

PUSHING BEYOND CENTURIES OF INEQUALITY: HOW THE UNITED STATES  
FACILITATED THE NORMALIZATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS  
BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of  
Texas State University-San Marcos  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of ARTS

by

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San Marcos, Texas  
August 2013

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## **DEDICATION**

For Doris and Harry Hagstad

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First I would like to thank the professors in the Department of History at Texas State University-San Marcos, especially Dr. Mary Brennan, chair of the history department and my thesis advisor. Without Dr. Brennan, who took a chance on a determined student, I would not be where I am today. Next, I would like to thank the second reader on my thesis committee, Dr. Ronald Johnson. From the very beginning, Dr. Johnson encouraged me in my pursuit of Asian history and has helped shape my understanding of diplomatic history to look beyond the politically correct version of diplomacy. I would also like to thank Dr. Ellen Tillman for agreeing to be the third member of my committee upon our first meeting and helping me in the thesis process. I would also like to thank Dr. Joseph Yick as well as Dr. Leah Renold for helping me to think about Asian history on a more critical level. My growth as a historical scholar would not have happened without these professors and the many more I have had the privilege to study under during my time here at Texas State. I am also grateful to my fellow grad students who have helped raise the bar for class discussions that have increased my level of historical understanding. I also want to thank the staff of the history department, namely Madelyn Patlan, for helping me navigate the technical aspects of the history department. I will be forever grateful to Texas State University-San Marcos for the opportunities provided to me.

Next, I would like to thank the staff at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas. Their help and dedication made my research process all the more bearable. I would also like to thank the staff at the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland as well as the staff at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, Massachusetts. Without their guidance navigating the many archive records, my thesis would remain incomplete.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends who have helped me as my academic career has progressed. Thank you to my mother, Susan, and my father, Steve, for always telling me to believe in myself and supporting me financially as I pursue higher education. To my twin sister, Amberlee, I am forever blessed to have her as my number one cheerleader and confidant. She always knows how to make me smile in the face of any and every setback. Next I would like thank my brother, Michael, and my sister-in-law, Jess, for funding my trip to do research at the National Archives and the JFK library in Boston. I appreciate their belief in what I am doing (even if they don't quite understand it) as well as the years of support they've given me. I would also like to thank Holly Broussard for hosting me in Boston and helping me to maneuver the city while I did research. I also want give thanks to my oldest brother, Steven, and his wife, Holly, for their continued encouragement. I also want to acknowledge the prayers and support of my church family from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Corpus Christi, Texas, especially my spiritual advisor Sister Emiliana. I am also grateful to my former professors at the University of Incarnate Word. Dr. Pat Gower, Dr. Lopita Nath, and Dr. Emily Clark first inspired me to go to grad school and have

supported me each semester as I maneuvered the new trials that grad school presented. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends. I would like to thank my number one grad school buddy, Don Carrington, who came with me to Texas State from UIW and has helped me keep my sanity as we navigated the challenges each semester offered. I would like to thank the good people I've met in grad school who have helped me along the way: Chris Dial for his steady encouragement and being my Yick study buddy; Alex LaRotta for helping me sort out the technical issues of thesis work; and Ashley Rueda for being my kindred spirit in grad school. My oldest friends from high school also deserve my highest gratitude: Samantha Honors, my best friend and eternal sunshine girl who always added a dash of fun to my life and believed in me; Kevin Showalter, my steady rock, always giving me the reality check I needed as well as reminding me that my efforts are never in vain. And last, but not least, I would like to thank my Friday group: Sarah Ohnemus, Jaymes Tamayo, Zach Schudrowtiz, Meredith Pullman, Jenny Adkins, and Herman Poothong for giving me something to look forward to every week and for being a constant source of encouragement and strength since 2010.

