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Korea Chapter

FOREIGN AREA OFFICER ASSOCIATION



"Producing the premier leaders of the Republic of Korea-United States Alliance since 2020"

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A Message from Major General Mark Gillette

REFLECTIONS ON 29 YEARS OF FAO SERVICE

In 1992 I started FAO training - a language refresher followed by ICT in Hong Kong. I returned to Aviation from 1994 – 1996, then started FAO full time and never looked back. 40 years serving our country and 29 serving the Army as a Foreign Area Officer. For anyone interested, I can send you my Joint Foreign Area Officer Course (JFAOC) and FAO gathering presentations where I lay out thoughts on leadership, FAO functions/skills, DODIs, AR, PAM requirements and a laundry list of what I have learned in 29 years.

I will not provide a list of leadership traits here – every senior leader has their own take on what makes a good officer, you have heard many, you will hear more. BLUF: Exemplify the Officer Traits you learned as a cadet before commissioning, namely the five essential characteristics of the Army Profession – Military Expertise, Honorable Service, Trust, Esprit de Corps, and Stewardship of the Profession. Wrap that in an ethical foundation – Legal and Moral– and you will do fine.

I will also not talk about FAO functional responsibilities or skills. See the appropriate DODIs, PAMs, ARs, and my (and other's) presentations. They are critical to success as a FAO – learn them, live them, be them. They are the foundation of your branch and just as tankers are judged on their success on Gunnery Tables, you are judged on your success executing our specific skills.

What I want to talk about is what I saw over the past 30 years – not with an eye to the future, we know the precarious future of FAO branch and Army cost cutting, and not with an eye to 30 years of change – our skills are more important today than ever before, while we fight the same battles using the same PowerPoint presentations – updated, but eerily similar. **Note:** Pay attention to what your senior FAOs are writing and saying, they are deeply involved in the Army's decision-making process and are fighting to protect our branch – you need to do your part as well. Yes, the knives are out – but for every branch. You prove every day why FAOs, and the FAO training pipeline are so important. If in doubt, see BG Harmon's May 2023 comments for proof.



Ok, so what did I do different? Nothing that I would not expect of you. The key to success up to COL is hard work, from there on – a little bit of luck, as it is for most General Officers. As GEN Odierno once said to a group of newly minted BGs (I was one) – I could replace all of you tomorrow, the dividing line is that thin. I approached each job as if it was the last job I was going to have in the Army. Yes, retiring as a LTC was, and is, a successful career. FAO COLs were few and far between, so I had options to retire in Mongolia when selected for COL. I had a complete business plan to retire in Cambodia when selected for BG. I bought a house the year before I was selected for MG – which I now get to live in 6 years later.

I did each job to the best of my ability, focused on advancing Army and USG interests. I never played politics, I spoke truth to power, (never try to BS a senior leader – military or civilian) and I was prepared to retire if the numbers went against me.

OPENING MESSAGE

Yes, this caused friction with desk officers and senior leaders in Defense Intelligence Agency, Combatant Commands (COCOMs), JS, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and the Inter-Agency – if you don't have friction, you are not doing the job right or you have a phenomenal desk officer. If you can brief senior leaders based on your expertise, experience, demonstrated competence (see functional responsibilities and skills), and have the facts on your side you will (usually) succeed. **Note:** No surprises! I always kept leadership informed - especially when I knew I was bucking predominant thinking. Senior leaders hate surprises.

So I have two things on which I will focus, plus a couple asides. First, FAO leadership - it is "small unit" leadership at its finest. Whether in country or on a staff, you will work with a small group of dedicated, senior NCO and Officer colleagues usually well trained for the task at hand (there is always the 5 percent that did not get the word – thus the need for your leadership). As a LTC SDO/DATT I had one AF NCO and 4 Foreign Service Nationals (FSN). As a BG I led a diverse team of 25-35 people of all services, including civilians. I thought I had peaked as a MG with 50+ U.S. military and civilians and a team of FSNs. I was wrong, I led a larger unit as a 2LT aviation battalion 3/5 platoon leader.

Concurrent with small unit leadership in country or on a staff, is your opportunity to lead outside the chain of command. We expect you to influence senior host nation government officials, the entire inter-agency, OSD, JS, Service Staffs, COCOMs, and component commands. As noted, recognition of your country/regional expertise is invaluable. While other staff also have expertise, and you should learn from them, listen to them, and understand their perspective, you need to be the recognized expert. **Note:** In country, your inter-agency partners are critical to your success – use them! I would never have succeeded without the support of U.S. DoS colleagues.

All of this is easy for me at the end of my time, but how do you succeed in the future? How do you prepare yourself for your next job, to acquire the demonstrated competence and experience that allows you to speak truth to power when someone higher is determined to take the wrong path.

First, determine what you do best and focus – without disregarding the other FAO skills that complement what you do best. **Note:** We are NOT one trick ponies! For me that was working in country, as an attaché and a security cooperation expert. Yes, I frequently ignored advice to "go home" but I wasn't focused on promotion even as a Major, I was focused on enjoying the feeling of accomplishment working with our Allies and Partners and seeing them advance. However, take my advice now – go do a tour in the NCR or at a COCOM – you will learn so much that I had to learn as a new GO.



OPENING MESSAGE

Second, and for those who have heard me speak – is the need to understand Perspective. Take the “skills” identified in our base documents and use them to integrate the “Perspective” of the other side into your daily activities. **Note:** The “other side” includes the Host Nation, regional Allies and Partners, our Army, other Services, and our Inter-Agency partners. You must take your knowledge of your host nation (or region) and provide advice and counsel from “their” perspective in “the” perspective of whichever USG senior leaders – civilian or military you brief. Understanding everyone’s culture will help you understand their perspective. If you fail to convince senior leadership of the various perspectives you will fail – but do your best and keep beating on the wall (trust me, I have failed at this repeatedly). While our doctrine says you should be knowledgeable of the operational and tactical application of force, able to advise at the strategic level, possessed of the poise and demeanor required to operate as diplomats, and able to move seamlessly in the political sphere – it leaves out “while understanding multiple perspectives.” Never forget, nations act in their interests (based on their perspective of the situation) – figure out how to align their interests with our interests.

One thing I did that stands out for me today is taking the hard jobs no one else wanted. What China FAO volunteers for Haiti? It is easy to bid on first world, quiet countries, or staff positions running 9-5 days. However, crisis thrives in the seams, and as we know, a once quiet COCOM (EUCOM) can suddenly become the crisis de jure. I am not saying you should look for a crisis, perhaps good for your career, usually bad for the host nation and regional partners. What you need to do is make every job important.



For me, Haiti and Mongolia were two off the radar countries when I arrived. In both countries I found a unique situation that allowed a FAO to chart a new path. In Haiti I was responding to “coups” and with the embassy team, maintaining Haiti as a recovering democracy. In Mongolia I sent coalition forces to Iraq and Afghanistan and worked with DoD and the Inter-Agency to provide millions in capacity building dollars.



How do you acquire the expertise and recognized competence? Non-stop learning. This is the key to acquiring and developing the FAO skills and functions, gaining the requisite knowledge, experience and expertise such that when you speak, senior leaders listen. Never stop learning. You will never know enough about the Army, other services, the Inter-Agency, and particular your region (or the region in which you are currently working). Know the regulations and instructions that govern what you do, this include the DIAM, the Green Book and the State Department FAM. Know these better than your OPSCO and the rest of your staff. The regulations are the key to accomplishing new things – what you can do, and the key to staying out of jail – what you cannot do. There is a fine line, and it should be more important to you because your staff wants to do good, you want to excel.

For the past decade I have been talking about FAO activities from a sociology aspect. FAOs, like our inter-agency partners, deal with the complexity of the human mind – and often minds not set in a Western pattern. As soldier/diplomats whether you are working as an attaché, a SCO, or as a staff officer you are dealing with people. If you do not take the time to learn about “people,” you will eventually fail. It is important to have knowledge of international relations – but at the lowest level international relations are the relations between people. Take the time to understand not only the culture of your country/region, but the sociology lying beneath. My home library still has every book from my Masters in Social Science and the knowledge therein provided a strong base for my success.

Taking care of oneself and subordinates

Find the "Balance – Unit vs. Personal Time" slide. Is it perfect – no. It is however a good reminder that no matter how important the mission of the day may be – sometimes Life and Family are more important. A good reminder for leaders on how to take care of subordinates and their families.

Also, "R.E.S.T. (read, exercise, sleep, think)" is a good personal start. It leaves out family/social but has two key components - "think" and "read." Schedule time in your day to "think" – put it on your calendar for 30 minutes or an hour daily. "Read" is one my favorites – ties in with Learning - whether you are reading doctrinal material, fiction or non-fiction, reading is key to learning (yes, podcasts are available as substitutes for books, so find out how you learn best).

