

A New Strategy for the Denuclearization of North Korea: Lessons Learned from the US Occupation of Japan

By Sugihara Seishiro
Former Professor at Josai University

Introduction

The following essay is divided into two parts. I originally delivered part one on May 18, 2017, as a lecture entitled "A Strategy to Denuclearize North Korea - How to Achieve a Soft Landing", to Shoheijuku, an organization chaired by Mr. Motoya Toshio, the President of APA Hotels. I prepared part two for a meeting of the Japanese Modern History Research Association where I presented it together with part one on May 31. However, I received many useful inquiries at that meeting from individuals deeply knowledgeable about Japan's modern history which helped bring to light areas where my lecture could be corrected or supplemented. The following essay therefore contains some modifications that I made on the basis of those inquiries. The contents of this essay are, in summary, my observations on America's historical experience of defeating and occupying Japan in World War II and successfully implementing political reforms there, and the possibility of developing a strategy that makes good use of this past experience in order to denuclearize North Korea with the fewest possible number of people killed or displaced. Though I know nothing of military affairs, I have undertaken some research into the US military's occupation of Japan in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in World War II. I want to explain, in my own way, the ideas that occurred to me concerning how this perspective can be applied to a strategy for the denuclearization of North Korea that, I believe, will result in the minimum loss of life. There may be some people who will find this essay to be radical or unhelpful, but I believe that it contains many points that should at least be of some use to the denuclearization strategy of the US-led military forces that are now being deployed near North Korea.

Part One

In general, it is quite difficult for a foreign authority to impose its own foreign-led reform program on the internal politics of another nation, and any attempt to do so would likely fail except in the most exceptional of circumstances. The most successful instance of this in world history is the reforms implemented during the American occupation of Japan by the US Army following the conclusion of World War II, but this success should largely be attributed to two sets of factors. On the one hand, the United States made extremely meticulous preparations for its reforms well in advance of the occupation, and the reforms themselves were of a very humanitarian character. On the other hand, the Japanese people were led by their own national attributes to accept their defeat candidly and submit tamely to the leadership of the US Army, and they already shared a common value system with the Americans emphasizing the importance of individual human lives. By contrast, there are a great many cases where the internal reforms being pushed on one country by a foreign power did not fit with that country's sense of values and a relationship of trust was not able

to be easily built, or where the preparations were undertaken with insufficient care. Consequently, the success of the American occupation of Japan should not be cited glibly as a precedent for future actions, and indeed, to do so would prove dangerous.

And yet, in the case of Korea, the North and South Koreans were until recently one people. They share a common culture and history, as well as a deep desire to end the partition brought about by World War II and reunite as one nation. If South Korea were to take charge of the political reform of North Korea, prospects for success would likely be quite high, provided that thorough preparations were made beforehand.

I will refer to these above premises throughout the rest of this essay.

Looking at the current political situation, it seems to me that this represents America's last chance to denuclearize North Korea. If the problem is not dealt with now, North Korea will continue to develop its nuclear arsenal and will eventually produce a ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead capable of reaching US territory. If that were to happen, America would surely have to abandon any policy of denuclearizing North Korea through military action, and the American people would have to accept the grave threat posed by a nuclear-armed North Korea in perpetuity. This is why it is fair to say that the strategy we decide upon now will be America's final opportunity to avert that danger. I thus conclude that there remains no sensible option but to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea. (To make a medical analogy, this would be our last chance to operate on a cancer patient in the hope of saving his life before the window of opportunity passes, the cancer spreads to the point where surgery is no longer feasible, and inevitably, the patient dies.)

However, the North Korean government feels unable to surrender its programs to develop nuclear weapons and the ballistic missiles that would carry them, as the realization of the nuclear agenda has become a prop holding the political system together and the only means through which Kim Jong-un maintains his personal grip on power.

Thus, the United States and North Korea are locked in a mutual standoff from which neither can back down. This, in other words, is a "game of chicken" between the USA and Kim Jong-un's North Korea. In a game of chicken, the nation with the stronger will shall win. If the Americans lose the game and North Korea becomes capable of directly attacking them with nuclear missiles, then this means that America's desire to denuclearize North Korea was weaker than North Korea's will to maintain its nuclear weapons.

Now let's consider China's standpoint. China shares a long border with its neighbor North Korea and the two countries have maintained a close relationship up to now. Still, this does not mean that China has any intrinsic desire to see North Korea continue its nuclear weapons program. In fact, China has a strong interest in stopping it. The current target of North Korea's nuclear weapons appears to be the United States, but North Korea is also prepared to deal with a potential threat from China in the event that, over the span of history, even China becomes its enemy. North Korea's nuclear weapons effectively deter

any possibility of a Chinese attack. China understands North Korea's intentions and is not at all pleased about them.

