia, the Marshall Islands, and Panama.

The PSI functions by building upon already established treaties and laws combined with interstate cooperation to search suspect vessels for shipments of WMD. A good analogy for how the PSI

118 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Nonproliferation, "What is the PSI?" <http://www.state.gov/t/np/rls/other/34726.htm>.

119 Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks on the Second Anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative," Washington, D.C., May 31, 2005, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/46951.htm>.

works is an example offered by Jofi Joseph: “One can liken PSI and its day-to-day execution to that of a deputized posse: the United States and a group of other like-minded states, using existing legal powers, have organized to hunt down illicit shipments of dangerous weapons. On any particular day, some members of that posse may choose not to ride out. Nor is the posse responsible for tracking all illicit shipments; rather it targets only those it views with particular concern as posing security threats.”¹²⁰ The PSI is a U.S.-led initiative, and the interdiction of air and sea shipments of WMD is geared toward the military side of its capabilities. By contrast, military cooperation in a CRI would be only one (relatively small) component of a cooperative program, which should make it easier for a wider range of countries to work together.

The way PSI members are able to coordinate and organize the initiative is through plenary meetings, operational experts’ meetings, and interdiction exercises. These meetings and exercises provide a venue for communication and information sharing between cooperating nations. Since the PSI’s inception in 2003, six plenary meetings, ten operational expert meetings, and sixteen interdiction exercises have been held.¹²¹ The central node for coordination in each government varies to some extent from country to country, but it is generally found within the foreign ministry’s bureaus that handle non-proliferation issues, with support from corresponding offices in the defense ministry, as well as the relevant branches of the military, most notably the navy and the coast guard. A few new personnel might be added in the relevant offices, but the initiative is almost completely implemented using the existing government structure.

The relatively loose and informal nature of the PSI is clearly an appealing aspect of the model as it pertains to building greater organizational capacity in the Asia-Pacific region to plan for and respond to large-scale crises. Despite its loose structure, there is a recognized commitment by certain countries to participate,

120 Jofi Joseph, “The Proliferation Security Initiative: Can Interdiction Stop Proliferation?” *Arms Control Today* 34, no. 5 (June 2004), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004_06/Joseph.asp.

121 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Nonproliferation, “Calendar of Events, Proliferation Security Initiative,” <http://www.state.gov/t/np/c12684.htm>.

backed by an agreement to an overarching set of principles and the assignment of foreign ministry, defense ministry, and uniformed personnel. Beyond the statement of principles, additional agreements can be entered into as a means to upgrade the level of cooperation in certain areas, as well as to provide a legal basis for specific activities when necessary, on a case-by-case basis. Governments participate at a level where they feel comfortable, politically and operationally. Despite the PSI's relatively long list of core members, only five are in the Asia-Pacific region (including the United States and Russia), which could become six or seven participants in a CRI with the addition of South Korea and China, probably supplemented by the involvement of key UN agencies. Overall, the PSI is a model for knitting together a set of existing initiatives and forums to facilitate a coordinated activity. When gaps are identified, the group can try to fill those voluntarily through coordinated discussion and domestic action.

TCOG Relevance

How a set of TCOG-like meetings might be structured in order to stimulate the establishment of a CRI needs to be considered. If we apply the TCOG lessons learned over the course of this project, two important components are clearly strong leadership and effective interagency coordination. There is no doubt that a regional CRI is not as high a collective priority as North Korea policy, but it should still be possible for the three countries to create an appropriate interagency mechanism that can facilitate trilateral consultations (or mini-lateral, if a few other nations are added) and lay the groundwork for a broader, multilateral CRI in Asia (and possibly beyond). Trilateral meetings on this topic might not be open ended, as they are in the North Korean context, and instead could be conducted over a finite period of time and be designed to help identify useful initiatives that already exist in the region, as well as to jump-start the development of overarching principles for guiding the process.

The lessons learned from OUA, outlined earlier, form a useful starting point as an agenda for core group discussion. These include issues such as basing rights, port rights, status-of-forces agreements, liability issues, overflight approval, and simplified visa and entry approvals during a crisis. **Examining ways to improve information sharing, incorporating multinational standard operating procedures into certain military exercises, and explor-**

ing the possibility of jointly preparing pre-positioned relief supplies are other potential topics.

The cross-servicing arrangements that the United States has with its allies could also be useful. One difficulty encountered during OUA was simply a problem of contracting logistics. For example, when the UNJLC determined that it wanted to set up a helicopter landing site at one location in Indonesia, it requested a set of special mats from the U.S. military with which to build a landing pad. The U.S. military had the mats, but it had no contracting mechanism by which it could provide them directly to UNJLC. U.S. officials offered to give them to the Indonesian military, but the UNJLC was restricted from working directly with the host military in that way. So the U.S. military gave them to the State Department, which gave them to OFDA, which then provided them to UNJLC. Then UNJLC asked the U.S. military to fly the mats to Indonesia from Utapao, but since the mats were no longer U.S.-owned material, U.S. officials hesitated. As a result, the first load of mats was carried by a Japanese military aircraft, though, according to an OCHA official in a July 2005 interview, eventually U.S. military officials were authorized to carry a second load. The experience that the United States and its allies have with cross-servicing arrangements should enable them to efficiently work around this kind of problem, with some advance planning.

A set of CRI TCOG meetings would obviously need to include key people from the State Department and foreign ministries (both from the appropriate regional offices and from agencies dealing with international economic assistance and disaster relief), as well as the defense bureaucracies, the national security councils (or Cabinet Secretariat in Japan, depending on how the NSC develops there), and to some extent the uniformed military. The TCOG format of three bilateral meetings followed by a trilateral session might still be useful in a CRI context, coupled with a combination of informal gatherings of military and civilian specialists, as well as occasional formal meetings involving senior leadership to endorse joint agreements.

