

Anti-Americanism in South Korea: South Korean Responses to ROK-U.S. Conflicts
In the Process of Finding National Identity

An Honors Thesis for the Department of International Relations

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Introduction

With the Stars and Stripes burning in the middle of the street, about a million people gathered to demonstrate against the United States roaring protest chants of “Yankee go home.” A great wave of thousands of small lights in candlelight vigils performed by the

citizens involved in the anti-American demonstration rolled over the crowd. The radical anti-American protests were manifested in harsh slogans, slashing by knives, and the throwing of stones and even Molotov cocktails by rioters at the police and the United States Embassy. These images received great media attention around the world. The news coverage of these vehement protests only added fuel to the people's great abhorrence towards the world's most powerful country. Surprisingly, these astonishing images were neither from the Middle-East nor from any former Soviet-bloc country whose relationships with the U.S. were marked by animosity. These incidents occurred in 2008 in South Korea, one of the most steadfast allies of the United States in the world.

Amid its successful democratization and economic triumph, the undercurrent of the South Korean public began to experience the dawning of anti-American sentiments. Despite mutual strategic importance and economic cooperation alongside precedents of humanitarian support from the U.S. in the 1950s and the 1960s, there were several periods when anti-Americanism became pervasive over the southern half of the Korean Peninsula. Anti-Americanism in South Korea was externalized through vehement demonstrations or civil society movements. In the 1980s, the South Korean desire for democracy was an initiative to propagate negative public perceptions of the United States, which had allegedly supported the repressive military regime of South Korea.¹ In the 1990s, civil society movements were set in motion to criticize the United States for political inequity in the South Korea-U.S. relationship. In 2002 and 2008, the general public took center stage in the vanguard of the anti-American movement. A million people gathered together in the center of Seoul, right next to the Embassy of the United States, to demonstrate public grievances against the U.S. and the South Korean incumbent government's policy decisions. Some of those

¹ Duk-Hwan Kim, "Anti-Americanism in South Korea, 1945-1992: A Struggle for Positive National Identity, (Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1992), 201.

demonstrations resulted in violent tragedy with several casualties among police officers and rioters.² These anti-American movements, with a rapid shift in the general public's attitude towards the U.S. from positive to negative in recent decades, developed both out of and into many political conflicts in the strategic relationship between the two countries.

South Korea obviously has a strong desire to maintain its alliance with the United States for its own security, regional stability, and economic prosperity. Since the Korean War, the U.S. has been an essential partner in South Korea's economic and political development, providing the South with the security it needed to devote its energies to nation-building. South Korea would not have achieved economic prosperity and the successful democratization without the U.S. support. And, vice versa, the U.S. has been interested in South Korea for decades in terms of its geopolitical importance in the East Asian order as a deterrent to the former Soviet Union and Chinese influences. There is hardly any doubt that the alliance has been beneficial to both countries. To many Americans, South Korean surges of anti-Americanism seem to be at odds with this strong alliance. Without substantial grounding in background knowledge of South Korea, an understanding of South Korean anti-Americanism is hardly conceivable. Furthermore, a clear interpretation of South Korean history and nationalism is necessary in order to access the fundamental grounds for the rise of anti-American sentiments.

Nationalism in South Korea culminated as South Koreans began to share "new stirrings of nationalism arising from their country's rapid economic growth and political liberalization."³ The miraculous development of its economy and South Korean political democratization in the 1970s and the 1980s were seen as illustrious triumphs. During the

² *Chosun Ilbo*, June 11, 2009

³ Katherine H.S. Moon, "Korean Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and Democratic Consolidation," *Korea's Democratization*, ed. Samuel S. Kim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 135.

process of the economic success, as South Koreans regained confidence in their economic identity, they were inspired to be independent of other countries' economic influences, particularly that of the United States. In South Korean minds, these achievements were greatly with the consummation of their blood, sweat, and tears that facilitated the restoration of the self-esteem and national self-identity.

In *Nationalism Reframed*, Rogers Brubaker describes that “Nationalism is not a ‘force’ to be measured as resurgent or receding. It is heterogeneous set of ‘nation’-oriented idioms, practices, and possibilities that are continuously available or ‘endemic’ in modern cultural and political life.”⁴ In general, this nation-oriented norm of nationalism evokes emotionalism and passionate rhetoric of “us-them”. The exclusive “us-them” concept tackles collaboration with other groups based on different identities,⁵ and in the South Korean case of anti-Americanism, this “us-them” concept clashed as America interfered in economic, social, and political subjects across the country.

Understanding the sociopolitical environments of South Korea stemming from historical backgrounds will help reveal reasons for the surge of anti-Americanism in South Korea. The national consciousness of South Koreans is comprised of distinctively intricate and interrelated psyches, derived from Korean history as a buffer and vassal state to the great powers of China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.⁶ The Korean Peninsula has been the “stepping stone and the bloodiest of battlegrounds” for foreign states to control the geopolitical power in East Asia.⁷ While Korea did adopt valuable assets from countries like

⁴ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 10.

⁵ Katherine H.S. Moon, “Korean Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and Democratic Consolidation,” 138.

⁶ Sung-Yoon Lee, “Dependence and Defiance: Historical Dilemmas in U.S.-Korean Relations,” *Korean Policy Review*, The John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (2006), 2.

⁷ Ibid.

China such as alphabets, and political and religious traditions, most of Korea's experiences with other nations were largely negative realities that challenged the Korean people's and nation's survival.⁸ Yet, in spite of its geopolitical insecurity, Korea had never fallen to become any other state's colony before the country was annexed by Japan in 1910. Withal, Korea developed and sustained its distinctive culture and polity throughout her history. One of the main reasons why Korea preserved her society, albeit always at risk to external powers, was Korean people's tenaciousness in protecting their national self-identity.

In modern times, South Korea has experienced unprecedented economic success and political democratization, yet for the first time in nearly 2,000 years, the Korean Peninsula was divided into the two countries in 1945 by gigantic influences of external forces, the United States and Russia.⁹ Confronting this unprecedented political reality, the two divided Koreas had different approaches. North Korea developed its unique ideology of *Chuch'e* (self-reliance) in the early 1970s to ensure political independence from the Soviet Union through their own socialist system.¹⁰ On the other hand, by adopting the U.S. military presence and political influences, South Korea heavily relied on U.S. support to further develop her politics and economy. As a result, South Korea thrived in its transformation from a nation marked by extreme poverty to a nation with a strong economy, fairly compatible with other developed countries. However, the gain of economic wealth was also a concomitant of anxiety over the country's independence. Many South Koreans began to fantasize the absence of the U.S. influence upon which South Korea hugely relied. This

⁸ Uichol Kim and Young-Shin Park, "Perception of American People, Society, and Influence: Psychological, Social, and Cultural Analysis of Anti-American Sentiments in South Korea," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 247.

⁹ Ibid., 248

¹⁰ Gi-Wook Shin, "Marxism, Anti-Americanism, and Democracy in South Korea: An Examination of Nationalist Intellectual Discourse," *Positions*, Vol. 3 (1995), 516.

sociological tendency led to the public's awareness of the need for an autonomous system for the country, independent of the U.S.'s political and economic interferences.¹¹ Regarding the U.S.'s roles in South Korea, South Koreans' sensitivity to foreign interferences – evidenced by historical facts and incidents – resurrected national self-identity and pride of their own.¹² This psychological shift among South Koreans made the general public prone to anti-American sentiments when dealing with conflicts between South Korea and the United States.

The central theme of my thesis will focus on specific sociological and political conflicts between South Korea and the United States, as related to South Korean's persistent efforts to preserve their sense of national self-identity. I will use those several key events to track the progression of nationalism among South Koreans and its impact on the evolution of anti-Americanism. Furthermore, I will demonstrate core features that have directly caused the rise of anti-Americanism, such as unfairness in political relations and the national security issue in the Korean Peninsula. Lastly, I will seek to show how anti-Americanism in South Korea contributed to the formation of patriotism and national self-identity and whether it has affected the South Korean general public, civil society, and government. Proceeding with these steps, I am looking forward to discovering possible ways not only to avoid South Korea-U.S conflicts but also to further cultivate the friendly relationship between the United States and Korea in the future.

¹¹ Meredith Woo-Cumings, "Unilateralism and Its Discontents: The Passing of the Cold War Alliance and Changing Public Opinion in the Republic of Korea," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 57.

¹² Kim and Park, Op.Cit., 248.

Background

Since the U.S. began its unilateral power in international relations, anti-Americanism has been a truly global phenomenon, animated by political disagreements or cultural grievances against America, which greatly affects multiple strata of the global community. Manifestations of anti-Americanism are felt greatly through the broadcasting of news media. Many world citizens censure the U.S. for their unilateral policies fueled by their self-interests. Anti-Americanism often aroused anti-American demonstrations, both temporary and long-term, depending on the level of intensity, seeking to change the actions and policies of the U.S. and find a mutual settlement for those conflicts. Moreover, not only do political conflicts between the U.S. and other countries become a catalyst for anti-American sentiment, but cultural disparities also conjure considerable negativity towards the United States. A nation's traditional values in their own cultural and political entity can create ideological chasms with the United States, as currently observed in continuous military tensions of the Middle East.¹³ In this case, anti-Americanism represents a fundamental opposition to American culture and ideology. Out of both political and ideological conflicts, anti-Americanism varies across different circumstances in different countries. In multiple strata of the world society, anti-Americanism will remain a social phenomenon in the world as long as the U.S. maintains unilateral power in its international relations.

1. Definition and Four Variants of Anti-Americanism

Anti-Americanism is defined not only as any hostile action and expression but also ideological discord with the United States, its government, domestic and international

¹³ Christine Chianese, "Anti-Americanism in the Middle East: An Examination of Benign and Virulent Foreign Public Opinion Against America," (M.A. dissertation, Georgetown University, 2002), 17.

policies, American culture or even the American people.¹⁴ Anti-American sentiments around the world have manifested in various forms such as peaceful marches, satires of American values, violent attacks and even terrorism. These demonstrations are spurred by specific social and political conflicts or ideological differences in religious and cultural affairs. Because there is a variety of anti-American sentiments in terms of sociopolitical and geopolitical differences across the world, anti-Americanism cannot be fully understood by a single paradigm. A study of Third World anti-Americanism proposes four different characteristics of anti-Americanism. These are issue-oriented anti-Americanism, ideological anti-Americanism, instrumental anti-Americanism, and revolutionary anti-Americanism.¹⁵

The most prevalent type among these four types of anti-Americanism is issue-oriented anti-Americanism, which expresses a country's general public, civil society, or government's hostility against specific policies or actions taken by the United States. This form of anti-Americanism is often fueled by Washington's decisions on specific issues as the international or economic self-interests of the United States are usually in conflict with those of other countries.¹⁶ In this case of anti-Americanism, the general public assembles to criticize the United States for their policies or actions, crying for their retraction or further amendment. Likewise, governments can act as representative dissenters protesting against the policies of the United States. As for issue-oriented anti-Americanism, both the general public and the government of an opposing country are major actors, who recognize disparity and refuse to accept the U.S.'s specific decisions. A major actor can utilize either violent or peaceful demonstrations, depending on the scale of anti-American sentiment. Issue-oriented

¹⁴ Jinwung Kim, "The Nature of South Korean Anti-Americanism," *Korea Journal*, Vol. 34 (1994), 39

¹⁵ Ibid., 40.

¹⁶ G.. John Ikenberry, "Anti-Americanism in the Age of American Unipolarity," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 16.

anti-Americanism is closely connected to a country's politics and economic issues that are vulnerable to U.S. influence. Issue-oriented anti-Americanism does not usually last for long if the United States and a country together resolve a conflict or reach an amicable settlement for the disputable actions of Americans.

The second type is ideological anti-Americanism that comes from nationalistic, religious, or cultural distinctions with the United States. This type is often manifested in a form of strong aversion towards mannerisms, behavior, or simply anything or everything produced or developed in America. Most of these social tendencies are derived from "the belief that American society epitomizes bourgeois decadence or godless materialism."¹⁷ Social or ideological discrepancies with American society and culture stimulate people to develop robust antipathy against the United States. Ideological anti-Americanism is deeply rooted in a society that is not compatible with U.S. values. The former Soviet bloc's ideological disparity during the Cold War and Middle Eastern countries' religious incompatibility with the U.S. can account for most ideological anti-American phenomena. In the case of ideological anti-Americanism, ordinary citizens are the major actors of anti-U.S. movements, since the general public is very responsive to ideological and religious changes that possibly endanger their national self-identity. Ideological anti-Americanism frequently causes violent demonstrations. Terrorism against the U.S. can also be categorized as ideological anti-Americanism that shows direct resentment to American influence and presences in world politics, by targeting American citizens or people who the United States comes in contact with.¹⁸

Third, instrumental anti-Americanism is a form of political agenda that manipulatively generates public anti-American sentiments to fulfill domestic purposes in

¹⁷ Jinwung Kim, "The Nature of South Korean Anti-Americanism," 40.