Language vs Personality

Language ability is a key skill for FAOs. Many of us have had the opportunity (or will) to serve as interpreters for DVs visiting our country. More of us have found the ability to converse with our Host Nation counterparts (or the soldier on the tank during a field visit) as beneficial, whether acting as an attaché or security cooperation planner. Even better is to strive for competency (not fluency) in several languages – third country nationals are an excellent avenue into what is happening in the host nation and the greater region as well. I once attended a dinner in the Philippines where I was speaking (poorly, but engagingly) English, Tagalog, Spanish, and Chinese.

However, given the reduction in AOCs and the advent of AIM we are seeing more and more FAOs filling out of AOC billets. While this is good, more opportunities for more FAOs worldwide, it comes with a catch – out of AOC FAOs still need to communicate with the host nation and understand the region. Having served out of AOC several times and observed how FAOs in our sister services operate - often without the requisite language training, I will repeat again – I would prefer a 1/1 with a personality over a 3/3 dud. Communication is not just a matter of speaking the native language, communication is developing a relationship, understanding the culture, and/or identifying those in the host military/third country nationals with whom you can speak. And my favorite – learning just enough to be able to tell several jokes in the vernacular. I have seen my wife spend an entire evening communicating with a Mongolian lady – neither of whom were more than 1+ in the other's language.

Do I want 3/3 FAOs with personality – of course, especially for my assistant attachés. When a crisis occurs or a DV arrives it is always better to have a modicum of ability. Someone has to respond to the earthquake/typhoon/tsunami. But if circumstances conspire not to give you the training, you need to figure out how to succeed.

For those that do not know, I am an introvert and my wife is an extrovert on steroids. By 2130 I am hiding in the corner hoping everyone leaves while she is organizing a new game or Conga line – blocking the exits to keep people in. Introversions should not hold you back from doing your job. It is more difficult, but again, developing methods of communication – whether with foreigners or U.S. inter-agency partners is key to achieving your goals.

Personal Gripes

I want to focus on a few issues with which many senior leaders take issue. First, if asked a yes or no question – answer with Yes or No. Senior leaders likely have background information and may be seeking clarity. Do not waste time with a soliloquy or hedging your answer. If the senior leader has a need for more information they will ask for more information. Basically, if they ask what time it is you would not tell them how to build a clock.

Second, do not build the perfect ladder against the wrong wall or make Italian sausage when the boss wants Polish kielbasa. If you are unsure of the task – ask questions. Do NOT spend hours working on a presentation/brief that is not answering the questions or providing the appropriate information. I have yet to see a Senior Leader refuse to provide additional guidance when asked. As a corollary to that – if you are the senior leader or the one doing the tasking provide specific guidance up front. As the one in charge, if you want to accelerate improvement – be specific in telling subordinates what you want. This is not "talking down" to people - we follow orders better than we read minds.

On e-mail etiquette, send it "TO" me... I rarely look at "CC" emails, unless from my Boss. Don't make me read the email trail to find out the latest information/query. In the Subject line you can open with: "Decision required" or "Info only."



On e-mail etiquette, send it "TO" me... I rarely look at "CC" emails, unless from my Boss. Don't make me read the email trail to find out the latest information/query. In the Subject line you can open with: "Decision required" or "Info only." Additionally, I have found putting the entire email in the subject line works well. If you can reasonably bound the question or an answer in 10-15 words – do not make me open an email.

Be careful with "reply all," if it is internal to your unit and everyone on the CC line needs to know your response, ok. If it was blasted out to a community – like the FAO community, – they do not need to hear from you. Finally, if you get a "kickback" from an addressee then you resend – do not count on someone else forwarding you email.

In closing I want to reiterate the small unit leadership necessary to be successful as a FAO. We will not command large formations of troops. However, if you think back to your first assignments at Company level Command – did you ever have more fun working with soldiers (or equivalent for our sister services)?

We work with a skilled workforce specially trained and chosen for their positions, everyone is a professional – be considerate of each other – they all want to do good – your job is to give them the tools to succeed. Every day look for some way to make a difference - I know it is rough from a cubicle in the bowels of the Pentagon or DIA HQ, but every job is important and time in the NCR will get you back to the field soon enough. Never forget who you are, who we work for, and why we do it everyday.

Finally, Family is forever – do not forget.

Mark Gillette

Major General Mark Gillette
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All photos courtesy of MG Gillette.

HIGHLIGHTS

On 25 July, the FAOA Korea Chapter attended a Thank You Breakfast for UN Veterans in commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the armistice

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On 13 October, the Chapter attended the 13th ROK-U.S. Alliance Conference & Gala

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On 22 June, FAOA held a Coffee & Chat with GEN(R) Vincent Brooks

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Stay tuned for announcements of exciting new partnerships and opportunities for FAOs

A Message from the President



Dear Members, Partners, and Leaders of the FAOA Korea Chapter,

Since last issue, our first General Officer sponsor Major General Mark Gillette ceremoniously retired after 29 years of service. Given an extensive personal reflection on a storied career in this issue, I will keep my comments brief, but on behalf of the FAOA Korea Chapter, thank you for believing in a group of young officers dabbling in ideas on what to do about the unique concentration of FAOs in Korea.

Your support demonstrated that good ideas have no rank and originality should be welcomed to advance teams and organizations. It was also an inspiration to me and the other founders of the chapter to ensure we rose to your expectations to create something lasting and beneficial not only to FAOs but to connect others across the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational spectrum.

For that you have our lasting gratitude and invitation that you will always have a place to reconnect with FAOs in the Republic of Korea.

Changing gears slightly, I would be remiss not to mention the Israel-Hamas conflict. As the old adage goes, "all security issues are regional." Israel offers an ever-present glimpse into the complexities of war and conflict.

Through North Korea's interactions with Russia and international terrorist organizations, Russia's war in Ukraine and support to North Korea, and China's ubiquitous global brinkmanship, examples of this adage validate it time and time again.

A Korea Military Academy cadet recently asked me what lessons the alliance should be drawing from Israel. The operational and tactical lessons will surely be forthcoming, but as FAOs, it should stand as an example to be vigilant, to prepare for the worst-case scenarios, and that all security issues are intertwined geographically and across domains. It is incumbent upon us not only to be ready but, as our military's "strategic scouts," to provide a deeper understanding of regional dynamics before conflict can occur.

I hope this publication offers one more forum where this can happen and can offer original thoughts and analysis to elevate us all in our profession.

Wei C. Chou
President, FAOA Korea Chapter

A Message from the Editor-In-Chief

Dear Readers,

With 2023 coming to close many of us are likely to reflect on key personal and global events that we have either been a part of, or witnessed. For some such reflection will be a point of pride, for others a reminder of what is to be done, and for some it will be a poignant exercise.

In my day job, I observe across my screen, with global remit, natural disasters, outbreaks of sudden violence and unrest on a weekly, if not near daily, basis. I watch and report as political decisions come with a wealth of complexities, whether they be domestic issues, in response to disasters or in times of conflict.

Whilst I am sure our readers are aware of this, all news outlets contain biases, even incidental ones. As an editor by trade, this is as much about what is published as what is not. Which stories are told as frontpage news, and which are not.

This year, as too many others, the public has been bombarded with casualties, which can easily become unimaginable statistics. Watching 2023's civilian death toll increase has been horrifying. We have seen destructive earthquakes, the continued conflict in Ukraine, a war in Sudan and most recently conflict between Israel and Hamas. Localized conflicts have also occurred, and been underreported, in many states.

Human stories, human lives, remain key to our work. We see the outpouring of protests over various issues because people are socially engaged and aware. Sometimes because they have to be, for example mass inflation and socio-economic disturbances that are having serious effects on security and stability in many countries. But also because, in many cases, they are fighting for something or someone.

Recent regional events include the Biden-Xi summit in the U.S. and both North and South Korea's successful launches of spy

satellites, as well as Kim Jong Un's state visit to Russia. 2024 will likely prove an interesting watch in the region, as ever. If you would like to contribute your thoughts or analysis on recent events, or speculation regarding the future, for us to publish in the next issue then please email us.

In this issue we begin with MG(R) Mark Gillette's reflections on 29 years of FAO service. They come with useful recommendations, and he has generously made his contact details available for those interested in his Joint Foreign Area Officer Course (JFAOC) and FAO gathering presentations.

We begin our analytical articles with Soyong Kwon's analysis of the ROK-U.S. alliance, including recommendations for the future, before moving to the first half of Matt Brazil's evolution of Chinese intelligence services. The second half will appear in our next issue.

Then we have Jennifer Ahn's recommendations for strengthening U.S.-ROK policy coordination in the Indo-Pacific region. Next, Israeli Defense Attaché to the ROK Asaf Livenh provides an opinion piece on the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas and its relevance to the ROK.

Lastly, we close with a FAO Billet profile, U.S. Naval Forces Korea Strategy and Policy Officer, by Natalia Widulinski.

As always thank you to our contributors, the team and our supporters who make publishing this journal possible.

I hope that all our readers have a good end to the year, and start of 2024.