If the six-party TCOG is any guide, a trilateral (or mini-lateral) initiative focused on crisis response planning would need to involve China and Russia as much as possible, not only to allay potential suspicions that the initiative is a surreptitious hedge against

Chinese or Russian military power, but also because the two countries should increasingly have resources to commit to the effort and because the whole CRI endeavor could prove to be a valuable confidence building measure. In addition, U.S. leadership would likely be an important factor for success.

Other Tools for Trilateralism

The development of a CRI, and a TCOG-like caucus within that group, is simply an approach to take better advantage of the cooperative tools that are already available in Asia, and it is a means to help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral responses to large-scale crises. There already exists, to some extent, a regional network of bilateral and multilateral interactions related to crisis response planning and international cooperation. The United States has bilateral arrangements with South Korea and Japan, such as the U.S.-Korea Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Management Committee, to exchange information and carry out small-scale joint projects. The countries have, at times, held bilateral meetings with each other among their foreign ministries' international economic assistance bureaus, though these meetings have not been carried out regularly or in a coordinated fashion.

There are multilateral organizations as well, such as MPAT and APAN, which have already been mentioned, and the International Emergency Management Society, which frequently organizes workshops and conferences in all three countries, including its upcoming thirteenth annual conference in Seoul in 2006. Additionally, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, a non-governmental "track two" organization, has a study group on regional peacekeeping and peace-building issues. The connections between these activities and countries in the network, however, are relatively weak, and this represents an opportunity for the three countries to develop a central node for information exchange and planning that is closely linked with a schedule of targeted exercises.

The MPAT program, in particular, is one that could be strengthened and better integrated with other initiatives. It has certainly proved its worth in the tsunami relief case, and it has the benefit of already involving certain UN agencies and NGOs. If an allied caucus were to be established within a CRI, the service members responsible for MPAT could be represented at those meetings, as a way to

tie in MPAT with the broader CRI effort. Moreover, China has been notably absent from MPAT in the past, although apparently this absence is not due to a lack of interest on the Chinese side. Instead, according to one U.S. government official interviewed, some in the U.S. government have reportedly been reluctant to include China in MPAT, though it is not clear why, since the procedures and processes of MPAT are not classified. Thus, if the strengthening of trilateral coordination within MPAT is seen to be demonstrating an exclusionary tendency, this could perhaps be countered by opening up MPAT to China.

In addition to MPAT, the nations' militaries in the region often conduct bilateral and multilateral search and rescue exercises or other crisis-response-related training activities, as noted earlier, supplemented by similar bilateral or trilateral "table top" exercises. While MPAT and other, similar kinds of workshops dwell on procedural issues, the exercises and training activities are a way to address operational issues. For example, one challenge encountered during OUA was the control of helicopter air traffic in and around numerous temporary landing sites that had been constructed on shore. Fortunately, a few U.S. Marine outfits were equipped with mobile (backpack-like) air-traffic control technology that enabled them to help manage the situation on an ad hoc basis at the busiest sites (and fortunately the pilots all spoke English). There were no reports of helicopter accidents during OUA, although there was at least one report of an aid drop causing injuries to civilians in Medan, Indonesia.¹²² This is one of many operational safety issues that could benefit from additional multilateral training, and if these kinds of activities are not practiced, it is only a matter of time before an accident compounds a tragedy.

The question of how to leverage the current exercise schedule to improve crisis response capabilities, however, is not as simple as it might seem at first. Resources in this area are already stretched thin, and, as noted earlier, the coordination of multiple countries' training objectives and schedules is a complicated task. As one U.S. marine described the planning process, "In a bilateral or trilateral situation, the direction that an exercise takes sometimes depends

122 Associated Press, "Helicopter Drops Aid Load over Medan, Local Media Report Injuries," January 5, 2005.

on the personalities of the people in the room at the concept development meeting. We have general planning parameters, and we build on what's been done before, but the details can often be a matter of who gets to the white board first." This is an understandable situation, but it is not sufficient if policy makers want to make tangible progress in improving multinational interoperability in crisis response situations.

Thus, another potential topic of discussion for a CRI core group would be how to harmonize certain crisis response training components across different exercises, or possibly to consolidate those activities in a special core group exercise. Cobra Gold would seem to be the ideal exercise for bringing the three countries together on these issues, though there are some complicating factors. Although Japan joined Cobra Gold as a full-fledged participant in 2005, it has taken a very narrow view of what its forces are allowed to do there, at times frustrating some of the other participants. Moreover, the Roh administration in Seoul has so far shown little interest in upgrading its involvement from observer at Cobra Gold. This is unfortunate and should be reconsidered. Lastly, even if South Korea wanted to become a regular participant, the Thai hosts have apparently indicated some reluctance to allow Cobra Gold to get too large and involve too many countries. It should be possible to overcome all of these challenges, however, if a concerted effort is made by the appropriate leadership in these countries.

Although the second chapter of this book has largely focused on preparing for a response to large-scale natural disasters or similar crises, another related area of potential cooperation worth mentioning briefly is national stabilization and reconstruction missions, which include peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations. As noted earlier, these kinds of operations are often highly sensitive politically, compared to DR/HA activities, and they are more likely to be assessed for potential involvement by governments on a case-by-case basis. This makes them harder to plan and train for in a multilateral format. Still, the fact is that the United States, Japan, and South Korea are all engaged in these types of missions, to varying degrees, and they often end up collaborating. Moreover, all three are committed to improving and expanding their capabilities in these areas in the future, not only on the military front, but also in terms of CIMIC.

