

North Korea's Hedging Strategy and South Korea's Proactive Strategy

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The year 2010 saw heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula triggered by North Korea, as shown by the sinking of the *Cheonan* warship and the artillery attack against Yeonpyeong Island. Some experts, even some within the intelligence community, estimated that through these efforts Kim Jong-eun was attempting to strengthen his power in the succession struggle.

North Korea's provocative actions, however, while internally motivated, repeatedly force South Korea to pay a ransom to support three generations of succession within the royal Kim family, and create an almost insurmountable problem for the South. Defining the Yeonpyeong Island incident is critical to the national security posture of the Republic of Korea (ROK). Conducting an exercise of artillery fire against a specific target is one thing, but attacking South Korean territory is a different thing altogether. The latter implies an invasive action, a deliberate attack to secure a series of strategic objectives waged by limited warfare.

In the context of North Korea's provocation, the conflicting, competitive, yet also cooperative relationship between the United States and China had both a direct and an indirect impact on the Korean Peninsula. The ROK's weak, vacillating reaction against the North Korean provocation clearly revealed the ROK military's limitations in countering the North Korean threat. Since dealing with a provocative scenario has a tremendous impact on how the ROK responds, a comprehensive reassessment of the North Korean threat is imperative.

Taking account of the complexity of power politics as well as North Korea's provocations, this briefing will explore a potential provocative scenario, which will be developed on the basis of Pyongyang's intent, its capability to inflict threat using asymmetric war-fighting assets, and the North Korean perception of South Korea's political, social, economic, and military vulnerability. Finally, the briefing will make policy recommendations in terms of security and defense posture, international cooperation to deter North Korean provocation, and examine how to promptly and effectively deal with future crises in the event of any further military action from the North against the ROK.

North Korea's Hedging Strategy

(1) Intent

North Korea's view of war is based on the confluence

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of the inevitability of class struggle, imperialism, and people's war perpetuated by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong, respectively. The *Communist Manifesto* dictates that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles—society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."¹ In a similar context, Lenin insists in his work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, that the war of 1914–1918 was imperialist on both sides, the colonizers and their colonies; it was a war for the division of the world, for the partition and repartition of colonies and spheres of influence of finance capital, and so on.² Furthermore, Mao's military-political strategy of people's war is to maintain the support of the population and draw the enemy deeply into the interior, where the population will bleed them dry through a mixture of mobile and guerrilla warfare.³ Influenced by these revolutionary tenets, North Korea's political and military leadership perceives war as a just war to completely liberate the South Korean people from U.S. imperialism and the bondage of the bourgeoisie.

It is believed that North Korea attempts to conduct warfare simultaneously from the front and the rear through a combination of preemptive strike and people's democratic revolution. At the initial stage of war, North Korea intends to paralyze the South Korean people by cyber attack, artillery mass fire, and the insertion of special operations forces (SOF), followed by the occupation of the Seoul metropolitan area by conducting blitzkrieg with mechanized forces and the eventual termination of the limited war through negotiation, prior to the deployment of U.S. forces to the Korean Peninsula. However, with the backdrop of a potential aggression, Pyongyang is also undertaking offensive peace actions, which include peace talks with South Korea and consultations on peace agreements with the United States. In other words, North Korea's political and military approach adopts a Nazism strategy of adventurism while it pursues appeasement at the same time.

(2) Capability

North Korea drew lessons from the Iraq War in March 2003. They learned that Saddam Hussein's large-scale mechanized forces and fighter aircraft could not resist the coalition forces, particularly the U.S. special operations forces, precision-guided munitions, and electronic warfare. North Korea strengthened its war fighting capability by reinforcing 200,000 SOF, deploying light infantry divisions at each frontal corps and positioning mechanized divisions at each forward corps along the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

The strength of the North Korea's People Army is 1,190,000, which makes it the fifth largest force in the world. The KPA consists of 1,020,000 army, 60,000 navy and 110,000 air force.⁴ North Korea has deployed 1,000 missiles, including Frogs, Scuds, Ro-dong missiles, Musudan intermediate range ballistic missiles, and Daepodong-II missiles, and the completion of its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) is due within five years. The overwhelming range of these missiles can not only cover the Korean Peninsula but also neutralize airports and naval ports where U.S. forces are deployed. North Korea has 13,600 howitzers, including 5,100 long-range artilleries, composed of 240 multiple rocket launchers and 170 mm guns, which can reach the Seoul metropolitan area. Weapons of mass destruction, including six to eight nuclear weaponized devices as well as 2,500 to 5,000 tons of chemical munitions can have a tremendous impact on the strategic military balance.

