



GLOBAL VIEWS 2004

Comparing South Korean and American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy



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THE CHICAGO COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Relations between the United States and South Korea have entered a crucial period. For more than fifty years, the two countries have shared a strategic alliance that has helped stabilize Northeast Asia and ensure the peace between North and South Korea. Recently, however, strains have developed in the relationship over disputes on how to resolve key issues of concern to both countries. Sharp differences have emerged on the North Korean nuclear threat, with South Korea stressing the continuation of its “Sunshine Policy” of seeking to build warmer relations with North Korea and resolve the crisis through negotiations. The United States, in turn, has labeled North Korea as a member of the “axis of evil” and has resisted negotiations until North Korea first makes changes. Both sides blame the other for the recent escalation of the crisis. In addition, there has been rising anti-U.S. sentiment in South Korea brought about by generational change, perceived U.S. unilateralism in dealing with North Korea, and other international issues such as the Iraq War.

The proposed withdrawal over time of a significant number of American troops from South Korea, the result of shifting U.S. military planning and national security priorities in the post-September 11 world, has also caused concern in South Korea. While South Koreans are deeply apprehensive about the United States taking unilateral military action against North Korea, they are still reassured by the presence of U.S.

troops as a protective cover from a North Korean attack. Recently, the United States transferred 3,600 U.S. troops from South Korea to Iraq and announced the planned withdrawal of one-third of U.S. troops from South Korea by the end of 2005 and the pullback of U.S. troops from the Demilitarized Zone to Pyongtaek, 70 miles south of Seoul, by 2008.

These measures call into question the future of the U.S. military presence in the country at a time when South Korea is reassessing its geopolitical future. While President Roh Moo-hyun has asked the United States to delay the withdrawal, he has also advocated greater independence for South Korea in its foreign and defense policies since coming into office in 2002. Diplomatic and trade ties with China have been strengthened. In 2003, China, for the first time, overtook the United States as South Korea’s number one export market. In turn, South Korea has attempted to leverage China’s influence with North Korea to push it towards a negotiated settlement.

Despite these strains, there is still a broad belief on both sides in the alliance’s value. South Korea has committed more than 3,000 troops to Iraq, the third largest force after the United States and Great Britain, to help in the reconstruction effort. While polls show that South Koreans were opposed to the war, the government recognizes the value that contributing troops has for maintaining good relations with the United States. The United States, in turn, remains committed to

South Korea's security, regional stability, and continued growth in economic and trade relations.

To ensure the continued success of a strong and vital U.S.–South Korea alliance in the twenty-first century, the bilateral relationship must evolve and refocus on the shared political, military, and economic interests of both countries. Both sides must be committed to adapting the alliance at a time of heightened regional tension and political transformation.

How Americans and South Koreans view the world and their relationship with each other will shape these policies and approaches and ultimately determine whether they succeed or fail. In particular, it is crucial to develop a better understanding of bilateral attitudes towards the alliance, the U.S. military role in South Korea, multilateral institutions, approaches to global security, and how to resolve the North Korea crisis. American and South Korean understanding of these critical issues is necessary to inform policymaking in both countries and foster support for continued dialogue and diplomatic engagement.

This report offers new evidence to answer some of these important questions. It is the result of a new binational partnership between The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) in the United States and the East Asia Institute in South Korea. The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations has conducted one of the preeminent surveys of American public opinion on U.S. foreign policy periodically for three decades. This year, CCFR and EAI have joined forces to undertake an ambitious study that, for the first time, includes parallel surveys in the United States and South Korea.

The CCFR/EAI study seeks to contribute to the current debate on U.S.–South Korea alliance by providing new data and analyses. In an attempt to capture and compare American and South Korean public opinion in the new international setting after the world-shaking events of September 11 and the Iraq War, the surveys posed many of the same questions in both countries on a broad range of international and bilateral issues. The result is the most in-depth and comprehensive picture ever presented of the foreign policy attitudes of these two different but closely linked allies.

Acknowledgments

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations would like to express its great appreciation to Kim Byung-Kook, director of the Center for Foreign Affairs and Security at the East Asia Institute (EAI), and his team for working with us to undertake this collaborative effort. Funding for CCFR's contribution to this study came from several sources. The Chicago Council would like to acknowledge the critical support provided by the Korea Foundation that made this report possible. We are also particularly grateful for the early and generous funding provided by Council board members Lester Crown, CCFR chairman; John Manley, CCFR vice chairman; and Richard A. Behrenhausen, who made a critical commitment to the study on behalf of the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation. We would also like to acknowledge the overall support provided by the Ford Foundation for the 2004 study. Finally, James Denny provided generous assistance that helped us in carrying out the study.

The continued success of the CCFR public opinion study is due to the remarkable collaboration of its team. This year's CCFR team included Steven Kull, director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland, who took a lead role in drafting this report; Catherine Hug, president of Hug Communications; Benjamin I. Page, Gordon Scott Fulcher Professor of Decision Making in the Department of Political Science at Northwestern University; and Robert Shapiro, professor in the Department of Political Science at Columbia University. Special recognition is due to Christopher Whitney, director of studies at The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and chief editor for the project, for his superb role in developing and implementing the 2004 study. We also want to thank Jennie Taylor, project coordinator for the CCFR study team, for her invaluable contributions to making this project a success.

In addition, The Chicago Council would like to thank Kim Tae Hyun, director of the Center for Foreign Affairs and Security at the East Asia Institute and professor at the Graduate School of International Studies,

Chung-Ang University; Lee Nae Young, director of the Center for Research on Political and Social Public Opinion at the East Asia Institute and professor in the Department of Political Science, Korea University; Kim Sung Han, professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security; and Namkung Gon, professor at the Department of Political Science, Ewha Womans University. They all contributed substantial time and effort to make this binational partnership a success. Oscar Torres-Reyna of Columbia University also played a critical role in the data analysis for the study. Clay Ramsay and Evan Lewis of PIPA also provided much-appreciated support.

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The data from this survey will be placed on deposit with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut, and NORC (National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago. It will be available to scholars and other interested professionals. The report will also be available on the Internet at www.ccf.org.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global Perspectives

Despite large economic, geopolitical, and military gaps separating the United States and South Korea, Americans and South Koreans share similar worldviews in terms of global engagement and how they perceive security threats and the role of the United States. There is concern, however, in South Korea over perceived U.S. unilateralism, especially how it relates to American use of force. Linked to this are differences between Americans and South Koreans over when a country can go to war and use nuclear weapons.

- Americans and South Koreans are both committed to their countries taking an active role in the world, reject the idea that the United States has an obligation to play the role of world policeman, and believe it is playing this role more than it should. Similarly, both publics believe the United States should be more willing to make decisions in cooperation with the UN and favor their countries' participation in UN peacekeeping efforts.
- South Koreans have warm feelings toward both the United States and China and only slightly cool feelings toward North Korea. Americans have neutral attitudes towards South Korea, slightly cooler feelings towards China and very cold feelings for North Korea.
- Security threats related to terrorism and nuclear proliferation loom large among both publics, but are seen by a larger percentage of Americans as critical. Half of South Koreans see U.S. unilateralism as a critical threat, a higher percentage than say the same for the development of China as a world power or the rise of Japanese military power. Economic threats such as immigration or competition from low-wage countries resonate more strongly among Americans.
- Both publics reject preventive war, but sharp differences emerge on whether preemptive war is permissible. A majority of Americans endorse the idea that a country can go to war if there is evidence of an imminent threat, while a clear majority of South Koreans say war is permissible only in response to an actual attack. Similarly, a majority of South Koreans believe the United States should never use nuclear weapons, while Americans are willing to permit their use in response to a nuclear attack. A slight majority of South Koreans, however, believe their country should have nuclear weapons.
- A majority of South Koreans favor the creation of a borderless and integrated regional community of East Asian countries including South Korea, China, and Japan but excluding the United States.

