



TALKING POINTS

Asan Plenum 2013: "New World Disorder"
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RELEASE EMBARGO DATE: MAY 1, 2013 AT 9 AM

Panel: Sources of Instability in East Asia (Regency Room)

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Talking Points for: Hong Kyudok, Sookmyung Women's University

For the majority of Asian states, they do not have readily identifiable immediate threats, nor do they have ambitions to develop the military capabilities of a major power. In such cases, military development takes the form of a 'hedging' strategy; force structures are developed and maintained as insurance against the future deterioration of strategic environment, and more generally to try to match the acquisition of advanced capabilities elsewhere in the region.

On the Korean Peninsula, however, one of the most significant drivers of military enhancement is to deter North Korean provocations. Let me explain the background of the defense posture initiated by the Lee Government and further developed by the Park Geun-hye government. After a series of armed provocations by the DPRK in 2010, the ROK government found it necessary to bring a more selective but a prioritized response to local provocations and asymmetrical threats and increases the active deterrence capabilities.

A new doctrine of "proactive deterrence" was taken. Under the new doctrine, the ROK armed forces make prompt, focused, and proportional retaliation against North Korea's armed attacks. In explaining the new posture, Minister Kim Kwan-jin clearly stated that "if the enemy attacks South Korean people and territory, the ROK military will definitely use force to punish the enemy to make sure they will not even dare to think about it again." It has been South Korea's position that "the enemy should be punished thoroughly until the origin of provocation, its supporting forces and the commanding headquarters that give the order to provoke are eliminated."

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The question is that how we can avoid the escalation and chance of falling into the so-called "commitment trap". The ministry spent much efforts to reinforce the Northwest Islands defense posture. The NWI Defense Command was activated on June 15, 2011. It strengthen the ROK Marine Corps combat power with an increase of 5,000 more Marines. By enhancing force, tanks, tactical airships, 130 mm MRLs, K-9 self-propelled howitzers and AH-1S helicopters were reinforced. The ministry also decided to fortify Northwestern Islands to ensure survivability and maximizes combat efficiency and build accommodations for U.S. Marines as a part of launching KITP (Korea Incremental Training Program) at the NWI and has developed the ROK-U.S. combined counter local provocation plan.

However, Kim Jong-un did not sit idly to watch over Seoul's efforts to increase its readiness and strengthen alliance capability with the United States. The young leader came down to Jangjae/Moo Islands and Wolnae Islands in March 2013 respectively to instruct its forces how to effectively attack the combined forces defending South Korean territories. The Northwestern Islands are a likely location of future military conflict between the North and South given their location and history. The North has long disputed where the maritime border between the two Koreas was drawn in the wake of the Korean War, suggesting it should be farther to the South.

Adding to the potential for armed conflict is the new "shoot-first-and ask-questions-later" approach being taken by the South Korean military. That approach was displayed on June 17, 2011 when two South Korean marines mistakenly fired 99 rounds from their guard post at an Asiana Airlines plane en route to landing at the South Korea's Incheon International Airport. No one injured in the incident. However, there is a wide range of concerns, arising out of this small incident and the ROK government also find it necessary to increase its capability to de-escalate the crisis because the situation must not escalate into the major armed conflict.

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North Korea has intentionally shown the world its willingness to get closer to the brink of war by announcing that it discarded the armistice agreement and entered into the war preparation stage in March 2013. Moreover, it escalated further by expressing its willingness to fire upon its Musudan IRBM to the U.S. Air Base in Guam and other key facilities in the U.S. Pacific Command. Kim Jong-Un made it very clear that it would use nuclear weapons preemptively and it would not give up the nuclear option unless the United States recognizes the DPRK as a nuclear power state and open the nuclear disarmament negotiation at the table. Pyongyang recently blocked the Kaesong Industrial Park and has not allowed South Korean reinforcement to provide manpower, resources and food from the south of the border.

Park Geun-hye government tried hard to keep the door open for North Korea to solve the crisis peacefully. However, the ministry has re-prioritized the acquisition plan by focusing on North Korea's asymmetric threats. In order to increase its capability to control the crisis, additional acquisition of counter artillery radar and other detection equipment needs to be quickly augmented. Improving JFOS-K and ground tactical C4I system needs to be upgraded. The ministry also need to enhance ISR capability such as high-altitude UAV and deep area precision strike capability. Building TBM defense system is also required. EMP protection capability for key facility also needs to be enhanced.

In order to enhance the initial response capability against the source of provocation, the ministry has decided to select the 5th generation fighter this year to take a fast track acquisition of the stealth fighters. The ministry has already finalized the decision to procure additional air assets including attack helicopters and maritime operation helicopters.

The ministry needs to prepare itself against the DPRK's Special Operation Forces (SOF) and cyberspace threats. The South needs to be ready for a large scale infiltration of North Korean SOF by maintaining operational and tactical response posture. It has also needed to reinforce surveillance capabilities to facilitate early detection and monitoring and this requires us to

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advance our early warning system. The ministry also plans to reinforce rear area operation units and strengthen our homeland defense divisions. In order to improve our execution capabilities the ministry decides to upgrade rear area C2 & strike system.

As witnessed recently, system breakdown of the major banks and broadcasting companies in Seoul turned out to be done by North Korean hackers. The Park government assesses that North Korea has more than 3,000 cyber warfare personnel, at a fairly high level of hacking capabilities. In response, the National Security Council will reinforce its early acquisition of various response capabilities, including reinforcing expert personnel at the Cyber Command, and developing various programs and vaccines.

After the home grown terrorist attack made in the Boston Marathon, vulnerabilities are also found in Seoul as white powder and letter to threaten the Minister Kim were found in the ministry of national defense. Therefore, the ministry decides to reinforce its counter-terror ops capabilities in the major metropolitan areas. Responding firmly against such vicious threats and provocations are not always easy job to do. However, the ROK government has keenly consulted with the Obama Administration and the Xi government in Beijing to control the situation. Particularly, the ROK-U.S. combined counter provocation response plan signed by the both JCSs on March 22, 2013 is a welcome addition to fix the dangerous instability spiral and therefore needs to be further developed.

Finally, the close cooperation is also needed in sharing operational experiences of how the United States and other partners are monitoring the potential adversary and defending themselves from the various types of local provocations and asymmetric warfare. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance are the key areas where Washington, Tokyo, Seoul and other Capitals can help each other in dealing with the threats from within and outside of the borders.

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It is necessary to work together with concerned states to share informations and develop ways to design a system to counter the various asymmetrical threats we are now facing. At this moment, we are particularly concerned over the surge of national sentiment heated by the domestic politics. It is too unfortunate that the opportunity for security cooperation is easily sacrificed at the expense of domestic politics. Politics should stop at the water's edge. The costs of not dealing with the threats are likely to be much higher. We believe that the costs of remedies can be significantly lowered by early actions and the sharing of the wisdom and experiences among strategic partners.

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