Increasingly, bilateral or multilateral military games and exercises will address unique stabilization and reconstruction circumstances. A good example of this is an annual exercise that takes place in Mongolia called Khaan Quest, starting in 2003. Khaan Quest is a U.S.-Mongolian interoperability exercise focused on PKO and stabilization operations, designed to help prepare Mongolian soldiers for their contributions to the international coalitions serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many of the U.S. Marines who are involved in the exercise deploy from Okinawa, Japan, and a good portion of the curriculum involves UN tactics and multinational operating procedures. Although the origins of Khaan Quest stem from the demands of specific multilateral PKO missions, there is an opportunity to expand the scope of the exercise over time to include other Northeast Asian nations and to create a regional PKO-focused event, possibly involving Mongolia, Russia, China, South Korea, Japan, and the United States, as well as certain UN agencies and NGOs.

In the final analysis, it seems that the TCOG model as a broader alliance management tool will have only limited utility beyond North Korea, but even in a narrow application, the TCOG can be a means to enhance the effectiveness of a wide array of other cooperative tools that are currently not well integrated. In the area of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance in particular, action is of significantly more value than talk, but for action to be well targeted and well coordinated, some talk and planning are necessary. Here is where the lessons of the TCOG can be applied, in a finite series of organized meetings to bring the right people together, to identify common interests (where they exist), and to establish priorities and pool resources to realize more effective collective action.

Such activities have value in and of themselves, but they could be especially important at this point and time in the Asia-Pacific region. In the last few years, the U.S.-ROK alliance has come under severe strain, and this will continue to be the case if North-South reconciliation moves forward without addressing adequately the North's nuclear weapons programs. From the South Korean perspective, the rationale for its alliance with the United States, for so many years, rested exclusively on its role as a deterrent to North Korean aggression. As the perceived threat from North Korea recedes, in South Koreans' minds, what then are the future roles for

the alliance, for USFK, and for Korea's armed forces in the region?¹²³ As China continues to grow into a more developed, modern nation, what are its roles and responsibilities to the regional and global communities? How will the regional powers mitigate their competition over resources, rights, and territories?

There are many possible answers to these questions, but one underlying theme should be a stepped-up level of multilateral interaction and a commitment to common regional interests. Trilateral activities, as a complement to other bilateral and multilateral initiatives, can be a means to help strengthen regional cooperation and can actually help prevent a drift into regional blocs (mainland versus maritime powers). Today, South Korea is essentially a maritime nation, as its estrangement from the North effectively cut it off from the Asian mainland. The eventual reunification of the Korean Peninsula, therefore, will also mark a reuniting of southern Koreans with the mainland, though Korea will retain most of its maritime and broader regional and global interests. Japan's contributions to regional and global security mechanisms will also grow over time, so it, too, will need to be integrated into multilateral activities. As all of these transformations unfold in Asia over the next few decades, better that they be met with greater interconnectivity, mutual understanding, and an overall sense of common purpose. An integrated set of tools for trilateral and multilateral cooperation is a means toward this goal.

123 For a discussion of the U.S.-ROK alliance, see Charles M. Perry, Jacquelyn K. Davis, James L. Schoff, and Toshi Yoshihara, *Alliance Diversification and the Future of the U.S.-Korean Security Relationship* (Herndon, Virginia: Brassey's, 2004).

Appendix A

Select Chronology on the North Korean Nuclear Issue

12/12/1985	The DPRK signs the NPT.
1/5/1986	The DPRK's 5-megawatt reactor in Yongbyon begins to operate.
1/30/1991	The first round of talks to normalize diplomatic relations between Japan and the DPRK are held in Pyongyang.
9/17/1991	The ROK and the DPRK join the United Nations.
12/1991	The DPRK and the ROK finalize a nonaggression agreement and sign the North-South Denuclearization Declaration.
1/21/1992	The United States and the DPRK hold "high-level" political talks in New York.
1/30/1992	The DPRK signs the IAEA Safeguards Agreement.
3/16/1992	The United States informs the DPRK that it will impose sanctions if North Korea does not allow international inspections soon. Washington fears that Pyongyang is stalling inspections and moving its nuclear program underground.
3/19/1992	The DPRK and the ROK set up the Joint Nuclear Control Commission to implement the Denuclearization Declaration. Talks break down in January 1993 after thirteen meetings.
11/1992	The eighth round of Japan-DPRK normalization talks breaks down.
2/1993	After six sets of IAEA nuclear inspections in the DPRK, discrepancies are revealed and the IAEA demands access to two special sites. North Korea refuses.
3/12/1993	The DPRK announces its intention to withdraw from the NPT, citing U.S.-ROK joint military exercises and IAEA demands for special inspections.
3/22/1993	The United States, Japan, and the ROK meet in New York to discuss the DPRK's March 12 announcement. The three nations state that they are prepared to deal with the DPRK's refusal of IAEA inspections through the UN Security Council.
4/4/1994	U.S. President Bill Clinton orders the establishment of the Senior Policy Steering Group on Korea, which has the responsibility of coordinating all U.S. policy for the current nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Robert Gallucci chairs the group.
4/28/1994	The DPRK's foreign ministry issues a statement claiming that the 1953 Armistice Agreement is invalid and declaring that the DPRK will withdraw from the Military Armistice Committee.

