

# **The Foreign Security Strategies of the Next U.S. Administration and the Korean Peninsula**

Young Sun Ha, Chairman of the National Security Panel/  
Department of International Relations, Seoul National University

The United States is facing a new era of 'changes'. As the Obama administration enters office, we can expect not only changes within the American society but also, changes within the international community that include the global economy, alliance and security. Then, how will these 'changes' appear? Will these changes hold severance from the Bush administration as a basis? Will these changes be a comprehensive change that includes all fields such as politics, economy and society? Would there be concentrated efforts in specific sectors and if there are, then what would be the intensity of these efforts? And also, would there be any sectors that are not relatively included in these changes?

In order to forecast what paths the ship 'USA' would take with a new helmsman Obama, the current U.S. situations need to be examined. Namely, the 'economic crisis'. When Americans were asked during an exit poll what they considered the most when they voted, 60% of them answered 'economy'. Then 'war in Iraq', 'terrorism', and 'health insurance' accounted for 10% each. Therefore, in order to have an outlook on U.S-Korea relations when the Obama administration comes in office, the '6:1:1:1' structure should be considered as the core.

The U.S. rebuilding, which will set off from the economy, will eventually be linked to rearranging roles and status of the United States in the international community. And this will cause changes in U.S. foreign policy and security strategies. Timely countermeasures accordingly are matters of survival for Korea. However, there is more than just being 'quick'. Pursuing empty countermeasures just to be in the same vein with the Obama administration is not commendable. What is important is the message we can convey to the new United States. The contents we are offering to the U.S. need to be appealing in order to convince and guide the U.S., who strictly follows practicality, to a right path.

The National Security Panel at the East Asia Institute recognizing such sphere has prepared a policy report under the title, 'Foreign Security Strategies of the Next US Administration and the Korean Peninsula'. This report offers appropriate policy proposals through U.S. history and profound analysis that calls upon the past, present and future.

## **The Map of U.S. Alliance Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Prospect through History**

Sang Yoon Ma, International Studies, The Catholic University of Korea

### **Seeing both the changes and continuity**

A prospect that the Obama administration would take upon a new turn of U.S. foreign policy from the eight years of the Bush administration has been presented. It is clear that the new administration will bring significant changes in U.S. foreign policy. However, such changes should not be considered as a fundamental severance from the history because the changes attempted by the new administration will take place without altering the fundamental conditions such as self-identity of the U.S., its diplomatic traditions and characteristics of foreign threats. After the new administration comes in office, it is necessary to recognize the balance of changes and continuity when presenting an outlook on the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

### **Recognizing threats of terrorism and pursuing alliance in transition continue**

The United States will continue pursuing alliances in transition even after the Bush administration as countermeasures to international terrorism. In other words, threats of terrorism and the ways U.S. recognizes them are expected to continue. Therefore, it can be expected that the Obama administration will continuously pursue alliances in transition, an idea centered around war against terrorism. President-elect Obama surely views the war in Iraq differently than the Bush administration in regard to war against terrorism, emphasizing that the war in Iraq is an unnecessary war, unrelated to threats of terrorism. However, although he has a different view on the Iraq war, he still takes terrorism, especially nuclear weapons and threats of global terrorism, very seriously and has clearly stated that the U.S. will not yield in dealing with it.

### **Relative change of status due to economic crisis?**

#### **Strengthening cooperation with the allied nations, not unilateralism**

On the other hand, relative change of status of the U.S. power gives an outlook of certain changes in carrying out the alliance strategies. The draw-out of the Iraq war brought visible and invisible loss on the U.S. status. The U.S. status is relatively falling also because of newly risen economic powers such as Europe, Japan and BRICs. Especially current financial crisis and market stagnation show relative weakness of the U.S. economic strength.

Although the probability of U.S. economic weakening causing weakening of the U.S. diplomatic power cannot be ignored, the relative fall of the U.S. power does not seem to continue on to sudden weakening of the U.S.' global leadership. Although the U.S. economic power declined, U.S. still holds advance status in other fields especially in culture, knowledge, and technology. There is no nation in immediate view that would be able to replace the power that U.S. holds.

However, the United States seems to restrain unilateralism and put weights on strengthening cooperation with the allied nations as its power is relatively declining. And also, as financial crisis and market stagnation require for concentrated U.S. focus on the domestic issues such as economic recovery, the U.S.' will of engagement in the international affairs may weaken. However, the fact that all these possibilities also signify that the United States may request the allied nations for more international contribution should also be carefully considered. It is because the U.S.' intention to save on the expenses will be reinforced by sharing the load of maintaining the world order through cooperation with the main allied nations.