- South Koreans have warmer feelings overall than Americans toward many international institutions. Majorities in both countries favor giving the WHO the right to intervene in a country to respond to a crisis that threatens world health.
- A strong majority of South Koreans and a smaller majority of Americans see globalization as beneficial to their respective countries. Differences emerge on perceptions of U.S.–South Korean bilateral trade, with South Koreans viewing it as unfair to them and Americans disagreeing. Additionally, a majority of Americans favor the United States making a commitment to comply with unfavorable WTO rulings, while a majority of South Koreans oppose making a similar commitment.

U.S.–South Korea Security Relations

Despite differences over the Iraq War, possible reductions in U.S. troop levels stationed in South Korea, and how to address the North Korean problem, South Koreans remain committed to having the United States be their preferred partner and view it as committed to their security. Interestingly, there is agreement in both publics over who would need to authorize a U.S. military attack against North Korea.

- South Koreans think the United States has more influence on South Korean foreign policy than the South Korean president or National Assembly, support the status quo in South Korea's relations with the United States, endorse the United States as South Korea's preferred partner, and believe there has been no worsening in bilateral relations since President Roh Moo-hyun became president in 2002.
- A large majority of South Koreans view the United States as beneficial to South Korea's security and want U.S. forces stationed there to act as a stabilizer for East Asia as a whole. South Koreans overwhelmingly believe the United States would defend their country from a North Korean attack; Americans only support doing so when U.S. efforts

would be part of a UN-sponsored endeavor together with other countries.

- South Koreans believe the current number of U.S. troops in South Korea is about right, but would accept a reduction and anticipate U.S. troops remaining for a considerable time but not permanently. Americans believe the United States has too many troops in South Korea and say a reduction would have no net effect on South Korean security.
- North Korean nuclear proliferation is of great concern to both publics, and a large majority of South Koreans believe it already has nuclear weapons. Despite a majority believing that the crisis will eventually be resolved through diplomacy, South Koreans are willing to accept U.S. military action against North Korea if it continues to develop its nuclear program, provided this action has the approval of the UN, most U.S. allies, and the South Korean government. Strong majorities of Americans say that UN and allied approval would be needed and a smaller majority says that South Korean government agreement would be needed.
- South Koreans believe the North Korean regime will eventually collapse and support reunification, but do not favor a substantial tax increase to cover the economic burden of North Korean reconstruction following reunification. A large majority sees the United States as beneficial in facilitating the reunification process.

CHAPTER ONE

Global Perspectives

The worldviews of Americans and South Koreans have been shaped by their different historical, geopolitical, economic, and military experiences. The United States is the world's preeminent political, military, and economic power and has extensive global commitments in each of these spheres. South Korea, which emerged as a fully democratic state in 1987 after years of autocratic rule, is a growing regional economic and political power in one of the world's most critical geopolitical areas and last remaining Cold War fault line. South Korean worldviews have been largely shaped by the memories of the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-45), the Korean War (1950-53), the U.S.-led military intervention and subsequent U.S. military presence in the country, lingering tensions with North Korea, and evolving relations with China, Japan, and Russia, all larger and stronger neighbor states.

The significant geopolitical differences separating the United States and South Korea affect some attitudes more than others. The findings of this study indicate that both Americans and South Koreans are committed to international engagement, support aid to developing countries, see many security threats such as terrorism in the same light, and oppose the United States playing a dominant role. They also have favorable attitudes towards the UN, believe the United States should cooperate more with it, and support their nations' participation in UN peacekeeping efforts. Differences emerge,

however, on some use-of-force issues that resonate strongly in South Korea.

Commitment to international engagement

South Koreans and Americans clearly support their countries taking an active role in the world. Asked whether it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs, a resounding 83% of Koreans and a smaller majority of 67% of Americans say they should play an active role. Furthermore, 83% of Americans and 76% of South Koreans say they are very or somewhat interested in news of their country's relations with other countries, with 34% of Americans and 17% of Koreans "very" interested.

Consistent with their views of themselves as active players in world affairs, both Americans and South Koreans favor development aid. Seventy percent of Americans endorse giving aid to help countries develop their economies. Sixty-one percent of South Koreans favor increasing economic aid to the Third World. Also, as will be discussed below, a strong majority of South Koreans favor continuing aid to North Korea.

Interestingly, both publics show concern about the United States playing a dominant role in the world. A strong majority of Americans (76%) and a smaller majority of South Koreans (56%) do not believe that

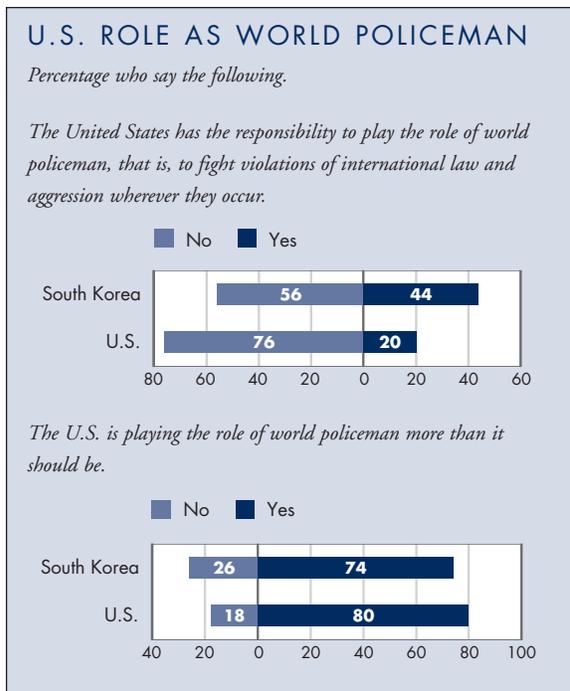


Figure 1-1

the United States has the responsibility to play the role of world policeman, requiring it to fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur (see Figure 1-1). More significantly, 80% of Americans and 74% of South Koreans agree with the statement that the United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be. These South Korean attitudes are particularly interesting given the long-standing U.S. role as a regional stabilizer in East Asia and the principal protector of South Korea from a North Korean attack.

Americans and South Koreans also strongly endorse their countries' participation in UN peacekeeping activities. When asked if their countries should participate in an international peacekeeping force being sent to a troubled part of the world if the United Nations requests it, 78% of Americans and 83% of South Koreans say their respective countries should take part rather than leave this job to other countries (see Figure 1-2). This South Korean finding is an endorsement of South Korea's existing commitment to UN peacekeeping, not surprising given that the UN is, even today, technically in command of U.S. forces in South Korea. South Korea has already participated in peacekeeping efforts in

Somalia (1994), the West Sahara (1994), Angola (1995), and East Timor (1999).

The overwhelming South Korean support for UN-led peacekeeping is particularly interesting given their much more hesitant endorsement of South Korean participation in the U.S.-led coalition activities to rebuild Iraq. The Iraq war was seen in South Korea as lacking a UN mandate, which has made the war very unpopular there. A reluctant majority of South Koreans, however, think that South Korea's international commitments oblige it to send troops to Iraq to be part of the coalition forces. When offered three choices about the increasing demand to reverse the decision to send additional South Korean troops to Iraq, a majority of 56% say that although they do not favor sending additional troops to Iraq, they believe South Korea should dispatch them because of its international commitment. Thirty-seven percent say they oppose both additional troops and the dispatch of troops in the first place. Only 7% said they unequivocally favor sending additional troops.