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6/10/1994	The IAEA Board of Governors passes a resolution finding the DPRK in further noncompliance for blocking inspections and preventing the agency from determining reactor core history.
6/3-4/1994	Delegations from the United States, Japan, and the ROK hold a trilateral meeting in Washington, D.C. They issue a statement calling for the UN Security Council to consider economic sanctions against the DPRK.
6/13/1994	The DPRK announces that it will withdraw from the IAEA.
6/15-18/1994	Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter visits the DPRK and obtains a commitment that allows IAEA inspectors and equipment to remain at Yongbyon. In addition, the DPRK agrees to an inter-Korean summit between DPRK President Kim Il-sung and ROK President Kim Young Sam.
7/8/1994	The death of DPRK President Kim Il-sung postpones negotiations on the nuclear issue and the planned July 25-27 North-South summit.
8/26/1994	Gallucci is appointed ambassador-at-large.
10/21/1994	The United States and the DPRK sign the Agreed Framework.
10/1994	Republicans win control of both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate.
12/16/1994	The United States, Japan, and the ROK meet in San Francisco to discuss the establishment of KEDO and the implementation of the Agreed Framework.
1/19/1995	The first U.S. shipment of fifty thousand tons of fuel oil is delivered to the DPRK under the Agreed Framework.
1/20/1995	The United States announces measures to ease sanctions against the DPRK in four areas: telecommunications and information, financial transactions, imports of North Korean magnesite, and transactions related to the future opening of liaison offices and other energy-related projects.
3/8-9/1995	The United States, Japan, and the ROK formally establish KEDO at an international conference in New York. Three months later Stephen W. Bosworth, former U.S. ambassador, is named executive director, and Cho Yong-jin, former director of the ROK Foreign Ministry's International Economy Bureau, and Umezaki Itaru, Japanese Foreign Ministry counselor for international cooperation, are named deputy executive directors.
11/20/1995	U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher meets with Japanese Foreign Minister Kono Yohei and ROK Foreign Minister Gong Ro-myung; they agree to continue trilateral meetings to closely coordinate DPRK policy.
1/24-25/1996	U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord represents the United States at the first senior-level trilateral meeting in Hawaii.
4/16/1996	The United States and South Korea propose a multilateral dialogue with China and the DPRK to "initiate a process aimed at achieving a permanent peace agreement" on the Korean peninsula. This series of meetings comes to be known as the Four-Party Talks.
5/14/1996	Lord represents the United States at the second senior-level trilateral meeting at Cheju Island.
6/8-11/1997	Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Charles Kartman represents the United States at trilateral meetings in Seoul.
11/21/1997	At the third preliminary meeting in preparation for the four-party talks, the DPRK agrees to participate in an initial plenary session. The four parties also agree on a broad agenda for the talks, including (1) the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and (2) issues concerning tension reduction.
12/9-10/1997	The first plenary session of the four-party talks is held in Geneva. Little progress is made as the DPRK continues to demand the removal of U.S. troops from South Korea and a bilateral peace treaty with the United States.
2/25/1998	Kim Dae-jung is inaugurated as president of the ROK.
8/31/1998	The DPRK launches a <i>Taepo-dong</i> missile over Japan.

Appendix A: Select Chronology on the North Korean Nuclear Issue:

10/21-24/1998	The third plenary session of the four-party talks is held in Geneva.
11/1998	William Perry, recently named U.S. North Korea policy coordinator and special advisor to the president and secretary of state, launches a review of DPRK policy.
2/9/1999	U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Negotiations Charles Kartman represents the United States at a trilateral meeting in Seoul.
2/26/1999	Defense officials hold a trilateral security meeting in Seoul.
4/24-25/1999	The United States, Japan, and the ROK hold a meeting in Hawaii where they agree to establish the TCOG.
4/24-27/1999	The United States, the ROK, the DPRK, and China hold the fifth round of four-party talks in Geneva.
5/18-24/1999	U.S. Department of State Counselor-Ambassador Wendy Sherman and William Perry visit Pyongyang and a suspected nuclear site at Kumchangni.
5/24/1999	Perry represents the United States at trilateral consultations in Tokyo preceding a trip to the DPRK.
5/29/1999	Perry represents the United States at trilateral consultations in Seoul following his trip to the DPRK.
6/25-26/1999	TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
7/27/1999	The foreign ministers from the United States, Japan, and the ROK discuss the DPRK and the four-party talks at the ASEAN Regional Forum in Singapore.
8/5-9/1999	The sixth and final plenary session of the four-party talks is held in Geneva, with the parties again failing to set specific agenda items.
9/7-12/1999	The United States and the DPRK conduct missile talks in Berlin.
9/12/1999	The heads of state from the United States, Japan, and the ROK conduct a trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the APEC meeting in Auckland.
9/24/1999	Perry's report is submitted to President Clinton.
11/8-9/1999	TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
2/1/2000	TCOG meeting is held in Seoul.
3/30/2000	TCOG meeting is held in Tokyo.
4/4-7/2000	Japan and the DPRK hold "high-level" normalization talks for the first time in eight years.
5/12/2000	TCOG meeting is held in Tokyo.
5/23/2000	U.S. team makes a second visit to the suspected nuclear site at Kumchangni.
6/13-15/2000	A ROK-DPRK summit is held in Pyongyang between ROK President Kim Dae-jung and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, Chairman of North Korea's National Defense Commission.
6/29-30/2000	TCOG meeting is held in Hawaii.
9/25/2000	Sherman officially replaces Perry as U.S. North Korea policy coordinator and special advisor to the president and secretary of state.
10/7/2000	TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
10/9-12/2000	DPRK Vice Marshall Jo Myong Rok, first deputy chairman of the National Defense Commission, visits the United States for talks with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, President Clinton, and Defense Secretary William Cohen.
10/23-25/2000	Albright visits the DPRK and meets with Kim Jong-il.
10/25/2000	The foreign ministers of the United States, Japan, and the ROK conduct a trilateral meeting in Seoul following Albright's visit to the DPRK.
10/31/2000	The eleventh round of Japan-DPRK normalization talks is held; talks are suspended for two years after this round.
1/20/2001	George W. Bush is inaugurated as president of the United States.