¹⁸ Ikenberry, Op. Cit., 15.

politics against the United States. A country implements instrumental anti-Americanism in order to gather domestic support and the provision of a plausible scapegoat for governmental failure.¹⁹ For instance, in the early 2000s, the Putin administration in Russia successfully utilized anti-American rhetoric that held capitalism allegedly accountable for the collapse of the Russian economy²⁰ and orchestrated the Russian public into anti-Americanism. The government mainly controls instrumental anti-Americanism based on their self-interests by manipulating public feelings into anti-Americanism. In some cases, instrumental anti-Americanism can be an effective agenda for anti-American candidates to win elections.

Lastly, revolutionary anti-Americanism refers to a national action or a military coup employed to overthrow a country's regime that is closely related to the United States. In this case, the collapse of its own regime is identical to success at weakening American influence in the country.²¹ Revolutionary anti-Americanism refers to a combination of ideological and issue-oriented anti-Americanism.²² Therefore, government, society, and people all play significant roles in developing hostility towards the United States.

Anti-Americanism articulates persistent criticisms of the U.S. for its perceived lack of respect for other countries based on American self-interests. As long as the United States retains unilateralist power, anti-Americanism will always be at the center of world politics. Political disparity as well as ideological and cultural differences from American values can fuel people's growing antipathy against America. Resentment of American political, military, social and cultural hegemony shows in a variety of anti-U.S. demonstrations through either

19¹ Jinwung Kim, "The Nature of South Korean Anti-Americanism," 41

20¹ Alastair Gee, "Rising Anti-Americanism in Russia," *U.S. News*, January 18, 2008.

21¹ Jinwung Kim, "The Nature of South Korean Anti-Americanism," 40.

22¹ Bruce Cumings, "The Structural Basis of "Anti-Americanism" in the Republic of Korea," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 111.

peaceful rhetoric or violent attacks. Depending on these variant political and cultural features across different countries, anti-Americanism reveals different types and characteristics when contending to cope with conflicts with the United States.

2. Distinctive Characteristics of South Korean Anti-Americanism

In South Korea, most anti-American sentiments are associated with issue-oriented phenomena of economic interests, security concerns, and political influences. A majority of anti-U.S. movements in South Korea have clearly shown public resentment against the U.S. policies and actions. The U.S. military presence in South Korea, the transfer issue of wartime operational command in the Korean Peninsula, and the events surrounding KOR-US Free Trade Agreement processes are examples that aroused issue-oriented anti-Americanism in South Korea. Disputable interventions of the U.S. in social and political issues are major factors that have created anti-American movements in South Korea. Many South Koreans felt that the United States often abused military and political pressures rather than seeking conciliation or negotiation in order to bring about desired outcomes that would comfort with American interest. In accordance with issue-specific anti-Americanism, South Koreans denounced the highhanded conduct of the United States.

Many scholars of Korean history have identified two types of anti-Americanism in Korea, emotional anti-Americanism and issue-specific anti-Americanism.²³ Korean anti-Americanism is a combination of these two variations and a collective reaction to conflicts that are vastly determined by the unilateral decisions of the United States. In addition, there exist at least eight Korean terms that describe Koreans' attitudes towards the United States: "*banmi* (anti-America), *sungmi* (worship America), *hyommi* (loathe America), *Chinmi* (pro-America), *yonmi* (associate with America), *yongmi* (use America), *hangmi* (resist America),

²³ Yongshik Bong, "Yongmi: Pragmatic Anti-Americanism," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 10 (2004), 154.

and *pimi* (criticize America).”²⁴ Among those eight Korean terms, there is no constant theme that has prevailed in South Korea. It could be either *Sungmi* or *hyommi*, depending on the South Korean general perception of the United States at any given time. By this, it can be concluded that the South Korean public emotion towards the U.S. are rather sensitive to the American actions and policies toward South Korea. This South Korean temperamental attitude towards the U.S. indicates that South Korean’s anti-Americanism is neither fixed nor monolithic.²⁵ For instance, prior to 1980, the American military and their presence in South Korea had been regarded as not only stately protection from the fears of the Cold War, but also an indispensable contributor to the development of the South Korean economy and democratization.²⁶ During this era, *Sungmi* prevailed in the society. However, the tides turned when people began to think of the U.S. government as the backer for the military regime in 1980.²⁷ There were numerous public uprisings against the United States, and *Banmi* became pervasive in South Korea. Anti-Americanism in South Korea has been an irregular social occurrence, stemming from the public’s emotional reaction to policy conflicts between the two countries. In this context, if there is no particular conflict between the two countries, anti-Americanism is highly unlikely to occur in South Korea. If there are numerous disagreements between the two countries, South Korean anti-Americanism can further advance to *hyommi*, which may possibly cause very virulent demonstrations against the United States.

South Korean anti-Americanism is also closely related to South Korean geopolitical volatility caused by the division of the Korean Peninsula. Since the reunification process and

24 Ibid., 156.

25 Seung-Hwan Kim, “Anti-Americanism in Korea,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26 (2002), 113.

26 Bong, Op. Cit., 156.

27 1980 is the year when Kwangju Uprising occurred. It was a public demonstration against the military regime, which was allegedly supported by the United States government.

North Korean issues are considered deeply inter-Korean related issues, the U.S.'s political interferences have sometimes been denied and become vulnerable to South Korean opposition to the United States' inter-Korean policies. As the Cold War ended and democratization in South Korea was successful, adjustments to the new political order led Koreans to see the U.S. political role in the Korean Peninsula as no longer indispensable in South Korean politics. As a result, the U.S. role and policy in the Korean Peninsula has generated numerous policy disagreements between the two countries when American security policies came into conflict with the South Korean view on security issues. For that reason, the security issue of the Korean Peninsula has continued to fan the flames of anti-U.S. sentiments in South Korea.

3. The Post-Korean War Generation: The Principal Agent of Anti-Americanism in South Korea

After 1980, concomitant with the rise of the post-Korean War generation, anti-American sentiments as well as public movements for political democratization became more pervasive in South Korea. Many scholars in South Korea emphasize the advent of the post-Korean War generation as a spread of leftist ideology and nationalism.²⁸ Those college students who were radicalized and adopted strong anti-U.S. sentiments during the 1980s and 1990s are called the "3-8-6 generation." The term "3-8-6 generation" refers to those who were in their thirties in the 1990s, class of the 1980s in their universities, and were born in the 1960s.²⁹ This "3-8-6" generation politically progressive in the 1980s in the vanguard of the South Korean democratization movements, has advocated a more autonomous position for

²⁸ Byong-Keun Jhee, "Anti-Americanism and Electoral Politics in Korea," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 123 (2008), 308.

²⁹ Chang Hun Oh and Celeste Arrington, "Democratization and Changing Anti-American Sentiments in South Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 47 (2007), 337.

South Korea vis-à-vis the United States.³⁰ They insisted that South Korea should not be treated as a subordinate ally of the United States.

While the old generation that experienced the Korean War greatly appreciated the United States for supporting South Korea through surviving the remnants of the Korean War, the post-Korean War generation did not have the same natural appreciation for the United States. They were the generation that had never known anything about the Korean War firsthand, but reservedly had a relative understanding of wealth and privilege.³¹ Also, they hardly experienced the country's extreme poverty and despair in the aftermath of the Korean War. This generational difference indicates a structural transformation in Korean ways of perceiving America from a totally positive and favorable to somewhat negative and unfavorable viewpoint. The older generation that experienced the abject poverty in the aftermath of the Korean War has not tended to easily change their favorable attitudes towards the United States. However, with its relative lack of inherent appreciation of America, the post-Korean War generation has been much more sensitive to prevailing national moods of KOR-U.S. relations and the two countries' conflicts. In the 1980s, the great wave of democratization movements developed anti-American sentiments with condemnation of the U.S. for its alleged support for the military regime. The rise of anti-Americanism in the 1980s was concomitant with the generational transformation from the Korean-War generation to the Post-Korean War generation in Korean politics.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of anti-Americanism in South Korea is that it has been a generational phenomenon.³² South Korean people who experienced the Korean War tended to have more favorable images of the United States than people who did

³⁰ Ibid., 345.

³¹ Ben Duncan, "Anti-Americanism and National Identity in South Korea," (M.A. dissertation, the University of Kansas, 2009), 3.

³² Bong, Op. Cit., 160.

not. The positive image of the U.S. was twice as extensive as the negative image in the older generations of their fifties and sixties (56.3 percent vs. 26 percent).³³ However, among people in their twenties, the negative image of the U.S. was conversely three times as high as the positive image (75.5 percent vs. 21.4 percent).³⁴ From this, it can be concluded that rapid societal and economic transformation after the Korean War produced a substantial gap between those who experienced poverty in the aftermath of the Korean War and those who did not experience it. Different perspectives on the U.S. values between these two generations also indicate a greater possibility for anti-American sentiments to occur in South Korea as the post-war generation grows up to take more control of South Korean society in the future.

The post-war generation shows a duality of attitudes towards the United States either as an important strategic alliance or as a ruthless hegemon. For example, they are discontent with the U.S. military presence in South Korea, but they are apparently aware of its strategic importance in the security of the Korean Peninsula. The post-war generation tends to approach towards “ideological issues such as patriotism, nationalism, unification, and sovereign independence on normative and ideal grounds.”³⁵ In other words, they follow the national interests, corresponding to a perceived national self-identity, not necessarily clinging to the U.S. values and their self-interested interventions. However, another side of the duality - the essence of the U.S. influence in the Korean Peninsula – has put the post-war generation into many policy conflicts with the U.S. values. The rise of this self-interested post-war generation in the 1980s facilitated anti-American sentiments that further developed various forms of anti-Americanism in the 1990s and the 2000s. There is no doubt that this post-war generation, including the widely known “3-8-6 generation,” not only led anti-American

³³ *Donga-Asahi*, “Public Opinion in Korea,” November 19-30, 2001.

³⁴ *Chosun Ilbo*, March 9, 2003.

³⁵ Bong, Op. Cit., 161.

demonstrations of the civil society and the general public but also established the cultural phenomena of anti-Americanism in South Korea in the early 2000s.³⁶ Compared to the older generation who appreciates the U.S. support after the Korean War, the post-war generation is much more sensitive to conflicting issues between the two countries than the older generations tend to be.

³⁶ Internet activism that enormously spread anti-American sentiments across the country and candlelight vigils in the center of Seoul can account for cultural phenomena of anti-Americanism led by the post-war generation.

Chapter One

Unfair Relationships between South Korea and the U.S.:

The Evolution of South Korean Anti-American Movements

Introduction:

Since the 1980s, in South Korea, there has been a myriad of anti-American issues, ranging from political conflicts between the two countries to social crimes committed by U.S. soldiers. Anti-Americanism in South Korea refers to a variety of South Korean critical perceptions towards the United States, and it has been a policy and issue-oriented occurrence that protested against unfair relationships between the two countries. It fluctuates alongside American policies that allegedly have adverse effect on South Korean national interest. Based on the fact that South Korea has grown as a strong and wealthy state, anti-American movements in the country can be observed as a national phenomenon in order to effect a more equal relation with the United States.

In tandem with the economic growth and the advanced standing of South Korea, the South Korean public began to swell with nationalism that further stimulated the growing sense of anti-Americanism. Thus, anti-Americanism in South Korea can be described as a public reaction not only to lodge complaints against the United States, dealing with political conflicts, but also to protect South Korean sovereignty from inequity in the two countries' relationship with their national self-identity. In this chapter, I will introduce several significant cases of South Korean anti-Americanism since the 1980 in chronological order. Moreover, I will analyze how these events influenced the public perception of the United

States with respect to fairness and equality between the two countries' relationship. Several political, sociological, and cultural conflicts between South Korea and the United States will be utilized to develop how anti-Americanism has affected the South Korean public, civil society, and the state, substantiated by their self-identity and pride.

Implications of South Korean Anti-Americanism:

Unfairness and the Public's Response

The changing dynamic of anti-Americanism in South Korea have been closely connected with numerous demonstrations that were spurred by unfair relationships between South Korea and the United States. The U.S. had been considered as more than an ally to South Korea after the end of the Korean War. Moreover, the country had been depicted as a savior, a protector, and a role model for South Koreans.³⁷ However, in the aftermath of the Kwangju Uprising in May 1980, South Koreans unprecedentedly showed a public aversion against the U.S.'s alleged complicity for killing civilians conducted by the South Korean military force. The U.S.'s complicity was perceived as an American action to belittle South Korean democratization movement. Not only did this incident instigate a profound sense of betrayal to South Koreans, but it also toppled and reshaped their images of the United States. Since the Kwangju Uprising, many Koreans have begun to take an unsentimental perspective on the United States. In this context, they regarded the U.S.'s political, social, and economic influence as manifestations of American arrogance and dominance to fulfill their own self-interests through South Korea.