This manuscript was submitted on July 9, 2013.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER	
I. SETTING THE STAGE .....	1
II. DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS AMIDST DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.....	23
III. A CHANGING WORLD: PUSHING AND PULLING THE NORMALIZATION PROCEEDINGS.....	42
IV. GETTING IT DONE: HOW THE NORMALIZATION AGREEMENT CULMINATED AFTER THIRTEEN YEARS .....	55
V. CONCLUSION.....	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	87

## **CHAPTER I:**

### **SETTING THE STAGE**

Beginning in the 1950s, the United States facilitated a “normalization” agreement between South Korea and Japan. Although the United States recognized many advantages to the rapprochement of South Korea and Japan, the American administrations failed to fully comprehend South Korea and Japan’s combined history and complex relationship. Even before Japan became the colonial overlord of the Korean peninsula, Japan and Korea’s relationship never existed in any form of mutual respect. For centuries, each saw the other as an inferior entity. Following World War II, Japan soared economically while South Korea floundered. When the United States initially approached South Korea and Japan about rapprochement, South Korea still remained at a disadvantage in comparison to Japan. However, as the “normalization” process began and later developed, the United States started what would eventually become one of the most successful partnerships in modern history. I use the term “normalization” because this is how the United States referred to the process of bringing South Korea and Japan together. However, what the United States was doing went far beyond diplomatic rapprochement

proceedings; the United States (unknowingly) provided the impetus for South Korea and Japan to establish a working relationship, one that had never existed in their shared history. America's reasons for its involvement in the normalization process took economic as well as diplomatic forms, and in the process America facilitated the beginnings of bringing South Korea and Japan beyond centuries of perceived and genuine inequality into a modern sense (outside the realm of imperialism) of diplomatic and economic equality.

Although the United States enjoyed a strong relationship with both Japan and South Korea following the end of World War II, the U.S. encountered many difficulties in facilitating a normalization agreement between its two allies. After Japan's defeat in World War II, the Korean peninsula regained autonomy. However, relations between Japan and South Korea were never diplomatically established. Recognizing this problem, the United States became the first party to approach both countries for the establishment of normal relations. Despite the fact that Japan still focused on recovering from the devastation inflicted by World War II, it remained in a far better position than South Korea. South Korea's infrastructure, still virtually nonexistent, became even more so with the advent of the Korean War. Japan and South Korea agreed to begin the process of normalization in 1952, but Japan still had the upper-hand. Japan and South Korea's shared history of inequality and intolerance on both sides prevented a normalization agreement from occurring for another thirteen years. The U.S. remained continually involved in the process but refused to act as direct negotiator. The U.S. recognized not only the economic advantages of a normalization agreement but also the strategic potential such an

agreement could create for the advancement of anti-Communism. Although the U.S. recognized the advantages, it rarely understood the tensions between the people of South Korea and Japan that remained from centuries of prejudice. Maneuvering the social and political stigmas associated with a normalization agreement would prove more difficult than initially anticipated.

The difficulty arose in part from Americans' failure to comprehend the long history of antagonism between the two nations as well as America's own role in the conflict. Before the rise of imperialism in Asia, the Korean peninsula remained almost completely secluded, known only as the 'hermit kingdom.' The Korean people acknowledged themselves as a vassal state of China and paid tribute to the Chinese emperor. Korea imported many aspects of Chinese culture and imitated much of China's political and social structure. In contrast, Japan remained only in the peripheral vision of Korea, merely as a barbarian state, populated by what the Koreans perceived as an inferior race that did not have the finesse and cultural refinement of China. Korea's first major clash with Japan occurred in 1592 when the Japanese invaded the Korean peninsula under Hideyoshi Toyotomi. Hideyoshi Toyotomi sought to use Korea as the stepping stone to conquer China. Although the Korean navy held its own against the Japanese, the Korean army required reinforcements from China. China's entrance into the conflict thwarted Japan's hopes of conquering the Korean peninsula. Japan's unwarranted aggression toward Korea cemented Korea's negative attitude towards its neighbor. Following Japan's

withdrawal, Korea enjoyed a peaceful existence and continued to thrive as a tributary state of China.<sup>1</sup>

This way of life changed abruptly with the advent of Western imperialism. Western nations invaded China before focusing their efforts on Korea. Despite the assaults, both China and Korea refused to modernize technologically or culturally in the face of Western encroachment, while Japan followed the example of the West and began modernizing its entire structure. Japan had remained culturally and technologically on par with China and Korea (although neither country would admit to such a reality) for centuries. Neither country held any major weapons advantage over the other. However, by modernizing its entire structure, Japan set a course that not only propelled it into the modern age, but forced Korea and China to play catch-up into the far reaches of the next century. Japan also copied the West by using military force to make the Korean government sign the Treaty of Kanghwa on February 1876. This treaty compelled the Koreans to open their borders to trade and, more significantly, recognized Korea as an independent state yielding the same sovereign rights as Japan.<sup>2</sup> This entirely new concept contradicted the entirety of Korean history as a Chinese tributary state. The Treaty of Kanghwa became the portal through which other imperial powers entered trade agreements with Korea.<sup>3</sup>

The United States became one such power. Under the Korean-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce, signed on May 22, 1882, the United States offered

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<sup>1</sup>Keith Pratt, *Everlasting Flower: A History of Korea*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006), 131-132.