Nonetheless, China has so far stopped short of taking any unilateral actions against North Korea. Without possessing the ability to single-handedly build an international coalition to halt North Korea's nuclear weapons program through military force, it seems that China's only real policy up to now has been to think as little as possible about the issue and procrastinate, being unable to settle internal settlement within the leaders. From China's perspective, its military might far surpasses that of North Korea, and given its historical relationship with the Koreans, it would not be easy for North Korea to attack China. It is thus probable that China fears nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea far less than it would fear nuclear weapons in the hands of any other nearby country. Even so, the Chinese do acknowledge that North Korea has nuclear weapons that could be used against them, and because they cannot tolerate a North Korea with the means to resist them, they felt compelled, after recent prodding from President Trump, to apply real pressure on North Korea. There is every reason to believe that, privately, China has always wanted to see North Korea denuclearize.

What is Russia's position towards North Korea? Russia's relationship with North Korea is similar to China's, but the bonds between Russia and North Korea are comparatively weak. The rising tensions between North Korea on one side and China and the USA on the other may motivate Russia to throw a lifeline to North Korea with the expectation of receiving something in return. Like a vulture circling above the distressed North Korea, Russia may seek economic gain through profitable trade deals. Nevertheless, Russia does recognize that the current US-led efforts to denuclearize North Korea are in the common interests of global peace, and if America shows that it is serious about dealing with this problem, I doubt that even Russia could attempt to selfishly exploit the crisis. Russia has never approved of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, and one could say that, in the grand scheme of things, Russia does indeed have the same unexpressed wish to see North Korea denuclearize as China does.

Finally, we must examine South Korea's stance. Because their fellow Koreans to the north have succeeded in creating a nuclear weapon and becoming a source of fear to the whole world, there is a possibility that the private view of the South Koreans is, to a certain extent, one of ethnic pride that their compatriots have reached the status of a great power. Even so, there are very few South Koreans who hope to live as the people of North Korea do under Kim Jong-un's regime, and I believe that most would, if possible, like to liberate the North Koreans from the Kim Jong-un dictatorship and let the North Koreans enjoy the same free and abundant lifestyles as they do. Moreover, the South Koreans are surely eager to reunify the Koreans and finally overcome the tragic legacy of partition left by World War II. The outcome of this crisis, depending on the strategy we implement, may lead to a reunification of the Koreans in which the South Koreans play a central role in reforming North Korea's institutions. The current US-led strategy to denuclearize North Korea will be South Korea's greatest national undertaking since the Korean War.

In consideration of the positions of the USA, North Korea, China, Russia, and South Korea, there is one thing that is of the utmost importance in our strategy to denuclearize Korea. As the United States applies pressure to North Korea to win the "game of chicken", it must unambiguously guarantee Kim Jong-un his life and the survival of his regime.

However, if this guarantee is made by America alone as part of its efforts to put pressure on North Korea, Kim Jong-un will probably judge it in the light of America's past record and decide that the offer cannot be trusted. If this approach is adopted, the guarantee must at very least be offered by both the United States and China. Preferably, Russia should also join in, and ideally, the offer could be made as a resolution of the UN Security Council. In any case, the point is that Kim Jong-un is highly unlikely to be able to calmly accept any guarantee that is backed solely by the word of the Americans.

Having done that, if Kim Jong-un succumbs to the pressure and agrees to relinquish his nuclear weapons, it will of course still be necessary for the countries that guaranteed Kim Jong-un his life and the survival of his regime to send inspectors to North Korea to investigate and confirm its compliance with the agreement. The inspectors must stay there and be prepared for a long-term mission in North Korea to ensure the destruction of all the facilities connected to its nuclear arms program.

Concerning the pressure that ought to be applied to make Kim Jong-un accept denuclearization, we will naturally have to ensure that we achieve the maximum impact, which means using every means at our disposal in the most thorough way possible. A half-hearted strategy might produce an unforeseen disaster in the process and actually prove to be more dangerous than a determined approach. China will need to completely blockade its long land border with North Korea, preventing the movement of any material through it. Russia will need to do the same, short though its border with North Korea may be. We must likewise cut North Korea off by air and water, including a total blockade on the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan enforced by the navies of China, South Korea, and the United States.

There is the possibility that North Korea might respond to this sort of total embargo not with an agreement to denuclearize and accept inspections, but with armed retaliation. At the first sign that this may happen, an immediate strike should be launched to destroy any North Korean bases with the capacity to make long-range attacks on South Korea, China, Russia, or Japan.

In the case of a military confrontation, the response from North Korea's army, navy, and air force is the point.

I doubt that North Korea's armed forces, estimated to be about 1.2 million-men strong at present, are highly loyal to Kim Jong-un. They are unlikely to have the will to put up a strong fight against the military forces of South Korea, the USA, or China. Furthermore, the North Koreans are lacking in military equipment and petroleum. I expect that their

petroleum reserves will be entirely exhausted in very little time. North Korea's military capabilities are clearly not equal to its rivals, to say the least, and even what capabilities they do have cannot withstand a prolonged war.