The 820 aircraft of North Korea include 100 leading edge fighters of MiG-23, 25, and Su-25s, which can conduct airstrikes on metropolitan areas within nine minutes. North Korea's 70 submarines, torpedoes, 130 air-cushion landing vehicles and 420 battleships have also been deployed. Furthermore, North Korea can conduct large-scale cyber terror attacks employing 1,000 technical reconnaissance teams.

North Korea will attempt to conduct hybrid war-



fare, which is a combination of high-speed maneuver, and asymmetric warfare that includes the use of WMD and missile, submarine, SOF, and cyber warfare.

(3) South Korea's Vulnerability

South Korea has political, social, and military characteristics that make it vulnerable to North Korean provocation. The political and social vulnerability of the South involves ideological confrontation between liberals and conservatives, an inconsistent and disintegrated policy toward North Korea, and the complexity of the decision-making process in dealing with North Korea and neighboring states, due to pro-North Korea and anti-American sentiment. Since the signing of the armistice agreement in 1953, the combined ROK-U.S. defense system has been a crucial instrument in deterring war on the Korean Peninsula, and North Korea has been influenced to believe that the United States has been playing a leading role in defense of the South. In this sense, North Korea assumes that South Korea does not have the political and military will to retaliate against the North's incessant provocation. The recent two serious incidents reconfirmed for Pyongyang that South Korea's leadership has a crisis management system with a high level of vulnerability, characterized by excessive sensitivity to the potential escalation of conflict into a war.

The Korean Peninsula's tumultuous security environment brings about economic vulnerability in the form of the withdrawal of foreign capital. Any instance of North Korean provocation detrimentally affects the business climate by inducing fear among foreign investors. The impact is even more evident in the Seoul metropolitan area, where the core national infrastructure is closely located near the DMZ. The potential damage to core facilities in the event of North Korean provocation can be predicted to have a severe impact on many industries.

Military vulnerability results from the proximity of Seoul to the DMZ, which makes the metropolitan

area's high-density population more vulnerable to North Korea's military provocations. Among the total South Korean population of 48 million, 15 million live in or around Seoul. Thus protecting Seoul should be a priority for the ROK military. Moreover, the ROK military must anticipate the counterstrategies of the enemy. For instance, North Korea might attempt to take 500 South Korean managers and engineers in the Gae-song industrial complex beyond the DMZ as hostages, which would constrain South Korean military actions. Another area of vulnerability is North Korea's easy access to information through mass media, exposing South Korea's policy and military actions toward North Korea. North Korea sees the complexity of the ROK-U.S. command structure as one of the most vulnerable areas. Although the ROK Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) exercises peacetime operational control over the military forces, it is worth noting that wartime operational control over the ROK forces is still in the hands of the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC). However, wartime operation control will be transferred to the ROK JCS from the CFC on December 1, 2015. The ROK's political and military leadership might hesitate to take prompt action against North Korea's provocation, as any action is likely to escalate to a war.

The issue of national security, in particular, has not received much attention from past and present administrations. Although national security was deemed more important than democracy by South Korean authoritarian administrations, this position has been hardly apparent in the actions of more current political leaders. The previous liberal administration invested significant effort toward the improvement of the inter-Korean relationship, and this was by focusing less on matters of security. Today, economic issues outweigh national security on the national agenda.

(4) Implications of Outside Interventions

External factors also have an impact on the dynamics of relations between the two Koreas. In the context of



the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong Island incidents, the conflicting, competitive, yet cooperative relationship between the United States and China had both direct and indirect influence on the Korean Peninsula. The conflict between the two superpowers was attributed to the U.S. involvement in the *Cheonan* incident and China's demonstration of power and assertive diplomacy by denying the United States access to the West Sea for conducting combined anti-submarine exercises with the ROK navy. The competitive relations between the two superpowers were aggravated by North Korea's artillery attack against Yeonpyeong Island. China inevitably acquiesced in the combined large-scale exercises in which the aircraft carrier, USS *George Washington* participated. China also struggled to influence the two Koreas by shuttle diplomacy. Presidents Obama and Hu Jintao eventually demonstrated their cooperative relations through the Joint Statement on January 19, 2011, which urged the two Koreas to conduct a sincere, constructive inter-Korean dialogue.⁵ The incidents symbolically exemplified the complex nature of U.S.-China relations.