<sup>2</sup>James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 289.

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth B. Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of a Phoenix*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 127.

its 'good offices' in the case of a threat from a third power.<sup>4</sup> Many Koreans hoped the United States would become a counterweight to Japanese growing encroachment. The United States, however, had its own designs in Asia that did not include saving Korea from Japan. As a result, the Americans stood by while Japan fought two wars to gain unchallenged access to the Korean peninsula. The first Sino-Japanese War ended with the Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895. Under the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, China recognized the independence of Korea and surrendered all rights to Korea's internal affairs. Less than a decade later, the Russians became the second power to challenge Japanese interests in Korea. To combat this, Japan went to war with Russia in 1904. Japan managed to hold on long enough to drive Russia to the negotiation table. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt offered to mediate between the two powers. Under the Treaty of Portsmouth, concluded in September 1905, Russia recognized Japan's "paramount political, military, and economic interests in Korea."<sup>5</sup>

Japan's path remained clear of any further barriers to taking over Korea. On August 16, 1910, Japanese Prime Minister Yi Wan-yong signed the treaty of annexation. Koreans pleaded with the United States to intervene, but the United States ignored the appeal in favor of its previous agreement with Japan. In July 1905, the United States negotiated the Taft-Katsura Memorandum which recognized Japan's "right to take appropriate measures for the 'guidance, control, and protection' of Korea; in exchange, Japan recognized America's position in the

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne Patterson and Hilary Conroy, "Duality and Dominance: A Century of Korean-American Relations," in *One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1982*, ed. Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1986), 4.

<sup>5</sup> W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism: 1894-1945*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 84.

Philippines.”<sup>6</sup> American refusal to help the Koreans against the Japanese later haunted the United States during the normalization process. In the 1960s, when the United States tried to convince the Koreans that it would protect Korea from any future aggression, the Koreans had little reason to believe the United States.

Japanese colonial rule over Korea proved to be every bit as horrible as the Koreans imagined it would be. Although the entire colonial period was a dark history between the two countries, World War II emerged as the main source of Korean bitterness. Not only were all nationalist movements brutally squashed, but the Japanese ruled the Koreans with an iron fist. When the second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the Japanese shifted the Korean people into a mass mobilization for the war effort. To control the activities of the population, the Japanese rulers replaced Korean organizations with state-sponsored groups designed to prevent any popular uprisings or disturbances.<sup>7</sup> In 1940, the Japanese organized Korea into “350,000 Neighborhood Patriotic Associations, each with ten households. These became the basic units for collections of contributions, imposition of labor service, maintenance of local security, and rationing.”<sup>8</sup> Schools became more militarized and regimented. All middle school and higher-level schools practiced compulsory military drills. In May 1943, the state permitted all Korean students to volunteer for the army. Korean volunteers remained minimal, which resulted in mandatory registration for military service by November 1943.

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<sup>6</sup> Yur-Bok Lee, “Korean-American Diplomatic Relations, 1882-1905” in *One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1982*, ed. Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1986), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 215-216.

<sup>8</sup> Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, Inc., 2010), 72.

Students were forced to collect scrap metal and attend patriotic rallies. By the 1940s, the Japanese shortened the school term and required secondary school students to work on military construction projects. Some of the students worked in Japan while other student labor groups stayed in Korea to build airstrips and defense works. By the spring of 1945, the Japanese suspended almost all levels of education beyond elementary school in favor of labor and military service.<sup>9</sup>