## **President-elect Obama's foreign and security policies and his main agenda (Press Summary)**

**Sang Hyun Lee (Security Studies Program Director, The Sejong Institute)**

### **The Foreign Policy Tone: Resolving International Issues Through Dialogue and Cooperation, Multilateral Security Organization and Partnership**

The basis of incoming Obama administration's foreign and security policies has been to use dialogue and cooperation, multilateral security organization and partnerships to resolve international issues. As a presidential-candidate, Obama criticized the Bush administration's foreign policy approach for their reluctance to engage in dialogue, which Obama saw as a very big problem. The unilateralist approach not only casted the US as arrogant, but it also increased anti-American feelings worldwide. These negative feelings made inroads into US leadership. Presidential-elect Obama argued that the strength of the US alone could not solve the complex issues of terror, nuclear proliferation, and infectious diseases, so therefore not only is the assistance of allies needed, but also help from the leadership of enemy states. Though the use of military force is on the table, stabilization operations at the level of combat missions are expected to focus on economic aid through which softpower can be utilized to earn the goodwill of the people.

### **Main Agenda: Reviving the Economy, Recovering US Moral Leadership at the Global Level, Counter-terrorism and Nonproliferation**

The most pressing issue on the Obama administration's diplomatic and security agenda is jump starting the US economy and recovering the moral leadership of the US at the global level. Those objectives with the issues of counter-terrorism and nonproliferation are the principle issues that will continue to be important.

Even though there will be criticism for government intervention into the free market system, the decision to pass the historically, unprecedented \$700 billion relief loan package shows the seriousness of the financial crisis that is facing the US. In parallel with the Obama administration strengthening economic cooperative efforts of the developed countries to revive the international economy, it is expected that effort will also be made to resuscitate the economies of the other countries.

Obama has publically pledged to withdraw US troops in Iraq by 2010. In terms of Iran, Obama has stated that he is willing to meet with the Iranians without preconditions and at a moment's notice within the purview of presidential power. Obama sees that it is possible to resolve the issues in this region by providing economic assistance and having diplomatic relations with Iraq and Iran as normal nations and

not as military objectives.

In terms of nuclear security, within 4 four years Obama is planning to seal safely the nuclear weapons that have been maintained in a lax manner and to strengthen the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty regime and for countries like North Korea and Iran, who are not living up to their responsibilities within the system, to be faced automatically with measures. For this purpose, Obama has stated that the IAEA budget should be doubled. In the case of North Korea, Obama revealed that though he is willing to talk; he will not be yielding, but “tough” discussions.

In regards to alliance policy, Obama has openly proposed that NATO needed to be strengthened to confront the new security threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He also expressed without exception the importance of the alliances in Asia, He sees the need to strengthen the alliances with Korea, Japan, and Australia to ensure the continuation of the peace and prosperity enjoyed by them, which means the need to construct an alliance infrastructure that has direction and at the same time a creation of a multilateral security arrangement that goes beyond the bilateral arrangements. Because of this view, the Obama administration is expected to continue Korea-US alliance as the “21<sup>st</sup> century strategic alliance.”

Finally, in terms of energy and environmental issues, the goal of the Democratic Party’s energy policy is that through the decrease in oil consumption the dangers from global warming will decline. Going forward, the Democratic Party has put forth a platform to inject \$150 billion into alternative energy development over a 10 year period, to decrease crude oil consumption by 35% by 2030, and to decrease greenhouse gas emissions to 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. It is the position that alternative energy needs to be fostered by the government rather than left to invisible hand of the market.