For this reason, we must anticipate the prospect of whole North Korean military units surrendering en masse to the South Korean or American forces they were sent to confront. The North Korean Army has about ten regular corpses and ten special corpses, and the military forces of both South Korea and the USA will need to make plans in advance on how they will handle the corpses that surrender and those that fight. They should agree in advance to refrain from attacking any corpses that show willingness to surrender and to not hesitate to launch all-out attacks against the bases of any corpses that clearly intend to fight.

When enemy soldiers are surrendering, normally the first task is to disarm them, but in this case, these corpses may need to protect themselves from the other North Korean corpses around them at the time they surrender. Because of this, we should not order any surrendering corpse to disarm until we can be certain that it will not come under attack from other corpses.

The next step comes once all of North Korea's armed forces have surrendered. Though I will leave aside what our long-term policy towards the surrendered soldiers should be, at least in the short-term we have to actively put them to good use as support units aiding the South Korean-led project to stabilize life in North Korea and foster industry. Moreover, if the reform program in North Korea were implemented by a direct military administration of the South Korean Army, it would entail immense expense and far more intricate planning, even taking into consideration the racial unity of the Korean people. I therefore conclude that the easiest and most effective method to introduce internal reforms to North Korea is through so-called "indirect rule" in which the North Korean government, including the military, continues to exercise administrative and executive functions. Note that it was also through the indirect rule of the Japanese government that America brought reform to Japan during the US Army's postwar occupation.

Once North Korea's armed forces have surrendered, the most urgent business will be to maintain public order and stabilize the livelihoods of the North Korean people by distributing to all ordinary civilians the essentials of life, including food and clothing, in the areas around certain bases. The same will have to be done with medical supplies in order to protect public health. If this is carried out, the conflict need not produce a single refugee. The next step will be the reform phase, including economic, educational, and political reform, and South Korea ought to be fully prepared with plans for the entire project.

Out of this internal reform process, a new North Korea will be born, and once that occurs, we must then ensure that it will enjoy peaceful relations with China, Russia, South Korea, the United States, and Japan. For instance, an anti-Japanese educational curriculum that would serve to disrupt peaceful relations should not be introduced in North Korea. We

ought to demand that there be no anti-Japanese education of the sort carried by the instruction of US occupation force.

The internal reform of North Korea, undertaken with the help of the North Korean Army through indirect rule, will last at least two years, and perhaps as long as three to four years, after which the two Koreas will reunify. Because the North and South Koreans are essentially one people sharing the same culture and have long wanted to reunite as one nation, the reunification process will go quite smoothly and should very likely be a great triumph for both sides.

During the time of the internal reform in North Korea, South Koreans soldiers, and even American soldiers for a brief period, will probably need to be stationed in North Korea. Nevertheless, after its objectives are accomplished, South Korea ought to withdraw all of its forces, without exception, out of the territory recognized as being North Korean before the crisis and back to the current boundaries of South Korea. The northern portion of the Korean Peninsula should be declared a total demilitarized zone in order to restore the military balance between South Korea, China, Russia, the USA, and Japan as far as possible to the status quo ante bellum. The plan to demilitarize North Korea after it denuclearizes should be clearly stipulated beforehand by agreement of all the powers working together on denuclearization, including South Korea, China, Russia, and the USA. This is important, as doing so will make it much easier to persuade China and Russia to participate in the US-led denuclearization strategy.

There is also one further possibility of Kim Jong-un being overthrown by a coup d'état and sent into exile from North Korea at some point during this process, even though we cannot easily foresee when it might arise. In that case, it seems appropriate for Kim Jong-un to seek asylum in China, given China's relationship with the North Korea since World War II and its historical relationship with them since ancient times. It will be necessary for China and the other countries supporting the denuclearization of North Korea to openly promise in advance to allow this as part of their official commitments.

The militaries of South Korea and the United States also have to find a way to inform all the officers and men of the North Korean Army, before the conflict breaks out, about exactly what their countries plan to do with North Korean military corpses once they have surrendered. This will serve to minimize the number of human losses in the event of an armed conflict. Moreover, if Kim Jong-un is aware that his own soldiers know how they will be treated by the South Koreans and Americans upon surrender, it will increase the likelihood that Kim might choose to eschew armed conflict altogether and go into exile. Therefore, the United States and South Korea must begin a robust psychological warfare campaign well in advance of any potential armed conflict in order to spread knowledge of their military plans within the officers and men of the North Korean Army.