As the Japanese war situation worsened, the Japanese increased restrictions on Koreans' freedom. The Japanese began a mass assimilation program aimed at erasing Korean cultural links to the past. In 1939, the Japanese issued the Name Order which forced Koreans to change their names to Japanese ones; later they forced the Koreans to register at Shinto shrines in order to pay homage to the Japanese emperor. The Japanese shut down all Korean language newspapers and ceased the publication of all Korean books. Japanese replaced Korean in schools. As the war deteriorated for the Japanese, the Koreans suffered as well. Many Koreans worked in Japanese factories amid allied bombings. The Japanese military also forced between 100,000 to 200,000 young Korean girls to become 'comfort women' for the Japanese army. Lured from their villages under false pretenses, these young women lived in virtual imprisonment. When these girls returned home after the war, they hid away in shame, treated as unwanted members of society. The lack of acknowledgement by the Japanese government of the abuse of the comfort women remains a source of bitterness between Korea and Japan today.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Keith Pratt, *Everlasting Flower*, 225-226.

<sup>10</sup> Lee, *Korea and East Asia*, 154-156.



With the defeat of Japan in 1945, Koreans found themselves once again pawns of more powerful countries. Although many Koreans believed the end of the war would mean that their sovereignty would be returned immediately, this was not the case. Like so many countries faced with cooperating with the decisions made by the three great powers (the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union) of World War II, the Korean peninsula lost the ability to decide its own fate following the collapse of Japanese rule. Soviet forces, upon liberating China from the Japanese, began pouring south into the Korean peninsula. The United States, fearing that the Soviets would win control of the entire peninsula, sent their own military forces to begin landing in the south. Although Korea already had a government in exile, Soviet and U.S. officials paid it little heed. On December 1, 1943, the Cairo Declaration (created by the United States, Great Britain, and China) stated that a trusteeship for an undetermined amount of time would be established for the Korean peninsula. In 1945, the conference at Yalta, also without a Korean representative, decided that Korea would be administered by an interim government under international jurisdiction until which time the Koreans could decide upon their own government.<sup>11</sup> The Korean peninsula, never meant to be permanently divided, remained at the political mercy of the Cold War environment that emerged almost immediately upon the end of World War II. When the UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) sought to establish a permanent government, North and South could not decide who represented the true will of the people. The Soviet-backed North refused to recognize the authority of UNTCOK.

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<sup>11</sup> Louis D. Hayes, *Political Systems of East Asia: China, Korea, and Japan*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 2012), 95.

This led to separate elections that resulted in the permanency of the division.<sup>12</sup> Most countries in the UN, including the United States, recognized the Republic of Korea in the South as the official government of Korea.

America's strong presence in Japan and South Korea evolved in the tense environment of the Cold War. After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States occupied Japan and began rebuilding the country. Officials in the American State Department believed that they needed a pro-US counterweight in Asia because of the instability in China due to the civil war there. The American relationship with Japan soon grew into a successful partnership. To the Republic of Korea, the United States became a protector as well as an economic pillar that helped sustain the country and prevent a Communist takeover from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the north. To further the interests of the free world and to help stabilize the South Korean economy, the United States went to great lengths to help bring about a normalization agreement between Japan and South Korea. The United States recognized the cultural and economic ties between the two countries and went through years of negotiations to help convince both sides of the benefits to such an agreement.

Scholarship on the U.S. involvement in the normalization process between South Korea and Japan is limited. Often the normalization process is overlooked entirely in the triangular history of the United States, South Korea, and Japan. While those historians who do discuss normalization may concede that U.S. pressure pushed South Korea and Japan to come to an accord, they tend to focus on only one

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<sup>12</sup> Lee, Chae-Jin, *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 22-23.

side of the triangular relationship. Historians concentrating on the Korean perspective mainly focus upon the fears Koreans held of Japanese domination as well as the anti-Japanese rhetoric that made the normalization process more complicated.