With best wishes,



Emily Stamp

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PITCH AN ARTICLE

If you are interested in pitching an article or book review for the next issue please email:

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The U.S.-ROK Alliance: Past, Present, and Future

By Soyoung Kwon

The U.S.-ROK alliance is a key partnership between the United States and South Korea for promoting regional stability and security in Northeast Asia. It is primarily based on the Mutual Defense Treaty, signed in October 1953 following the Korean War. This bilateral security alliance, though asymmetrical, worked as a security guarantee for South Korea against the spread of communism and aggression of North Korea and China. The strong and firm security relationship, featuring stationed U.S. troops, U.S.-Korea joint training, and the U.S. nuclear umbrella in South Korea, worked as an effective deterrence against North Korea's attack.

Since the 1990s, there has been growing demand for autonomy in security as well as conflicting progressive or conservative discourse in Korea over the U.S.-ROK alliance. A change of administration with different political orientations would view the U.S.-ROK relationship and inter-Korea relations differently, which directly affected the perception of threat and the level of reliance on the U.S. The division of opinion has manifested over the issues of the wartime operational control, negotiations for cost-sharing of the U.S. Forces stationed in Korea, the combined defense posture, and relocation of the U.S. bases. Yet, it never shook the core purpose of the alliance and its foundation based on common vision, values, and purpose.

The U.S.-ROK alliance at 70 faces a new security environment that features the U.S.-China rivalry, the rise of competition in critical and emerging technologies, and a revolution in military affairs based on artificial intelligence as seen in the Ukraine war. Since the new trends obscure the distinction between security and economic interests and between the areas of competition and cooperation, the common interests in the U.S.-ROK alliance need to be redefined.

Addressing the question of "why alliances endure or collapse?", Stephen Walt points out four critical factors: 1) common interests and goals, 2) dependability and credibility in commitments, 3) equity in benefits and costs of the alliance, and 4) domestic politics with strong domestic support (2). The status of the U.S.-ROK alliance shows some signs of challenges in these areas.

Divergent interests that lead to disagreements over policy and trade imbalances can undermine the security commitment based on common interests. Mixed messages, misleading gestures, and unclear conversations can undermine the dependability and credibility of the allies. The financial pressure can also pose questions on the benefits and costs of the alliance. The new security issues add uncertainty to existing dynamics in the relationship. The endurance or collapse of an alliance depends on a complex interplay of the factors mentioned, and there is no simple formula for predicting the outcomes. However, by understanding these factors, policymakers can work to strengthen the relationship and mitigate the risks of collapse. The U.S.-ROK alliance is at a historic juncture to rethink opportunities and challenges, through which it can navigate towards future-oriented cooperation.



Parachute Demo Team, ROK, October 20, 2012. Credit: U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Alexis Siekert. Courtesy of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

ANALYSIS

The Origin and Evolution of the U.S.-ROK alliance: Common Interests

The history of the U.S.-ROK alliance could be traced back to the 1950s when the U.S. recognized the strategic importance of the Korean peninsula in the Northeast Asia region as the testing ground for its capability to stop communist expansion. Following the 1953 Armistice Agreement that brought about a ceasefire in the Korean War, the Mutual Defense Treaty was signed between the U.S. and ROK, with both states agreeing to protect each other in case of external attacks or aggressions (3). During the Cold War, it was vital for the U.S. to establish a bilateral alliance with countries in the East Asian region as “pacts of restraint.”(4) The geopolitical strategic importance of East Asia served the purpose of the U.S. alliance system in deterring communist aggression and maintaining regional stability.

The security environment in Northeast Asia rapidly changed after the Cold War. The focus of the alliance soon changed from blockading communism to impeding China from growing to be a regional hegemon (5). Washington saw that China would be enlarging its military capabilities and engaging in overt conflict against its neighboring states to pursue regional hegemony, which can potentially destabilize regional peace and weaken U.S. influence over the region (6). North Korea’s military provocations and nuclear proliferation further fomented an unpredictable and vulnerable security environment in the region. The Joint Vision between the U.S. and South Korea affirmed their commitment to build a constructive alliance based on “common values, trust, and peace” to bring security, stability, and prosperity in the East Asian region (7).

The U.S.-Korea alliance, however, has gone through some dramatic changes during the TrumpMoon administration (2017-2020). The Trump administration stated: “China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity.” and “North Korea’s continued provocations would prompt neighboring countries and the United States to further strengthen security bonds and take additional measures to protect themselves.”(8) South Korea, on the other hand, saw China as an important economic partner rather than a security threat. The perception towards North Korea changed positively by the Moon Jae-In administration that advocated peace initiatives and improved inter-Korea relations. As a result, South Korea was hesitant in sharing the vision of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy or the Quad. Caught between the Chinese economy with the United States, ROK was stuck with two difficult choices.

While the U.S. position over its strategic interest and purpose of the alliance remained fairly constant, South Korea’s perception of the alliance has fluctuated due to domestic politics. The turning point was the inter-Korean summit of 2000, where leaders of the two Koreas met for the first time in history. Scott Snyder noted: “Upon Kim Dae-Jung’s return from the North, he declared that his visit had forestalled the possibility of war on the Korean peninsula. Although this statement was widely regarded as overoptimistic, it served to both validate and facilitate a transformation of South Korean public perceptions of the North from the image of the enemy to that of brother-in-need. Such a transformation carried with it a subtle implication for South Korean public perceptions of the U.S. force presence in the ROK from that of necessity to extravagance or even a legacy of the past era of inter-Korean conflict.”(9)

“By prioritizing non-traditional security topics and global agendas, cooperation between the two countries will likely encourage more equal security partnership based on mutual respect and benefits.”

The main issues of contention have been the equity in the relationship and the credibility of the U.S. commitment. The progressive governments (2003-2007; 2017-2022) asked for some adjustments in the U.S.-ROK alliance including downsizing the U.S. troops, relocation of U.S. bases in Korea, and a transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) from the Combined Forces Command (CFC) to the ROK Joint Chief of Staff (10). This aligned with Korea’s desire to achieve self-defense and a symmetric alliance. The conservative governments (2008-2012; 2013-2017) prioritized consolidation of the U.S.-ROK alliance reaffirming the intent to restore based on established friendship. These administrations also advocated an agreement on the condition-based transition of wartime operational control, negotiations for cost-sharing of U.S. Forces Korea, and upgrading the alliance’s combined defense posture. In 2014, the Park Geun-Hye administration declared “the indefinite delay of OPCON transfer until some point in the mid-2020s” and made decision to retain a U.S.-ROK Combined Division and the U.S. counter-fire forces north of the Han River.”(11)

ANALYSIS



The Moon administration called for a retake of wartime operational control and relocation of CFC. The CFC finally moved from Seoul to a military complex in Pyeongtaek, 65 kilometers south of Seoul. The OPCON transfer, originally scheduled for 2022, did not happen.

The alliance quickly deteriorated over the cost-sharing agreement for U.S. military presence in South Korea. The controversies over the Special Measures Agreement (SMA), which is a bilateral negotiation platform between the U.S. and ROK to discuss cost sharing of USFK, intensified in 2019 when the Trump administration demanded South Korea to pay US\$5 billion for USFK's stationery. This was an unprecedented fivefold increase from the previous year. With both sides failing to reach an agreement, 4,000 Korean employees in USFK bases had to take unpaid leave in April 2020. In the wake of the SMA controversy, leftist media outlets in South Korea questioned the role of the U.S.-ROK alliance and presence of U.S. troops in the country (12). This issue became a source of tension in the alliance and a loss of credibility in U.S. intent and commitment.

Trump's claims on possible withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea, scaling back joint exercises, and burden-sharing pressure adversely affected the public's views of the U.S. and the credibility of the U.S.-Korea alliance as a security guarantee (13). To make matters worse, the U.S. overture to North Korea by the Trump Administration was not fully coordinated with South Korea, nor aligned with its approach. The Moon administration's National Security Strategy once gain accentuated South Korea's autonomy on self-defense capability and peace settlement in the Korean peninsula, creating a discourse of strategic alliance that calls for partnership rather than asymmetrical alliance.(14)

The U.S.-ROK alliance has remained in Cold War premises, structures, and patterns of interaction, but no serious effort had been made to review and update the strategic framework. South Korea's demands for equity and autonomy as well as call for transforming asymmetric alliance into strategic partnership (i.e. Israel) invite inquiry on the existing framework of the security relationship.

Security Issues and Challenges: Old & New

The long-standing dispute over the cost of U.S. military presence in South Korea was finally settled in 2021 by President Biden and the incumbent South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, as the two countries signed a new cost-sharing agreement. The Biden-Yoon administration is coordinating the security relationship within the context of the Indo-Pacific strategy to meet the changing international order and changing nature of threats. The South Korean public's view on the need for the U.S.-Korea alliance, the U.S. troops stationed in Korea, and confidence in U.S. defense has been strongly positive (16). The alliance is strengthened in recent years through enhanced joint military exercises and intelligence sharing, along with increased economic and diplomatic cooperation. Building on such positive momentum, the Biden-Yoon summit last May boosted the alliance, giving South Korea equal status.