The incidents also showed the dynamics of the two Koreas, which had reverse impacts on the power structure in Northeast Asia. China pays more attention to the overall stability on the Korean Peninsula, not specifically acting on the tension between the two Koreas. It supported North Korea's position when the Presidential statement to the United Nations Security Council was presented, saying that North Korea was not involved in the *Cheonan* incident. China's lack of firm and decisive action over the *Cheonan* incident induced North Korea to launch another attack by shelling Yeonpyeong Island. Thus, had China showed a stronger attitude toward North Korea, it could have prevented another North Korean attack.

Although the two provocative actions by North Korea paralyzed South Korea, the South Korean government took prompt diplomatic action to coordinate with friendly states and the global community with regard to North Korea's brutality. Despite the threaten-

ing retaliatory pressure from Pyongyang, the Lee Myung-bak administration also conducted previously planned exercises in the West Sea in the vicinity of the Northern Limit Line. North Korea did not take any military action against these exercises because China influenced North Korea to restrain from responding with any provocative action.

(5) North Korea's Limited War Scenario

North Korea's national strategy, entitled "Strong and Prosperous State" focuses on three areas: ideology and politics, the military, and the economy. North Korea's political leadership is confident that *juche*, or self-reliant ideology, and military-first politics can firmly control the North Korean people for regime survival. It is estimated that North Korea has become a *de facto* nuclear state and has been developing its ICBM, which will empower it to deal with U.S. military actions. North Korea's wishful thinking regarding control of the Seoul metropolitan area, where two-thirds of South Korea's national wealth is concentrated, might push it to wage a limited war. North Korea's perception of military provocation is based on the following assumptions. Prior to the Yeongpyeong incident, only 40 percent of the South Korean population showed a high level of security awareness and only 25 percent of the student population were willing to join the army in the event of war.⁶ After the Yeongpyeong attack, there was a drastic change in the level of security awareness among the South Korean public. North Korea's brutality further reinforced its image as an "enemy" of the South.

North Korea can infiltrate the South by sending 15,000 to 20,000 special operations forces, who could be disguised as South Korean soldiers and police; such a scenario would allow the North Korean military to easily commit atrocities, especially against civilians. Having conducted Distributed Denial of Service attacks (DDOS) as cyber terrorism three times in the past, in July 2009 as well as in March and May 2011, North Korea can again gain confidence to neutralize



South Korea's command and control structure. At the height of the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong attack, Pyongyang keenly watched to see how vulnerable Seoul was in its crisis management and in the readiness of the ROK's military force. Keeping track of the recent strike against Libya of the combined forces of the United States and its allies, we can vividly visualize a similar scenario for the Korean Peninsula.

It is estimated that North Korea attempts to employ three options, depending on the situation: offensive diplomacy with a defensive military posture, a limited preemptive strike with a political objective, and more direct offensive military action. The South Korean government perceives the North Korean threat as neither a total war nor a limited war but only as a local provocation, because the North does not have enough logistic capability, energy, and infrastructure to launch a large-scale attack. Significantly, U.S. forces still remain in Korea, so that when the North attacks the South, they will certainly have to deal with a U.S. intervention, which might signal the end of North Korea. The South Korean government assumes that North Korea is only capable of instigating local attacks as in the case of the sinking of the *Cheonan*, a few fire engagements in the DMZ, infiltrating South Korea by guerrillas, and launching cyber attacks or missile tests and a third nuclear test. In addition, North Korea can attempt to bend the truth by accusing either the ROK or the United States of provocation, such as the ROK military drills or the combined U.S.-ROK military exercises. North Korea's provocation at the time and place it deems suitable could be used to achieve political goals such as Kim Jung-eun's propaganda to further establish the legitimacy of his political authority, draw global attention and secure favorable negotiation power, spur internal conflict in South Korea, prevent the North Korean people's deviation, and enhance North Korea's military credibility. However, these scenarios are very optimistic. South Korea has to prepare for the worst-case scenarios from North Korea.