After the Kwangju Uprising, South Koreans grew more concerned about their asymmetrical relationship with the United States, and set in motion anti-American

³⁷ Tim Shorrock, "The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980s and the Rise of Anti-Americanism," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 8 (1986), 1200.

movements as an exclamation of their concern.³⁸ South Korea's successful democratization in the late 1980s and economic triumph resurrected national self-identity as free, strong, and wealthy. But, at the same time, they were greatly concerned about their inevitable dependence on the United States, particularly for national security. Accordingly, anti-Americanism in South Korea has resulted in various anti-American demonstrations. In the 1980s, there were violent student demonstrations against American policies, concomitant with their desire for political democratization against the military regime. As the post-Korean War "3-8-6 generation," university students in the 1980s manifested strong aversions towards the U.S.'s alleged support for the repressive military regime. In the 1990s, civil society movements, relatively more peaceful and well-organized by numerous NGOs, performed anti-American demonstrations against both human rights of South Koreans and environmental harms caused by the presence of U.S. bases. Furthermore, in the 2000s, the general public performed candlelight vigils which became a cultural phenomenon of anti-Americanism, calling for the amendment of the KOR-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement. Since the Kwangju Uprising in 1980, anti-U.S. movements in South Korea have been transformed from movements confined mostly to university student uprisings to more civilian and public leading demonstrations in order to seek a more equal relationship with the United States.

1. The Kwangju Uprising in 1980: Birth of South Korean Anti-Americanism

The Pre Anti-Americanism Era:

Prior to 1980, there had been no public manifestations of anti-Americanism in South Korea, since anti-U.S. sentiment was socially taboo out of respect for the U.S.'s support for South Korea in the aftermath of the Korean War. South Korean government maintained this

³⁸ Kun Young Park, "The Evolution of Anti-Americanism in Korea: Policy Implications for the United States," *Korea Journal*, Vol. 47 (2007), 181.

anti-leftist political system that restricted even public expressions of anti-American sentiments between the Korean War and 1980. People believed leftist ideals would harm the alliance between South Korea and the United States. Moreover, the confrontation in the Cold War did not give any chance for anti-U.S. movements on South Korean political soil. The South Korean government also restricted the press and media coverage from casting the U.S. image in a negative light.³⁹ This was perceived as essential because South Korea needed substantial economic and military assistance from the U.S. not only to continue with its economic success, but also to maintain national security during the Cold War.

The period between the 1950s and the 1970s was littered with incessant security conflicts in the Korean Peninsula, ranging from North Korea's attempt to assassinate President Park Chung-hee (1963-1979) in January 1968⁴⁰, the *USS Pueblo* Incident⁴¹ in January 1968, to continuous skirmishes near the Military Demarcation Line between the South and the North, which confined the rise of any potential anti-U.S. sentiment of the South Korean public. Also, these events all proved the essentiality of the United States military influence in South Korea. Until the 1970s, South Korea was still considered a weak nation which definitely needed the U.S. support to maintain economic and political stability; thus, public manifestations of anti-Americanism in South Korean society was practically impossible at that time.

The Kwangju Uprising: the First Anti-U.S. Movement of South Korea

The 1980 Kwangju Uprising marked the inception of anti-Americanism, which was

³⁹ Oh and Arrington, Op. Cit., 336.

⁴⁰ 31 North Korean military agents attempted to sneak into the Blue House (South Korean president's office and residence) to assassinate President Park Chung-hee, but they failed the attempt after they had entered into Seoul.

⁴¹ The *USS Pueblo* is a commissioned ship of the U.S. Navy, which was captured by North Korea. Crewmembers were held prisoners for eleven months.

deeply rooted in nationalistic, political, and social frictions with the United States. This unprecedented public aversion towards the United States began with the public uprising against South Korean military power that forcibly suppressed the democratization movement after the death of President Park Jung-hee. There are several factors that account for the Uprising that gave birth to South Korean Anti-Americanism. First of all, people believed that the U.S. supported the repressive military regime with tacit complicity. Second, even after the Kwangju Uprising occurred in 1980, the U.S. politically supported Chun Doo Hwan's military regime (1980-1987). Prior to the Kwangju Uprising, the U.S. was regarded as not only a savior but also the role model of democracy. Duly, during the Uprising, South Koreans had expected the U.S. troops in South Korea to interfere in order to protect the human rights and political freedom of South Koreans. However, although there was no official documentation indicating U.S. involvement in this incident, it was widely believed that the U.S. gave tacit permission to the transitional government of General Chun Doo Hwan to deploy massive infantry divisions of the ROK Army to suppress the civilian uprising. Several years after this incident, former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, William Gleysteen wrote, "...Korean military authorities requested permission to move the 20th Infantry Division from the Seoul area to Kwangju...The U.S. Commander [General Wickham] concurred after checking with me."⁴² According to the words of Ambassador Gleysteen, the U.S. acquiesced in the plan to subdue the uprising.

The significance of the Kwangju Uprising was that it drastically altered the South Korean view of the United States from a symbol of democracy to a unilateralist power that acted based on its own self-interests. Considering the strong political and military alliance between South Korea and the United States, South Koreans felt a sense of betrayal by the

⁴² William M. Drennan, "The Tipping Point: Kwangju, May 1980," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 290.

complicity of the U.S. for the military power. President Chun Doo Hwan's visit to the newly-inaugurated Ronald Reagan's White House on February 2, 1981, thereby confirmed many South Koreans' altered view of the United States, since President Chun Doo Hwan was honorably welcome by President Reagan.⁴³ Many South Koreans began to speculate that the true aim of U.S. involvement in South Korea was to fulfill U.S. national interests rather than to protect a strong KOR-U.S. alliance.⁴⁴ To some extent, they also felt the U.S. belittled the value of Korean democracy by not treating South Korea as a brother nation but rather a lesser ally.

Since the Kwangju Uprising, anti-Americanism in South Korea has become a widespread social phenomenon against Washington's decisions. It demarcated the onset of public distrust of the United States and opened the door to a medley of various anti-American movements.

2. South Korean Anti-American Movements in the 1980s and the 1990s

After the Kwangju Uprising in 1980, in spite of university students' violent demonstrations against the United States, the geopolitical situation of South Korea constrained the further growth of anti-American sentiments. In the 1980s, student uprising was regarded as a collective front, pressing towards the path to democratization in South Korea. Severe demonstrations showed the public wrath of the military regime. To the majority of South Koreans in the 1980s, the American policies supporting the military regime were seen as huge obstacles thwarting the ripening of South Korean democratization. These university student activists in the mid-1980s recognized the necessity of "anti-American national self-reliance" (*Panmi Chajuwha*) to fulfill the democratization in the country.⁴⁵

⁴³ Sung-Yoon Lee, Op. Cit., 15.

⁴⁴ Oh and Arrington, Op. Cit., 337.

⁴⁵ *Time*, "World Notes- South Korea: Happy Days Are Gone Again," October 27, 1986.

However, in the mid-1980s, anti-American movements were still confined to university student uprisings, since international relations were still under the influence of the grim Cold War atmosphere. Although a majority of the South Korean society was supportive of those pro-democracy struggles, both civil and political leaders were cautious of radical anti-U.S. movements and eschewed the spread of further anti-Americanism in society.⁴⁶ Therefore, even though open expressions of anti-American sentiments increased in civil and political society, the geopolitical circumstances shaped by the Cold War and North Korea restricted the suffusion of anti-Americanism in South Korea.

Entering into the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and the consolidation of South Korean democratization, South Koreans initiated active civil society movements that developed more peaceful and organized steps of managing KOR-U.S. conflicts. In the 1990s, South Korean civil society organizations directly addressed social damages caused by the United States Forces in Korea. They also demanded compensation for South Korean human rights impaired by U.S. soldiers' misdemeanor.

Maneuvered by popular support from the people, these civil society movements gave a wider range of South Korean people more opportunities to recognize sociopolitical unfairness between the two countries. In contrast to the 1980s in which university students were the main actors of anti-American sentiments, civil society movements in the 1990s were primarily conducted by numerous NGOs of human rights and environmental groups.⁴⁷ They also initiated many organizational demonstrations against the United States Forces in Korea for their inappropriate actions on the South Korean society.

Compared to the violent demonstrations led by radicals in the 1980s, these civil

⁴⁶ Oh and Arrington, Op. Cit., 337.

⁴⁷ Katharine H.S. Moon, "Citizen Power in Korean-American Relations," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 239

society movements were more peaceful, organized, and systemically conveyed. To some extent, these civil rights activists regarded these demonstrations of the South Korean public as an initiative to a peaceful process of salvaging the human rights of those threatened prostitutes. Furthermore, they performed actions of restoring South Korean national self-identity and practicing a more meaningful approach towards the path to a more equal relationship between South Korea and the United States.

Civil Society Movements against Crimes Committed by U.S. Forces in South Korea (USFK)

U.S. Forces in South Korea (hereafter referred to as “USFK”) have been involved in many cases of criminal activity and crimes by U.S. soldiers. Their transgressions, many of which constituted physical violations of South Korean women living near U.S. bases, have generated the growth of anti-American sentiments in South Korea. In many South Koreans’ view, these violations were “representing degradation and humiliation of the Korean nation, which must be opposed.”⁴⁸ What is more, the number of crimes committed by U.S. soldiers did not decrease substantially until the 1990s. The high crime rate associated with USFK was not negligible at that time, and South Koreans realized the necessity of civil society movements to raise public awareness of U.S. soldiers’ crimes near the U.S. base camp towns.

Out of all U.S. base camp town social issues, prostitution has always been the core of U.S. soldiers’ crimes in *kijich’on*.⁴⁹ These prostitution-related crimes effectuated concern not only as a *kijich’on* safety issue but also as a breach on human rights and human dignity. For instance, on October 28, 1992, in Tongduchon, which housed the United States Second Infantry Division, a young female prostitute, named Yun Gum-I, was killed by Kenneth

⁴⁸ Katherine H.S. Moon, “Korean Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and Democratic Consolidation,” 151.

⁴⁹ In Korean, *kiji* means the military base, and *ch’on* means village.

Markle, a private in the U.S. Army.⁵⁰ This incident resulted in a new South Korean perception of *kijich'on* prostitutes and their human rights. Before Yoon's death, the life of a camp town prostitute was seen as a necessary cost of maintaining the U.S. soldiers who safeguarded the national security in South Korea.⁵¹ However, soon after Yoon's murder, many national campaigns against U.S. soldiers' physical abuses were formed to defend the prostitutes' human rights, and to prevent further murders from happening.⁵² Prostitutes were also South Koreans and considered daughters of the nation, and these social movements drew national attentions to South Koreans regarding U.S. soldiers' physical abuses. Accordingly, civil society groups were mobilized to criticize unequal KOR-U.S. relationships, crying for the reshaping of the mutual relations on a more equal footing. Those criticisms aimed at not only establishing better living conditions in *kijich'on* but also resurrecting South Korean human rights, particularly of those prostitutes living in the U.S. base camp towns.

Development of this sort of condemnation led the South Korean public to become more organized as they actuated public movements against brutal crimes committed by U.S. soldiers. Many civil society activists blamed USFK for their arrogant behavior, violation of the Korean laws, and asserted break in South Korean human rights. The Yun Gum-I case not only sparked the general public's recognition of the *kijich'on* issue, but also brought recognition of many other prostitutes who were abused or even killed by the American soldiers even in earlier times. Civil society organizations gathered people in front of the U.S. Embassy and the Yongsan Garrison⁵³ to blame the U.S. government for these crimes. Anti-

50¹ Katharine H.S. Moon, "Resurrecting Prostitutes and Overturning Treaties: Gender Politics in the "Anti-American" Movement in South Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.66 (2007), 129.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., 130

53 The main base of the USFK

American movements, using public demonstrations as its vehicle, aimed at the cessation of U.S. soldiers' physical abuses and amendment of those soldiers' misdemeanor that threatened safety and human rights of South Koreans, particularly residing near *kijich'on*.

Environmental Harms Caused by the Presence of USFK

Environmental destruction in the proximity of U.S. military bases also created social problems that aroused civil society movements against USFK. Environmental groups such as Green Korea United (*Noksaek Yonhap*)⁵⁴ investigated environmental contaminations caused by the U.S. Forces in Korea and criticized USFK for their environmentally harmful actions.⁵⁵ Provinces near the U.S. military bases directly felt the negative impacts of environmental adulteration in their daily lives, caused by the presence of USFK. For instance, villagers of Maehyang-ri, a small town in Kyeonggi province, were bore the exigencies of noise and property damage, the byproduct of the U.S. military's bombing practices since the 1950s. In 1998, hundreds of Maehyang-ri inhabitants not only began to organize campaigns for the cessation of bombing practices for their town's environmental safety but also demanded financial compensation for property and psychological damages through a civil suit.⁵⁶ Similar to the noise pollution in Maehyang-ri, soil and water pollutions also affected the lives of people near U.S. military bases by impairing their physical and mental health as well.⁵⁷

With regard to environmental pollution USFK has caused, the main concern of South Korean has been the USFK's negligence towards the impacts of environmental destruction. In

54 It is a famous civil society organization, designed to protect South Korean environment.

55 Oh and Arrington, Op. Cit., 344.

56 *Chosun Ilbo*, Dec 2, 2010. As a result, the U.S. bombing practices near Maehyang-ri ceased in 2000.