Charting a Path Forward

While the alliance remains strong and important for both the United States and South Korea, there are new issues to be addressed to advance the future-oriented U.S.-ROK alliance. First, the focus needs to expand beyond the traditional purpose of the alliance - deterring North Korea and China - or the extended deterrence based on the U.S. nuclear umbrella. It needs to incorporate non-traditional security issues that are becoming increasingly important in the region and the world. These issues include AI, cyber security, supply chain, energy security, climate change, etc. They have a direct impact on stability and security of the region, as they can lead to conflict with the neighbors or with the great powers. In the case of the Korean Peninsula, both hard security and non-traditional security are at play, which proves that the alliance must be more alert in defining what is in the security policy topics. By prioritizing non-traditional security topics and global agendas, cooperation between the two countries will likely encourage more equal security partnership based on mutual respect and benefits.

Another area where the alliance could develop its cooperation includes emerging sectors such as technology and clean energy. New security issues related to critical and emerging technologies (CETs) invite a new agenda for the future of the U.S.-ROK alliance. China has become a serious competitor in the emerging technologies to the U.S. with increased capacity and opportunities.

Photo: ROK Air Force and U.S. Air Force service members train together during exercise Red Flag in Alaska on June 14, 2023. Credit: U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Isaac Velasco. Courtesy of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

The technological rise of China has changed the U.S.' threat perception as reflected on its national security goals. In the midst of technological competition in the region, where China invests heavily in AI, 5G networks, and quantum computing, the U.S.-ROK alliance should find measures to work together to develop capabilities to maintain strategic edge and effective cybersecurity measures.

In commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the U.S.-Korea Mutual Defense Treaty, the key question is how the two allies can better improve technical, policy, and strategic collaboration as equal partners in the field of science and technology. A new referent object of security always accompanies unprecedented challenges and opportunities. And the nature of novelty pushes us to place the issues within the traditional realist thinking of security until the stakeholders find the need for cooperation. High-tech cooperation, therefore, will take time to find a common ground in science and technology partnerships within the existing frame of alliance.

“The U.S.-ROK alliance is at a historic juncture to rethink opportunities and challenges, through which it can navigate towards future-oriented cooperation.”

Recommendations

The U.S.-ROK alliance should take a collaborative and forward-thinking approach to new security issues including emerging and critical technologies. Identifying the areas that can facilitate collaboration and tech cooperation is the first step. It can be summarized as follows:

- Joint Research and Development (R&D): the U.S. and ROK can invest in joint R&D of emerging and critical technologies such as AI, quantum computing, and 5G networks. This would allow the two countries to share expertise and resources and accelerate innovation in these areas to advance their capabilities.
- Shared standards and regulatory frameworks: the U.S. and ROK can work together to establish global standards for CETs and shared regulatory frameworks which will help ensure that these technologies are interoperable, safe, and secure without being misused.
- Joint cybersecurity measures: the U.S. and ROK can work together to enhance their cybersecurity cooperation, particularly in the areas of critical infrastructure protection, information sharing, and joint cyber exercises.
- Technology supply chains: the U.S. and ROK should coordinate to strengthen their technology supply chains, calibrate dependence to China while ensuring secure and reliable access to critical technologies.

The spill-over effects of the U.S.-China rivalry and the recalibration of the traditional alliance system on tech cooperation may create more problems than solutions. The intensifying U.S.-China tech competition for influence and hegemony has created diplomatic and economic challenges to the countries in the region that are pressured to join the technology

alliances and decoupling policy to exclude China from its high-tech supply chain. There is also a deep-seated concern that the tech cooperation is framed within the asymmetrical security relationship between the U.S. and Korea. The new paradigm of cooperation such as Chip 4 alliance is blurring the balance between security and economic interests, thus causing economic insecurity and technological nationalism. It also raises questions of trust and credibility, which could adversely impact the U.S.-Japan-Korea relations.

Conventional International relations assert that an alliance endures when there is a common threat perception, shared goals, mutual trust, and domestic political support. But the formation of tech alliances or let alone tech partnerships are far more complicated and requires complex preconditions for such arrangements to transpire. This strikes at the heart of the viability of friend-shoring considering the U.S., South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan have tech companies and enterprises competing for profit and innovation. The challenge is finding a pragmatic and sound approach between competition and cooperation to ensure that all players reap the benefits and minimize risks or frictions. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the divergent interests and discuss how to compensate for each other's weaknesses. For this, there must be better coordination and communication, particularly from the U.S., to clarify the purpose and objectives of the high-tech alliance rather than imposing 'friend-shoring'. Building trust among the stakeholders is very much needed for tech cooperation to move forward within or even outside the traditional framework of security alliance while

still mindful of countering China's threat. Providing incentives to compensate for revenue losses or investing in capacity can be an effective way to strengthen mutual trust and practice equal partnership. The proceeding chapters will provide more in-depth recommendations on how to advance U.S.-ROK cooperation in critical technologies. Each article examines the path forward for the U.S.-ROK bilateral relations by undertaking two steps. First, adopting a pragmatic and sensible approach to learning by doing. This necessitates sharing best practices and lessons learned through testing and evaluation in a timely fashion.

Second, viewing collaboration as a spectrum rather than as one-size fits all. Such a realistic pathway reduces friction and reinforces trust. Such a proposition can be achieved through upgrading or setting-up new channels of communication to facilitate open and transparent consultative processes that enjoy key stakeholders. The U.S.-ROK dialogue at the technical, policy and strategic levels must be sustained to find positive-sum areas for cooperation that are more feasible and less conflictual. The major key takeaways summarize in the proceeding papers offer new possibilities to achieve these endeavors.

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Soyoung Kwon

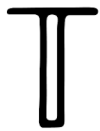
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USS Nimitz (CVN 68) Arrives in Busan, South Korea on March 28, 2023. Credit: U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Hannah Kantner. Courtesy of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command



Chinese Intelligence Culture: An Evolution of Struggle and Fear

Part One: Red Revolutionary Espionage By Matt Brazil



The Fearful Intelligence Culture

Since 1927, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was only six years old, it has placed espionage work at the core of its operations. Intelligence and security significantly contributed to the party's 1949 victory on the Chinese mainland, and to the maintenance of the Party's power to this day. Intelligence officers serve in China's diplomatic posts abroad and throughout the country at the local level. Most recently, the internet and artificial intelligence have enabled previously unimaginable foreign espionage successes by Beijing's domestic and foreign spying apparatus.

However, those who spy on the CCP's perceived enemies and defend against them are also vigilant against their own society, which Mao Zedong "thought," including its updated versions, tells them is full of enemies. Fear is a constant companion to those working in China's intelligence agencies: fear of enemies within and of being caught between CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping's never-ending anti-corruption drive and a culture that still fosters graft. And then there is the fear of being considered out-of-step—insufficiently loyal to Xi's "thought" and to his status as the Party's "core."

Never-ending fear in the intelligence ranks is an issue that goes back to Mao's time as a revolutionary leader in the 1930s, but under Xi fear has become more pronounced than in recent decades—even as Beijing pursues its worldwide espionage and intelligence offensive. The Ministry of State Security (MSS) and its brother agencies will likely continue to achieve successes in cyber espionage, agent recruitments, and technology theft, but dispassionate intelligence analysis may be hindered by pressure to conform to the Party line and Marxist principles (1).

Digging Out Enemies—Forever

The fear of enemies within, the campaigns to dig them out, and the genuine threat of enemy espionage prompted the CCP Central Committee to directly control intelligence and security from its first decade. It was a bloody beginning.

CCP intelligence was born out of the disastrous attacks against the party on 12 April 1927, when the communists were betrayed by their erstwhile "united front" allies, the Chinese Nationalist Party (国民党, Guomindang, aka: the KMT/GMD) led by Chiang Kai-shek. It was arguably the CCP's first major intelligence failure and came close to destroying its leadership.

After fleeing the cities and conducting numerous meetings in secret, the party Central Committee directed Zhou Enlai to establish the Central Special Services Section (SSS). He gradually built it over the next 24 months to include logistical, administrative, intelligence, and special operations branches.

The SSS reported directly to the CCP leadership as a unit under the Central Committee. But it was merely an independent Section (科, ke), not yet equal to the higher-ranking departments (部, bu) at the Central Committee conference table.

The decade that followed underlined the necessity to build a more thorough knowledge of the Party's enemies. SSS officers were assigned a variety of dangerous and daring tasks, principally to penetrate Chinese Nationalist Party and Central Government organizations and military commands. They also assassinated traitors, and harassed and even killed particularly effective police and other security officials in Shanghai and other cities, including Hong Kong.

“China needs to be understood as an intelligence state where, in contrast to liberal democracies, covert techniques are woven into the fabric of the state, as was the case with the Venetian Republic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”

Nigel Inkster, The Great Decoupling, China, American, and the Struggle for Technological Supremacy (London: Hurst and Company, 2020).

127.

As the weaker contestant in the struggle for national power, the CCP needed high quality information about enemy capabilities and intent, and often resorted to terrorist tactics.