South Korea should seriously examine the follow-

ing scenario. First, a missile attack against critical targets, including Incheon International Airport, the Yongsan military complex area composed of the Ministry of National Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces, and Osan Air Base co-located with the U.S. 7th Air and ROK Air Force Operational Command, should be anticipated. Second, North Korea could attempt to conduct a naval clash to neutralize the Northern Limit Line. North Korea could also occupy the five islands in the West Sea and Dae-sungdong Village in Panmunjom while simultaneously conducting a large-scale cyber terrorist attack and penetration of the Seoul metropolitan area by Special Operations Forces, spreading harmful chemical materials in the subway, and causing panic through long-range artillery fire with biological and chemical munitions. It is estimated that North Korea would attempt to paralyze Seoul by means of separate individual attacks or simultaneous collective operations. Once having successfully achieved the initial objective of causing chaos in Seoul, then light infantry brigades and mechanized forces of the North Korean People's Army would continue to conduct DMZ breaching operations, envelop Seoul through high-speed maneuver warfare with well-developed road networks in the metropolitan area and supported by underground sympathizers through people's democratic revolutionary strategy followed by link-up operations between landing amphibious forces in the East and West Sea along the Young-dong Express Highway. Then North Korea will attempt to terminate the limited war early by negotiation, prior to the U.S. main forces' deployment to the Korean Peninsula. If North Korea can win a limited war, they could eventually achieve a "strong and prosperous state" by seizing two-thirds of South Korea's economic wealth as the third and final economic objective of North Korea's national strategy.



The ROK's Proactive Strategy

Given North Korea's potential for provocative military action and limited war, the ROK should prepare for any contingent situation. How to establish an ROK security and defense posture to deal with North Korea's provocative actions is one of the most urgent issues.

(1) Integrated Security Posture

The South Korea National Security Council (NSC) needs to be recuperated to develop a national security strategy and to take responsibility for crisis management and policy coordination. Experts and policy practitioners, with a holistic understanding of both theory and practice in the areas of security, defense, and diplomacy, should be assigned to the NSC. High-level diplomatic and security policy makers from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade, National Defense, and Unification and experts from the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, and Korea Institute for National Unification should regularly meet to consult on policy coordination and countermeasures. The crisis management mechanism should be reformed, with institutionalization of crisis management as the control tower. Government officials in diplomacy and security should enhance crisis management capability through pan-governmental levels through periodic political and military games. A responsive communication system should be established in accordance with the spectrum of North Korea's provocations. However, the special advisor for foreign affairs and security, and the director of the crisis management office should be integrated, because diplomacy and security are inseparable. The disaster security management agency under the control of the Administration and Safety Ministry should be reverted to the Prime Minister's Office or as an agency under Presidential control as the Emergency Planning Commission. South Korea should achieve a total security posture by enabling its citizens to reach a

high level of security awareness about North Korea's threat and intent, through participating in joint military-government exercises and training in preparation for a possible North Korean provocation.

(2) National Will to Defend Values

Consistent and balanced policy toward North Korea should be pursued. A solid security posture of South Koreans should be maintained and intra-governmental agencies should share useful information with one another. The elusive goal of achieving national consensus brought about by pro-North Korean factions triggers provocation from the North. Thus the subject of modern Korean history and security that specifically tackles North Korea's provocation cases should be integrated in the curriculum in primary school as well as in junior and senior high school. Liberals should be in a position to emphasize that North Korea's human rights conditions and political power succession over three generations are below acceptable standards. Since North Koreans usually perceive of South Korean liberals as pro-North Korea, if both the liberals and the opposition party would unite to criticize Pyongyang's abusive human rights conditions and eventually pass a human rights law in the National Assembly, the North Korean authorities would think that they could no longer control or influence the liberals as well as the opposition party.

(3) Rights to Self-Defense and Rules of Engagement

The morale of the ROK forces should be boosted through empowerment. The ROK forces did not and could not retaliate against North Korea's violation of the armistice agreement and its terrorist actions. The People's Army of the DPRK continues to manipulate the South Korean government and military forces. Why is the ROK so feeble against North Korea's continuing provocations? There is no doubt that ROK national security relies heavily on the ROK-U.S. combined defense



system, which has made great contributions to deter war on the Peninsula and facilitate South Korea's economic miracle. However, the combined defense system has constrained ROK forces from taking prompt action and retaliating against North Korea. The ROK military leadership should be sensitive enough to government directives and the commander's guidance of the Combined Forces Command or the United Nations Command (UNC). The escalation of the crisis alarms the government and the UNC is likely to pay attention to the rules of engagement to keep the armistice agreement, which agrees to respond proportionally against North Korea's provocations. As an example, if North Korea fires artillery, South Korea can retaliate against North Korea by artillery fire and addition measures by the approval of the Field Army Commander.