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3/26/2001	TCOG meeting is held in Seoul.
5/2001	Jack Pritchard is named U.S. special envoy for North Korean negotiations and U.S. representative to KEDO. Kartman shifts to become executive director of KEDO.
5/26/2001	TCOG meeting is held in Hawaii.
6/6/2001	The White House announces the completion of a Bush administration review of DPRK policy.
9/6/2001	TCOG meeting is held in Tokyo.
11/26-27/2001	TCOG meeting is held in San Francisco.
12/24/2001	The Japanese Coast Guard sinks a DPRK spy/drug-running ship that penetrated Japan's coastal waters.
1/25-26/2002	TCOG meeting is held in Seoul.
1/29/2002	President Bush says the DPRK is a member of an "axis of evil" in his State of the Union address.
4/2002	The DPRK accepts the idea of a Pritchard visit to Pyongyang, but Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly is later named to go instead.
4/9/2002	TCOG meeting is held in Tokyo.
4/18/2002	TCOG meeting is held in San Francisco.
7/2002	U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell meets with DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Num-sun on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Brunei.
9/9/2002	TCOG meeting is held in Seoul.
9/17/2002	Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro visits Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang. The two sign the Pyongyang Declaration.
10/3-5/2002	Kelly visits Pyongyang to discuss bilateral relations and accuses Pyongyang of pursuing a covert HEU program. DPRK officials reportedly acknowledge the program at first, but later deny its existence.
10/20/2002	Powell says that Pyongyang's pursuit of a uranium-based nuclear weapons program has nullified the 1994 Agreed Framework.
10/26/2002	Heads of state from the United States, Japan, and the ROK meet in Mexico, on the sidelines of the APEC meeting.
11/8-9/2002	TCOG meeting is held in Tokyo.
11/14/2002	The executive board of KEDO meets in New York and decides to stop fuel oil shipments to the DPRK.
11/21/2002	The DPRK declares that the Agreed Framework is void upon hearing the KEDO executive board's decision.
12/2002	The DPRK restarts its nuclear facility at Yongbyon after removing IAEA monitoring seals and cameras, and expels IAEA inspectors.
1/6/2003	The IAEA meets in Vienna, Austria, and adopts a special resolution calling for the DPRK to comply with IAEA inspections.
1/6-7/2003	TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
1/10/2003	The DPRK withdraws from the NPT.
2/12/2003	The IAEA Board of Governors declares the DPRK in breach of atomic safeguards and refers the case to the UN Security Council.
2/25/2003	Roh Moo-hyun is inaugurated as president of the ROK.
4/2003	The United States, China, and the DPRK conduct three-party talks in Beijing. The DPRK submits its eight-point plan.
6/12-13/2003	TCOG meeting is held in Hawaii.
7/1-2/2003	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
7/31/2003	Representatives from the United States and North Korea meet in New York to discuss the format of future high-level talks aimed at resolving North Korea's nuclear weapons crisis. A six-party format is discussed.

Appendix A: Select Chronology on the North Korean Nuclear Issue:

8/14/2003	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
8/22/2003	Pritchard steps down as U.S. special envoy for North Korean negotiations and U.S. representative to KEDO; he reportedly submitted his letter of resignation in April.
8/27-29/2003	The first round of six-party talks is held in Beijing.
9/28-29/2003	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Tokyo.
10/7/2003	On the sidelines of the ASEAN+3 summit in Bali, Indonesia, Japan, the ROK, and China sign a declaration for "the further promotion and strengthening of tripartite cooperation in the new century."
11/2003	Joseph DeTrani is named the new State Department special envoy for North Korean negotiations and U.S. representative to KEDO.
12/1/2003	KEDO formally agrees to suspend the LWR project in North Korea for one year.
12/3-4/2003	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
1/22/2004	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
2/22/2004	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Seoul.
2/25-28/2004	The second round of six-party talks is held in Beijing.
4/7-8/2004	Informal TCOG meeting is held in San Francisco.
5/12/2004	The first six-party working group meetings are held in Beijing.
5/22/2004	Koizumi returns to Pyongyang for a meeting with Kim Jong-il and comes home with family members of previously abducted Japanese citizens.
5/26/2004	DPRK and ROK general-grade (flag) officers meet for the first time ever at the Mt. Geumgang resort in North Korea to discuss confidence building measures.
6/13-14/2004	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Washington, D.C.
6/21/2004	Inaugural meeting of the Three-Party Committee is held in Qingdao, China, bringing together the foreign ministers of South Korea, Japan, and China. The Three-Party Committee was established at a trilateral summit meeting in October 2003, and is scheduled to meet annually to plan and coordinate cooperation among the three countries.
6/21-22/2004	The second round of six-party working group meetings is held in Beijing.
6/23-25/2004	The third round of six-party talks is held in Beijing. The United States reportedly outlines "five corresponding measures" in return for a nuclear freeze by North Korea, including heavy fuel oil, a provisional security guarantee, longer-term energy aid, direct talks about the lifting of economic sanctions, and retraining nuclear scientists during a three-month "preparatory period" of nuclear dismantlement.
7/1/2004	Foreign ministers from North and South Korea meet for only the second time on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Jakarta to discuss inter-Korean relations. The first meeting of ROK-DPRK foreign ministers took place four years earlier.
7/2/2004	Powell meets for twenty minutes with DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Jakarta.
7/24/2004	North Korea's Foreign Ministry denounces the U.S. offer (made at the June 2004 six-party talks) as a "sham proposal." It rejects the proposal and indicates that it does not intend to rejoin the six-party talks in September as originally planned.
8/2004	DeTrani meets with DPRK permanent representative to the UN Pak Gil-yon in New York. The purpose of the dialogue from the U.S. perspective is to reiterate Washington's position regarding North Korea's nuclear program.
8/24/2004	The South Korean government reveals to IAEA officials that a group of its country's scientists secretly produced a small amount of HEU as the result of experiments in 2000. It says that the experiments were quickly suspended. The IAEA launches an investigation to clarify details.