57 James V. Feinerman, "The U.S.-Korean Status of Forces Agreement as a Source of Continuing Korean Anti-American Attitudes," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 208.

addition, under South Korea-U.S. military jurisdiction, according to the ROK-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, there was no U.S. accountability for environmental harms caused by their military practices or actions. Therefore, the entire burden was placed on South Koreans. Accordingly, South Koreans called for the revision of the unfair ROK-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement to protect people living near the bases from further detrimental effects of environmental pollution.

3. The ROK-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (the SOFA)

The ROK-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (hereafter referred to as “the SOFA”), designed to protect the U.S. soldiers from Korean jurisdiction, has continued generating USFK conflicts between the two countries since its inception. Due to the SOFA, South Korea with its limited enforcement of the law to USFK problems neither prevented further crimes from U.S. soldiers, nor prohibited any harmful action taken by U.S. military bases on the South Korean environment. Many South Koreans considered the SOFA as a symbol of political unfairness between South Korea and the United States, and they continuously demanded the revision of the SOFA on a more equal footing to prevent further conflicts with the presence of USFK.

When the SOFA was officially issued in 1967, it did not provide any Korean judicial authority in investigating or indicting American soldiers who committed crimes.⁵⁸ The two countries agreed that the ROK would surrender all rights to, and would allow USFK to have exclusive rights to the military bases and facilities.⁵⁹ Before the end of the Cold War, the military governments restricted any public news that might hurt the mutual friendship with

⁵⁸ Yong-lib Gweon, “The Changing perception of America in South Korea: Transition or Transformation,” *Korea Journal*, Vol. 44 (2004), 164.

⁵⁹ Misun Hwang and Helen Kim, “Anti-Americanism in South Korea, Korean Culture and the Threat of War,” *Edge*, Winter 02-03 (2003), 5.

the United States. Withal, most of the crimes committed by U.S. soldiers were undisclosed.⁶⁰ After the Cold War, with the establishment of the democratic government, South Koreans aspired to prevent any further crimes by U.S. soldiers against South Korean civilians. However, due to the enforcement of the SOFA, South Koreans were legally helpless to prevent these crimes.

From South Korean perspective, one of the main issues behind the contention of the SOFA was a lack of reciprocity.⁶¹ According to the SOFA, if a visiting Korean military officer committed a crime, he or she would be indicted in the U.S. court, whereas even if the U.S. soldier stationed in South Korea were indicted for murder of a South Korean citizen, he or she would be handed to the U.S. court, not the Korean court.⁶² South Koreans had two concerns brought forth from the SOFA. First, since American soldiers were not fully compliant with the Korean law, South Korean citizens would be vulnerable to U.S. soldiers' continuous crimes and would remain as victims in these crimes. Second, under protection of the SOFA, a substantial decrease in the crime rate of American soldiers was hardly imaginable, since American soldiers would not be afraid of the South Korean judicial authority. In this context, the SOFA was viewed as a symbol of political unfairness between the United States and South Korea, the U.S. with the upper-hand.

From the American perspective, the SOFA protected U.S. soldiers from having to sacrifice their rights and freedom for the wishes of political activists.⁶³ The United States ascertained that U.S.'s military support in South Korea was essential and dignity for their service should be protected as compensation for service in South Korea. The SOFA was

⁶⁰ Gweon, Op. Cit., 164.

⁶¹ Feinerman, Op. Cit., 207.

⁶² Ibid., 201

⁶³ *Kookmin Ilbo*, July 6, 2000

intended to provide protection for the U.S. military personnel stationed abroad, particularly to obstruct any hostility or movement of political and social opposition against the U.S. forces.⁶⁴ The U.S. tried to protect their citizens serving in their military abroad with the legal law enforcement delineated by the SOFA. Disputes surrounding the SOFA have been complex between the two countries, since each country has a totally different frame of reference on the same agreement.

Many South Korean critics have criticized the SOFA, asserting that the agreement did not correlate with other U.S.'s Status of Forces Agreement with other countries such as Japan, Philippines, and NATO countries. In a white paper titled, "The SOFA, an Unequal Accord and Directions for Revision" published on Nov 7, 2000, a South Korean lawmaker maintained that "the SOFA is a document demonstrating the arrogance of a superpower and comprising inequality, prejudice and discrimination, when compared with the similar agreements the United States signed with Japan and Germany."⁶⁵ In fact, since the signing of the SOFA, only 0.7% of all crimes committed by the U.S. military personnel up to 1987 have been brought under the jurisdiction of the South Korean government.⁶⁶ This number was extremely small compared to the rate of 32% NATO countries and 21.2% in the Philippines. In addition, in 1988, even if the U.S. government waived 297 U.S. military servicemen who were suspected of violating Korean laws, only six cases were held under the jurisdiction of Korean authorities.⁶⁷ This could easily inspire U.S. military servicemen in South Korea to dare to act in improper ways, since they knew they would not be affected by Korean jurisdiction even if they committed felonies. Grievances upon this matter of self-imported

⁶⁴ Feinerman, Op. Cit., 201

⁶⁵ *The Korea Herald*, November 8, 2000.

⁶⁶ Jinwung Kim, "Recent Anti-Americanism in South Korea: The Causes," 758

⁶⁷ *The Korea Herald*, February 17, 1989.

American superiority burgeoned amongst South Koreans.

In fact, Japan and NATO countries are wealthier and politically more powerful than South Korea, which may have served as grounds for the disparity. However, many believed the South Korean mentality to be commensurate with South Korea's growing economic and political power that generated a strong will for a more equal power with the United States. Many South Koreans asserted that the country must have full jurisdiction over social crimes by U.S. soldiers, or at least an equal position with Japan and NATO countries as one of the most important U.S. allies. Also, they considered crimes committed by the U.S. soldiers in South Korea would not diminish if the current status of the SOFA was sustained in such a manner.

When the Kim Dae Jung administration (1998-2003) was inaugurated in 1998, the administration began sought more direct negotiation between South Korea and the United States for revision of the SOFA. A *JoongAng Ilbo* survey of 1,006 Koreans conducted in August 2000 found that 75.7% of the respondents considered the SOFA unequal.⁶⁸ Also, according to a *Hankyoreh* survey of 1,000 Koreans in September 2000, 85.2 percent of the respondents said that revision of the SOFA was essential.⁶⁹ Resentment of South Korean citizens towards crimes committed by U.S. soldiers generated the public's demand for the revision of the SOFA. In the late 1990s, when the progressive Kim Dae Jung regime took power and the number of U.S. soldiers' crimes still did not seem to decrease, South Korean citizens also began to realize the importance of the SOFA revision to fix the unequal relationship between South Korea and the United States. These efforts to redraw the SOFA indicated the widespread public sentiment that South Korea had lost its political

⁶⁸ *JoongAng Ilbo*, August 14, 2000.

⁶⁹ *Hankyoreh Shinmun*, September 25, 2000.

sovereignty.⁷⁰ In this context, calling revision of the SOFA and people's action to impel its amendment were historic examples of the politics of democratization in the area of foreign and security policy in South Korea.⁷¹ However, until the late 1990s, the government confronted a dilemma as citizens' legal rights and profound concerns about the national security that was hugely dependent upon the United States policies.

On December 28, 2000, South Korea and the U.S. governments finally reached an agreement on revisions of the SOFA. Both governments stated that the SOFA revision reflected both nations' interests in a wide range of fields, including criminal jurisdiction, environment, labor, quarantine regulations, facilities and areas, non-appropriated fund facilities, and civil proceedings.⁷² These revisions gave South Koreans more jurisdictional authority over U.S. soldiers charged with criminal activities. The revisions strove to prevent further protraction of crimes committed by U.S. soldiers. Moreover, it was expected to maintain stable relations between South Korea and the United States, thereby facilitating enhancement of a stronger mutual alliance. These revisions were even regarded as a restoration of not only national pride but the offended notion of sovereignty that had been damaged by the unequal treaty. The SOFA revisions in 2000 were successfully agreed upon, and it was seemingly a huge gain for South Koreans. However, despite these successfully established revisions in 2000, there was another round of calls for further changes to the SOFA in 2002 when middle-school girls were killed by a U.S. armored vehicle. This incident revealed the shortcomings of the SOFA revisions made in 2000, laying bare to the South Korean public that the emendations made had not done much in equalizing the ROK-U.S.

⁷⁰ Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 120.

⁷¹ Katherine H.S. Moon, "Korean Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and Democratic Consolidation," 155.

⁷² Feinerman, Op. Cit., 203.

relationship.

Hyo-sun Mi-sun Incident in 2002: Profound Unfairness of the SOFA

The middle-schoolgirl incident was a clear reflection of continued partiality in the SOFA, which further provoked South Korean antipathy against the United States. Two middle-school girls, Mi-sun and Hyo-sun, were bulldozed by a U.S military armored vehicle on a narrow road in Uijeongbu in June of 2002. However, the two soldiers involved in this incident were acquitted by “a U.S military court of all charges, including negligent homicide and unintentional manslaughter.”⁷³ Even under the revised SOFA, the two American soldiers were tried by the U.S. military court since they were on duty at the time of the “accident.” Presumably, the acquittals of the two soldiers greatly angered the South Korean public. First, it was seen as American deprecation of South Koreans, since there was no formal apology from President Bush until December of the same year. Even though the president’s apology was a rare case and the USFK Commander made a formal apology right after the accident, it was not enough to soothe the public’s ire. Second, it resulted in great public grievances over the American military courts that found the two soldiers not guilty by “hiding under the shield of the legal technicality of the Status of Forces Agreement.”⁷⁴ Many South Koreans believed Korean public pressure would mandate that the American soldiers be charged with careless murder in a Korean court. To South Koreans, despite its revision in December 2000, the continuing ambiguity of the SOFA⁷⁵ rendered yet another argument about the continuous inequality of the SOFA. This moot decision triggered a huge number of Koreans to initiate

⁷³ Cumings, “The Structural Basis of “Anti-Americanism” in the Republic of Korea,” 94.

⁷⁴ Youngshik Bong and Katharine H.S. Moon, *Rethinking Young Anti-Americanism in South Korea* (New York: Central European University Press, 2007), 89.

⁷⁵ In this accident, it was not regarded as a murder but a negligent homicide by the two soldiers; if it had been counted as a murder, the case would have been charged in a Korean court.

protest movements against the United States, calling for a further amendment of the SOFA.

The incident indicated a variety of sociopolitical aspects that finally aroused the general public's active participation in anti-American demonstrations. Most notably, South Koreans were mainly angered by the U.S.'s rejection of a waiver of criminal jurisdiction, which was amended in 2000. They perceived the U.S.'s refusal to enable the South Korean judiciary to try the U.S. soldiers, as arrogance reflecting U.S.'s unilateralist power. The gravity of the two school girls' deaths and its implications on the ROK-U.S. relationship were felt widely in the South Korean society. Students, adults, seniors, intellectuals and even politicians all joined in national mass demonstrations, voicing their rancor against the United States. This new wave of anti-Americanism, which panoramically affected the South Korean public, clearly manifested a new assertiveness, independence, and national pride⁷⁶ in historical public mass demonstrations against the United States - candlelight vigils.

4. Public Leading Anti-American Movements: Candlelight Vigils in 2002 and 2008

Candlelight Vigil in 2002: Initiation of Public's Peaceful Demonstrations

Since June 2002, the candlelight vigil has become a crucial part of cultural and social demonstrations, a new symbol of public anti-Americanism movement. In June 2002, when the two school girls were killed by the U.S. soldiers, the South Korean public began to gather to protest against the U.S. peacefully. Since there was nothing South Koreans could do regarding the U.S. soldiers' acquittal of all charges under the SOFA, South Koreans were out to the streets and gathered in the center of Seoul to show their grievances against the U.S.'s decision. Hundreds of thousands of South Koreans were holding candles in their hands to protest against the U.S. in the deaths of two school girls. It was a manifestation of the South Korean public's strong will for fairer relations with the United States. The candlelight vigil in

⁷⁶ Jinwung Kim, "Recent Anti-Americanism in South Korea: The Causes," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 29 (1989), 758.

2002 was an active movement of anti-Americanism by the general public in an effort to change the perceived unfairness between the two countries without exploiting violence. In 2002, candlelight vigil became not only a social phenomenon to show anti-U.S. sentiments, but also a new symbol of peaceful anti-American movements in South Korea, led by the general public.