When asked what should be taken most into consideration in rethinking the decision to dispatch additional troops, 46% say South Korean soldiers' safety, while 38% say either the country's international commitment (20%) or the U.S.-South Korea relationship (18%). Another 16% see the legitimacy of the war in Iraq as the most important factor. Thus, it appears that a sizeable majority in South Korea supports the deployment, but without enthusiasm, seeing it as linked to South Korea's difficult international position and ensuring maintenance of good relations with the United States.

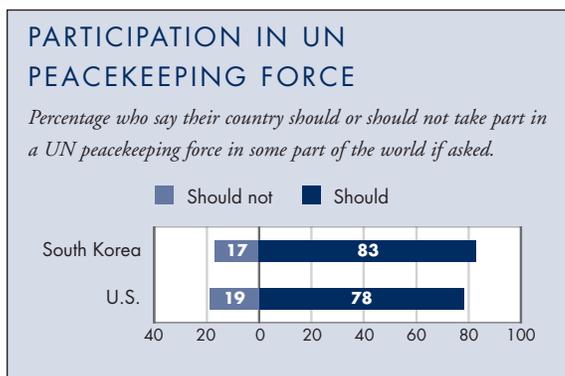


Figure 1-2

Threat perceptions

Americans and South Koreans both see terrorism and nuclear proliferation as truly critical threats to their countries' vital interests (see Figure 1-3). International terrorism tops both countries' lists of threats, with 75% of Americans saying it is a critical threat and 61% of Koreans agreeing. The threat of chemical and biological weapons (not asked in South Korea) is next on the U.S. list of critical threats, with 66% of Americans viewing it as a critical threat. Two similar items, the threat of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers and

North Korea becoming a nuclear power, rank third (64% critical) and second (59% critical), respectively, on the U.S and South Korean lists. It is interesting that a slightly higher percentage of Americans than South Koreans view this as a threat, given that South Korea would be within range of North Korean nuclear weapons, while the United States is better secured against an attack from an unfriendly power. This is likely due to the South Korean belief that the North Korean nuclear crisis will be resolved diplomatically, as will be seen in the next chapter.

CRITICAL THREATS			
<i>Percentage who view each of the following as a "critical threat" to their country's vital interests.</i>			
	SOUTH KOREA		U.S.
International terrorism •	61	International terrorism •	75
North Korea becoming a nuclear power	59	Chemical and biological weapons	66
AIDS, the Ebola virus, and other potential epidemics •	51	Unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers	64
U.S. unilateralism	50	AIDS, the Ebola virus, and other potential epidemics •	58
Global warming •	48	Large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S.	52
The rise of Japanese military power	47	Military conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors	39
Development of China as a world power •	46	Islamic fundamentalism	38
Economic competition from low-wage countries •	29	Global warming •	37
Sino-Japanese rivalry	23	Economic competition from low-wage countries •	35
World population growth •	22	The development of China as a world power •	33
Large numbers of illegal foreign workers	21	World population growth •	30
Tensions between China and Taiwan	16	Tensions between India and Pakistan	18
		Economic competition from Europe	14

Figure 1-3

• Asked in both South Korea and the United States

WHEN COUNTRIES CAN GO TO WAR

Percentage who say the following conditions best describe when countries, on their own, should have the right to go to war with another country they believe may pose a threat to them.

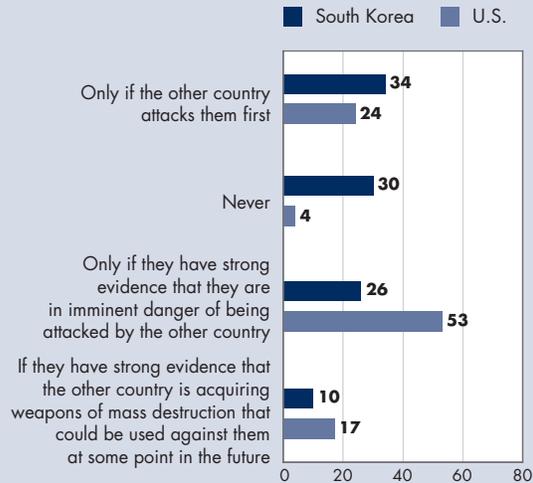


Figure 1-4

Below these security issues is a second tier of closely clustered threats, with about half of South Koreans perceiving them as critical. The threat of AIDS, the Ebola Virus, and other potential epidemics is viewed as critical by 51% of South Koreans and 58% of Americans. Forty-eight percent of South Koreans see global warming as a critical threat, while only 37% of Americans agree. Strikingly, 50% of South Koreans see U.S. unilateralism as a critical threat to the vital interests of South Korea, a slightly higher percentage than say the same for the rise of Japanese military power (47%) or the development of China as a world power (46%). Given the long U.S. military presence in South Korea, the strength of this perception is particularly surprising. Americans are even less concerned about China, with only 33% seeing its development as a world power as a critical threat to the United States.

Regarding economic threats, Americans demonstrate a much higher level of concern about immigrants and refugees coming into the United States (52% critical) than South Koreans do about large numbers of illegal foreign workers coming to South Korea (21% critical). Similarly, a greater number of Americans (35%)

than South Koreans (29%) see economic competition from low-wage countries as a critical threat. South Koreans are also slightly less concerned about world population growth than Americans. Twenty-two percent of South Koreans see it as a critical threat, while 30% of Americans do.

Use of force

South Koreans are considerably more restrained than Americans about when nations can go to war. Fifty-three percent of Americans endorse the view that a country can go to war if it has strong evidence that it is in imminent danger of being attacked by another country, while just 26% of South Koreans agree (see Figure 1-4). A clear majority of South Koreans (64%) instead take the more limiting positions, saying either that a country may only go to war if the other country attacks it first (34%) or that a country may never go to war (30%). Only 28% of Americans take these two positions (24% and 4%, respectively). Both Americans and South Koreans reject preventive war, with only 17% of Americans and 10% of South Koreans agreeing that a country can go to war if it has strong evidence that the other country is acquiring weapons of mass destruction that can be used against it at some point in the future.

South Koreans oppose the use of nuclear weapons by the United States, with 60% saying the United States

U.S. USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Percentage who say the following.

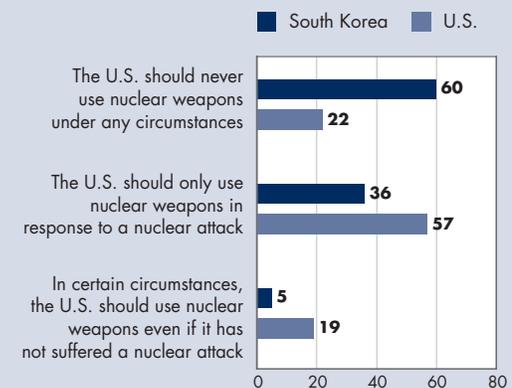


Figure 1-5

should never use nuclear weapons under any circumstances (see Figure 1-5). Another 36% say the United States should only use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack, and only 5% think that in certain circumstances the United States should use nuclear weapons even if it has not suffered a nuclear attack.

American attitudes differ sharply on the use of nuclear weapons. Only 22% think the United States should never use nuclear weapons under any circumstances, while a majority (57%) thinks it should only use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack. Nineteen percent think in certain circumstances the United States should use nuclear weapons even if it has not suffered a nuclear attack.