Just as the Brecourt Manor Assault from D-Day in World War Two is used in modern times to train West Point cadets, China’s MSS employs their own classic operations to train new recruits. One of these is dubbed the “Three Heroes of the Dragon’s Lair” (龙潭三杰, Longtan sanjie). The Three Heroes spy ring kept the CCP underground headquarters in Shanghai one step ahead of Nationalist police for two short years. In Chinese Communist jargon, it was also known as the Li Kenong Small Group (李克农小组, Li Kenong xiaozu), after its head. This sort of moniker for similar networks was used afterward, though it is unclear if such monikers remain current.

The Three Heroes ring performed one last vital act before they were exposed in April, 1931, an event that carries great cultural significance even today—the second time in four years that an intelligence failure almost destroyed the Party. That month the head of SSS operations, Gu Shunzhang (顾顺章), was tasked with accompanying a Red Army leader, Zhang Guotao (张国焘) from Shanghai to the Eyuwan Soviet, a Red Army redoubt 500 miles west.

Once Gu delivered Zhang, he went to Wuhan for a rendezvous, but was captured by Nationalist intelligence (2).

Gu immediately defected to avoid torture, raising an important post-mortem question for the CCP’s leaders that may still resonate today: if the intelligence chief immediately defects to the enemy upon capture, what hope is there of resistance by the rank and file? A member of the Three Heroes Ring, Qian Zhuangfei (钱壮飞) spotted the first reporting telegrams at Nationalist intelligence headquarters in Nanjing. He alerted his network, and thus saved some members of the Party’s underground (地下党, dixia dang). Zhou Enlai, today considered the father of CCP intelligence, was one of those saved by the ring’s quick action. He organized and carried out the revenge execution of Gu’s entire family, sparing only an infant.



Credit: Keith Tsuji, Getty Images

By 1934, Nationalist raids against communist cells in Shanghai and other cities were like a relentless mudslide that destroyed everything Red in its path. That October, in faraway Jiangxi province, the Red Army was surrounded and forced to embark on its historic Long March, actually a calamitous escape to China’s northwest in which the forces of Mao and Zhu De sustained losses of nearly 90% over 13 months. The number of SSS survivors is not known, but was likely not many. Those who did not survive the March included two members of the “Three Heroes” ring, Qian Zhuangfei, killed by enemy bombing, and Hu Di, “mistakenly killed in a purge. Their boss, Li Kenong, lived to lead CCP Intelligence for the first decade of the People’s Republic (3).

In November 1935, upon arrival at the CCP’s new headquarters of Bao’an, the Central Committee decided to scrap the SSS because few assets remained in China’s cities. The surviving agents and officers were transferred to the Red Army’s State Political Protection Bureau (PPB, 国家政治保卫局, Guojia zhengzhi baoweiju, 1931-39), known from its founding during the “Futian Incident” more for massive purges of enemies within, at Mao’s behest, than for producing intelligence. But even with Li Kenong in charge and enemy intelligence a priority, the purges continued.(4)

Discipline, Struggle, Victory, Repeat

Meanwhile in Moscow, Stalin was not pleased with reports of the CCP's grand retreat and the collapse of its intelligence system in enemy areas. He would conclude that Mao was the best man to lead the communist movement—but the Russian *vozhd*, “the beloved leader of the world's proletariat,” wanted changes. In November 1937, Stalin sent two CCP leaders back to China from their posts as representatives to the Communist International. The most senior of the pair, Wang Ming, would become a footnote in history as a failed challenger to Mao.

The other, Kang Sheng, who had undergone training by Stalin's secret police (5), took charge of CCP intelligence and made himself an acolyte of Mao Zedong, loyally serving the Chairman for the rest of his life. Much of that time (1937-46 and 1966-73) Kang was directly in charge of Chinese Communist Intelligence. Kang reorganized the remnants of the PPB and SSS into the “Central Social Affairs Department” (SAD, 中央社会部, Shehuibu), now a department-level organ of the CCP Central Committee. It was a promotion for the organs of security and for Kang himself, who rebuilt CCP Intelligence headquarters and revived communist spy rings behind enemy lines with his deputy directors Li Kenong, in charge of spying on Nationalist-held areas, and Pan Hannian, whom Kang ordered to reside in Hong Kong, in charge of spying on Japanese-held zones.(6)

The SAD's successes during the early 1940s are the stuff of books, films, and television series today, but not included in popular culture is the massive purge, led by Kang at Mao's direction, of the CCP headquarters in Yanan during 1942-43. Seemingly in a rehearsal for the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s, Kang dug out “traitors” who had “lost their footing” in huge numbers, leading to a crescendo that targeted even the venerable communist and father of CCP Intelligence, Zhou Enlai, not to mention Wang Ming and some of those connected to him who had been trained in Moscow (7).

Stalin's representative in Mao's camp, the Russian military intelligence (GRU) officer Peter Vladimirov, reported the play-by-play back to the Kremlin, prompting Stalin to send Mao the famous “Dmitrov Telegram” of 22 December 1943: cease the “Salvation” campaign to dig out enemies, leave Zhou Enlai, Wang Ming, and other senior communists in place, focus on resisting Japan, and stop giving so much power to the Kang Sheng.

Kang's spy hunt, the telegram claimed, was actually aiding the Nationalist enemy. It was, perhaps, a face-saving maneuver that left Mao in power but led him, in 1946, to replace Kang as head of all intelligence operations with Li Kenong, the last of the “Three Heroes” ring (8).

Li, aided by Pan Hannian, led CCP intelligence operations from the surrender of Japan through the subsequent Chinese Civil War. Cadres who hitherto had sat comfortably in Red Areas were compelled to “volunteer” for the dangerous duty of infiltrating Nationalist areas to recruit and lead spy rings. This paid huge dividends as this phase of Chinese history, plagued by hyperinflation, famine, and mounting dissatisfaction with the Nationalists, grew popular sympathy for the CCP and made subversion easier. Such widespread infiltration led Nationalist leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to later write of CCP Intelligence that there was “no space they did not enter.”

Part Two, “CCP Intelligence in the People's Republic,” will be published in the next issue.

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U.S.-South Korea Policy Coordination Toward the Indo-Pacific Region

by Jennifer Ahn



In June 7, 2023, the Council on Foreign Relations' program on U.S.-Korea Policy held a virtual workshop on U.S.-South Korean policy coordination toward the Indo-Pacific region. This workshop was made possible by a generous grant from the Smith Richardson Foundation.

Introduction

The Yoon Suk-yeol administration unveiled its Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region on December 28, 2022. The Indo-Pacific strategy emphasizes South Korea's national interests as directly linked to the region's peace, prosperity, and stability and serves as South Korea's foreign policy blueprint for becoming a "global pivotal state." Expanding and deepening its bilateral partnerships in the region based on shared interests and values are central components to this strategy.

As the United States continues to forge a network of like-minded allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region that would bolster the regional-security architecture and advance collective resiliency and prosperity, it will be important for the United States and South Korea to enhance their policy coordination in the region. Such coordination will play a crucial role in strengthening the reliability of South Korea as a regional partner and its leadership capabilities.

Different Levels of Expectations Regarding China Between the United States and South Korea

The greatest challenge to enhanced U.S.-South Korea cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region involves their differing expectations for policy toward China. During the May 2023 Group of Seven (G7) meeting in Japan, U.S. President Joe Biden and leaders of the other G7 countries announced a strategy of de-risking but not de-coupling from China, which has received support from European countries and was received well by the South Korean public.

U.S. President Joe Biden and ROK President Yoon Suk Yeol, during a State Arrival Ceremony at the White House in Washington, on April 26, 2023.
Credit: Evan Vucci, AP



ANALYSIS

As indicated in its Indo-Pacific strategy, South Korea is pursuing cooperation with China based on the principles of inclusiveness, trust, and reciprocity, as China remains South Korea's largest economic partner. Meanwhile, the United States increasingly views China as a peer competitor and "pacing challenge." Participants agreed that the United States and South Korea have yet to fully close the gap on how to respond to China's growing threat as a global power.

Thus, the management of different expectations between the United States and South Korea, albeit pursued within the context of complementary approaches, serves as a challenge to deepening regional cooperation between the two allies. This challenge is particularly felt in hot-spot issues such as a potential Taiwan contingency: the United States has strengthened its rhetoric and deepened support for defending Taiwan while South Korea has exhibited greater caution in speaking out.

Recommendations

- Minimize the gaps in understanding between the United States and South Korea regarding the domains for cooperation, competition, and conflict regarding China.
- Ensure an understanding among U.S. policymakers that South Korea's policy toward China could differ due to the country's specific history and past experiences with China.

- Remove ambiguity within South Korea's policy toward China so as to clarify South Korea-China relations based on mutual benefit and respect.

Different Levels of Expectation Regarding North Korea Between the United States and South Korea

A second challenge facing U.S.-South Korea regional cooperation is the different priority level attached to managing relations with North Korea relative to broader Indo-Pacific concerns. While South Korea's new Indo-Pacific strategy emphasizes the North Korean issue as an Indo-Pacific issue, South Korea has in the past been hesitant to step up its contributions to broader Indo-Pacific needs because of the threat posed by North Korea. However, South Korea is currently viewed as more willing to pursue proactive measures toward North Korea, such as strengthening extended deterrence. South Korea's focus on addressing the North Korean issue could conflict with the perception that the United States is deprioritizing North Korea and focusing instead on broader regional issues to counter China, leading to differing capacities and readiness capabilities.