Candlelight Vigil in 2008: Public Demonstration against the KOR-U.S. Beef Protocol

The social tendency of candlelight vigils, originally designed as the common people's voluntary participation in peaceful demonstrations, was at its height again in May 2008, when South Korea and the U.S arrived at an agreement on a beef protocol. President Lee Myung-Bak, who was inaugurated in 2008, made "concessions that Japan and Taiwan had not, which was to allow US beef to be imported into Korea that was less than 20 months old."⁷⁷ This statement had deeper implications than simply beef imports per se. First, importing U.S. beef was banned in response to the earlier scare of Mad Cow Disease. The South Korean public again amassed with candles, primarily driven by concern over the health and well-being of the nation's citizens. It was not soon afterwards that South Koreans began to perceive the KOR-U.S. beef protocol as a myopic political decision of President Lee Myung-Bak to achieve a positive relationship with the U.S. at the expense of citizens' well-being and the country's sovereignty. The candlelight vigil in 2008 lit the fire of anti-Americanism that surged nationwide, evidencing the public's anger at the pro-American government.

This movement was initiated by a nationally renowned T.V program, "P.D Note," which broadcasted information about Mad Cow Disease and its genetic effects on people's

⁷⁷ Duncan, Op. Cit., 61.

health.⁷⁸ It distorted some facts about the Mad Cow Disease and the U.S.'s beef consumption. The famous T.V program reported spurious assertions that Mad Cow Disease would be more genetically infectious to Koreans. Also, the program claimed that Americans were not even eating the beef that was being exported to South Korea. It implied the U.S. "wanted to send garbage Americans will not eat."⁷⁹ The famous program was obviously at the vanguard of instigating the public uprising. These provocative remarks on the beef issue gained enormous social attention. After the broadcast, the snowballing anger of the South Korean people reached its zenith, and the public movements which began as peaceful candlelight vigils took a violent turn as the public veered toward violent riots led by radicals.

The heightened anti-American sentiment utilized the candlelight vigil in 2008 as a great impetus to accelerate public antipathy against the Lee Myung-Bak government. Prior to 2008, candlelight vigils were mostly standing against specific social events such as the Hyosun and Mi-sun Incident, but this public demonstration against the ROK-U.S. beef protocol exerted people's political grievances against the ruling government rather than the social event itself. Soon after its initiation, the peaceful candlelight vigil morphed into civil riots since political radicals were involved and protested against the government with the employment of violence. The radicals saw this public gathering as a great opportunity to shrivel the conservative president. They also maneuvered anti-American sentiments to decrease the president's popularity and humiliate the government via radical demonstrations and violent attacks. These aggressive rallies continued for about two months near the City Hall of Seoul, putting the center of Seoul's economy and transportation facilities in a state of near paralysis.

The anti-U.S. demonstration in 2008 was described as South Korean public's fear of

78 Ibid., 63.

79¹ Donald Kirk, "Korea's 'Bulldozer' Leader Hits the Wall," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol.177 (2008), 11.

another unequal treaty that would directly affect their historical vulnerability to foreign influence. During the past decade of the progressive regimes in power, anti-Americanism prevailed among South Korean general public.⁸⁰ Based on this fact, when the Lee Myung-Bak government was inaugurated in February 2008, there was a great potential for growing public grievances at the pro-U.S. government. The beef protocol, believed to be an indication of ongoing inequality between South Korea and the United States, lit the fuse of these public grievances into a form of mass demonstrations, evidencing the continuing manifestation of anti-Americanism in South Korea. In June 2008, Bruce Cumings suggested that “a small matter of beef imports has put masses of Koreans into the streets and threatens to trample the very foundations of Korean-American relations.”⁸¹ The social phenomenon of 2008 was a new expression of South Korean trepidation for not only their health concerns but also the perceived unfair protocol as a resemblance of the SOFA, about which they have been concerned for many years but still problematic. In the end, the mass demonstration in 2008 was seen as a sociopolitical conflict between the anti-American public and the pro-American government.

5. Economic Conflicts and Anti-Americanism in South Korea

With the nation’s triumphant economic growth in the 1980s, South Koreans began to perceive unfairness in economic issues with the United States. Beginning in the 1980s, the patron-client relationship between the U.S. and South Korean economies radically changed as South Koreans pronounced that they were no longer an underdeveloped country. This sudden change brought deep worries in Washington, as the growth of South Korean exports to the

⁸⁰ I have to mention the inter-Korean relation was a huge part of growing anti-Americanism in South Korea between 1998 and 2007, which will be discussed in later chapter.

⁸¹ Bruce Cumings, “Where’s the Beef?” *The Nation*, July 7, 2008.

U.S. was one of the main factors that accounted for the U.S.'s huge imbalance of trade.⁸² Accordingly, the United States not only viewed Korea as an economic competitor but also began to exert economic pressures. For example, the random application of "Super 301"⁸³ on trade of steel and motor vehicle with South Korea provided clear evidence that the U.S. could adversely affect the Korean economy. Many South Korean people were angered by the U.S.'s economic actions, purporting to deter further economic development of South Korea. These continuous economic pressures of the United States on the South Korean certainly produced ominous signs of possible collisions between the two countries' economies. And, in the 1990s and the 2000s, these lurking economic conflicts actualized, once again making room for anti-Americanism, rooted in the realization of unfair relations between the two countries by the South Korean public.

The financial crisis of 1997 in South Korea was one of the main events that shattered the economic trust between the two countries. In 1997, the Korean economy came to an unprecedented juncture with domestic and oversea financial collapses. At the edge of the cliff, the Korean government asked the United States to provide financial support which was their only lifeline out of the crisis, but the U.S. refused to do so until the last minute.⁸⁴ Many South Koreans thought the U.S. actions toward Korea at this time were premeditated in order to control the South Korean economy. The U.S. not only delayed its decision to give financial support to South Korea, but also helped lead U.S. firms to merge with and acquire collapsing South Korean firms at cheaper rates. During this crisis, South Koreans painfully witnessed U.S. leading institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dominate financial

⁸² Gweon, Op. Cit., 163.

⁸³ "Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974" is the U.S. economic action including retaliation on foreign countries that violate an international trade agreement or burden the U.S. commerce.

⁸⁴ Myongsob Kim, Suzanne L. Parker, and Jun Young Choi, "Increasing Distrust of the USA in South Korea," *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 27 (2006), 430.

policies that devastated the Korean economy.⁸⁵ These economic pressures on South Korea greatly changed South Korean's perception of the United States from an economic model, great supporter, and partner to a threatening economic competitor.

The Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (hereafter referred to as "FTA") negotiations that first began in the mid-2000s have reiterated the KOR-U.S. economic distrust. There have been numerous obstacles in reaching a final resolution of FTA, since both countries have tended to focus on economic gains out of their respective national economic interests. South Koreans have experienced several U.S. economic policies that adversely affected the South Korean economy. Thus, distrust towards the United States has disposed South Koreans in being cautious of the free trade negotiations. Without recovery of mutual trust, South Korea and the U.S. will hardly make an agreement that will satisfy both countries in the future.

Conclusion:

Political unfairness between the two will hardly be resolved in the foreseeable future, since South Korean political realities with the security issue involved clearly denote the country's inevitable dependence on the U.S. military, diplomatic, and political influence. As long as the USFK maintains their essentiality in the Korean Peninsula, the SOFA will not easily be amended for South Korean favorability. In addition, as the United States has the necessary credentials to procure incentives for their admirable service in South Korea, it is also reasonable for the U.S. to protect their rights from foreign jurisdiction. The perceived unfairness in the two countries' relationship has created social and political antipathy against the United States, magnifying negative impacts of U.S. influence rather than positive aspects. Therefore, it may need more complicated steps to narrow down legal and social gaps between South Korea and the United States so that the two nations could reach a satisfactory

⁸⁵ Gweon, Op. Cit., 164

agreement at some point in the future.

Regarding the perceived unfair relationship between South Korea and the United States, anti-Americanism in South Korea is much more complex than it has shown to be. South Koreans think that the suffering of residents from the unfair relationship between the two countries is no longer compatible with their gains of U.S.'s support for the national security. With an affluent and mature society successfully established in past decades, South Koreans began to search for their national self-identity, which would not only be free from other country's interference but also would not easily be affected by foreign influence. In this context, anti-American movements in South Korea are seen as a collective reaction to specific events that plausibly instigate South Korean self-defensive mentality. The civil society movements and the public leading demonstrations against the United States galvanized the society into the awareness of their national identity as distinctive, independent, and strong. Demanding further protections of women prostitutes' human rights, equality in the SOFA, and economic exchange on a more equal footing from was all indicative of South Korean persistent will for solidity of their national pride.

In fact, anti-Americanism in South Korea is not abhorrence to the United States per se. Instead, it is public attitude towards specific events that challenge South Korean grounds for national pride, independence, and even sovereignty. South Koreans felt a sense of betrayal in response to U.S. unfavorable actions, since the U.S. sometimes did not help South Korea when they were in need of U.S. support. South Korean anti-Americanism was neither an ideological opposition nor a strong aversion towards American principles. It was the South Korean emotional reaction when they felt insecure about their future with the inevitable influence of the United States. Various social movements against the U.S. do not necessarily indicate the U.S. is a possible enemy to South Korea. They actually imply a South Korean desire for the better KOR-U.S. relationship on a more equal footing with their self-identity

firmly developed and steadily preserved in the future.

Chapter Two

South Korean Trilateral Relationships with the U.S. and North Korea:

Influences in the Evolution of South Korean Anti-Americanism

Introduction:

South Korean and American perceptions of North Korea changed sporadically with regard to the irregular North Korean threats such as nuclear and military provocations. In this context, political disagreements between South Korea and the United States frequently occurred in response to North Korean propaganda strategies and their erratic economic and security policies. Also, to some extent, the U.S. was regarded as a hindrance to an earnest goal and objective of many South Koreans: peace and reunification with North Korea. This negative image of the U.S. was highly associated with the synchronal growth of pro-North Korean sentiments and pervasive nature of anti-Americanism at the time.

Political tensions between South Korea and the United States have continued, and the rising phenomenon of anti-Americanism roused by these tensions not only worsened the bilateral relationship between the two governments, but also enlivened South Korean public uprisings against the United States. In this chapter, I will analyze how the trilateral relations in the Korean Peninsula have been affected by these North Korean actions. Moreover, I will address the political chasm between South Korea and the United States regarding North

Korean issues and how these differing political views from South Koreans have triggered public anti-Americanism in South Korea. Thereon, I will demonstrate anti-Americanism alongside the pro-North Korean sentiments by linking these two opposing concepts into the political dilemma that South Korea faces between brothers (North Korea) and friends (the United States).⁸⁶

Anti-Americanism in South Korea:

Differing KOR-US Perceptions of North Korean Issues

Since the Cold War ended, South Korean attitudes towards the United States have been greatly affected by the political structures of inter-Korean relations as well as trilateral relations between the two Koreas and the United States. The chasm between American and South Korean perceptions of North Korea has often stimulated political tensions between South Korea and the United States, particularly during the years between 1998 and 2007. The unique brotherhood in the Korean Peninsula posed a political dilemma as to whether South Korea should maintain good diplomatic relations with its blood-related North, or focus more on diplomatic relations with the United States. This dilemma has also greatly affected how South Koreans viewed the United States.

The political role of the United States in the Korean Peninsula is essential in the maintenance of balancing power and security; however, American policies towards the Korean Peninsula focus on self-interests in the East Asian order: their own security and economic concerns. Differing goals, objectives, and implications of the political structures with those of South Korea often animated anti-Americanism alongside the pro-North Korean

⁸⁶ Sung-han Kim, "Brothers versus Friends: Inter-Korean Reconciliation and Emerging Anti-Americanism in South Korea," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 181.

sentiments in South Korea. South Korean desires for national independence and reunification are closely associated with the South Korean concept of “one-Korea nationalism.” The theme of “one-Korea nationalism” indicates unconditional brotherhood with the North, thereby providing potential for further conflicts in terms of U.S.’s actions toward North Korea.⁸⁷

North Korean nuclear attempts and military provocations have aggravated the trilateral relations by creating serious military tensions in the Korean Peninsula. It is essential to observe how these North Korean actions have affected South Korea-U.S. relations, inter-Korean relations, and North Korea-U.S. relations. When confronted with policy disparities and differing perspectives on the North Korean regime, South Korea-U.S. relationships created political conflicts and tensions that incited the wave of anti-Americanism among South Korean public. Hence, anti-Americanism in South Korea culminated as political conflicts between South Korea and the United States pinnacle - when the Bush administration (2001-2009) displayed strong disagreement with the “Sunshine Policy” of the Kim Dae Jung administration and his successor, President Roh Moo Hyun (2003-2008).⁸⁸

Differing goals and objectives and irregularity of political changes opened the door to a variety of policy conflicts in the trilateral relationship of the Korean Peninsula. From the 1980s, contemporary to the South Korean social tendency of anti-Americanism, to the present with North Korea’s periodic provocations, South Korea and the United States collaborated to maintain peace; nevertheless, policy disagreements remained inescapable at the same time. Anti-Americanism stemming from the inter-Korean issue has been more than a complex puzzle due to the unique security situation in the Korean Peninsula, where American involvement has been essential but often clashed with the interests of South Korea.