The two North Korean provocations in 2010 vividly showed the powerful impact of both actions on the ROK military leadership. If the ROK government and forces do not exercise proper authority by timely self-defense against future intentional provocation from the North, the reverence of the current administration and forces will be challenged by domestic and foreign actors. The ROK forces should reach an agreement with the UNC on the issues of self-defense authority in the event of North Korea's provocation. The right of self-defense ensures compliance with the UN Charter Article 7, the Geneva Conventions, and the Hague Treaty. Because North Korea clearly violated Article 2, Item 4, of the UN Charter, Article 8 of the Rome Convention, and committed war-related crimes, it should be punished. Minister of National Defense Kim Kwan-jin took the appropriate action at the commanders' conference, issuing commanding guidance to all echelon commanders, who should take action and report accordingly; this action clarifies the concept and implementation of self-defense rights.

(4) Superb Military Posture

Mental readiness is an imperative for a strong army.

The South Korean people's trust in their forces, soldiers' morale, operational discipline, and readiness needs to be firmly established. Vulnerable aspects of war-fighting assets should be resolved. Defense command dedicated to defending the Northwestern islands was activated on June 15, 2011. Intelligence assessment capability, including vigilance and surveillance systems, should be enhanced. Striking assets, including maritime assets, in particular, and counter-fire operation assets to neutralize North Korea's artillery need to be strongly reinforced. Bolder psychological operations should be conducted, since Pyongyang's political and military leadership is highly sensitive to North Koreans' ideological deviation. South Koreans must also help inculcating the truth in North Koreans with regard to the reality of the two Koreas, especially the differences in terms of the economy, human rights conditions, and international status.

(5) Increase in Defense Budget

North Korea's direct and reinforced threats demand a higher budget for the South's national defense expenditure. From 2009 to 2011, under the Lee Myung-bak administration, the defense expenditure increased at an annual average of 5.6 percent, which was below 0.8 percent point in terms of the total average expenditure increase of 6.4 percent. In the meantime, from 2005 to 2008, under the Roh Moo-hyun administration, the average defense expenditure increased by 8.0 percent, which was 0.6 percent point higher than the average annual increase of 7.4 percent.⁷ The current administration should increase the national defense budget for 2012, considering the recent provocative acts of North Korea.

International Cooperation

(1) ROK-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Security Cooperation



The foundation of South Korea's national security is based on the ROK-U.S. alliance, and in order to respond proactively to Pyongyang's provocation, a solid ROK-U.S. combined posture is essential. As China continues to provide unilateral support to North Korea, this has to be countered by pursuing trilateral security cooperation among South Korea, the United States, and Japan. We never expect that a military alliance will be established between Seoul and Beijing, because of their conflicting political ideologies, China's military alliance with North Korea, and their historical experience.

(2) Security Cooperation with China

In the meantime, South Korea should establish security cooperation with China to guide them to play a role as a responsible stakeholder. The Republic of Korea should develop a national strategy that includes not only the United States but also China. Previous and current South Korean administrations and a majority of South Koreans tend to get along well with one, the United States or China, rather than both. The liberal administrations, such as those of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, maintained more favorable relations with China and they exercised an assertive diplomacy toward the United States. The Lee Myung-bak administration, on the other hand, appears to be pro-American and so it seems that it confronts less friction in foreign policy.

This imbalanced perception retains inherent problems. Why can't South Koreans get along well not only with the United States but also with China? Hwang Joon-hun, the Chinese author of *Chosun's Strategy* during the Ching dynasty in the late nineteenth century insisted that the Chosun dynasty should maintain cordial relations with key neighboring states through keeping its friendly relations with China, linking with the United States and also by establishing ties with Japan. He proposed multilateral diplomacy a century ago. A proactive approach is required for South Korea to acquire a deeper under-

standing of both the United States and China to get along with the two rather than just always favoring the United States. National strategy should thus encompass both the United States and China. The President and his special advisors for foreign affairs and security should consider both states' importance to the South Korean national interest. Hence, forging networks with both states is vital to demonstrate a more balanced diplomatic and security strategy.