Despite the strong opposition of South Koreans to the U.S. use of nuclear weapons, a slight majority (51%) agree that South Korea should have nuclear weapons. While South Korea is a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and thus has committed to not developing nuclear weapons, South Koreans appear to see the possession of them as a powerful defensive tool.

This is reinforced by the fact that 75% of South Koreans agree with the statement that to survive in international society requires a strong military capability.

Multilateral institutions

South Koreans overall show somewhat warmer feelings toward international organizations than do Americans. When asked to give a thermometer rating for international organizations on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 degrees meaning very cold, 100 degrees meaning very warm, and 50 degrees being neither cold nor warm, South Koreans give the UN a warm, mean score of 63 degrees, compared to 57 degrees for Americans (see Figure 1-6). This warm feeling among South Koreans may be related to the role the UN played in defending South Korea during the Korean War. Likewise, South Koreans give more favorable ratings to the World Court (57 degrees versus 50 degrees), the European Union (57 degrees versus 49 degrees), and international human rights groups (62 degrees versus 57 degrees).



Figure 1-6

Attitudes towards economic organizations follow a similar pattern, with South Koreans giving warmer ratings to the International Monetary Fund (56 degrees versus 44 degrees), the World Trade Organization (58 degrees versus 48 degrees), and the World Bank (58 degrees versus 46 degrees). The high rating given the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is particularly interesting given South Korea's history with the IMF, from which it received a bailout package in 1997. There is a common perception that countries that go through IMF bailout programs typically have unfavorable attitudes towards the organization, but it appears that South Korea's success in using the program constructively to help restart its economy has positively influenced attitudes towards the IMF and possibly towards other international organizations as well.

Both South Koreans and Americans look very favorably on the World Health Organization (WHO) and want to strengthen it. It is the highest rated organization on both lists, with South Koreans giving it a mean score of 65 degrees, compared to 60 degrees for Americans. A separate question asks whether the WHO should be given extraordinary new powers to intervene in a country to respond to a crisis that threatens world health, even if that country disagrees. Seventy-eight percent of Americans and 75% of South Koreans endorse this idea.

In addition to sharing generally warm attitudes towards the UN, strong majorities in both countries support participating in UN peacekeeping efforts, as mentioned previously, and think the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the UN and abide by them. Eighty-five percent of South Koreans and 66% of Americans agree with the statement that when dealing with international problems, the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice. Correspondingly, South Koreans show a readiness to trust that international institutions are not dominated by stronger countries. A majority (56%) disagrees with the statement that weak countries should not rely on international

institutions like the UN and WTO because they are under the influence of major powers. Forty-four percent agree.

Globalization and trade

While both South Koreans and Americans look favorably upon globalization, South Koreans are more enthusiastic. Eight-one percent of South Koreans say globalization is generally good for South Korea, while a smaller majority (64%) of Americans agree for the United States.

Perhaps most striking, two-thirds of South Koreans favor the creation of a borderless and integrated regional community of East Asian countries, including South Korea, China, and Japan, that would be similar to the EU (see Figure 1-7). Additionally, 78% favor (19% strongly) its creation without U.S. participation. These results are interesting given the long-standing partnership with the United States and South Korea's historical animosity towards Japan. These feelings may be driven by the experience of the 1997 Asian crisis, which led many to focus on new ways to protect the South Korean economy. Also, the proliferation of free trade areas internationally may have made South Koreans conscious of their country's economic isolation and thus want to reach out to new partners. Concern over U.S. trade practices and perceived unilateralism may also be playing a role (see discussion of threats).

South Koreans are fairly negative about the fairness of bilateral trade with the United States. Only 28% think the United States practices fair trade with South

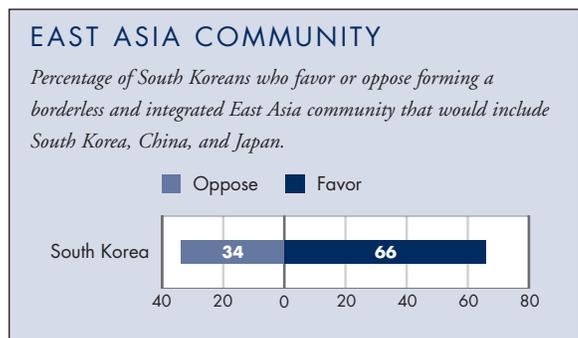


Figure 1-7

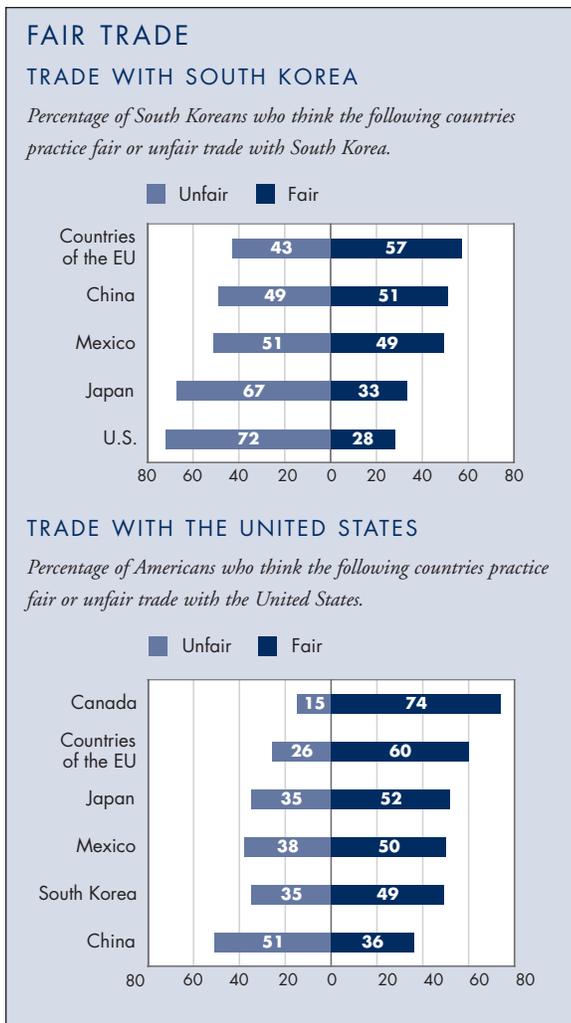


Figure 1-8

Korea, the lowest total for any of the five countries asked about (see Figure 1-8). In contrast, 57% think the EU practices fair trade with South Korea, and 51% think that about China. Only a small majority (52%) thinks South Korea practices fair trade with the United States, ranking fifth out of six countries or groups of countries asked about in terms of South Korea's own trading practices. Only poor countries rank lower, with whom only 47% of South Koreans think their country practices fair trade. By contrast, majorities think South Korea practices fair trade with the EU (74%), China (62%), Japan (58%), and Mexico (53%).

A plurality of Americans (49%) think South Korea practices fair trade with the United States, which is close to the 52% who say likewise about Japan and 13 per-

centage points higher than the 36% who believe China practices fair trade (see Figure 1-8). In contrast, 69% of Americans think the United States practices fair trade with South Korea, a total exceeded only by the 81% who think the same about U.S. trade with Canada and the 76% who say the same about trade with the EU and Japan, respectively. A bare majority (51%) of Americans think the United States practices fair trade with poor countries. This finding is reinforced by the fact that a strong majority of Americans (65%) strongly (23%) or somewhat disagree (42%) that rich countries are playing fair in trade negotiations with poor countries.