For example, Sung Hwa Cheong's book, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea: Japanese-South Korean Relations Under American Occupation, 1945-1952*, highlights the Korean perspective of the normalization process and outlines the beginnings of the normalization process and the complex triangle of which the United States soon found themselves apart. Cheong's book focuses on the animosity Koreans held for the Japanese and the advantages politicians such as South Korean President Syngman Rhee derived from this bitterness. Cheong notes that the United States did not expect such hatred nor did it quite understand the depth and intricacy South Korean hatred of the Japanese encompassed.<sup>13</sup> Cheong's standpoint on the normalization process, although only covering the initial proceedings, highlights the tumultuous domestic situation, especially that in South Korea, and its detrimental effects on the normalization process. Cheong's standpoint on the U.S. involvement in the proceedings is that the United States did not fully grasp the complexity of the nearly impossible task set before them. However, as the 1950s progressed, the United States would become very much aware of the diminishing chances of a normalization agreement happening while Syngman Rhee remained in power in South Korea.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Sung-Hwa Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea: Japanese-South Korean Relations Under American Occupation, 1945-1952*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991), 99-143.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Like Cheong, John Lie's book, *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea*, focuses on the role anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea played in preventing a normalization agreement from occurring for thirteen years. Lie focuses upon Korean fears of Japanese subjugation as well as feelings of Korea's economic inferiority. Lie argues these feelings of inferiority motivated Koreans to catch up to Japan's booming economy. Rather than focusing on Syngman Rhee as Cheong did, Lie blames President Park Chung Hee and his anti-Japanese rhetoric for inciting nationalistic feelings in the Korean people. Lie also claims that the two main reasons the Korean government under Park pushed for a normalization treaty stemmed from the economic troubles of the regime and the decline in U.S. aid. Lie credits the economic turnaround in South Korea to its connection with the Japanese market following the completion of a normalization agreement. Throughout his book, Lie asserts the idea that the political environment cannot be separated from the economic situation of a country. <sup>15</sup>

Scholars who emphasize the Japanese perspective frequently discuss the prevalence of Leftist groups who refused to acknowledge South Korea over North Korea as well as the negative impacts anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea had on Japan's political officials who sought an accord. For example, James W. Morley, in his book *Japan and Korea: America's Allies in the Pacific*, recognizes the issues of both countries in achieving a normalization agreement. Morley especially emphasizes the ramifications for Japan of officially recognizing South Korea, namely that South Korea would be deemed the sole government of the Korean peninsula.

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<sup>15</sup> John Lie, *Han Unbound: The Political Economy of South Korea*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 58-60.

This idea worried Leftist groups in Japan who refused to take part in officially isolating the North Korean regime. Many in these groups also believed that formally recognizing one government would prevent future reunification of the peninsula. However, South Koreans deemed their recognition by Japan necessary in order to prevent Japan from adopting a “two Korea” policy that would lessen the legitimacy of their claim to represent all Koreans on the peninsula. Many other sources neglect to acknowledge this issue in the normalization proceedings because of the delicacy of the matter.<sup>16</sup> Morley acknowledges that the political factions of both sides that opposed a normalization agreement created further barriers for the achievement of normalization. Although Morley’s book is published before the achievement of a normalization agreement, his arguments about the barriers faced on each side show a more complete history of the normalization process.<sup>17</sup>

Written a few years later, Morinosuke Kajima’s book, *Modern Japan’s Foreign Policy*, addresses other concerns Japan had over coming to an accord with South Korea. The main concern involved the South Korean proclaimed Rhee line. This line, proclaimed by Syngman Rhee in 1952, established the fishing boundary in the Sea of Japan for South Korea. Any boats caught crossing this line were seized by South Korea. The Rhee line became one of the last issues worked out in the normalization treaty. Fishing rights for both countries also remained a vital point of interest in the normalization treaty, especially since the fishing industry continued to be an important aspect of the livelihood of Koreans and Japanese alike. Kajima

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<sup>16</sup> James W. Morley, *Japan and Korea: America’s Allies in the Pacific*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1965), 58-66.

<sup>17</sup> Morley, *Japan and Korea*, 58-66.

also notes that Japan had to tread a fine line in regards to concessions to South Korea. Many opposition groups in Japan denounced the Japanese negotiators as being weak. Although he focuses on economic concerns, Kajima also discusses the complicated political process of ratification process in the Japanese Diet.<sup>18</sup>