The USA, China, Russia, and South Korea can work in concert to denuclearize North Korea both because it will eliminate a threat posed to themselves and because it is in

accordance with the global agenda of nuclear non-proliferation. Consequently, many other countries will feel a natural obligation to join in on applying pressure to North Korea. From the perspective of the North Koreans as well, the country's nuclear weapons serve no purpose beyond protecting Kim Jong-un's life and regime, and are certainly not something ordinary North Korean citizens have actively desired. At the very least, there is no reason that North Koreans should take up arms against and spill the blood of their fellow Koreans simply to maintain the nuclear weapons propping up Kim's dictatorship. Before a potential conflict erupts, we have to get the message out to the soldiers of North Korea's military that they need not obey an order, even from Kim Jong-un himself, to attack South Korea.

For this objective, we should consider issuing a succinct declaration expressing our message in a way that the people and soldiers of North Korea will find convincing. The declaration would state that the North Korean Army has no moral reason to be loyal to Kim Jong-un, a man who assassinated his brother and executed his uncle, and that the North Koreans should instead accept South Korean leadership and aspire to build a better country like South Korea where they need not live their daily lives in poverty and fear. This idea derives from the Potsdam Declaration, which was transmitted to Japan by the Allied Powers in the final stage of World War II and played a major role in convincing Japan to surrender. If it is a joint declaration issued by all the countries involved, it will also serve to unite this alliance behind a set of principles.

We must also make the North Koreans clearly understand that, in the end, they will have no chance of defeating the better-equipped South Korean and American forces in a war. They have to know well that, if they do fight, many North Koreans will be senselessly killed and their lands will be devastated.

Finally, we need to convey even to Kim Jong-un himself that the moment that he orders his armed forces to attack is the moment that disloyal units are most likely to launch a coup d'état and bring down the regime. He should know that if he decides to start a war, it may be the last decision he ever makes.

In consideration of all the above, what is most important is that the countries desiring to denuclearize North Korea do so while keeping in mind the US occupation of Japan after World War II and that we henceforth do everything that we can to construct peaceful relations between Japan, South Korea, China, Russia, and the USA.

Part Two

My strategy to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis can unfold through achieving the objectives of one of two different plans.

The strategy of Plan A ends when Kim Jong-un renounces his nuclear ambitions, accepts inspections under the guidance of the US Army, destroys his nuclear facilities, and permits the permanent stationing of inspectors in North Korea. In Plan A, the international

community recognizes Kim Jong-un's rule over North Korea, which, unfortunately for the South Koreans, means that their long-cherished dream of national reunification will not come to pass. On the positive side, Plan A should not, in principle, produce a single casualty, unlike Plan B as I will explain below. At the time that North Korea accepts inspections, it will likely also request financial aid, which, if other countries acquiesce, will be an economic boon for the North Korean people.

If Kim Jong-un refuses to give up his nuclear weapons and resorts to armed force to escape the pressure being applied to him, the strategy of Plan B involves an immediate, all-out counterattack by the US-led forces, ending when North Korea is militarily defeated. In Plan B, South Korea and Japan may suffer some losses during the North Korean offensive. Nevertheless, due to the lopsided combat capacities of the two sides, the outcome will soon become apparent, and Kim Jong-un will probably be killed in the fighting or go into exile. Afterwards, the South Korean Army will guide North Korea towards political reform, culminating in the reunification of the Korean Peninsula and total dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Our means to achieve the objectives of Plan A are the application of strong pressure on Kim Jong-un, specifically a total land, sea, and air embargo of North Korea. We can thus execute Plan A using the same means that are a prerequisite to the military operations of Plan B. The application of pressure in Plan A links it to the subsequent Plan B. This means that if we can achieve the objectives of Plan A, the denuclearization strategy will be completed without any need to shift to Plan B.

Whether we end by achieving the objectives of Plan A or Plan B ultimately all depends on the decision made by Kim Jong-un. If we evaluate this from the perspective of the victims, Plan A will cause the least chaos and, theoretically, will not result in any deaths or displacement of people. In the case of Plan B, we have no guarantee that an unexpected tragedy can be prevented. Still, I think that even Plan B will result in few casualties and even fewer refugees.

Plan A's strategy relies heavily on the pressure exerted on Kim Jong-un by a total land, sea, and air embargo of North Korea unaccompanied by direct, armed attacks. Regardless, even if North Korea shows no sign of launching a retaliatory offensive, the embargo will still include some limited military strikes as a way to underscore and strengthen the effects of the embargo. However, because these strikes are only intended to achieve the objectives of Plan A, they must be undertaken at times and against targets that are announced in advance. We should start by hitting inconsequential sites and should only select targets that will clearly result in no loss of life. Over time, we would gradually increase the intensity of the military pressure, and finally make attacks against important targets like nuclear weapon launch bases, even if they will cause significant casualties there, in order to weaken North Korea's capacity for military action.