Further differences exist in attitudes towards compliance with World Trade Organization (WTO) rulings (see Figure 1-9). A majority of Americans (69%) believe that the United States should make a commitment to comply with WTO rulings that go against it as a result of trade disputes, while a majority of South Koreans (52%) oppose their country making a similar commitment (48% say that it should). This may be due to the fact that South Korea has been the target of international efforts to have it more forcefully apply intellectual property rights rules as well as concerns related to the opening of its agriculture industry.

There is, however, overwhelming agreement on the need for worker protections in international trade agreements. Ninety-three percent of Americans and 89% of South Koreans support requiring the maintenance of minimum standards for working conditions. While economic competition from low-wage countries is not viewed as among the most critical threats facing either



Figure 1-9

country, it is possible that both Americans and South Koreans see this measure as a way of raising production costs in low-wage countries and thus as favorable to developed nations such as the United States and South Korea.

There is also agreement on the need to protect small farmers in each country. Eighty-seven percent of South Koreans favor the South Korean government giving subsidies to small farmers. Likewise, a majority of Americans (71%) favor giving subsidies to farmers who work farms less than 500 acres. However, only 31% favor giving subsidies on a regular, annual basis, compared to 41% who favor such subsidies only in bad years (not asked in South Korea).

Views of countries

While Americans and South Koreans share some similarities in how they look at other countries, there are also some striking differences. Most noticeable among these is how they rate each others' country on the thermometer scale. South Koreans rate the United States warmly, giving it a mean of 58 degrees. However, for Americans, South Korea is in a mid-range, with a mean of 49 degrees (see Figure 1-10). Perhaps most surprising to Americans, South Koreans give China the same mean rating as the United States (58°). Among Americans, China is rated much lower at 44 degrees. Interestingly, South Koreans give North Korea an only slightly cool rating (46°), while Americans give it one of their coolest ratings (28°).

Some other countries given high ratings by South Koreans are also given high ratings by Americans. These include Great Britain (62° from South Koreans, 70° from Americans) and Germany (55° from South Koreans, 58° from Americans). Two additional countries that receive high ratings from South Korea are Canada (57°) and Brazil (55°), neither of which were included in this year's U.S. survey but in past surveys also received warm ratings from Americans.

Two countries that get slightly cool ratings from South Koreans but are a bit more warmly rated by Americans are Mexico (49° from South Koreans, 54°

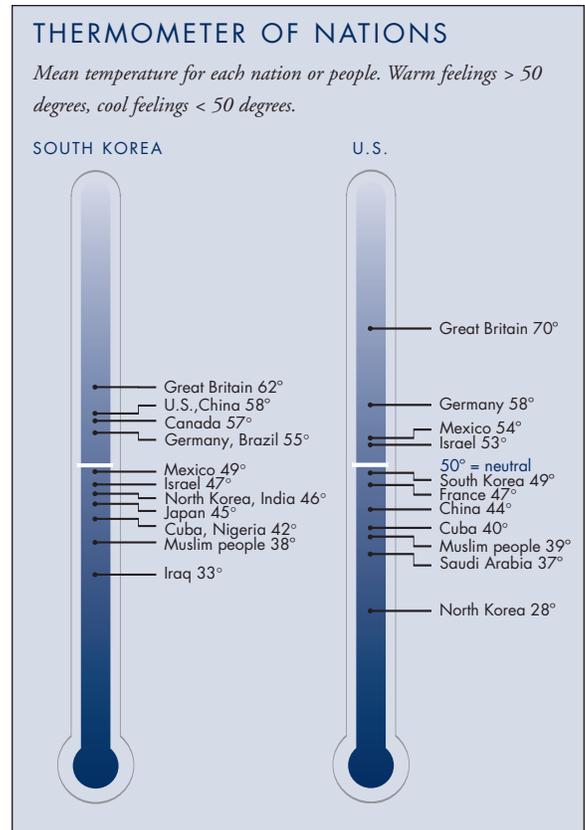


Figure 1-10

from Americans) and Israel (47° from South Koreans, 53° from Americans). Two other countries that receive slightly cool ratings from South Koreans but were not included in the U.S. survey are India (46°) and Japan (45°).

Moving into a cooler range, South Koreans and Americans give similar ratings to Cuba (42° from South Koreans, 40° from Americans). South Koreans also give cooler ratings to Nigeria (42°) and especially Iraq (33°). While not a country, both South Koreans and Americans rate “Muslim people” similarly coolly (38° from South Koreans, 39° from Americans).

CHAPTER TWO

U.S.–South Korea Security Relations

The U.S.–South Korea alliance has been a cornerstone of U.S. strategic policy in Northeast Asia for fifty years. Following the end of the Korea War, during which 33,000 U.S. troops were killed and 101,000 injured, the United States and South Korea signed a mutual defense treaty that committed the United States to defend South Korea from external aggression. As a result, 37,000 U.S. troops were stationed on or near the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea. This forward positioning of U.S. troops in South Korea along with a similar program in Japan has protected South Korea against a possible North Korean strike and prevented the development of a regional arms race.

In recent years, however, fissures have emerged in the alliance related to differences over how to address the North Korean problem, perceived U.S. unilateralism in its international dealings, the Iraq war, and growing anti-American sentiment among Koreans, crystallizing over the U.S. military presence. South Korean relations with North Korea, which had dramatically improved after the 1997 election of President Kim Dae-jung and the subsequent “Sunshine Policy” of engagement, became tense again in 2002 following North Korea’s decision to restart its nuclear program, which had been shut down as part of the U.S.–North Korea Agreed Framework of 1994. The United States has expressed fear that North Korea might sell nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons to terrorist groups or other rogue

states that might, in turn, sell these weapons. As a result, the United States has refused to rule out military options for ending North Korea’s weapons program. South Korea has viewed the U.S. hard-line approach as counterproductive and believes only a negotiated settlement will resolve the crisis.

Concurrently, the United States is significantly lowering its troop levels in South Korea as part of a global military restructuring effort. This is raised concern in South Korea about the U.S. commitment to the alliance and the implications this has for South Korean security. President Roh has asked the United States to delay carrying out this redeployment. He has also sent 700 medical and engineering personnel and 3,000 troops to participate in the U.S.-led peacekeeping efforts in Iraq, largely in an attempt to maintain good relations with the United States and influence U.S. policy towards North Korea.

Despite these recent changes in the security relationship, our findings indicate that South Koreans still think the United States is beneficial to South Korea’s security and would defend it from a North Korean attack. They want U.S. troops to remain, see the United States as South Korea’s preferred partner, and do not think there has been a recent worsening of bilateral relations. Americans want to reduce the number of U.S. troops in South Korea and only support U.S. participation in efforts to reverse North Korean aggression if it

comes as part of a UN-sponsored effort. Both Americans and South Koreans agree that any U.S. military action against North Korea would need to have the approval of the United Nations, most U.S. allies, and the South Korean government.

Bilateral relations and the strategic alliance

Despite stresses in U.S.-South Korean relations over the last few years, a majority of South Koreans have warm feelings toward the United States, giving it a mean response of 58 degrees on the thermometer rating. A 53% majority give the United States a rating above 50 degrees and only 22% rate it below 50 degrees. Americans rate South Korea a more neutral 49 degrees, with 31% giving it a rating above 50 and 30% a rating below 50 degrees.