⁸⁷ Seung-Hwan Kim, *Op. Cit.*, 115.

⁸⁸ Gi-Wook Shin, *Op. Cit.*, 508.

1. Pro-North Korean Sentiments from the South Korean Public and Politics in the 1980s: Anti-Americanism and North Korean Ideology

Beginning in the early 1980s, the emergence of radical movements, mainly formed by university students, heightened the intensity of South Korean anti-Americanism. This surge of negative views of the U.S. is also concomitant alongside rise in pro-North Korean sentiments.⁸⁹ In accordance to the organizations' terms, anti-Americanism should be treated along the same lines as the pro-North Korean ideology. Many of these radicals highlighted "deep anxiety about post-colonial South Korea not having gone through a proper process of decolonization."⁹⁰ In addition, they defined the postcolonial history of South Korea as an imperfect freedom, because South Koreans had heavily depended on the U.S.'s political, economic, and social influence to sustain the nation. Accordingly, they called for a perfect freedom, an indication of absolute political self-reliance, which was their motto of national sovereignty.

In their own interpretation, North Korea's *Chuch'e* ideology was a more suitable concept for the political situation in South Korea that called for defiance against pro-American sentiments. North Korea's *Chuch'e* ideology was composed of three fundamental concepts: a decolonization narrative utilizing total independence in politics (*chaju*), self-sustenance in the economy (*charip*), and self-defense in national security (*chawi*)⁹¹. In the advent of this "northern wind,"⁹² the radicals confronted an ideological schism between South Korean democracy vastly influenced by the United States and the pro-North Korean ideology.

89¹ Some radical leftist organizations formed in South Korea, such as the South Korean Federation of University Students Councils (*Hanguk Daehaksaeng Chong Yunhap hoi*, in abbreviation, *Hanch'ongryon*).

90¹ Namhee Lee, Op. Cit., 126.

91¹ Ibid., 128.

92¹ In Korean "*Bukpung*": a popular term meaning Gigantic sway of influence from North Korea

Some radical students visualized the pro-North Korean movement as an antidote to the South Korean social fabric that had been “adulterated” by U.S. influence. They regarded self-reliant defense, independent of the United States; such would be a necessary tool to achieve the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, to be executed only by the concerted efforts of “one Korean nation.”⁹³ The spread of *Chuch’e* ideology and radical anti-Americanism movements immensely intensified political tensions between the government and the anti-American college students. Through these public movements, South Korean progressives sought independent national defense and inter-Korean relations untainted by U.S. involvement.⁹⁴ These movements were not nationally permeating in South Korea; nonetheless, they, in some measure, did affect and change both South Koreans’ anti-leftist and anti-American mentality.

2. Differing Goals and Objectives of Trilateral Relationships in the Korean Peninsula

The importance of trilateral relations in the Korean Peninsula emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War. During the Cold War, South Korea was solely dependent on the United States for its security; however, the end of the Cold War occasioned the need for a new relationship, totally different from the previous one. South Korea normalized its diplomatic relations with China in 1992. As a result, North Korea recognized the importance of its relations with the United States to maintain the regime. In addition, South Koreans began to consider inter-Korean relations regarding their own security. Aside these other factors, drastic change in the ROK-U.S. relationship was inevitable because the U.S.-DPRK bilateral negotiations were also being established at the time. In this context, controversy sprouted in South Korea over whether the “ROK-U.S. friendship” would be compatible with

93 Namhee Lee, Op. Cit., 127.

94 Victor D. Cha, “Anti-Americanism and the U.S. Role in Inter-Korean Relations,” *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 116.

inter-Korean relations. A growing sense of independent diplomacy between the two Koreas emerged in South Korean politics, and this tendency generated political discrepancies with the United States from time to time. Till today, the trilateral relations have hardly been successful because bilateral relations between the two Koreas and the United States are very sensitive to political changes. Moreover, none of the bilateral relationships in the Korean Peninsula have been successfully secured. The establishment of a secure trilateral relationship in the Korean Peninsula is seemingly very difficult to achieve.

Since the pursuit of goals and objectives vary among South Korea, North Korea, and the United States, there have been numerous irregular and complicated political conflicts. For example, the prolonged North Korean nuclear issue has been on the negotiation table for more than fifteen years now; not only has it been unsolved, but most diplomatic efforts taken by the U.S. have failed on all accounts. The differing goals and objectives of the three countries have generated many policy disagreements in South Korean and American perceptions of North Korea. Conflicts and tensions budding from the differing views on the Korean Peninsula have also affected the wave of anti-Americanism in South Korea.

There is basically a triangular relationship in the Korean Peninsula: the inter-Korean relationship, ROK-U.S. relationship, and North Korea-U.S. relationship. There is speculation over a potential trilateral relationship among these three countries to build up the eventual security and fulfillment of peace agreements in the Peninsula; however, since each of those three fundamental relationships has a different aim and perspective in terms of maintaining each country's objective, the likelihood of such a relationship remains questionable.

The priority of North Korean diplomacy is regime survival. The nuclear weapons program and the hereditary leadership system from father-to-son are prominent cases for North Korean regime survival efforts.⁹⁵ North Korea's recent objective is to overcome its

⁹⁵ North Korea is the only Communist country with a hereditary leadership system in the world.

economic crisis, including the brutal famine. Therefore, it is essential for them to maintain nuclear weapons in order to guarantee the existence of the regime. Also, they regard nuclear weapons as bargaining chips for negotiations with the U.S. and South Korea. With nuclear weapons, North Korea not only tried to strengthen its political position in the Korean Peninsula, but also aspired to obtain more economic support from both South Korea and the United States. This brinkmanship diplomacy of North Korea is a huge gamble for survival, regardless of whether they gain adversity or favorable conditions from the diplomatic strategy as a result.

With respect to the maintenance of peace in East Asia, the United States ostensibly acknowledges the concept behind the North Korean regime's existence, but regards the nuclear weapons program as a great threat to the balance of power in the East Asian order.⁹⁶ Diplomacy and negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea have always been associated with North Korean nuclear attempts. For example, the U.S-North Korea Agreed Framework, concluded in Geneva on October 21, 1994, was designed for the non-proliferation of nuclear reactors in North Korea to maintain the peaceful air in the Korean Peninsula after the Cold War.⁹⁷ Moreover, the purpose of the Six-Party Talks was aimed at denuclearizing the North Korean state through cooperation with other deeply concerned proximate countries. Nonetheless, despite all these diplomatic efforts by the United States, North Korea did not show any intention of abandoning its nuclear development; the regime still continues the nuclear program as a bargaining chip to control Korean Peninsula issues favorable to their regime. Accordingly, the U.S. has been deeply troubled with the North's military ambitions which would threaten peace in the Korean Peninsula and the East Asian order.

96¹ Jibum Kim, Carl Gershenson, Jaeki Jeong, and Tom W. Smith, "The Polls-Trends: How Americans Think About North Korea: 2000-2007," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 72 (2008), 811.

97¹ Sung-han Kim, Op.Cit., 181.

South Korea's main goal is to achieve peaceful diplomacy with North Korea and ultimately achieve the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. With its economic superiority to the North and its capacity to provide humanitarian aid, South Korea has sought to dismantle the Cold War structure in the Korean Peninsula. Despite the contrary, current North Korean military provocations hinder the process of restructuring the political order in the Korean Peninsula. Without North Korea's cooperation, it would not be possible to achieve the South Korean goal of peaceful diplomacy that would eventually lead to reunification. Also, U.S. support is crucial to this end.

South Korea's official goal in the Korean Peninsula has been reunification despite the recognition of the necessity of maintaining the national division for economic and sociological reasons. However, from the U.S. perspective, the reunification would not only be too costly, but would disturb its own political standing in East Asia; therefore, it is more likely that the U.S. wishes to keep its military forces in the Korean Peninsula as a deterrent to Chinese and Japanese influences in the East Asian order.⁹⁸ Therefore, many South Koreans believe that the U.S. interferences in the North Korean issues are not necessarily designed to support South Korea.

To achieve successful trilateral relations, it is essential to maintain stable interrelations between two sides of the triangle; however, due to the inconsistency of North Korea's political decisions, the United States and South Korea, based on their goals, confront difficulties accomplishing their objectives in dealing with the North. Furthermore, the South Korea-U.S. chasm in their goals and objectives often stimulates political conflicts between the two countries with regards to North Korean issues. These political disagreements between the ROK and the U.S. governments facilitated widespread anti-Americanism in South Korea between 1998 and 2007, when the progressive regimes of South Korea had numerous policy

⁹⁸ Ibid., 192.

conflicts with the United States, particularly during the Bush administration.

3. The Bush Administration and the South Korean Progressive Regimes:

Political Conflicts and Their Implications of Anti-Americanism

These two progressive presidents of South Korea, Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun, have advocated not only humanitarian but political and economic engagements with North Korea, describing the North Korean leader as “wise enough to choose the open-ended road.”⁹⁹ The emotional wave of anti-Americanism in South Korea was synergetic with the pro-North wave in South Korean politics, since the two regimes were relatively pro-North Korea. Most of the political cases of inter-Korean conflicts with the United States occurred during the years of these two progressive regimes.

When the Kim Dae Jung administration was inaugurated in 1998, political disparity between South Korea and the United States arose while developing a strategy for dealing with North Korea. President Kim Dae Jung announced in his inauguration speech that “the South would not give up the policy of unification via absorbing the North.”¹⁰⁰ With his theme of the “Sunshine Policy,” the Kim Dae Jung government focused on the process of unification by consensus. Through the “Sunshine Policy,” the regime supported huge economic aid in order to persuade the North to cooperate with South Korea in inter-Korean relations.

The administration considered diplomatic relations between the U.S. and North Korea as the most problematic issue because the U.S. policy specifically focused on North Korean nuclear and military power. The new South Korean government saw the U.S.’s

⁹⁹ *The Washington Post*, April 11, 2003.

¹⁰⁰ Jong-Yun Bae, “South Korean Strategic Thinking toward North Korea: The Evolution of the Engagement Policy and Its Impact upon U.S-KOR Relations,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 50 (2010), 338.

diplomatic tendency as an obstacle to the peaceful coexistence of the two Koreas, rearing detriments on both inter-Korean relations and the ROK-US alliance. Thus, the Kim Dae Jung administration highlighted the necessity of improving inter-Korean relations between the South and the North, which was finally accomplished when North Korea agreed to a summit talk in June 2000.¹⁰¹

After the summit talk, the peaceful mood of the inter-Korean relationship illustrated noticeable changes in the ROK-U.S. relationship in light of both South Korean and American policies towards North Korea. Even though the Clinton administration (1993-2001) was worried about losing leadership in the Korean Peninsula, they were partly supportive of the Kim Dae Jung administration's decision. In addition, Madeline Albright's visit to Pyongyang and the U.S-North Korea joint communiqué in Washington denoted the Clinton administration's diplomatic movements toward North Korea in line with the new wave of inter-Korean relationship.¹⁰²

In contrast to the Clinton administration, the Bush administration thought the South Korean engagement policies were overly generous, naïve, and dangerous taking into account the totalitarian Kim Jong Il's regime. President Bush's harsh rhetoric, such as "axis of evil", was a huge blow to Kim Dae Jung's "Sunshine Policy." Despite the Bush administration's hard line policies towards the North, the Kim Dae Jung government maintained its "Sunshine Policy" and retained its "basic theme of engagement-reconciliation, coexistence, and cooperation with the North."¹⁰³ From the neoconservative view taken from Washington, the South Korean ideology at that time was a huge contradiction with their political theme of

101 Sung-han Kim, Op. Cit., 183.

102 Woo-Cumings, Op. Cit., 72.

103 Bae, Op. Cit., 338.

offensive realism.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the Bush administration considered not only powerful economic and political sanctions, but also a possible preemptive attack on the nuclear reactors in North Korea to curb the proliferation of North Korean nuclear program.¹⁰⁵ As the Kim Dae Jung government focused on building up a mutual relationship with the North as a partner, the Bush administration treated the North as a part of the “axis of evil”, or what was earlier called, “a rogue state.”¹⁰⁶

The trilateral relations seemed a task far from becoming a reality in the early 2000s, which was a period of deadlock in South Korea-U.S. diplomacy. South Korean progressives thought the Bush administration’s goal was to attack North Korea in order to collapse the North Korean regime, after which it would pursue control over the Korean Peninsula to retain its regional hegemony in East Asia. Thus, in response to the U.S.’s hard-line policy towards North Korea during the Bush administration, many South Koreans felt the U.S. intended to hinder the inter-Korean unification process, driven by its self-interest of maintaining leadership in the security of East Asia. Even though the U.S. initiated the Six-Party Talks to strategically deal with the North Korean nuclear problem, it was not enough to mollify the public’s ire. The differing objectives of the Kim Dae Jung administration and the Bush administration stimulated numerous social upheavals against the United States in South Korea. Many South Koreans desired inter-Korean independence and more equal diplomatic relations with the U.S. in regard to national security in the Korean Peninsula. In addition, the reunification process was more developed during the Kim Dae Jung administration; the Bush administration, however, would not consider any policy of the South Korean reunification

104¹ Jihwan Hwang, “Realism and U.S. Foreign Policy toward North Korea: The Clinton and Bush Administrations in Comparative Perspective,” *World Affairs*, Vol. 167 (2004), 16.