The all-out, US-led offensive of Plan B will be triggered as soon as North Korea shows any indication that it will respond with armed force. However, it has to be made clear that once we initiate Plan B, we cannot go back to Plan A. Reverting to Plan A means leaving Kim Jong-un in power, and that will expose the North Korean soldiers who surrendered to the US Army at the start of the execution of Plan B to unconscionable danger once they are brought back under Kim's authority. For this reason, we have to perish any thought of achieving the objectives of Plan A at the same moment that we shift to the strategy of Plan B.

Whether we proceed through Plan A or Plan B, I should not need to say that the strategy we adopt must be carried out with absolute determination. Even in the case of Plan A, our first resort, the more rigidly we enforce the embargo, the quicker and easier it will be to achieve our objectives. On the other hand, if we stick with half-measures, it might lead Kim Jong-un to the mistaken conclusion that he can break through the crisis, making a terrible accident more, rather than less, likely. In the case of Plan B as well, the more strongly we press our offensive, the fewer people are likely to die.

To reiterate, according to Plan A, denuclearization will be achieved without the national reunification of the Korean Peninsula that both North and South Koreans have long desired. However, the central purpose of our strategy is to denuclearize North Korea with the support of all the nations and all the peoples of the world. If fulfilling this goal does not incidentally bring about national reunification, North and South Korea will have no choice but to accept it. North and South Korea need to understand in advance that national reunification may have to wait for another day.

We also need to be fully aware that if we cannot avert recourse to Plan B, then a few unforeseeable tragedies may be inevitable. Nevertheless, the participating nations that fear North Korea's nuclear weapons must understand that the risk of disaster is far lower today than it might be in the future after North Korea develops intercontinental ballistic missiles and can easily launch a nuclear strike against any of its neighbors, including Japan, or even reach as far as the United States.

As I have already stated, the current US-led strategy to denuclearize North Korea is an extremely tense "game of chicken". If the Americans are left with no option but to go to Plan B, they have to be mentally prepared to initiate military operations without further hesitation. Success rests entirely on how strong America's will really is. As noted earlier, it is important, in order to secure the backing of China and Russia, that the United States and South Korea withdraw all their troops from the region of North Korea after achieving the objectives of Plan B so that the military balance will be restored, as far as possible, to what it was before the war. And yet, even in this situation China will still lose its influence over North Korea and may therefore find it preferable to support the status quo with Kim Jong-un in power. However, if America clearly indicates that it is more than willing to launch a military campaign should the need arise, then China will probably favor the US-sponsored land, sea, and air embargo and wholeheartedly support it in the hope of avoiding Plan B

altogether. In every scenario, the United States can only win the "game of chicken" if its will is strong enough.

A central aspect of both Plan A and Plan B is that we ensure that as many North Korean military personnel and civilians as possible know why we are taking action, how we will do it, and what will happen after we achieve our objectives. In addition, we have to effectively inform all North Koreans that their country's nuclear weapons exist only to prop up Kim Jong-un's dictatorship and provide no benefit to themselves. In case of hostilities, they must also understand that they could never win a war against the vastly superior forces arrayed against them and would simply die for a lost cause.

As I said before, it would be wise to draw up a short declaration aimed at North Korean military personnel as an effective method to deter them from fighting. If possible, it would be approved in advance by all involved nations and released at the time we implement the denuclearization strategy. The joint declaration should acknowledge that, though the strategy to denuclearize North Korea emerged directly from the threat posed to the United States, it now belongs to the universal mission of the human race to defend nuclear non-proliferation, and because of this, any North Korean serviceman who fights for the regime will be punished, even if they are just following Kim Jong-un's orders. This has to be plainly stated before the outbreak of any hostilities.

Furthermore, we ought to communicate to Kim Jong-un himself that the North Korean people and his soldiers have been told and are well aware of our intentions. To reiterate what I said earlier, Kim Jong-un needs to fully realize that his own army corpses would not necessarily obey an attack order and that his life would be in grave danger should he choose to give one.

The purpose of the denuclearization of North Korea is nuclear non-proliferation, which is a common interest of all the peoples of the world. For this reason, I believe that it should be supported by every nation. Nonetheless, countries that do possess nuclear weapons must not use them simply to further their own national interests. They have to be always conscious of the fact that, because they possess something that other nations do not, they also bear a special responsibility to the human race.