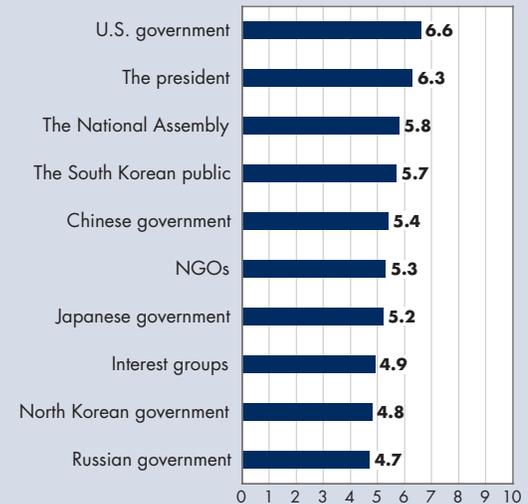
Surprisingly, given the high level of concern expressed in both South Korea and the United States over recent policy differences, most South Koreans (54%) do not think there has been a change in bilateral relations since the inauguration of President Roh Moo-hyun in December 2002. Still, a sizable number of South Koreans (31%) believe relations have worsened, while only 15% think they have improved.

South Koreans perceive the United States as having an extraordinary level of influence. Asked to assess the level of influence of various actors on South Korean foreign policy on a 10-point scale (with 0 indicating not at all influential and 10 indicating extremely influential), the United States ranks first, with a mean score of 6.6 (see Figure 2-1). Fifty-eight percent give the United States a score of 7 or higher. Remarkably, the U.S. mean score is higher than those for the South Korean president (6.3), National Assembly (5.8), or the South Korean public (5.7).

On balance, South Koreans appear to support the status quo in South Korea's relations with the United States. On the question of what would be the most desirable U.S.-South Korean relationship on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning an independent foreign policy without U.S. interference, 10 meaning a strengthened

INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE AND GROUPS ON FOREIGN POLICY SOUTH KOREA

Mean level of influence that the South Korean public thinks the following people or groups have on South Korean foreign policy on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning not at all influential and 10 meaning extremely influential.



UNITED STATES

Mean level of influence that the American public thinks the following people or groups have on U.S. foreign policy on the 0 to 10 scale.

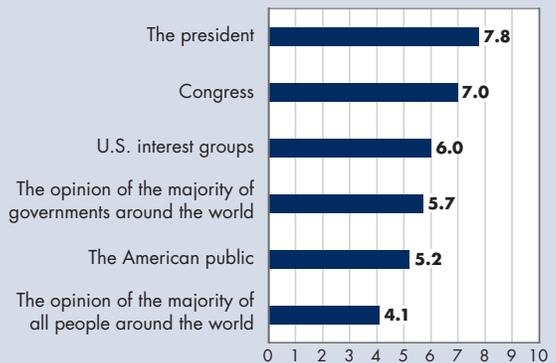


Figure 2-1

South Korea-U.S. alliance, and 5 meaning the status quo, the mean response is 5 (chosen by 32%). Thirty-seven percent of South Koreans choose a number from 6 to 10, calling for a strengthened alliance, while only 31% choose a number from 1 to 4, calling for more South Korean independence.

A majority (59%) also wants to keep the alliance after the reunification of the Korean peninsula, with 53% saying it should be maintained at its current level and 6% saying the alliance should be increased. Thirty-one percent want to maintain the alliance at a reduced level after reunification, and only 9% want to terminate the alliance at that point.

In addition, despite their preference for creating an integrated and borderless East Asian community that excludes the United States (see section on globalization and trade in Chapter 1), South Koreans still see the United States as South Korea's preferred partner (see Figure 2-2). When asked which of five countries or groups of countries South Korea should most cooperate with, a majority pick the United States (53%). This is followed by China (24%), the EU (10%), Japan (4%), and Russia (1%). The sizable gap separating the United States from China is worth noting. Many had thought recently that South Korean public opinion had tilted decisively towards China, a belief that is clearly refuted by the results on this question.

South Koreans, thus, clearly support a strong bilateral relationship and alliance with the United States. However, there is still concern about perceived U.S. unilateralism and how this might influence U.S. policy towards North Korea. As seen in the first chapter, half of South Koreans list U.S. unilateralism as a critical threat to the interests of South Korea, 56% reject the idea of the United States playing the role of world policeman, and 85% think the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations.

A large majority (78%) of South Koreans view America as beneficial to South Korea's security (42% "significantly," 36% "a bit"), while only 12% think the United States is threatening (9% "a bit," 3% "significantly"). Just 10% believe that the United States has no impact on South Korea's security. In addition, it appears that a majority of South Koreans endorse the strategic premise that U.S. forces in South Korea act as a stabilizer for East Asia as a whole. A 60% majority say they support the role of U.S. forces in South Korea as a regional stabilizer that may have to engage in military



Figure 2-2

conflicts beyond the peninsula, while 40% say this force should confine its role to the deterrence of a North Korean military attack.

A near unanimous 89% of South Koreans think the United States would contribute military forces to reverse the aggression if North Korea were to attack South Korea (see Figure 2-3). However, support for doing so among the American public is not quite so unequivocal and depends on the presence of a UN approval and the participation of other countries. A majority (64%) say they would support this use of troops if the United States were contributing military forces together with other countries to a UN-sponsored effort. But when it is not specified that such action would be part of a multilateral effort, only 43% say they would favor the United States using U.S. troops to defend South Korea from an attack by North Korea, while 51% say they would be opposed.

U.S. military presence in South Korea

A majority of South Koreans find the current number of U.S. troops acceptable, though a majority of Americans find them too many. When told at the time of the survey that the United States had 37,000 troops in South Korea, 57% of South Koreans said that level was about right, 35% said it was too many, and only 8% said it was too few. However, 52% of Americans

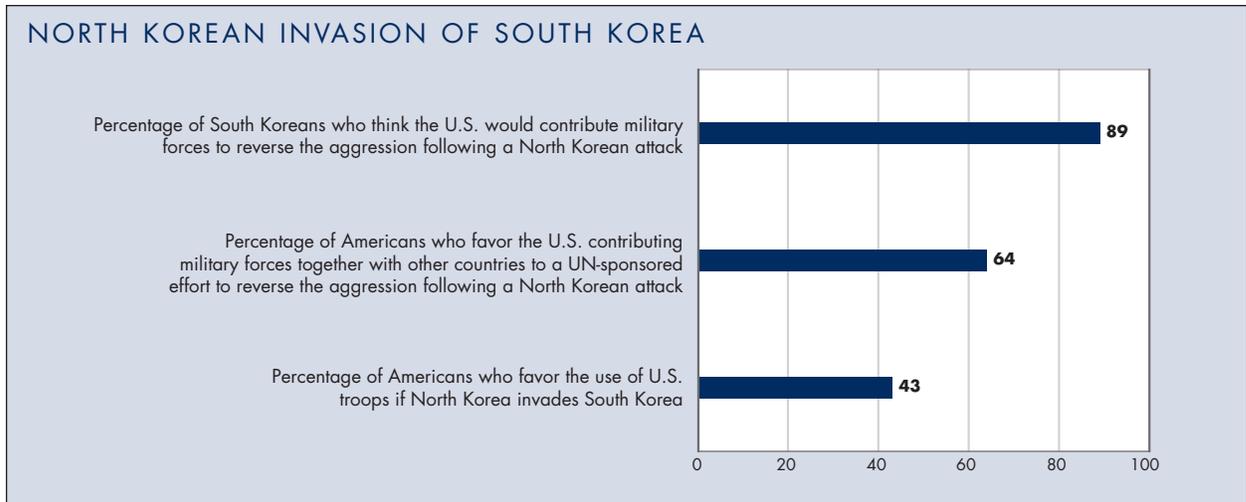


Figure 2-3

said this was too many troops, while 34% of Americans said the levels were about right, and only 7% said this was too few.