105 Bae, Op. Cit., 338.

106 Ibid., 337.

process without a concrete resolution of the North Korean nuclear threat.¹⁰⁷ In this context, the trilateral relationship was not successful at the time, since the bilateral relationship between South Korea and the U.S. between 1998 and 2003 failed to come to a significant agreement regarding North Korean conflicts.

As a supporter of President Kim Dae Jung's "Sunshine Policy," President Roh Moo Hyun stated that his government would abide by the tenets of direct engagements with the North. Hence, his security concern also conflicted with the Bush administration's hard-line policy against Pyongyang. At the same time, the Roh Moo Hyun administration called for a more equally-balanced ROK-U.S. alliance in pursuit of a more self-reliant diplomatic policy with North Korea. Since the inter-Korean relationship had been stable since the inter-Korean summit talk in 2000, he reaffirmed that South Korea was eligible to take the lead in dealing with security concerns in the Korean Peninsula.¹⁰⁸ As the election of Roh Moo Hyun continued the pro-North Korean policies of South Korea, it also sustained political tensions in terms of the security consensus between South Korea and the United States.

President Roh Moo Hyun focused on developing inter-Korean trust and cooperation independent of the U.S.'s direct involvement, while expressing his desire to establish a more equal relationship with the United States. In addition, he regarded the North as a political and economic partner rather than a national enemy. The goal of the regime was a gradual reunification process in the Korean Peninsula, whereas the Bush administration retained its aggressive policies against the North Koreans regarding the nuclear issue. This disparate approach to the North Korean situation fed U.S.-R.O.K political discord surrounding the security consensus. For instance, Operational Plan (OPLAN) 5029, "a contingency

¹⁰⁷ Chaibong Hahm, "Anti-Americanism, Korean Style," *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 229

¹⁰⁸ Duncan, Op. Cit., 57.

arrangement in preparation for an unexpected incident in North Korea such as regime collapse or mass defections,¹⁰⁹ was rejected by the Roh Moo Hyun government's National Security Council, as they expected the plan would provoke the North and perturb the carefully managed peaceful mood of South-North relations at the time. From the regime's perspective, OPLAN 5029 was too risky to be conducted as response to North Korean military contingencies. Moreover, the Roh government intended to transfer the wartime operational command from the U.S. to South Korea, not only to prevent any U.S. military decisions to conduct a preemptive attack on North Korean nuclear reactors, but also to put diplomatic relations between South Korean and the United States on par.¹¹⁰

The rise of the progressive regime in 1998 greatly altered the public's viewpoint on the United States and North Korea, introducing tolerance of anti-American political decisions and an acceptance of pro-North Korean sentiments in the South Korean society.¹¹¹ Moreover, the change of political society hugely influenced South Korean perspectives on the security issue in the Korean Peninsula. The proportion of South Koreans who were opposed to a military preemptive attack on the DPRK's nuclear facilities rose from 42.4% in March 1994 to 54.1% in December 2002, and further to 71.2% in October 2004.¹¹² The findings of this survey reflected the gradual change of public viewpoints on both the U.S. and North Korea. In the 1997 and 2002 presidential elections, anti-American views were influential, and the public softened its views on North Korea; correspondingly, the progressive regimes were able to win both elections.

The legislative actions taken to support North Korea through the building of the

109 Bae, *Op. Cit.*, 337.

110 *Ibid.*, 338.

111 In Dec 1997, the election of Kim Dae Jung was also a result of IMF crisis and alleged military conscription corruption by Lee Hoi Chang, the conservative candidate.

112 Oh and Arrington, *Op. Cit.*, 334.

Gaesung industrial complex and provision of humanitarian aid for the North Koreans reflected a political decision that went against the Bush administration's policy towards the North. These efforts at engaging North Korea not only weakened the anti-leftist system in South Korea, but generated divergent sentiments of anti-Americanism as well. Both the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations encouraged the public's growing sense of an independent civil society, political society, and state against the United States. These panoptic phenomena of anti-Americanism, touching on all three arenas, contributed to the further maturation of anti-Americanism. As the society enormously tolerated the anti-American political atmosphere in South Korean politics, civil society organizations gathered to demonstrate against the Bush administration. Despite the Bush administration's forceful policies, the South Korean progressive governments continued their support of the North Korean regime. These pro-North sentiments in all three of South Korea's public milieu were unprecedented before Kim Dae Jung's inauguration in 1998. The progressive regimes changed the political spectrum in South Korea, which in turn led the country to become more vulnerable to anti-Americanism.

The South Korean perception of North Korea drastically changed from a negative to a positive image after the inter-Korean summit talk. The resurgence of brotherhood in the Korean Peninsula kindled the South Korean public's hope for the progress of the reunification process, and this rapport demonstrated a clear manifestation of the people's expectation for a plausible reunification thanks to the "Sunshine Policy." During Kim Dae Jung's presidency, exchange visits of separated families from South Korea and North Korea were actively administered, and more frequent economic exchanges such as the Mt. Kumgang tour and the Gaesung Industrial Complex were implemented for mutual gains from the bilateral relations. Not only did South Korea use cheap North Korean labor, but the North also gained technological support, development, and economic profits from these two

economic exchanges. During years in which the progressive regimes held political power, South Korea obtained more opportunities to work with North Korea through in economic and social reciprocity that led the public to perceive North Korea as a brotherly partner rather than an enemy.¹¹³

The Bush administration, however, retained its aggressive stance towards North Korea and called North Korea part of “the axis of evil,” which aggravated political and sociological conflicts in the midst of an already growing anti-American sentiment in South Korea. South Koreans had a profound aversion against the U.S.’s invasion of Iraq that occurred without clear or valid evidence of the existence of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) or the endorsement of the United Nations.¹¹⁴ The Bush administration’s hard-line doctrine deeply worried South Koreans about another military conflict on the Korean Peninsula. In addition, the U.S. rejection of the “Sunshine Policy” worried the majority of South Koreans about the possibility of the U.S. launching a preemptive attack on North Korea. The nuance of the term used by the Bush Administration, “axis of evil,” caused South Koreans to suspect the possibility of the U.S. initiating another war in the Korean Peninsula, since the U.S. had already attacked another member of the “axis” in Iraq.

4. The North Korean Nuclear Issue: Conflicts in ROK-US Diplomacy

The North Korean nuclear issue has absolutely been the primary concern for the U.S. on the question of security in the Korean Peninsula. From the early 1990s, Kim Young Sam (1993-1998) and Bill Clinton, Kim Dae Jung and George W. Bush, and Roh Moo Hyun and Bush all faced the same difficulty in reaching agreements on the North Korean nuclear issues.

¹¹³ Sung-han Kim, Op. Cit., 182.

¹¹⁴ Chung-In Moon, “Between *Banmi* (Anti-Americanism) and *Sungmi* (Worship of the United States): Dynamics of Changing U.S. Images in South Korea,” *Korean Attitudes Toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, ed. David I. Steinberg (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 149.

The brinkmanship strategy of North Korea was nearly successful in receiving compensation for abandoning the nuclear program. North Koreans, however, have never actually abandoned the nuclear program. Despite the Six-Party Talks Agreements in 2005 and 2007, the problem of North Korean nuclear ambition still remains unresolved.

North Korea's nuclear ambition began in the early 1990s in the hope of reinforcing its military capability to maintain its regional presence in the aftermath of the Cold War. In spite of its conservative characteristics, the Kim Young Sam government recognized the necessity of dealing with the North Korean regime,¹¹⁵ since political conflict with North Korea would be an enormous blow to the South's economic market and development. The government was primarily aiming at joining the membership of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to promote economic growth and international trade.¹¹⁶ Appropriately, the Kim Young Sam administration was extremely worried about the North Korea disrupting the great economic opportunity with their nuclear attempts. When the Clinton administration prepared for military action on the North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear reactor, Kim Young Sam strongly opposed its plan of preemptive attack, which would jeopardize not only the national security of the Korean Peninsula, but also the South Korean ambition to be a member of OECD. From the U.S. perspective, the North Korean nuclear reactor was the biggest threat to economic and political influence of the United States in the Korean Peninsula and East Asia. But, after the U.S. and North Korea signed the Geneva agreement in 1994, which offered North Korea numerous benefits in return for shutting down its nuclear program, the political conflict between South Korea and the United States was seemingly settled for the time being.¹¹⁷

115 Bae, Op. Cit., 337.

116 Ibid.

117 Balbina Y Hwang, "Anti-Americanism in Korea: Implications for the Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance," *East Asia: An International Quarterly*, Vol. 20 (2003), 70

However, in early October 2002, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly revealed acquired information that North Korea had been running a nuclear program for several years to enrich uranium, indicating that the North had violated the U.S. - North Korea Agreed Framework and other agreements they had been previously reached.¹¹⁸ The disclosed nuclear program in North Korea turned out to be a massive burden to the “Sunshine Policy,” focusing on the political and economic cooperation with the North. The Bush administration emphasized the North’s responsibility for the violation of the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework. North Korea’s bold approach deteriorated the South Korea-U.S. policy consensus on the security issue in the Korean Peninsula. Still, both Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations retained their economic aid to the North even though North Korea did not show any intention of giving up its nuclear programs.

In the early 2000s, many South Koreans believed that North Korea would not use its nuclear weapon against South Korea due to substantial thaw in inter-Korean relations. Some of these people, including government officials, even felt that nuclear program was essential for North Korea to maintain its regime, and the nuclear weapon was developed only as an instrumental bargaining chip for negotiation with the United States. In the meantime, many of these people seriously contemplated a strategic movement towards independent inter-Korean relation by reducing its political dependence on the United States. Thus, the U.S.’s hawkish actions and economic sanctions against the North were seen as unnecessary to these South Koreans.

This pro-North Korean policy confronted a turning point when North Korea executed its nuclear test in 2006. The U.N. Security Council adopted the Resolution 1718, which condemned the test and adopted sanctions against the North.”¹¹⁹ The U.S. and the U.N called

118 :Sung-han Kim, Op. Cit., 187.

119 :Bae, Op. Cit., 339.

on the South Korean government to reconsider the Gaesung Industrial Complex and the Mt. Kumgang tour, because these economic policies still gave the North economic benefits that might countervail the purpose of putting economic pressures on the North. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice added to “the chorus of the U.S. voices on October 16 and 19, reminding the South of the importance of its participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).”¹²⁰ However, the South Korean government’s responses were defiant of these calls, still insisting on operating these two economic projects which directly funded the North Korea regime. Despite the unrelenting nuclear ambition of the North, the Roh Moo Hyun government maintained its engagement policy with the North until the end of his term. Accordingly, political tensions between South Korea and the United States persisted until 2007.

It is true that during the 10 years of the progressive regimes in South Korea, North Korea received substantial amounts of economic aid while it was building nuclear reactors. The Six-Party Talks, which also seated the neighboring countries of, Japan, China, and Russia at the negotiation table regarding the North’s nuclear issues, failed to reach to a successful agreement, since North Korea did not show any clear intention of abandoning its nuclear weapons program. As long as North Korea possesses nuclear weapons, the security issue will never be one to easily resolve. Moreover, it will remain as one of many possible grounds for summoning ROK-U.S. policy conflicts in the future.

Conclusion:

The Trilateral relationship among South Korea, North Korea, and the U.S. and its geopolitical issue, has always been a sensitive factor in anti-Americanism in South Korea. Before the collapse of the Soviet bloc, anti-Americanism in South Korea has been regarded

120 Ibid.

as a taboo in fear of the Cold War. During the Cold War era, communism was obviously the biggest fear of South Koreans, so there was not enough space for anti-Americanism to anchor itself in being a determinant of South Korean politics. In terms of national security and economy, South Korea was inevitably dependent on U.S. disposition.

However, in spite of the end of the Cold War era, political conflicts between South Korea and the United States still exist in the distinctive security situation of the Korean Peninsula. During the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations, much of the South Korean public questioned the essentiality of the U.S.'s active involvement in inter-Korean politics and diplomacy, since the peaceful stage set between the South and the North had not been upset by the endorsement of pro-North Korean policies.