How to establish relations with Beijing is one of Seoul's primary foreign and security tasks. Programs for reinforcing security cooperation with China should be developed and implemented. Exchange and cooperation initiatives to minimize conflict with China should be explored. These programs should include strategic talks, officer and student exchange program, and the establishment of brotherhood relationships between army, navy and air force units of the two states. Direct communication hotlines between Seoul and Beijing have already been established. An additional treaty for the prevention of dangerous military action should be concluded. Moreover, Track 1.5 conferences between the two states, including the Korea-China Security Forum, the Retired General Officers Association, and the China International Strategy Association should be expanded.

(3) Northeast Asia Multilateral Security Arrangements

The Secretariat office for BESETO (Beijing-Seoul-Tokyo) will be opened in 2011 in accordance with the agreement of the South Korea-China-Japan Summit in 2010, and multilateral response forces of Northeast Asia to deal with natural disasters, including tsunamis, should be established. Seoul, Washington, and Beijing should conduct joint reconnaissance and rescue exercises and counter-piracy exercises, which will make North Korea refrain from hostile actions because it heavily perceives China as a supporter.



Conclusion

The year 2011 is a critical time, just a year before 2012, deemed a vulnerable period for national security due to the following reasons: South Korea and the United States will conduct presidential elections; Chinese President Hu Jintao will turn over presidential authority to Xi Jinping; and North Korea will celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Kim Il-sung; the year 2012 also is the target year of North Korea's vision for a strong and prosperous state. The sinking of the *Cheonan* and North Korea's artillery attack against Yeonpyeong Island vividly urged the South Korean people to grasp the North's real intentions; the incidents awakened the naïve populace, thereby highlighting the need to establish a vigilant national security posture. We should be aware that the Yeonpyeong attack did not involve accidental fire but was a brutal invasion to contribute to the North's strategic objective. Moreover, if North Korea's political and military leadership decides to seize the opportunity to prove South Korea's recurring weakness in responding to North Korea's sequential provocations, they are most likely to launch a limited war to achieve their "strong and prosperous state." Such a possibility is even more likely if North Korea's political succession settles down smoothly and South Korea's vulnerability provides more confidence for the North's leadership to launch further attacks.

The two pillars of national survival are security and the economy. A prosperous economy cannot be sustained if security is challenged. That explains why security issues cannot be approached through economic solutions. Even though South Korea has a superior advantage over North Korea in terms of national power, economic wealth, and international status, these advantages are futile against the issue of national security and defense posture. The ROK enjoys overwhelmingly superior national power over North Korea. However, if we are vulnerable in our security posture, we are facing a severe security crisis which might lead

us to collapse despite our overwhelming advantages except military. We will be able to block North Korea's further provocations through the determination and resolution even to wage war in order to keep peace.

The Republic of Korea, a great model for the Third World's national development strategy on economic growth and political development, should and is able to build a strong and secure state by strengthening a self-reliant security posture and cooperative security relations with key actors, primarily the United States, China, and the United Nations.

Whether the ROK's proactive security strategy will succeed or fail depends heavily on two prominent tasks: one is overcoming the stereotype perception of escalation to war in the event of self-defense retaliation. This entails great economic loss, which South Koreans are anxious about because in the event of war, South Korea's economic achievement might severely suffer. South Koreans are trapped in this kind of mindset, which prevents them from exercising bolder actions in response to North Korea's continuing provocative actions. Another huge challenge for Seoul is keeping the rules of engagement faithfully, which dictate that it has to abide by the provisions of the armistice agreement; such legalities have constrained South Korea from carrying out a more aggressive strategy toward North Korea. Hence these barriers thwart South Korean determination to face North Korea's assault. Without a proactive South Korean mindset and strategy with revised rules of aggressive engagement as well as a right to self-defense to respond to any intentional provocation from North Korea, and contributions to deter North Korea's limited war, achieving peace and security on the Korean Peninsula remains elusive.■

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Notes

¹ Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 2008. *Communist Manifesto*. Edited by David McLellan. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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⁶ Research Institute on Security Affairs. 2010. *Survey of Korean People's on National Security*. Seoul: Korean National Defense University.

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