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9/9-10/2004	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Tokyo.
9/27/2004	The DPRK vice foreign minister states in an interview with reporters that North Korea has "reprocessed eight thousand wasted fuel rods and transformed them into arms."
10/13-14/2004	KEDO holds a regular board meeting and tentatively decides to extend the LWR program's suspension for one more year.
10/18/2004	President Bush signs into law the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004.
10/21/2004	ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young tells a session of parliament that "Our government has no detailed and direct evidence [supporting claims that the North has an HEU program]."
11/2004	DeTrani and Pak meet in New York.
11/2/2004	George W. Bush is reelected President of the United States.
11/27/2004	The Three-Party Committee (China, Japan, and the ROK) adopts the Action Strategy on Trilateral Cooperation, calling for, inter alia, the promotion of working and senior-level exchanges for confidence building among the three countries and the strengthening of "close coordination to expeditiously achieve substantive progress at the six-party talks."
12/2004	DeTrani and Pak meet in New York.
12/28/2004	Song Min-soon becomes ROK Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and head of delegation for the TCOG and six-party talks, succeeding Lee Soo-hyuck.
1/2005	Sasae Kenichiro becomes Japan's director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asia-Oceania Affairs Bureau and head of delegation for the TCOG and six-party talks, succeeding Yabunaka Mitoji.
1/19/2005	During testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, soon-to-be-confirmed U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declares North Korea an "outpost of tyranny."
2/2005	Based on research from the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. officials declare that North Korea may have exported nuclear material to Libya.
2/10/2005	The DPRK makes its first official declaration that it possesses nuclear weapons and announces its withdrawal from the six-party talks.
2/14/2005	Ambassador to South Korea Christopher R. Hill is named head of the U.S. delegation to the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. He is sworn in on April 8, 2005.
2/26/2005	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Seoul.
3/3/2005	North Korea issues an official memorandum declaring that it is no longer bound by its September 1999 self-imposed long-range ballistic missile testing moratorium.
3/17/2005	Joseph R. DeTrani is promoted to the rank of ambassador as he continues to serve as Special Envoy for the six-party talks.
4/18/2005	ROK officials confirm that North Korea has shut down its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, a necessary first step toward reprocessing spent fuel rods for extraction of weapons-grade plutonium.
5/6-7/2005	Foreign ministers from the ROK, Japan, and the China hold a trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Europe Meeting.
5/9/2005	In an interview with CNN, Secretary Rice says that the United States "recognizes that North Korea is sovereign." A State Department spokesman also offers direct talks between the United States and the DPRK if Pyongyang agrees to return to the six-party talks.
5/11/2005	North Korea declares that it has removed the eight thousand spent fuel rods from its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, though the claim is met with skepticism in the United States. Pyongyang issues a statement that cites the removal of the fuel rods as a "necessary measure" to enhance its nuclear capability.

Appendix A: Select Chronology on the North Korean Nuclear Issue:

5/13/2005	DeTrani and Jim Foster, head of the Office of Korean Affairs in the U.S. State Department, meet with diplomats from the DPRK's UN delegation in New York in an effort to bring North Korea back to the six-party talks. This is the first face-to-face meeting of U.S. and DPRK representatives since December 2004.
5/16/2005	The two Koreas hold their first direct talks in ten months, as South Korea tries to bring the North back to the negotiating table under the six-party framework. Vice ministers from each country lead the delegations.
6/6/2005	DeTrani and Foster meet with Pak Gil-yon and his deputy Han Song Ryul in New York.
6/10/2005	President Bush and President Roh meet in Washington and declare that they will speak with "one voice" on the need to get North Korea back to the six-party talks. They state that their goal of a nuclear-free peninsula is the same, but Roh says there are still differences in the policy approaches of Washington and Seoul.
6/22/2005	The ROK and the DPRK open high-level reconciliation talks.
7/13/2005	ROK Unification Minister Chung announces that South Korea will supply 2000 megawatts of electricity to North Korea if it agrees to dismantle its nuclear programs.
7/14/2005	Informal TCOG meeting is held in Seoul to review the agenda and prepare for the upcoming six-party talks that were finally rescheduled.
7/26 - 8/7/2005	The fourth round of six-party talks convene in Beijing after a thirteen-month hiatus. After thirteen days of negotiations, the talks go into recess, with plans to reconvene on August 29.
8/19/2005	Jay Lefkowitz is named U.S. Special Envoy on Human Rights in North Korea, in accord with the 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act.
9/13-19/2005	The fourth round of six-party talks reconvenes in Beijing. This round yields agreement on a joint statement of basic principles regarding Korean denuclearization and corresponding measures.