## A Comparison of Principle Policies in the Diplomatic and Security Areas

	Democratic Party	Republican Party
Basic Security Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Renewing American leadership</li> <li>➤ Main security threats – Proliferation of WMDs, the spread of terrorism by extremists and rogue states, rising states challenging the US and liberal democracy, weak states unable to govern their territory and people, activities supporting extremists, global warming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Peace through strength</li> <li>➤ Possibility for sustained world wide peace is through the determination to secure freedom</li> <li>➤ International cooperation needs to be strengthened for the expansion of international peace</li> <li>➤ Humanitarian rights and US values need to be promoted for international peace and stability</li> </ul>
Weapons of Mass Destruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Prevent nuclear proliferation</li> <li>➤ Block Iranian nuclear possession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Prevent nuclear proliferation</li> <li>➤ Block Iranian nuclear possession</li> </ul>
War on Terror	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Shared Security Partnership Proposal – Share terrorism-related information, contribute funding to uproot terrorism</li> <li>➤ Withdraw US troops from Iraq in 16 months</li> <li>➤ Stationing the fewest number of troops abroad</li> <li>➤ Strengthen War on Terror in Afghanistan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ After victory in the Iraq War, withdrawal of US troops with honor</li> <li>➤ Stationing of US troops until the recovery of Iraqi security</li> <li>➤ Strengthen War on Terror in Afghanistan</li> </ul>
Korea Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Important ally</li> <li>➤ FTA revision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Value sharing ally</li> <li>➤ Supports Lee Myung Bak administration's policies</li> <li>➤ Supports FTA</li> </ul>
North Korea Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ North Korea is a rogue state</li> <li>➤ Attempt at using diplomatic solution to resolve the nuclear issue</li> <li>➤ Possible direct talks with Kim Jong Il</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ North Korea is a maniacal state.</li> <li>➤ Resolution to the North Korea nuclear crisis is CVID</li> <li>➤ Korea-US-Japan cooperation</li> </ul>

## **Predictions about Obama Administration's Security Strategy: Public Declarations and Reality**

**Dong Sun Lee (Korea University)**

### **Issues Facing the New Obama Government**

The election of Barack Obama means that change is coming to the US security strategy, but it is difficult to see a sudden departure from the current strategy. Because the Iraq War and the financial crisis, the principle issues facing the US are problems that can not be resolved in the short run. Furthermore, the US political, economic, and military resources have been exhausted, so it will be difficult for President-elect Obama to reshape the international order to his ideal.

### **Cautious Expansion of a Values-based Alliance**

The next government will take a more cautious approach in expanding a values-based alliance. Obama has emphasized the need to prevent nuclear proliferation by strengthening the security of nuclear-related facilities and materials. To realize this goal, it is necessary to have the cooperation of the Russians. If the expansion of NATO is advanced, then the Russians will be antagonized and this will work to the detriment of a nuclear-secured world. In addition, because China's cooperation is needed to strengthen PSI, the possibility is high that even the cautious efforts to promote a democratic alliance in Asia will be seen by China as an effort to contain China.

### **Utilizing International Organizations/Multilateral Diplomacy and the Pursuit of Direct Dialogue**

Though the Obama government will be aggressive at utilizing international organizations and multilateral diplomatic vehicles, we must not automatically exclude the possibility of unilateral action. In certain cases, a unilateral strategy can be adopted, which Obama has repeated in his campaign speeches. According to his presidential campaign speeches North he would be willing to talk directly with Korea and Iran and so it is possible he would not be able to take into account the opinions of the affected countries.

### **Limit the Use of Offensive Military Strategies**

The next administration will limit as one can offensive military strategies such as preemptive strike and preventive war. The use of military power will be reduced to allow for the realization of the idealized goal: the growth of democracy. However, this does not mean that the use of military power will be abandoned. Obama has stated throughout the campaign that he will not exclude the military option in the denuclearization negotiations with North Korea and Iran. However, due to the expected severe damage and costs of such an action, in reality the possible use of the military option on North Korea and Iran is slim.

### **Nuclear Proliferation Problem**

In responding to the nuclear proliferation problem, as stated in his speeches Obama is willing to talk to Iran and other involved countries without preconditions. This effort will help the Six-Party Talks to achieve a certain level of success, but the complete dismantlement of the nuclear program and verification issues, which in the later phase is expected to undergo difficult negotiations. Thus, in the eventuality diplomatic efforts would run up against an obstacle, there is a possibility that the Obama administration will take a play out of the Republic Party play book and opt to go with a hard line strategy.

Moreover, the US during the period of NPT violations is seen to be aggressively promoting automatic sanctions and the proposed securing of uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel rod reprocessing facilities as a way to strengthen the NPT regime, but it not possible to be optimistic about the success of such actions. Should the level of security anxiety not decline, the majority of countries will choose not to abandon the option of developing nuclear weapons, and to prevent the reliance on a third country for their nuclear fuel rod supplies.