In the event that we execute Plan B, North Korea will be transformed under South Korea's guidance. However, because the internal reform of North Korea and long-awaited reunification of the Korean Peninsula were only possible thanks to international cooperation, they must likewise be carried out in the spirit of international cooperation. From this perspective, there are some areas where South Korea, too, should reform itself. For instance, the single biggest problem may be South Korea's unfortunate tendency to single out certain foreign countries, the current target being Japan, and instill hatred of them through the education system. In the twenty-first century, our mission should be to build a peaceful world based on mutual cooperation between all nations. There is no justification for dredging up old history in order to demonize other countries. Moreover, the hateful

indoctrination taking place in South Korea's schools has caused harm not only to the target countries having to bear such abuse, but also to South Korea itself by narrowing the minds of its citizens and causing the very country to lose its sanity. This policy does not serve the interests of the human race, and certainly has done no good for South Korea. We are now living in the twenty-first century, and have long since passed the point where all governments need to stop instilling hate through their education systems, no matter what country the hate is being directed against. Instead, governments should take responsibility to remove prejudice against foreign countries from the minds of their people and teach tolerance. Furthermore, though this is a matter affecting only Japan, South Korea should return Takeshima Island, which was seized after World War II during the presidency of Syngman Rhee, to Japanese control. The South Korean-led internal reform of North Korea will probably be a costly endeavor. However, after South Korea has resolved this territorial dispute and has put an end to its anti-Japanese educational curriculum, especially on the contentious comfort women problem that is the cause of so much bad blood between Japan and Korea, then Japan should agree to provide aid to support South Korea's reconstruction of North Korea and the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, which is surely destined to be the greatest nation-building exercise of the century.

On the subject of South Korea's internal self-reform, I would like to call attention to several other noteworthy matters. Firstly, in 2005, then South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun enacted a law that ostracized and persecuted the descendents of pro-Japanese collaborators during the period of Japanese rule, and even seized their property. This was not a correct understanding of the rule of law. It is important to remember that "rule of law" does not simply mean rigid obedience to the laws enacted by the government. Rather, it is expected that all legislation be passed in the spirit of fairness, and an essential principle of legal fairness is the prohibition on ex post facto law, meaning that a law criminalizing a certain behavior cannot be applied retroactively to acts committed prior to the passage of the law. The law passed and enforced by Roh's administration was ex post facto and in violation of this principle. Secondly, in 2017, President Park Geun-hye was forced to resign due to an investigation by the Constitutional Court of her alleged criminal activities, which was a troubling erosion of the normal separation of powers. When a government is constructed upon a separation of powers between the legislative, judicial, and executive branches, the executive is the core of the political system. Cases can arise where political stability should take precedence over routine criminal investigations, and the existence of a constitutional court within the judicial branch that investigates the appropriateness or the implementation of the decisions of the executive branch is actually harmful to a healthy separation of powers. By comparison, consider the 1960 decision of the Japanese Supreme Court concerning whether or not the US-Japan Security Treaty infringed upon the anti-war Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan. The Japanese Supreme Court dismissed the case on the grounds that, even if it could render a legal judgment on this highly controversial political issue, it would be outside the court's purely judicial scope. When it comes to the rule of law, Japan's record is by no means perfect, but it would be fair to say that Japan has at least been doing much better than South Korea.

In addition, South Korea and Japan agreed to a "final and irreversible" settlement to the contentious comfort women problem in 2015 on the advice of US President Barack Obama. Under the terms of the deal, Japan was to pay one billion yen in compensation. In Japan, few were satisfied with their government's decision to reach a new agreement with South Korea, which seemed unnecessary in consideration of both the historical facts about the comfort women and the other forms of compensation Japan had already rendered to South Korea through the 1965 Japan-Korea Treaty on Basic Relations and other measures after it. And yet, it is now the South Koreans who are increasingly demanding that their government revisit the issue and renegotiate the settlement. If the South Korean government responds to these demands by scrapping the "final and irreversible" bilateral settlement recommended by Barack Obama, South Korea will bring shame upon itself internationally as a country unable to keep its promises. To defend the agreement, Japan has to commit itself to not make any further compromises, no matter how much it might anger the South Koreans. Japan would also be acting in the best interests of Korea, whose reputation would suffer if Japan backed down in any way. Any such policy intending to slander another country and foment hostile feelings is intrinsically disreputable and is not to be tolerated. The Koreans are a fundamentally proud people, and their government should never adopt such policies even if the people feel passionate about them.

There is also a separate, unresolved issue between Japan and North Korea at stake amidst the current efforts to denuclearize North Korea. I am referring to North Korea's abductions of foreign citizens, though strictly speaking the United States and South Korea have been involved in this problem as well. In the case of Japan, a settlement with North Korea over the many Japanese citizens ruthlessly kidnapped by North Korean agents has proven elusive for decades. Even if we successfully execute Plan A, a resolution to this issue must be laid down in clear terms. In the case of Plan B, our military operations to liberate North Korea should involve rescuing all the abducted foreigners, including Japanese citizens.

Geopolitically, Japan has always wanted a friendly, prosperous, and peaceful nation to occupy the Korean Peninsula. When pre-Soviet Russia seemed on the verge of swallowing up Korea, Japan felt so threatened that it had to go to war twice, in the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, in order to prevent it from happening. The destabilization of the Korean Peninsula is certainly not something Korea's neighbors, or indeed any country, has ever desired. Japan's, and the whole world's, inescapable wish is naturally to see a prosperous and unified nation, which thinks and acts sensibly, take root in the Korean Peninsula.