Anti-Americanism in South Korea between 1998 and 2007 particularly concentrated on the negative aspects of the Bush administration and its neoconservative characteristic on inter-Korean and North Korean issues. From South Koreans' perspective, the Bush administration's policies towards North Korea were heavily based on its moral absolutism, unilateralism, and offensive realism that utilized hard line strategies such as the possible employment of preemptive attacks and political and economic sanctions against the North.¹²¹ In the South Korean belief, U.S. conduct indicated a fear for a unified Korea, which, as they also knew, would never easily come without U.S. support.¹²² South Koreans saw the U.S. influence in the Korean Peninsula as a pursuit of their national self-interests rather than security per se. In this context, the Bush administration was perceived as the biggest threat to the unprecedented peace that had settled in the Korean Peninsula since its division. The anti-American sentiment in the 2000's ripened in response to these hard-line attitudes of the U.S. towards North Korea and the ominously lingering potential of a second Korean War

121 Chung-In Moon, *Op. Cit.*, 147.

122 Gweon, *Op. Cit.*, 166.

instigated by the U.S., which Koreans feared most.¹²³

However, from the Bush administration's perspective, South Korean anti-American tendency created a myopic view of the North Korean nuclear issue as an acceptable policy of their North Korean brother's bargaining purpose. This concept obviously put not only the security of the Korean Peninsula in serious jeopardy, but also would provoke other East Asian countries partaking in the deadly race of nuclear armament development. The U.S. saw that a hawkish policy towards the North was the only plausible way to encourage North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons. The U.S. saw that all former diplomatic efforts to dissuade the North from nuclear ambitions failed due to the North's noncooperation. In tandem with the peaceful mood in inter-Korean relations, it was inevitable that South Korea and the U.S. collided in huge policy disagreements upon various North Korea issues.

South Korean anti-Americanism has easily been influenced by their "us-them" identity which defines North Korea as "us" and the U.S. as "them." Many South Koreans still consider North Koreans as their "brothers" who just live under a different regime and circumstances. With Confucian residuals in the Korean Peninsula, "we" cannot be manipulated by others, and this exclusiveness of the cultural tradition magnified the paramount importance of the two Koreas' own role in the inter-Korean relations. Therefore, the U.S.'s political or military involvements, often seen as forcible threats or unilateral arrogance, reinforced Korean vulnerability to foreign influence.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the complicated nature of security in the Korean Peninsula is in absolute need of U.S.'s political and military support to maintain peace. South Koreans should thus have a more objective point of view on the status quo of the security issue. In the same way, the U.S. should commit to less disputable approaches towards South Korea by reinforcing the importance of the mutual alliance. The mutual relationship

123 Ibid., 167

harnessed by South Korea and the United States is an indispensable element to achieve the goals and the objectives of both countries. Concerted efforts between the U.S. and South Korea can sustain more decisive preventions from irregular provocations of North Korea. Withal, proper collaboration to narrow down the policy gap between the two countries is definitely a first step that should be taken. Then, the camaraderie between South Korea and the United States will be reinforced, and they will, consequently, be able to find a plausible solution to the current security issue dealing with the South Korean “brother,” North Korea.

Conclusion

South Korea has achieved tremendous economic, political, and cultural progress to

boost South Korean national self-identity and self-esteem over the past decades. In politics, South Korea has successfully evolved from an authoritarian regime to a successful democracy. With regards to its economic growth, South Korea has developed into the thirteenth biggest economy in the world. Culturally, the widespread phenomenon of “*Hanryu*” (Korean Wave) demonstrates a remarkable expansion of its cultural influence in Asia.¹²⁴ In sports, South Korea not only entered the top 10 in the rankings of several past Olympics but also made it to the semi-finals of the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup. Formerly referred to as one of the four rising dragons in Asia,¹²⁵ South Korea has achieved phenomenal success according to various international standards to become one of the middle power countries of the world. Without doubt, South Korea enjoys those privileges of which they deserve to be proud.

However, as free, strong, and wealthy as it is today, South Korea still depends on the United States when it comes to vulnerable national security or geopolitical decisions that lie ahead.¹²⁶ The continuous security dependence means South Korea will inevitably face an unfair relationship with the United States. The disparity in social, economic, and political decisions between the two countries has shattered the long-established South Korean belief that the U.S. would always remain a great friend. Accordingly, even with the great success of South Korean political democratization and economic triumph, this perceived unfairness between the two countries has been a determinant rationale for South Korean defiant actions against the United States.

Since 1980, there has been no single fixed image of Americans, on either extremes of *hyommi* (loathe America) or *sungmi* (worship America), in South Korea. Anti-American

124 Kim, Parker, and Choi, Op. Cit., 431.

125 Hongkong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea

126 Lee, Op. Cit., 17.

sentiments have greatly relied on the public's emotions towards the United States out of case by case political and nationalistic circumstances. In other words, Koreans' attitudes toward the United States and its bilateral relationship have heavily relied on emotional and conditional grounds¹²⁷ rather than strategic and fundamental ideologies.

Compared to anti-Americanism in other parts of the world, South Korean anti-Americanism has manifested through a plethora of approaches. In the Middle East, anti-Americanism is often seen as a trace of deep political animosity in virulent terrorist attacks.¹²⁸ To be more specific, religious and fanatic beliefs cause deep hatred against the U.S and often manifest themselves in offensive anti-American action. On the other hand, French anti-Americanism is associated with national pride in being a leader within the Western civilization, which the French regard to be somewhat tarnished by unbound U.S. power and materialistic greed.¹²⁹ However, anti-Americanism in South Korea is similar to neither that seen in the Middle East nor in France. Korean anti-Americanism is confined to specific events, such as the Kwangju Uprising in 1980 and civilian victimization by the U.S. military bases. South Koreans' propensity to love or hate America is largely dependent on actions taken by Americans and those South Koreans who question whether those actions preserve or threaten South Korean nationalistic spirit and sovereignty.

South Korean surges in anti-Americanism were pervasive through the civil society movements in the 1980s, the 1990s, and the 2000s. The Kwangju Uprising of May 1980 gave birth to anti-Americanism as South Koreans altered their views of the U.S. from absolute amity to ambivalent dichotomy, in a pendulum swing between love and hate. In the 1990s, civil movements of human rights and environmental groups expressed their grievances at the

127 Bong, Op. Cit., 157.

128 Gweon, Op. Cit., 158.

129 Ibid.

USFK's misconduct, manifested in crimes committed by U.S. soldiers and environmental degradation caused by the presence of USFK. Moreover, candlelight vigils became a cultural phenomenon as a mode of publicly voicing anti-American sentiment in the 2000s. The evolution of South Korean anti-Americanism evidently shows the Koreans' consistent will for a healthier relationship with the United States.

The duality of South Korean attitudes towards the United States has existed since the inception of anti-American sentiment in South Korea: Dependence mentality and victimization mentality. Dependence mentality represents the South Korean tendency to rely on the U.S. in terms of security and economic matters, which cannot be completed by solely the efforts of South Korea without support from the United States. More frequently than not, South Koreans were in need of U.S. influence and sought U.S. support when it faced difficulty solving national security and economic problems. This dependence mentality became deeply entrenched among South Koreans, ironically even among those who actively voiced criticisms of the United States. On the other hand, victimization mentality traces back to historical South Korean sensitivity to foreign interferences. South Koreans feared that they would be adversely affected by foreign powers that allegedly acted based on their own national self-interests against South Koreans. Embracing this victimization mentality, South Koreans tended to believe that U.S. actions towards South Korea would one day affect South Korean national values and achievements negatively. Withal, the duality of South Koreans' attitudes can lead South Korea to an emotional ambivalence between pro-Americanism based on dependence mentality and anti-Americanism based on victimization mentality.

With respect to international politics and security affairs in general, U.S. unilateralist movement, followed by substantial military expenditures and mechanical support, could be an apparatus to ease military tensions between Seoul and Pyongyang and contribute to peace in the Korean Peninsula. However, since Korean sentiments toward the United States are in

alignment with the national mood of the time, which between 1998 and 2007 was colored with anti-Americanism alongside pro-North Korean sentiments, the Washington's policy toward the North was viewed as a restraint on the peaceful movement between the two Koreas as well as an obstacle to the reunification process. Contemplating on U.S. policies on the North Korean nuclear issue or the SOFA has yielded the South Korean belief that U.S. policies were irrespective of inter-Korean interests.

Also, China's increased power in the Korean Peninsula indicates substantial implications for the East Asian order and for U.S. geopolitical and military strategy in the region. China can be a key player in terms of the Korean Peninsula security issues, because China has fairly good relations with South Korea, North Korea, and the United States. If China successfully increases its influence in the region, it is highly likely that the U.S. may try to further strengthen its diplomatic relationship with South Korea. In this case, the future of South Korean diplomacy between China and the U.S. can result in two ways. The first scenario is the achievement of a stronger alliance with the United States, so the U.S. maintains its regional influence over China. The second scenario is that South Korea will strengthen the ROK-PRC relationship rather than the ROK-U.S. relationship. Whichever of these two scenarios South Korea may endorse heavily relies on the level of anti-Americanism with respect to the security of the Korean Peninsula. In addition, the rise of Chinese power in the Korean Peninsula is very crucial in terms of Asia-Pacific international relations.

Therefore, anti-Americanism in South Korea is not something that is inevitable or uncontrollable. Since the Korean War, South Korean anti-Americanism, indicating unconditional abhorrence of the United States, has never been an inherent social, cultural, or political feature. Rather, anti-Americanism in South Korea was more an issue-oriented opposition to various conflicts with the United States. So to speak, the replacement of the two countries' conflicts can help remove the chronic dichotomy of love and hate towards the

United States.¹³⁰ Accordingly, South Koreans keep demanding that the U.S. should put more effort into understanding South Koreans' desire for dignity as a sovereign partner with the U.S. in dealing with political, social, and economic relations.¹³¹

Based on the fact that South Korean anti-Americanism has been issue-oriented, some wonder if there is any possible way of preventing those conflicting issues before they rise to the surface in anti-U.S. sentiments. There is a possibility that both countries can work toward preventing altogether diminishing the intensity of anti-Americanism sentiments. But, due to their enormous cultural differences, South Korea entrenched in Confucianism and the United States docked on Western norms of self-interest, it is hardly possible to remove single element that may generate anti-American sentiments in South Korea. In my opinion regarding the Kwangju Uprising, we cannot solely blame the U.S. for not helping the South Korean public, since the U.S. might have seen its decision for complicity as the least costly and most effective way in dealing with South Korea at that time. But, South Koreans still felt a sense of betrayal, because they believed the United States broke the Confucian principle of friendship between the two countries. It was a cultural conflict between traditional Confucian value of reciprocity and the Western value of self-interest. The Confucian value could not be removed from the South Korean mentality completely. Similarly, the U.S. will definitely keep taking actions towards South Korea based primarily on perceived self-interest. Therefore, conflicts in the bilateral relationship are likely to trigger anti-American sentiments alive in South Korea in the future. Nonetheless, it is possible to diminish its frequency and intensity as long as both of the countries respect the other's respective cultural beliefs and values. A more solid maturation of Korean society as well as a more comprehensive U.S. understanding of South Korean nationalism, wants and needs, is prospective of a healthier and amicable

130 Ibid., 176.

131 Gweon, Op. Cit., 175.

relationship between the two allies. Also, with the facilitation of more economic, cultural, and human resource exchanges between South Korea and the United States, these social, cultural, and political gaps in the bilateral relation will likely diminish.

Retracing its history, Korea experienced a plethora of foreign oppressive forces due to its geopolitical location surrounded by great powers. Koreans have historically exerted a strong aspiration for political autonomy and respect from other countries. Also, South Koreans were cognizant of the necessity of efforts in preserving their distinctive identity. In this context, South Korean anti-Americanism is not only a modern version of South Korean tenaciousness in finding their national self-identity, but also an expression of a new Korean identity, perceived as free, strong, and wealthy, on that does not cling on specific foreign powers.

The rise of anti-Americanism in South Korea is part of a resurrection of national confidence through economic and political success, in order to find a novel national self-identity. In the future, we may possibly see another display of the anti-American phenomenon in South Korea. However, as long as the South Korean society continues to develop and mature, and the U.S. makes more effort into understanding South Korean culture mentality, the intensity and frequency of anti-Americanism in South Korea will be kept at a minimum.

Anti-Americanism is the process of finding South Korean national self-identity motivated by a strong will for an improved and more stable relationship with the United States. In my view, South Korean anti-Americanism is not made up of a dichotomy of love and hate towards the United States. Rather, it is more a South Korean voice seeking better and favorable relations with America. People still argue how anti-Americanism affects South Korean society, but it arguable that anti-Americanism is “a more positive projection of South

Korean nationalism”¹³² rather than a negative reaction to American cultures. By acknowledging South Korean national identity and its burgeoning nationalism, both countries can not only reduce policy gaps, but also increase mutual understanding. With this mutual understanding and recognition of the roots and tenor of South Korean anti-Americanism, the ROK-U.S. relationship will be revamped to a new level of partnership, reducing conflict between the two nations bred by misunderstanding of social and political dispositions. An alliance forged in blood, the special ROK-U.S. relationship certainly is. The next task is to cement that alliance through cultural relativism and sophisticated public diplomacy.

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¹³² Duncan, Op. Cit., 71.

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