At the same time, South Koreans do not appear overly concerned about current discussions on lowering U.S. troop levels. When told that officials in Washington have proposed reducing the number of U.S. troops in South Korea by about one-third and then asked to choose between saying that this would be good or bad for South Korea’s security, 60% think this would be good (11% very, 49% somewhat), while 40% say it would be bad (6% very, 34% somewhat). A separate question asked in the United States finds that 53% of Americans think there would be no net effect to South Korean security as a result of reducing troop levels by one-third.

Despite support for reductions, 62% of Americans support the United States having long-term military bases in South Korea. Most South Koreans anticipate U.S. forces being drawn down at some point in the future, but not immediately. Offered four choices about how long forces should remain, only 13% say U.S. forces should remain indefinitely, while just 6% respond they must withdraw immediately. A plurality (43%) thinks U.S. forces should be withdrawn gradually in stages, and another 38% think they should remain in South Korea for a considerable period. Thus, 81% of South Koreans favor U.S. forces remaining in South Korea for a considerable, but not permanent, period of time.

Attitudes towards North Korea

South Koreans have different feelings about North Korea than do Americans. Asked to rate their feelings about North Korea on the thermometer scale, Americans give North Koreans one of their coolest ratings (28°). South Koreans, however, give a mean rating of 46 degrees, with 59% giving a rating of 50 degrees (neutral) or warmer. This is in the range that Americans give to South Korea (49 degrees) and France (47 degrees). It should be noted that North Koreans are still essentially “family” for South Koreans.

South Koreans also show support for giving economic aid to their brethren in the north, though there is some desire to shift its emphasis and maybe to decrease the amount. In a question about aid to North Korea that offers four response options, only 24% choose the option that aid should be stopped immediately because it will not bring change in North Korea. Fifty-percent think economic aid should be confined to humanitarian purposes. Another 21% simply say such aid should remain at the current level (which includes some capital investment projects). Only a tiny minority (5%) say aid should be expanded.

When South Koreans are asked about the “Sunshine Policy” of seeking warmer ties and making some capital investments in North Korea, only 19% want to drop this policy for a harder line, a modest

52% majority want to keep it as it is, and 29% want to strengthen it. Fifty-six percent of Americans favor having diplomatic relations with North Korea, but only 31% support trade relations.

Resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis

North Korean nuclear proliferation is of great concern to both South Koreans and Americans. A clear majority of South Koreans (59%) view North Korea becoming a nuclear power as a critical threat to South Korea, while 64% of Americans think the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers is a critical threat. North Korea, included in President Bush’s “axis of evil” along with Iraq and Iran, is widely considered one of the most hostile countries to the United States.

Most South Koreans (75%) think North Korea already has nuclear weapons, with only a quarter thinking that this has not already happened. Perhaps for this reason, only 39% say they would feel very threatened if North Korea had nuclear weapons, while 49% say they would feel a bit threatened, and 12% would not feel threatened. In addition, almost half of South Koreans (49%) think North Korea is either significantly (27%) or a bit (22%) beneficial to South Korean security,

while only 41% consider it significantly (16%) or a bit (25%) threatening.

Possible reasons for why these threat perceptions are not higher may be that many South Koreans have already mentally assimilated a part of this possible risk and think the crisis will be resolved peacefully. Sixty-one percent believe North Korea will give up its nuclear development programs through negotiations, with 52% saying this will take much time but will happen eventually and 9% saying it will happen soon. Nineteen percent believe major countries, including the United States, will recognize North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons and learn to live with a nuclearized North Korea. Only 19% think the crisis will escalate into military conflict in the Korean peninsula due to North Korea’s refusal to denuclearize (see Figure 2-4).

Similarly, 76% think the North Korean nuclear question can be resolved either through dialogue between the United States and North Korea (50%) or through diplomatic pressure against North Korea (26%). Only 21% think economic sanctions against North Korea could lead to a resolution, and a mere 3% think military action could work. The three most critically important actors in resolving the crisis are seen as the United States (58% critical), South Korea (58% critical), and North Korea (55% critical). Thirty-seven percent feel that China is critically important, while Russia (18%) and Japan (17%) are seen as lesser actors.

Despite their strong belief that the crisis will be resolved diplomatically, South Koreans do not rule out certain multilaterally endorsed military actions against North Korea. Respondents were asked, “Suppose North Korea continues to develop nuclear weapons. Please select whether you would support or oppose the United States using military force to destroy North Korea’s nuclear weapons capability under each of the following circumstances.” Respondents were then each given one of eight different scenarios in which three factors were varied—whether the UN approved, allies approved, and whether South Korea approved. If all three of these conditions are positive—i.e. the UN, allies, and South Korea approve—a striking 80% of South Koreans say they also approve. However, if any one of these factors is not posi-

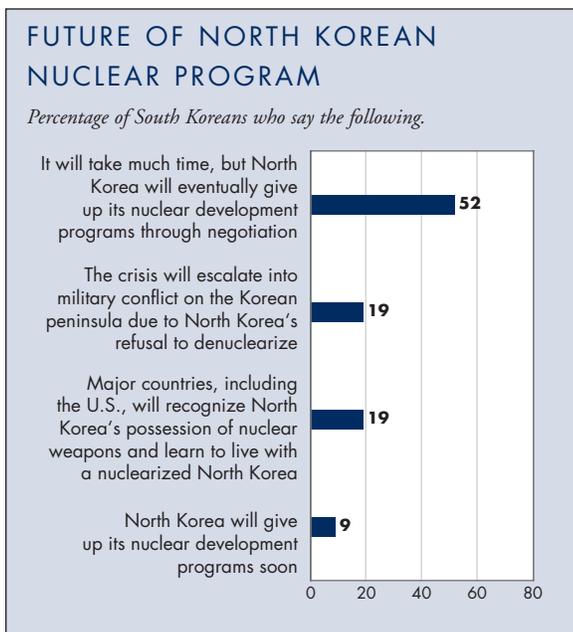


Figure 2-4

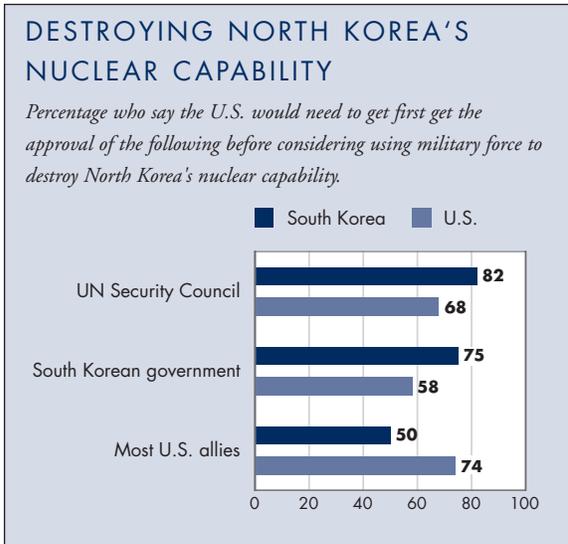


Figure 2-5

ive, support drops sharply. If the UN and South Korea approve and allies do not, approval is 38%. Every other variant has approval ratings that range from 9% to 27%.

Also, when asked directly if it would be necessary to get the approval of the UN, U.S. allies, and the South Korean government if the United States were to consider using military force to destroy North Korea's nuclear capability, 82% say that it would be necessary to get the approval of the UN, 75% the approval of the South Korean government, and 50% the approval of U.S. allies (see Figure 2-5). It is not surprising that among South Koreans, concern about support from U.S. allies is lower and concern about support from the South Korean government is higher.