In February, 1945, US President Franklin Roosevelt told Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin during their meeting at Yalta that the Korean Peninsula might need to remain under trusteeship for twenty to thirty years. He probably said this because of Korea's tragic experiences during the late-Choson dynasty. According to Chinese tradition, power belongs to the ones who hold the "mandate of heaven", and the Choson dynasty came to power in fourteenth century Korea when its founder General Yi Songkye violently seized that mandate by rebelling against and overthrowing the ruling Koryo dynasty. Although the

Choson dynasty was responsible for several notable accomplishments, including the invention of the Korean alphabet, its leaders gradually became too absorbed with preserving their own power to bother with nation-building. Even if it did hold a "mandate from heaven", the Choson dynasty by and large retarded Korea's development. Worst of all, the Choson suppressed and destroyed Buddhism, a religion which had been cherished in Korea up to the end of the Koryo dynasty. Today, the essence of the Korean spirit is said to be the "culture of resentment", or *han* in the Korean language, but resentment is one of the negative emotions that Buddhism most strongly warns against. It is easy to understand how the Korean people became so embittered, as they did suffer the historical humiliation of having been forced to continually submit to other countries for two thousand years. Even so, now that we have entered the twenty-first century, isn't it time for the Koreans to finally let go of this resentment? Shouldn't the people of the Korean Peninsula be a truly proud people? They show their resentment towards others so openly that one wonders, are the Koreans a proud people in all but appearance?

Although the people living in the Korean Peninsula never marched into central China to found their own dynasty there, they did successfully avoid being destroyed under China's aegis. Despite this, Korea was ultimately annexed by Japan in 1910. Ito Hirobumi, the most powerful figure in the Japanese government at that time, was a strong opponent of annexing Korea, but his assassination by Korean activist An Chung-gun in Harbin, Manchuria, had removed the last obstacle to the annexation. Japan's rule over Korea was not a happy time for either party.

Concerning the role of the United Nations, all five of the world's principal nuclear powers are also permanent members of the UN Security Council. What should we do if some of them, despite their positions of responsibility, refuse to go along with the current effort to denuclearize North Korea? If that happens, the entire denuclearization strategy would collapse, so the peoples of the world would have to raise their voices as one to condemn the defecting country or countries in the strongest possible terms. And yet, what is even more problematic is that it would become all too clear that the unchecked pursuit of naked self-interest by the permanent members of the Security Council is preventing the United Nations and its Security Council, organizations that were theoretically created to enforce world peace, from fulfilling their original purposes. In other words, it would mean that our only option is to thoroughly reform the United Nations itself.

And yet, this may be impossible if the nuclear powers with permanent seats on the UN Security Council block the needed reforms for the same self-interested reasons. However, even then, there is a solution. If the reforms make no headway, the righteous nations who realize the need for change should secede from the United Nations and immediately form a new, separate international organization. Even though Japan is neither a nuclear power nor a permanent member of the Security Council, I believe that it will waste no time in leaving the current UN and joining the new UN in the hope of creating a functional community of nations. If this new UN can fulfill the expectations of other nations by making significant contributions to world peace, then they, too, may quickly withdraw from the old UN in

order to be a part of the new UN. If so, the staff and structures of the old UN will soon be forced to transfer to the new one. In other words, the new UN will supplant the old one. Naturally, the new UN would aspire to promote peace in the twenty-first century world, and would likely include a provision in its charter forbidding all member nations from using their education systems to incite hatred against other countries.

In this way, the reform of the UN would be a straightforward matter. If the permanent members of the Security Council do neglect the common interests of humanity in favor of their own selfish interests, we will have to remind them all that reform through the establishment of a new UN can happen. By doing this, we will ultimately have no difficulty getting the permanent members of the Security Council to back the US-led strategy to denuclearize North Korea. As it embarks on this strategy, the United States government also ought to make the other members of the Security Council well aware of what the consequences would be if the UN failed as an organization.

The impetus behind the US-led effort to denuclearize North Korea was the threat posed to the United States if North Korea's nuclear and long-range missile programs were to produce a weapon capable of reaching the American mainland. To that extent, it was motivated by America's national interest. Nevertheless, it coincides with the desperate wish of all the peace-loving peoples of the world to halt the proliferation of nuclear arms. In that sense, it is also based on a common, global goal.

Taking a broad view of American history, I cannot deny that the USA has not always acted justly. And yet, it is also true that, since its founding, America has always been the world's leading nation of immigrants who are bound together by a sense of justice and desire to spread the universal values of liberty and democracy. Furthermore, as the country with the world's most powerful military, America plays the role of an international policeman dedicated to protecting a peaceful global order.