Writing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Tadokoro Masayuki, in his article, “The Model of an Economic Power: Japanese Diplomacy in the 1960s,” highlights the issues anti-Japanese regimes in South Korea, such as that of Syngman Rhee, presented for the Japanese from a different perspective. Unlike many other Japanese scholars, Masayuki notes the insensitivity of the Japanese towards South Korea’s bitterness against Japan as its former colonial ruler. Many Japanese Leftist groups dismissed South Korea as merely a puppet of the United States and used South Korea’s continued anti-Japanese sentiments as reason enough not to improve relations with the country. Other concerns raised over the normalization agreement involved the determination of the legality of the 1910 annexation of Korea to Japan as well as fishing territory disputes. The 1910 annexation question remained largely symbolic, but Japan refused to appear weak in admitting to any imperial crimes against the Korean peninsula. Moreover, Masayuki notes that the Sato government in Japan took every precaution in choosing the negotiator to act Japan’s behalf in the normalization proceedings. The man chosen, Shiina Etsusaburo, sought to diffuse Korean suspicions immediately by acknowledging the remorse of the Japanese people over the dark period of their shared history. The inclusion of this in the

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<sup>18</sup> Morinosuke Kajima, *Modern Japan’s Foreign Policy*, (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company: Publishers, 1969), 197-211.

discussion of normalization history shows Masayuki's determination to acknowledge the lengths Japan went to in reassuring South Korea of its sincerity.<sup>19</sup>

Other historians have examined the relationship through the prism of the Cold War and how it affected both countries, ultimately making an agreement possible. Charles J. Fuccello, in his dissertation entitled "South Korean-Japanese Relations in the Cold War: A Journey to Normalization," argues that the Cold War created a new sense of urgency for countries to settle their disputes in such a way as to not to create further conflict in the nuclear environment following World War II. Fuccello notes that South Korea especially felt the need to create a stronger bulwark against Communist infiltration from North Korea. Japan likewise had its own Socialist factions that favored rapprochement with Communist China as well as North Korea, instead of solely South Korea. Fuccello argues that although most Koreans saw the US as an undependable ally, the Cold War altered the situation. Post-1950 U.S. interests lay in a modernized Korea and an industrialized Japan that remained committed to the Western position of the Cold War, in essence the American position of a bulwark against the Communist threat. All of these factors combined to create legitimate reasoning for South Korea and Japan to put aside their differences and come to an accord.<sup>20</sup>

Two main views dominate the historiography that focuses on the American role in normalization. The more prevalent view focuses on the American desire to create an economically and politically stable Free East Asia. There are varying

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<sup>19</sup> Tadokoro Masayuki, "The Model of an Economic Power: Japanese Diplomacy in the 1960s" in *The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan*, ed. Makoto Iokibe, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 81-107.

<sup>20</sup> Charles J. Fuccello, "South Korean-Japanese Relations in the Cold War: A Journey to Normalization" (PhD dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1977), ii, 54-56, 305-307.

degrees of scholarship in this view that deal with the security interests of the United States. The less prominent view of U.S. involvement is that the United States remained committed solely to working out the existing issues South Korea and Japan had with each other (i.e. fishery disputes and the status of Koreans living in Japan). In essence, how the former colonizer reestablished relations with the former colony. In the former viewpoint, the American role is very apparent throughout the entire process, although the United States refused to act as direct negotiator. In the latter, the role of the United States is minimal. Almost all scholars agree, however, that the United States organized the first normalization conference in 1952 and the best example of the dominant view is Kil J. Yi's article: "In Search of a Panacea: Japan-Korea Rapprochement and America's 'Far Eastern Problems.'" Yi argues that the United States saw the normalization agreement as the ultimate solution to their situation by creating a stronger coalition against Communism in East Asia. Moreover, the agreement would also allow Japan to relieve the United States of the economic burden that South Korea had become because the cultural ties between South Korea and Japan created a natural economic bond between the two countries. Yi outlines three issues that further escalated the need for a rapprochement between South Korea and Japan: first, the nuclear capabilities of Communist China created an even more hostile East Asia; second, the need to ensure Japan's loyalty to the American mindset of the Cold War; and third, the desire to help post-colonial societies escape the clutches of Communism and determine their own fate.<sup>21</sup> The United States hoped that once Japan and South

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<sup>21</sup> Kil J. Yi, "In Search of Panacea: Japan-Korea Rapprochement and America's 'Far East



Korea reestablished diplomatic relations, South Korea's economy would stabilize with Japanese investment. In turn a stronger South Korea, as well as the cooperation of America's two main allies in Asia, meant a solid coalition against the growing strength of Communist China.<sup>22</sup>