Appendix B

TCOG Meeting Chronology

Date Location	Format	Representatives	Remarks
4/24/1999 Hawaii	Initial	William Perry, U.S., North Korea policy coordinator; Lim Dong-won, ROK, senior presidential secretary on diplomacy and national security; Kato Ryozo, Japan, deputy vice minister for foreign policy (director general of MOFA Foreign Policy Bureau)	Formative meeting
5/24/1999 Tokyo	Formal	Perry; Lim; Kato	Worked to develop a coordinated message before Dr. Perry's trip to Pyongyang.
5/29/1999 Seoul	Formal	Perry; Lim; Kato	Discussed the result of Dr. Perry's visit to Pyongyang
6/25-26, 1999 Washington	Formal	Wendy Sherman, U.S., Department of State counselor-ambassador; Jang Jai-ryong, ROK, deputy foreign minister; Kato	Discussed U.S.-DPRK and ROK-DPRK bilateral meetings that occurred in Japan and reaffirmed their commitments to the 1994 Agreed Framework.
7/27/1999 Singapore	Ministerial	Madeleine Albright, U.S., secretary of state; Hong Soon-Young, ROK, MOFAT minister; Koumura Masahiko, Japan, MOFA minister	Discussed the upcoming four-party talks being held in Geneva.
9/9/1999 Auckland	Ministerial	Albright; Hong; Koumura	The foreign ministers met on the sidelines of APEC meeting.
9/12/1999 Auckland	Head of State	Bill Clinton, U.S., president; Kim Dae-jung, ROK, president; Obuchi Keizo, Japan, prime minister	Heads of state met on the sidelines of APEC meeting.
11/8-9/1999 Washington	Formal	Sherman; Jang; Takeuchi Yukio, Japan, deputy vice minister for foreign policy (director general of MOFA Foreign Policy Bureau)	Discussed U.S.-DPRK talks held in Berlin from September 7-12, 1999, and addressed the issue of reduced sanctions in exchange for an end to missile launches.
2/1/2000 Seoul	Formal	Sherman; Jang; Takeuchi	Reviewed U.S.-DPRK talks held in Berlin on January 22, 2000.
3/30/2000 Tokyo	Formal	Sherman; Jang; Takeuchi	Discussed bilateral policies and bilateral DPRK talks.

Appendix B: TCOG Meeting Chronology:

Date Location	Format	Representatives	Remarks
5/12/2000 Tokyo	Formal	Sherman; Jang; Takeuchi	Discussed bilateral talks between all three nations and the DPRK, including an upcoming North-South summit June 12-14, 2000.
6/29-30/2000 Hawaii	Formal	Sherman; Jang; Takeuchi	Discussed and supported the recent ROK-DPRK summit. The three nations called for a regular dialogue between the Korean leaders.
10/7/2000 Washington	Formal	Sherman; Jang; Takeuchi	Discussed bilateral talks between all three nations and the DPRK.
10/25/2000 Seoul	Ministerial	Albright; Lee Joung Binn, ROK, MOFAT minister; Kono Yohei, Japan, MOFA minister	Follow-up meeting to Albright's visit to the DPRK.
3/26/2000 Seoul	Formal	Thomas Hubbard, U.S., acting assistant secretary of state; Yim Sung-joon, ROK, deputy foreign minister; Kunihiko Makita, Japan, director general of MOFA's Asian Affairs Bureau	The ROK urged the U.S., and the Bush administration, to resume talks with the DPRK and to refrain from "tough talk." The three nations also decided to keep the TCOG name.
5/26/2001 Hawaii	Formal	James Kelly, U.S., assistant secretary of state for East Asian Affairs; Yim; Makita	Discussed the preliminary U.S. review of DPRK policy; including a possible revising of the Agreed Framework and the replacement of light-water reactors with thermal power plants.
9/6/2001 Tokyo	Formal	Kelly; Yim; Makita	Discussed a proposal by the DPRK to resume talks with the ROK. In addition, the three nations also discussed the impact on inter-Korean relations of an August summit between Russia and the DPRK, as well as a visit to Pyongyang by Chinese leader Jiang Zemin.
11/26-27/2001 San Francisco	Formal	Kelly; Yim; Hitoshi Tanaka, Japan, director general of MOFA's Asian and Oceanian Affairs	Considered the implications of the global war on terrorism. The three nations also discussed stalled inter-Korean ministerial meetings and stalled Japan-DPRK talks.
1/25-26/2002 Seoul	Formal	Kelly; Yim; Tanaka	Discussed the U.S. desire to continue bilateral talks with the DPRK (U.S. declared "any time, any place without preconditions").
4/9/2002 Tokyo	Formal	Kelly; Lee Tae-sik, ROK, deputy foreign minister; Tanaka	Discussed planned visit by Jack Pritchard (U.S. special envoy for North Korean negotiations) to the DPRK and the result of Lim Dong-won's trip to the DPRK.

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Date Location	Format	Representatives	Remarks
6/18/2002 San Francisco	Formal	Kelly; Lee Tae-sik; Tanaka	Discussed planned Pritchard trip; however, the ROK proposed sending a more senior official, either Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage or Kelly.
9/9/2002 San Francisco	Formal	Kelly; Lee Tae-sik; Tanaka	Discussed Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang.
10/26/2002 Los Cabos, Mexico	Head of State	George W. Bush, U.S., president; Kim Dae-Jung, ROK, president; Koizumi Junichiro, Japan, president	Heads of state met on the sidelines of the APEC meeting.
11/8-9/2002 Tokyo	Formal	Kelly; Lee Tae-sik; Tanaka	Meeting centered on condemning the DPRK's continuing nuclear program and whether or not to halt oil shipments as a result.
1/6-7/2003 Washington	Formal	Kelly; Lee Tae-sik; Yabunaka Mitoji, Japan, director general of Asian and Oceanian Affairs	Continued to focus on the DPRK nuclear program and whether or not to continue with the light-water reactor project.
6/12-13/2003 Hawaii	Formal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck, ROK, deputy foreign minister; Yabunaka	Discussed three-way and five-way meeting formats. The U.S. suggested scrapping the light-water reactor project and presented a containment plan regarding drugs and missiles.
7/1-2/2003 Washington	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	Proposal presented to halt construction of a light-water reactor in North Korea. The three nations also discussed the need for five-way talks with Japan and the ROK joining trilateral discussions among the U.S., China, and the DPRK in Beijing.
8/14/2003 Washington	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	The three nations coordinated their policy in an attempt to develop a joint strategy ahead of six-party talks in Beijing. They also reviewed a possible U.S. proposal to the DPRK.
9/28-29/2003 Washington	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	Assessed results of the six-party talks and coordinated policy for an upcoming second round of talks in Beijing. They also discussed the future of KEDO and the issue of a nonaggression pledge.
12/3-4/2003 Washington	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	Agreed to a broadly worded set of principles for ending the DPRK nuclear program. Reportedly agreed that the DPRK should not be allowed to have nuclear plants and that it would not asked to rejoin the NPT.