Such coordination will play a crucial role in strengthening the reliability of South Korea as a regional partner and its leadership capabilities.

In strengthening U.S.-South Korea extended deterrence efforts on North Korea, participants noted the significance of the Washington Declaration and the creation of the Nuclear Consultative Group. The Washington Declaration, announced on April 26, 2023, between Presidents Joe Biden and Yoon Suk Yeol, deepens alliance-based planning and decision-making on U.S. nuclear deterrence through enhanced dialogue and information sharing, strengthens South Korean conventional support for U.S. nuclear operations, and creates a new interagency table-top simulation for nuclear contingencies. Establishing a mechanism to build greater South Korean assurance to make U.S. security pledges more credible should also help South Korea contribute more to Indo-Pacific security.

Recommendations

- Establish a standing institution for implementing the Washington Declaration, similar to NATO headquarters in Brussels, which ensures a consultation and coordination mechanism between the United States and South Korea.

A ROK-U.S. combined aerial exercise in the ROK on March 19, 2023.
Credit: U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Cameron Silver. Courtesy of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command



Domestic Polarization as an Obstacle for Strengthening U.S. and South Korean Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Domestic political polarization in South Korea has emerged as a potentially significant obstacle to South Korea realizing the goals outlined in its Indo-Pacific strategy. Participants agreed on the need for the Yoon administration to communicate more diligently to the South Korean public on the importance of an enhanced South Korean foreign policy profile in the region. As the prevalent sentiment among the South Korean public questions the country's alignment with U.S. regional efforts, which was reinforced by the Donald Trump administration's America First approach toward foreign policy, the Yoon administration should make a stronger case to the South Korean public on the benefits and importance of South Korean support of the rules-based international order.

Recommendations

- Educate the South Korean public on the benefits of enhanced U.S.-South Korean cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy.
- Ensure the durability of South Korean commitment in the Indo-Pacific region across changes in government.
- Pursue internal consensus-building measures to gain support on polarizing foreign policy issues so that South Korean efforts in the Indo-Pacific region are not constrained by domestic polarization and politicization.

Diversifying South Korea's Regional Network Through Minilateral and Multilateral Cooperation

South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy identifies six regions for expanding the country's geographical scope of strategic cooperation: (1) the North Pacific, (2) Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), (3) South Asia, (4) Oceania, (5) the African Coast of the Indian Ocean, and (6) Europe and Latin America. Participants welcomed the focus on Australia and India in South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy as well as in the recently unveiled [National Security Strategy](#). Some participants noted that while Australia and India are important players in the Indo-Pacific region, South Korea's bilateral relations with those countries remain underdeveloped. Other participants noted that the South Korea-India relationship is the weakest bilateral link for South Korea among the Quad (the informal security dialogue among the United States, Australia, India, and Japan) countries.

As South Korea pivots from a narrow focus on the Korean Peninsula to a broader regional strategy toward the Indo-Pacific region, it will be important that South Korea expand its partnerships in the region.

“Thus, the management of different expectations between the United States and South Korea, albeit pursued within the context of complementary approaches, serves as a challenge to deepening regional cooperation between the two allies.”

Recommendations

- Explore new avenues of cooperation through expanded formats such as trilateral and minilateral coalitions that synergize the efforts of multiple countries.
- Consider additional forums and partnerships in addressing the North Korean threat, especially since North Korea poses a global challenge on which the UN Security Council remains divided.
- Strengthen South Korea's involvement with the Quad working groups on economic security and emerging technology as South Korean membership into the Quad remains unlikely in the near-term future.
- Enhance South Korea's defense-industrial cooperation within the region and garner support from neighboring countries through the use of soft power.

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Democracy's Fight for Security

By CAPT (Navy) Asaf Livneh

The following statement represents the views and opinions of the author, a representative of the Israeli government. The article does not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Foreign Area Officer Association Korea Chapter. The mere appearance of it does not constitute an endorsement by the same. The article has been made available for informational and educational purposes only.

I am greatly honored to have the privilege to address you, the men and women keeping peace and guarding the values of the free, democratic world here in the Republic of Korea (ROK), as well as the Indo-Pacific region.

As you are aware, the State of Israel is currently facing one of the darkest moments in its history as it is fighting for the security and well-being of its people. Israel is also doing its utmost to ensure the safe return of the kidnapped civilians and servicemembers following the brutal terrorist attack Hamas launched on October 7th.

After Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Hamas came to power, which resulted in a hostile border and countless acts of aggression against Israel that led to several operations in Gaza throughout the years. Nevertheless, Israel has made efforts for the purpose of creating a better life for the civilians in Gaza. Not only do they deserve a better life, but Israel thought it could dissuade Hamas away from terrorist activity through negotiations with neighboring countries and the Palestinian Authority, hoping for more peaceful times in the Middle East. But on the morning of October 7th, we woke up to a nightmare, quickly realizing Hamas never turned away from the path of terror.



On the other hand, all theaters becoming increasingly interconnected also promises great potential for cooperation between Israel and the ROK. Israel and the ROK are islands of democracy, 75 year-old success stories built on the aftermath of terrible conflicts from which they were able to prevail and keep growing in a hostile environment.

U.S. President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Credit: Jim Watson / Getty Images

They used the same methods as other terrorist organizations in killing and torturing as many innocents as possible, then broadcasting that worldwide to inspire other terrorists and intimidate the liberal world.

Although Israel is on the other side of the world, and at times may seem irrelevant to the challenges faced by the ROK-U.S. Alliance and USFK, all geopolitical arenas are increasingly interconnected. Since the 1950s, North Korea has been a supporter of Israel's and the U.S.' enemies, providing them with weapons and guidance. Even in the most recent terrorist attack, there are numerous pieces of evidence that Hamas operatives used weapons manufactured in North Korea, most likely provided to them by Iran, designated a state sponsor of terror by the U.S. and longtime North Korean trading partner. Our enemies are already revealing the extent of their strategic collaboration. Recently, reports indicate North Korean weapons were found in Gaza and Iranian technology appeared in Pyongyang's military parades through their longtime cooperation in ballistic missile technology, but this may be but the tip of the iceberg.

As North Korean and Russian military collaboration escalates, North Korea may become emboldened in its various arms and technology exchange networks, which have hitherto been hiding below the surface. Where there are opportunities for North Korea to benefit financially from illicit activities, such as the sales of munitions to Russia or arms to terrorist organizations, and simultaneously diminish and distract the U.S., North Korea will occupy that space.



Suspected North Korean-made F-7 rocket-propelled grenades seized by the Israeli military in October 2023. Credit: Alon Bernstein /AP

Like-minded nations with hostile borders in very complicated neighborhoods should build better security capabilities together. The well-known astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson once said: “When you go to space, country borders go away except for two places In the daytime you can see the border of Israel with its surrounding deserts cause Israel irrigates, so its green and the surrounding areas are brown... Another border which you can see from space at night is, of course, North and South Korea. And if you look at the GDP per capita differences between Israel and surrounding nations and South Korea and North Korea, space can reveal economic inequities in at least those two places.” These parallels do not only apply to the economy, but also represent the shared values between the two countries that allowed for such development in the first place.

So far away from each other, yet so similar in their development as prosperous societies, the ROK and Israel of 2023 face similar threats. Islands in every other sense but the literal geographic one, Israel and the ROK developed similar strategic postures as well as similar tactics and methods to cope with similar threats from autocratic actors. However, on 7 October 2023, Israel’s strategic conception of the threat proved to be wrong. Israel’s heavily technologically-based defenses failed when Hamas committed a planned synchronized terrorist attack. Both countries have been facing the need to reduce active-duty military manpower, seeking more efficient, technology-based doctrines to form strong defenses in the 21st century. It is therefore of no surprise that the ROK is determined to take every lesson learned from Israel and other conflict

zones in order to update its strategic thinking, force planning, and operational doctrine. Hopefully, the lessons learned from the breaching of Israel’s defenses prevents similar occurrences in other like-minded countries.

The American support that both countries enjoy may also be a good place to build upon and strengthen the two nations’ ability to cope with growing threats from hostile actors. The U.S. forms multiple common threads between the two nations’ militaries from equipment to policy and doctrine. No doubt, learning from the past together will surely create a more secure future for both countries and could be useful for the ROK-U.S. Alliance in preparing for possible future threats.

In closing, Israel will continue fighting to destroy Hamas and remove all threats on the Gaza Strip border. As the former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir said: “We don’t thrive on military acts. We do them because we have to, and thank God we are efficient.” Israel will prevail and overcome this challenge as it did with all the challenges it faced throughout its history and the history of the Jewish people. Israel is deeply grateful for the American support it receives and excited at the potential for a stronger relationship with the ROK. Finally, we hope our example provides a reminder of the need for vigilance and that we all share common threats. The U.S., ROK, and Israel should enhance cooperation after the war ends. We must carefully analyze and share the lessons learned to better prepare for future threats to our collective peace and prosperity.