Americans are even more influenced by UN approval. In the question about a possible U.S. attack on North Korea that varied the scenarios for approval, 79% give their endorsement if all three (the UN, U.S. allies, and the South Korean government) approve. When the approval of U.S. allies and South Korea is not obtained, support is lower. But when UN approval is specified, majorities of 59% to 67% always give their approval. With the approval of allies and South Korea only, support is still 52%. In all other cases the percentage drops below a majority, but never anywhere near the extremely low levels of support found among the South Koreans for these options. When Americans are asked directly about whose approval would be necessary for

the United States to use military force to destroy North Korea's nuclear capability, a large majority of 68% (though somewhat less than the 82% among South Koreans) say that UN approval is necessary, 74% that allied approval is necessary, and 58% that approval from the South Korean government is required.

A separate question asked of South Koreans probes the circumstances under which they would approve of a U.S. preemptive military strike against North Korea. Asked to choose among five circumstances for action as well as under no circumstance, 61% find an acceptable reason for carrying out such a strike, most of them related to North Korea's role as a proliferator, with 39% responding that they would not approve of a U.S. preemptive strike under any circumstance (see Figure 2-6). These 61% are divided among the following situations: if North Korea tests nuclear bombs (20%), if North Korea tries to sell nuclear materials to other countries

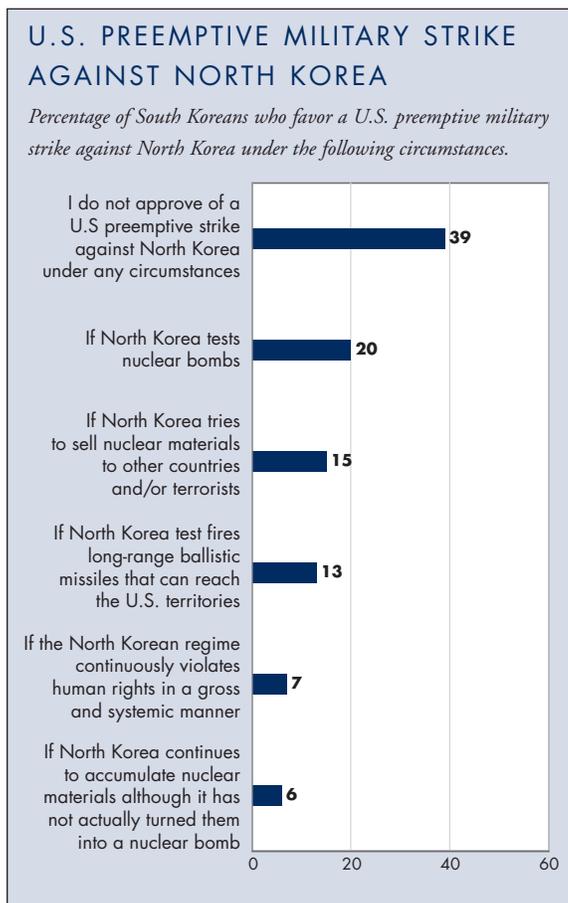


Figure 2-6

and/or terrorists (15%), if it test fires long-range ballistic missiles that can reach the U.S. territories (13%), if it continuously violates human rights in a gross and systematic manner (7%), or if North Korea continues to accumulate nuclear materials without turning them into a bomb (6%). These last two, which are most likely under current circumstances, receive the least support. It should be noted that this question did not specify what level of multilateral support would be obtained, which, as we explored above, could have had a strong impact on the responses.

Reunification

South Koreans show support for reunification even when they are reminded that doing so could be costly, though there is a limit on what they will accept in terms of increased taxes to this end. After being told that reunification would be costly and then asked if they are willing to pay more taxes to share the economic burden of North Korean reconstruction after reunification, only 30% say they are not willing, while 54% say they would

not mind as long as the tax increase is not substantial, and a further 16% is simply not willing to pay more taxes. Furthermore, a large majority (69%) thinks that because reunification will cause many problems, it should be handled cautiously. Only about one in five think it should be accomplished at all costs, but an even smaller minority (9%) says it is undesirable due to economic difficulties or instability.

These attitudes, however, must be viewed in the context of the broad perception, held by nearly three-fourths of South Koreans (74%), that the North Korean regime will eventually collapse. Less than one in five think the North Korean regime will endure.

When asked to evaluate whether other countries' impact on the prospect of reunification is beneficial or threatening, a strong majority (77%) see the United States as beneficial, with 37% saying it is significantly beneficial. China is seen as beneficial by 73%, but only 24% say it is significantly beneficial. Also getting good ratings are Japan, with 56% saying it is beneficial (13% significantly), and Russia, with 54% saying it is beneficial (10% significantly).

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

The South Korea survey

The East Asia Institute commissioned Media Research of Seoul, Korea, to collect data for this survey in South Korea. Media Research conducted face-to-face interviews, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, with a representative sample of 1,000 men and women 20 years or older. All fieldwork for the survey was conducted between July 5 and July 16, 2004.

To obtain this sample, Media Research used a multistage quota sampling strategy. Respondents were chosen by first dividing South Korea into fifteen regions, and a sample size was assigned to each region based on population size. In the next stage, respondents were chosen to correspond with the known age and gender distribution within each region. The survey results are therefore unweighted because the sample created by quota method is demographically representative of the South Korean population.

In the South Korean results, the response of “not sure/decline to answer” is always negligible. “Not sure” was not given as a possible response to interviewees participating in the survey. Though not sure responses were also omitted as a written option on the American survey, it was indicated that if the respondent did not know about the question, they could skip it and continue with the survey. Skipped questions were recorded as a “not sure.” In the South Korean survey, rather than tell

the interviewer that they did not know what they would choose as an answer, most times the respondent chose from the answer options given. In addition, in the face-to-face interviews that took place, if a respondent did not understand the question, interviewers explained the meaning and encouraged respondents to provide one of the given answers. Media Research intentionally did so to minimize the percentages of “not sures.” It is likely that with a different method of surveying such as telephone or Internet, there would have been a higher percentage of “not sures.”

Moreover, in the Korean culture it is not considered acceptable to admit to not knowing about current issues in front of people. Therefore, although some respondents might not have an understanding of the question, most tended to choose from the options given rather than admit not knowing. Similar results are found in other South Korean surveys.

Basing results on the total sample in South Korea, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The U.S. survey

In 2004, for the first time, The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations has conducted its opinion survey of the general public through the Internet. Knowledge

Networks, Inc. (KN) administered the survey between July 6 and July 12 to 1,195 American adults who had been randomly selected from KN's respondent panel and answered questions on screens in their own homes. The margin of sampling error is approximately 3 percentage points.

The KN panel is carefully constructed to ensure that it is representative of the noninstitutionalized adult population of the United States. In contrast to some early Internet surveys, the sample is not self-selected (which can lead to over-representation of computer owners and the affluent, while neglecting technophobes and lower-income people). Instead, a random sample of Americans is selected independently of computer own-

ership and is given free hardware and Internet access in return for participation in the KN panel.

The evidence indicates that KN samples are equal or superior in representativeness to most survey samples interviewed face-to-face (which is extremely expensive) or by telephone (which faces increasing problems due to refusals, call screening technology, and cell phone use) and that the quality of data produced is also equal or superior. Indeed, there are indications that Internet respondents, who can see all response alternatives at once on their screens and can take as much time as they want to answer questions, may tend to answer more deliberately and thoughtfully than is typical of face-to-face or (especially) telephone interviews.

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