When we look at it from this perspective, we can see why it is so crucial that the entire world unite behind any military action that the United States undertakes for the purpose of denuclearizing North Korea. The US-led denuclearization campaign needs the cooperation and active support of all the peoples of the world.

Incidentally, South Korea and Japan have both signed security treaties with the USA, and they also cooperate with one another on affairs of defense. In spite of this, in 2007, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution that unfairly took sides in the Korea-Japan comfort women problem. The resolution harshly condemned and made demands upon Japan based on a patently false conception of the Japanese Army's comfort women system. It is ironic that, as a nation of immigrants that has always wanted its ethnic communities to put aside the animosities they had felt in their countries of origin, America of all countries would fan the flames of interethnic conflict by passing a resolution taking up the claims of only one side. We must say that the resolution is an apparent violation of the ideal of founding America of immigrants' nation.

The matter of the comfort women of World War II was not a bilateral problem between Japan and Korea, and certainly not a global problem, at the time the war ended. The trouble began in 1982 when influential Japanese newspapers published the account of a Japanese man who falsely claimed to have kidnapped Korean women in "slave hunts" during World War II and forced them to become comfort women for the Japanese Army. Mistaking this for a true testimony, the people and government of South Korea started to publicly criticize Japan and even take their complaints to the international community. Within Japan, it quickly became clear that this account was actually a crude fabrication, but it wasn't until the year 2014, thirty-two years later, that the newspapers that had published the articles on the fraudulent "testimony" in the first place finally retracted them. To make matters worse, while the Korean government and people were propagandizing their false, anti-Japanese claims to the world, the Foreign Ministry of Japan failed to provide a rebuttal to get the truth out. This is how the idea that the comfort women were forcibly recruited sex slaves took root internationally.

Every military in the world has had to come to grips with the problem of soldiers and sex, and has utilized the services of prostitutes. In the case of the Japanese Army of World War II, soldiers used privately-owned brothels set up near their barracks. The involvement of the Japanese Army in these brothels was limited to health and hygiene inspections and security maintenance, and the comfort women who served there had not been kidnapped by the Japanese nor were they sex slaves. Furthermore, the events in question are not on-going, but rather occurred over seventy years ago, and for this reason, the problem should have been regarded as legally resolved in 1965 with the ratification of the Japan-Korea Treaty on Basic Relations.

Despite that every army in the world has had the problem of "comfort women", in other words the problem of soldiers and sex, despite that the comfort women who mostly survived World War II were much more fortunate than the Japanese soldiers who were far more likely to have died, and despite that the Japanese Army's use of comfort women ended over seventy years ago, the House of Representatives of the USA, a nation of immigrants, chose to single out only Japan for condemnation. The congressional resolution was improperly researched, full of erroneous information, and even though both Japan and South Korea are allies of the United States, it one-sidedly criticized and demanded an apology from the Japanese alone. Needless to say, Japan could not possibly have accepted it.

Even before the misreports from Japanese newspapers, anti-Japanese sentiment was already high in South Korea due to historical circumstances and the aggressive anti-Japanese education promoted by Syngman Rhee, the first President of South Korea. I am not surprised that South Koreans were angered by these reports about the comfort women before they were exposed as lies. On the other hand, what is fundamentally reprehensible is that Koreans simply continued to repeat the same lies to the world as anti-Japanese

propaganda even after they knew what the truth was. First and foremost, the people of Korea, proud as they are, need to take pains to understand this.

Concluding observations

I attempted to devise this strategy for the denuclearization of North Korea in the light of my research into the modern history of Japan and the world. Needless to say, there are a few gaps in my analysis. For instance, I barely touched on the economic financial dimensions of the aforementioned military operations and how much they might cost. If a real war does start, I expect that my strategy will unavoidably entail considerable military expenditure, but once begun we cannot stop midway no matter what the cost may be, as the denuclearization of North Korea is an imperative objective. If we are deterred from following through with military operations due to their cost, then we should never have played the "game of chicken" in the first place. In other words, it would mean that we are willing to passively accept the fulfillment of North Korea's nuclear agenda. Are the Americans determined to play this "game of chicken" in order to protect their own security and to resolve problems of common concern to the people of the twenty-first century world? If so, they must adopt a plan to minimize human casualties, regardless of the relative concerns of cost, and recall the memory of how they defeated and occupied Japan in World War II and succeeded at turning Japan into a reliable US ally. I believe that there is now little alternative left for the human race than to completely denuclearize North Korea, even if it is a difficult burden to bear. My proposal to achieve this end is grounded in the lessons of history and aims to minimize human losses, and in spite of its gaps, I am convinced that it contains many useful points that would be unwise to overlook. On this matter, all nations and all peoples have to do what needs to be done to cooperate with the United States.