CAPT (Navy) Asaf Livneh is the Israel Defense Attaché to the ROK, a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, and an experienced submariner.

The FAOA Korea Chapter Billet Profile: U.S. Naval Forces Korea Strategy and Policy Officer

FAOs assigned to Commander, Naval Forces Korea (CNFK) are assigned to the Strategy, Policy, and Engagements Directorate (N5). FAOs typically serve in the N52, focused on progressing U.S. Navy strategic objectives within the U.S.-ROK alliance. They can also be assigned to N51 which is focused on plans, coordinating directly with USFK, UNC and CFC to write operational plans and support joint exercises. In 2016, CNFK relocated from Seoul to Busan, where the command is collocated with ROK Fleet Headquarters.

CNFK is a small command (less than 100 servicemembers), and the N5 is a small directorate (billeted for 6 total FAOs). Thanks to its collocation with ROK Fleet Headquarters, FAOs are able to work side-by-side with their ROK partners. This enables direct, daily communication (typically in Korean) with ROK Navy counterparts, resulting in information access, alliance building at the lowest levels, and rapid facilitation of operational needs from U.S. Navy stakeholders around the world. As Strategy and Policy Officers at CNFK, FAOs work not only with Navy counterparts, but also Department of Defense and Department of State stakeholders.

CNFK FAOs have direct impacts on Navy policy and engagements on the Korean Peninsula. CNFK is considered the eyes and ears of the U.S. Navy on all matters of Korea, and regularly support Key Leader Engagements for the U.S. and ROK and regularly provide feedback to INDOPACOM, PACFLT, Seventh Fleet, and OPNAV on how to move forward with various programs, operations, and policies within the ROK. Even the most junior FAOs can create impact at CNFK, from planning multinational engagements to advising senior leaders on opportunities for expanding U.S.-ROK interoperability.

Assignment Highlights:

FAOs stationed at CNFK experience the beauty and chaos of living in Busan. Although it is the second largest city in the ROK after Seoul, it can feel a bit like a vacation thanks to its coastal location, beautiful beaches and mountains.



CNFK FAO LCDR Widulinski (second from left), U.S. and ROK female servicemembers meet with ROK First Lady Kim Keon Hee during President Yoon's visit to Busan during the USS Kentucky (SSBN 737) port visit in July 2023.

The ROK Fleet Naval Base is quite small, resulting in a close-knit community not only within CNFK but also with the ROK Navy servicemembers stationed here. It is a great location to live, work, and experience Korean culture. Not to mention, FAOs are challenged to support high-level operations and engagements.

In July 2023, CNFK supported the first visit of a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine to the ROK in over 40 years. The USS KENTUCKY (SSBN 737) port visit to Busan reaffirmed U.S. extended deterrence commitments to the ROK following the Washington Declaration issued by President Biden and President Yoon in April 2023. I had the unique opportunity to coordinate the Key Leader Engagements associated with the port visit, including a visit by President Yoon to the USS KENTUCKY. As the sole representative for N5, I ensured U.S. stakeholder strategic objectives were met in planning meetings with the Yongsan Presidential Office, ROK Ministry of Defense, and ROK Fleet. This is just one example of the exposure, opportunities, and work done by the FAOs at CNFK! FAOs at CNFK hit the ground running and can make a difference on a daily basis through their connections at all levels, both within the U.S. and ROK navies.

Contributed by: LCDR Natalia Widulinski

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Partners

The FAOA Korea Chapter would like to thank the following organizations for their generous support:



The **Korea-United States Alliance Foundation** is an organization committed to promoting the ROK-U.S. Alliance and the contribution of the United States Forces Korea to security and peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Foundation exists to financially support the management and operations of the Korea Defense Veterans Association; to strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance through programs that facilitate education, discussion and research on the Alliance; and to promote the honor and welfare of both countries' armed forces personnel and their families.



The **Korea Defense Veterans Association's** mission is to enhance the ROK-U.S. Alliance by advocating for the Alliance and supporting the people who built and serve the Alliance. KDVA seeks to enhance, advocate for, and educate about the ROK-U.S. Alliance; recognize and support service members, government civilians, and their families who have or are serving in the ROK-U.S. Alliance; serve its members with professional networking, mentoring, volunteering, and researching opportunities; honor and support the veterans who defended South Korea during the Korean War.



The **United States Embassy Association** is a private, non-government, non-appropriated employee organization, established under the rules of the U.S. Department of State for the benefit of its members. It provides activities, facilities, programs, personal services, and lodging in order to bring a little bit of America and community spirit to the lives of employees assigned abroad.



George Mason University Korea draws on an extraordinary combination of people, place and values to create a top institution of global higher education. The **Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution** is a community of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and partners with a fundamental commitment to building peace. Through the development of cutting-edge theory, research, education, and practical work, we seek to identify and address the underlying causes of conflict and provide tools for ethical and just peacebuilding on the local, national, and global stages. abroad.



The **Center for Future Defense Technology and Entrepreneurship** stands at the forefront of the global defense innovation ecosystem. As the only defense innovation hub in South Korea, we aim to advance the global defense innovation ecosystem through events, publications, strategic network partners, and in-house experts and advisors.



The Sejong Society is a non-partisan, and all-volunteer tax-exempt organization dedicated to informing, developing, and connecting young professionals interested and engaged in U.S.-Korea affairs. Our ultimate goal is to inspire the next generation, regardless of political and career affiliations, of Korea and Northeast Asia specialists.

Calendar of Events

December 2023

- Tuesday 12th:** KAFS Korea-America Friendship Night
- Thursday 14th:** United Nations Command Deputy Command Change of Command
- Monday 25th:** Christmas Day
- Wednesday 27th:** KUFA 51st Memorial Day for U.S. President Truman
- Sunday 31st:** New Year's Eve

January 2024

- Monday 1st:** New Year's Day

February 2024

- Saturday 10th:** Lunar New Year (ROK)

March 2024

- Friday 1st:** Independence Movement Day (ROK)

Community News

- In November, FAOs in Korea had the distinct pleasure of coordinating and hosting the annual Military Committee Meeting, Security Consultative Meeting, and inaugural UNC Defense Ministers Meeting. Great work by all!
- Thank you to Natalia Widulinski for providing details on her billet in South Korea. If you would like to share your billet please get in touch by email: editor.faoakc@gmail.com
- If you would like to attend future events, including socials, coffee & chats with distinguished guests and panels, then sign up to our distro list by emailing: SecretaryFAOAKC@gmail.com

If you have any news to share, including personal or career achievements and upcoming events, please email editor.faoakc@gmail.com

FAOs supporting U.S. Secretary of Defense Austin



Distinguished Members



Sheena Chestnut Greitens

Dr. Sheena Chestnut Greitens is an Associate Professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. She has been an assistant professor of political science at the University of Missouri and was a founding co-director of MU's Institute for Korean Studies. Her work focuses on East Asia, authoritarian politics, and American national security. She holds a doctorate from Harvard University; an M.Phil from Oxford University, where she studied as a Marshall Scholar; and a bachelor's from Stanford University.



Derek Grossman

Derek Grossman is a senior defense analyst at RAND focused on a range of national security policy and Indo-Pacific security issues. He served over a decade in the Intelligence Community, where he served as the daily intelligence briefer to the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the assistant secretary of defense for Asian & Pacific Security Affairs. He holds an M.A. from Georgetown University in U.S. National Security Policy and a B.A. from the University of Michigan in Political Science and Asian studies.



Kongdan "Katy" Oh Hassig

Dr. Kongdan "Katy" Oh Hassig is an independent scholar. She has been a Senior Asia Specialist at the Institute for Defense Analyses, a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a member of the Political Science Department of the RAND Corporation. She has taught at the University of California San Diego, George Washington University, and the University of Maryland Global Campus in Asia. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Board of Directors of the U.S. Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, and the Board of Directors of the Korea Economic Institute of America. She was a founding co-director of The Korea Club of Washington, D.C.



Soo Kim

Soo Kim is a policy analyst at the RAND Corporation and an adjunct instructor at American University. Her research interests include the Korean Peninsula, Russia, Indo-Pacific strategy, near-peer competition, decision making, propaganda, and the intelligence community. She served as an analyst in the Central Intelligence Agency and also worked at the Department of Homeland Security. Kim earned a B.A. in French from Yale University and an M.A. in International Relations/Strategic Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.



Sung Hyun "Andrew" Kim

Sung Hyun "Andrew" Kim is a Non-Resident Fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School. Prior to this, he was a visiting scholar at Stanford University. Mr. Kim retired from the Central Intelligence Agency after 28 years of service and was the first Assistant Director of the CIA, Korea Mission Center. As the Chief of CIA Station in three major East Asian cities, Mr. Kim managed the collection, analysis, production, and distribution of information that directly affected national security. He is a recipient of the CIA Director's Award and the Presidential Rank Award.