### **Deepen Close Economic Ties Through Free Trade**

The Obama government will promote deeper economic ties through free trade. In the beginning of his term, Obama will accept the automobile and other special industrial sector labor demands and promote fair trade, while there may be an increase in trade pressures with the principle trading nations, but the administration will not stray too far from the basic principles of free trade. The reason is that because various economic sectors demand support for free trade and the positive trade effects on the whole economy can not be ignored.

## **The Obama Administration's East Asia and Korean Peninsula Policy**

**Seongho Sheen (GSIS, Seoul National University)**

**It will be difficult for the East Asia Policy to become a top priority.**

### **The Pursuit of a Stable Asia through a Pragmatic and Realistic Approach**

Obama's foreign policy priority will be in the following order the recovery from the economic crisis, the War on Terror in the Middle East region, East Asia and alliance policies of which the Iraq situation and War on Terror are the dependent variables. If the Iraq and Afghanistan situation does not resolve itself quickly, the Obama administration will have to take a more pragmatic and realistic approach to promote stability in Asia.

### **China Policy: The Outstanding East Asia Question About a Shared Partnership**

In the long-run when gauging the rise of China, China is being acknowledged as a responsible stakeholder with its participation in the Six-Party Talks, the stable maintenance of the One China policy, East Asia's multilateral security cooperation. The Obama administration is promoting a cooperative relationship with China so that the important issues facing Asia can be properly addressed.

### **Japan Policy: Pursuing a Balanced Alliance**

Japan continues to be acknowledged as a close Asia alliance partner, who has basic values in common with the US. However, if in the previous administration had an overly close relationship with Japan, the Obama administration is expected to have a more balanced policy and relationship with Korea, other allies, and China.

### **Korean Peninsula Policy: A Flexible and Pragmatic Approach a Legacy of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bush Administration**

The foremost Korean Peninsula issue with the most resilience will be the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue at the Six-Party Talks. Obama revealed during the campaign at various times that he is willing to have direct talks with the North. But, in a similar context, the offer of membership into the World Trade Organization, economic investment, diplomatic normalization with the US as part of a US compensation package that was offered to Iran, the North Koreans were offered the proposed package in a similar context for complete verification on North Korea's nuclear program dismantlement to signify their denuclearization. However, in contrast to the hard line, conservative tone of the Republicans, Obama's direct dialogue efforts may result in a North Korea demanding more compensation and a brinkmanship-type of response from the North. The North's delay tactics and an Obama confronted with foreign and domestic criticisms could switch to a more hard line policy like militaristic posturing of the 1994 Clinton response, which could bring about another crisis.

In regards to the Korea-US alliance, the return of wartime operations control and the US military's

strategic flexibility will continue to be promoted as Korea's defenses become Koreanized, so that the US could use its resources that would have gone to US troops stationed abroad would be used instead to help the US recover from the financial crisis. At the same time, it can be expected that the US will request that Korea act on promise by the Lee Myung Bak administration to make contributions to world and regional peace with ROK military troops. For instance, should the War on Terror in Afghanistan accelerate, Korea could be ask to participate. On the other hand, should the US-China political and military relations become amicable then Korea can push for a strategic cooperative partnership with China, which should give Korea some breathing room.

The East Asia and Korean Peninsula political and military policies of the next administration to be inherit from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bush administration will be more a flexible and pragmatic approach, than the previous hard line and aggressive approach of Bush's first term.

### **An Economic-Centered Foreign Policy Could Create New Tensions**

The problem is that the Obama administration's economics-centered foreign policy could create new tensions for East Asia and the Korean Peninsula. Obama during his campaign pointed to unfair trade practices by foreign countries and that overseas cheap labor costs were a few of the principle causes of a weak US economy and rising unemployment. Obama took the position that China's manipulation of its currency and unfair trade practices were the expressions of China's rise, and he was also critical of the Korea-US FTA. Of course, to overcome the global economic crisis, Obama needs to closely cooperate with China who holds about \$2 trillion in their reserves.

However, should the new Obama administration to resolve domestic unemployment and to get the US trade balance into the black, one method would be to demand of China the following: currency revaluation and a reform of unfair trading practices, and a tightening up of China's labor conditions, and environmental reform. But, then the US-China relationship will result in serious friction. In the same vein, before next year's KORUS FTA ratification the automobile sector or rice and beef industry sectors should be renegotiated, and if Korea were to request the same labor conditions and environmental protection as the US, then the same problems that arose during the Mad Cow Crisis and other trade frictions will result.