Appendix B: TCOG Meeting Chronology:

Date Location	Format	Representatives	Remarks
1/22/2004 Washington	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	Discussed the DPRK's nuclear ambitions and the ongoing six-party talks.
2/22/2004 Seoul	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	The three nations worked to develop a common stance for the six-party talks. They all agreed that the DPRK's uranium-based atomic weapons program must be investigated.
4/7-8/2004 San Francisco	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	The three nations discussed possible agenda items for the six-party working group meetings. The ultimate goal was to jump-start the working-group process.
6/13-14/2004 Washington	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	Coordinated policy surrounding the major issues of the DPRK nuclear program in anticipation of six-party talks in June. The issues included the CVID approach, the question of an existing uranium enrichment program, and the prospects for a nuclear freeze in the DPRK.
9/9-10/2004 Tokyo	Informal	Kelly; Lee Soo-hyuck; Yabunaka	Discussed strategies and policies in anticipation of six-party talks planned for September (though that schedule was in doubt at the time). Also discussed recent revelations of certain nuclear experiments in ROK in 2000 that appeared to violate its NPT safeguards agreement.
2/26/2005 Seoul	Informal	Christopher Hill, U.S., assistant secretary of state for East Asian Affairs-designate (sworn in April 2005); Song Min-soon, ROK, deputy foreign minister; Sasae Kenichiro, Japan, director general Asian and Oceanian Affairs	Discussed strategies to bring North Korea back to the six-party talks.
7/14/2005 Seoul	Informal	Hill; Song Min-soon; Sasae	Reviewed agenda and prepared for the upcoming fourth round of six-party talks. Agreed that, if Pyongyang abandoned its nuclear programs, the ROK would supply electricity and the U.S. heavy fuel oil to the DPRK.

Appendix C

Acronyms and Abbreviations

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
C2	command and control
CCC	Combined Coordination Center
CGP	Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership (Japan)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States)
CIMIC	civil-military cooperation
CRI	crisis response initiative
CSF	combined support force
CSG	combined support group
CVID	complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement
DPRI	Defense Policy Review Initiative (U.S.-Japan)
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
GPR	global posture review (United States)
GPWF	Good People World Family (Republic of Korea)
GSIS	Yonsei University's Graduate School of International Studies (Republic of Korea)
HA/DR	humanitarian assistance/disaster relief
HEU	highly enriched uranium
HIC	humanitarian information center
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IFPA	Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (United States)
IPP	Individual Partnership Program

JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff (United States)
JDA	Japan Defense Agency (Japan)
JDR Law	Japan Disaster Relief Law (Japan)
JFIR	The Japan Forum on International Relations (Japan)
JSO	Joint Staff Office (Japan)
JTF	joint task force
JTS	Join Together Society (Republic of Korea)
KCOC	Korea NGO Council for Overseas Cooperation (Republic of Korea)
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (U.S.-Japan-ROK-EU)
KFWA	Korean Foundation for World Aid (Republic of Korea)
KIDA	Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (Republic of Korea)
KOICA	Korea International Corporation Agency (Republic of Korea)
LNO	liaison officer
LWR	light-water reactor
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force (United States)
MND	Ministry of National Defense (Republic of Korea)
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan)
MOFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Republic of Korea)
MPAT	Multinational Planning Augmentation Team
MSDF	Maritime Self-Defense Force (Japan)
NBC	nuclear, biological, chemical
NDPG	National Defense Program Guideline (Japan)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPT	Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council
NSC-CMC	National Security Council Crisis Management Center (Republic of Korea)
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (United States)
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense (United States)
OUA	operation Unified Assistance
PACOM	U.S. Pacific Command (United States)
PfP	Partnership for Peace (NATO)
PKO	peacekeeping operation
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
RIMPAC	Rim of the Pacific
ROK	Republic of Korea

SCM	Security Consultative Meeting (U.S.-ROK)
SDF	Self-Defense Forces (Japan)
SPI	Security Policy Initiative (U.S.-ROK)
TCOG	Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (U.S.-Japan-ROK)
UN	United Nations
UNJLC	UN Joint Logistics Center
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USFJ	U.S. Forces Japan
USFK	U.S. Forces Korea
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

About the Author and the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis

James L. Schoff is the associate director of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, where he specializes in East Asian security and non-proliferation issues, international crisis management, and American foreign policy. He joined IFPA in 2003, after serving as the program officer in charge of policy studies at the United States-Japan Foundation for nearly four years. Before working at the foundation, Mr. Schoff spent several years developing new business and managing building projects in Asia for Bovis Construction, an international construction and project management firm. His recent publications include *Building Six-Party Capacity for a WMD-Free Korea* (co-author) (Brassey's, 2004); *Crisis Management in Japan and the United States: Creating Opportunities for Cooperation amid Dramatic Change* (editor) (Brassey's, 2004); and *Alliance Diversification and the Future of the U.S.-Korean Security Relationship* (co-author) (Brassey's, 2004). Mr. Schoff graduated from Duke University and earned an M.A. in international relations at The Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He also studied at International Christian University in Japan.

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One of the more successful innovations of the last six years in the area of U.S.–Japan and U.S.–South Korea alliance management has been the establishment and use of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) for developing common policies toward North Korea. The three countries can learn from the TCOG and use other diplomatic and military planning tools to improve the way that they prepare for and respond to complex contingencies, such as a large-scale natural disaster, a regional or global epidemic, or the adverse affects of a failing nation-state.

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