Heino Klinck



Heino Klinck is a former U.S. Army China FAO who last served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia. His experience includes 2+ decades abroad; leading strategy efforts in a Fortune 100 company; senior political-military roles in the Pentagon; analytical and operational responsibilities in the intelligence community; and diplomatic postings in Europe and Asia. Mr. Klinck has a B.A. and M.A. in International Relations from Boston University; an MBA from the University of London; an M.S. in Global Strategy and Security from the University of Rome; and he was awarded a Fellowship by Stanford University's Asia-Pacific Research Center.

Mark William Lippert



The Honorable Mark William Lippert has a distinguished career in the United States government that spanned approximately two decades. From 2014-2017, he served as the U.S. ambassador and plenipotentiary to the Republic of Korea. He previously held positions in the Department of Defense, including as chief of staff to Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs. He graduated from Stanford University with a B.A. in Political Science and holds an M.A. in International Policy Studies from the same institution.

Curtis "Mike" Scaparrotti



General (Retired) Curtis "Mike" Scaparrotti led a distinguished, 41-year career in the U.S. Army, and most recently served as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander of U.S. European Command. Prior to this, he served as the Commander of U.S. Forces Korea/United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command. GEN(R) Scaparrotti graduated from the U.S. Military Academy, and his education includes the Command and General Staff College, the U.S. Army War College, and a Master's degree in Administrative Education from the University of South Carolina.

Suzanne Vares-Lum



Major General (Retired) Suzanne Vares-Lum served 34 years in the U.S. Army and is President of the East-West Center. She is an influential executive with leadership and planning experience spanning the Indo-Pacific region, violent extremist organizations, and natural disasters. She most recently served for five years as one of the most senior leaders in U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and now serves as a strategic consultant and advisor. Vares-Lum received a B.A. in Journalism and an M.Ed. in Teaching from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and a Master's degree in Strategid Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

Major General Mark Gillette, Honorary Member

Mark Gillette is a retired U.S. Army major general and former Senior Army Foreign Area Officer. He has extensive experience from various political-military assignments throughout Asia. MG Gillette holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Military Academy, a Master of Social Science from Syracuse University, and a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. He retired as U.S. Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché in Cairo, Egypt in 2023.

MG Gillette advised and supported the initiatives of the co-founders of the FAOA Korea Chapter—both leading up to the organization's establishment and during its formative period. He continues to play an active role in the events and activities of the FAOA Korea Chapter today and is a key advocate for the development of its membership. In recognition of his significant contribution toward accomplishing the mission of the FAOA Korea Chapter, MG Gillette was presented Honorary Membership on July 23, 2020.



Board Members



Wei C. Chou, *President*

Wei C. Chou is a U.S. Army Northeast Asia FAO. He holds a Bachelors of Science degree from the United States Military Academy and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Hawaii as an East-West Fellow. After eight years as an airborne and mechanized infantryman, Wei served across a range of FAO capacities in Hawaii, Japan, and the Republic of Korea.

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Chris Hobgood, *Vice President*

Chris Hobgood is a U.S. Army Northeast Asia FAO. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Lander University; a Master of Science degree from Webster University; and a Master of Arts degree from Middlebury Institute of International Studies. Chris has over 22 years of service and worked in a variety of FAO assignments by advising senior military and civilian leaders with regional expertise on the Indo Pacific region as a Security Cooperation officer, a political-military officer, and Senior Defense Official / Defense Attaché.

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Karen DeLoria, *Treasurer*

Karen DeLoria is a U.S. Army Indo-Pacific FAO. She holds an Associate in Arts in Japanese from the Defense Language Institute, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Cal Poly Pomona, and a Master of Science in Project Management from Missouri State. Karen has over 18 years of service including a decade of experience in the Army Engineer Regiment.

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Josh Duran, *Secretary*

Josh "Duran" Duran is an active-duty Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Naval Academy. After serving eight years as a Naval Intelligence Officer, he has served two additional tours in the Republic of Korea as an FAO.

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Adrian Romero, *Chief of Public Relations*

Adrian Romero is an active duty Warrant Officer in the U.S. Army. He holds an A.A. degree in Applied Science and is currently pursuing an M.B.A. He has over ten years of work experience in the Indo-Pacific region.

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Staff Members

Editor in Chief

Emily Stamp is a London based editor who works with global security teams to publish incident alerts and risk forecasts. She holds an undergraduate M.A. in Psychology from the University of St. Andrews and an M.A. in International Conflict Studies from King's College London.

Assistant Editor

Apoorva Jayakumar holds a Masters degree in Global Finance and Economy from Yonsei Graduate School of International Studies. She has a keen interest in reading about Indo-Pacific strategy & policy.

Marketing Coordinator

YoonJeong Choi is a student pursuing a business bachelor's degree at Purdue University in Indiana State. Her interests include IT, HoloLens, environment, space technology, and e-commerce.

Research Intern

Salome Giunashvili is a recent Master's degree candidate in International Studies from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. She holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Tbilisi State University. Her research interests span across several different areas involving international security, hybrid warfare and alliance politics.

Senior Researcher

Amos Oh is a U.S. Army Strategist with extensive policy and planning experience. He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and also earned an M.P.A. from the Harvard Kennedy School. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Southern California.

Associate Researcher

Sean McCauley is an instructor based in South Korea. He is a political science graduate of the University of Alberta with a special focus on international relations; and he has extensive background in political advocacy in Canada.

Graphics Designer & Social Media Assistant

Sara La Cagnina is a Communications Manager who graduated with an M.A. in International Tourism from the Università Della Svizzera Italiana. She has extensive experience with digital communication and event coordination.

About the Korea Chapter

The FAOA Korea Chapter was founded in July 2020 in accordance with Article VII of the FAOA Charter. It is a 501(c)19 non-profit organization, consisting primarily of current and former Foreign Area Officers and International Affairs Specialists who advance the Republic of Korea-United States (ROK-U.S.) Alliance through events and activities that promote mentorship, education, research, and connection.

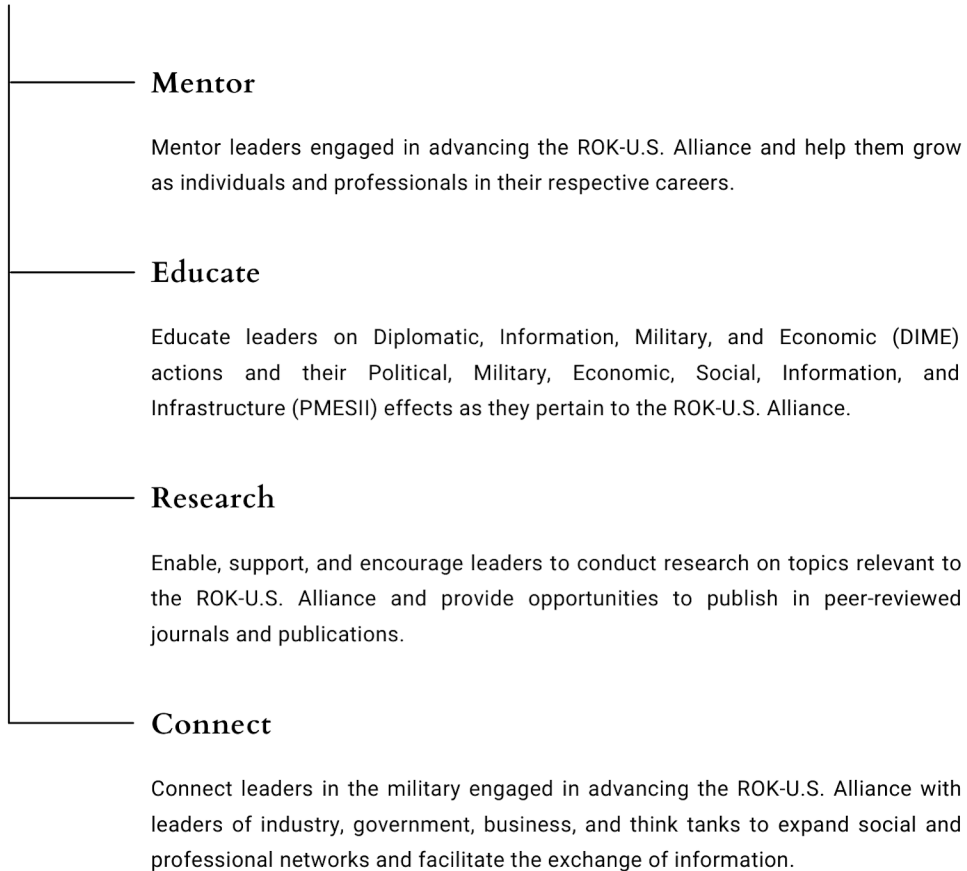
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To develop and inspire leaders engaged in the advancement of the ROK-U.S. Alliance.

Our Core Values

- Commitment to Leader Development
- Pursuit of Inspiration

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CALL FOR ARTICLES

Contribute to the journal of the FAOA Korea Chapter,
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