An opposing view to Yi's Panacea concept is addressed by Mark Weaver in his Master's Thesis, "American Mediation and the Japan-South Korea Normalization Treaty." Weaver asserts that rather than creating a geo-strategic alliance in East Asia, the US initiated the normalization process between South Korea and Japan to settle outstanding disputes from the colonial period. Weaver further claims that American contributions to the normalization process remained limited in substance and only cautiously offered. Although Weaver's argument is valid in the sense that the normalization agreement allowed for South Korea and Japan to sort through outstanding issues, his sources show that his information is incomplete. The majority of his primary documents originate in the 1950s when there remained limited progress in the negotiations. The primary evidence used throughout the thesis is limited and one-sided. Weaver even omits the evidence presented in his sources of the avid interest the United States had in the achievement of a normalization agreement, especially for a strong coalition in East Asia against the Communist threat.<sup>23</sup> Weaver's incomplete analysis, although showing another

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Problems," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (November 2002), 637.

<sup>22</sup> Kil J. Yi, "In Search of Panacea," 633-662.

<sup>23</sup> One instance of this is that Weaver quotes continually from a dissertation entitled "From Colony to Neighbor: Relations Between Japan and South Korea" by Paul Chan and completely disregards Chan's primary evidence that contradicts Weaver's argument, including State Department telegrams highlighting the advantages a normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan would bring.

perspective, lacks sufficient evidence to validate his point of contention about the history of the normalization process.<sup>24</sup>

Junkab Chang, in his dissertation “United States Mediation in South Korean-Japanese Negotiations, 1951-1965: A Case Study in the Limitations of Embassy Diplomacy,” takes another approach. He argues that the U.S. policy to develop the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan failed for so many years because of the limits of embassy diplomacy. Chang notes that early on in the negotiation process, the United States witnessed the intense animosity held on both sides and soon discovered that U.S. pressure could do little to overcome these issues. He further concludes that mere ambassadors alone could not assert the necessary amount of influence: higher level officials, such as U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, were needed to add leverage to the wishes of the United States. Another aspect to his argument asserts that the U.S. remained hindered by the lack of trust on both sides for the United States. Chang’s alternate take on the limits of the diplomacy of the United States lends a complex dimension to the normalization proceedings.<sup>25</sup>

Other scholars focus on how the relationship the United States had with each country affected the normalization process. For example, Chae-Jin Lee’s book, *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*, highlights the U.S./ South Korean relationship and how the normalization process is portrayed.<sup>26</sup> The Americans had

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<sup>24</sup>Mark Weaver, “American Mediation and the Japan-South Korea Normalization Treaty” (master’s thesis, The University of New Brunswick, 1997), iii, 14-53.

<sup>25</sup> Junkab Chang, “United States Mediation in South Korean-Japanese Negotiations. 1951-1965: A Case Study in the Limitations of Embassy Diplomacy” (PhD dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1998), i-iii, 167-205.

<sup>26</sup> Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 51.

to constantly reassure the South Koreans of their continual support and future protection, lest any power try to conquer Korea again. Lee also discusses the balance the United States needed to maintain between the two countries. Although the United States had to work harder to convince South Korea of Japan's benefits, at times the United States also had to exert pressure on Japan to be more yielding, especially in regards to South Korea's request for economic assistance from Japan. Lee also discusses the Kim-Ohira Memorandum of 1962 which stipulated a ten-year pledge of Japanese economic grants that helped enhance the Japanese image in South Korea. The United States maneuvered these issues and made continual promises of the U.S. commitment to South Korea's security.<sup>27</sup>

Selig S. Harrison portrays the dimensions of Japan's relationship with the United States. In "The United States, Japan, and the Future of Korea," Harrison argues that although there were certain factions in Japan that called for the withdrawal of the U.S. presence from Japan, the majority opposed this view. Many in Japan believed that the withdrawal of the United States would cause Japan to remilitarize, which in turn would hurt the booming economy of Japan. This Japanese faction also believed that being included in the defense perimeter of the United States saved the economy from vast military expenditures. Harrison also notes that opposition to the normalization agreement believed that a simple joint declaration between the two countries could bring about trade, not an official treaty that officially isolated North Korea. U.S. influence on this matter allowed

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<sup>27</sup> Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 50-54.

proponents of the normalization agreement to follow through with the negotiations.<sup>28</sup>

Nancy Bernkopf Tucker addresses another complication that arose for the United States toward the end of the normalization process in “Threats, Opportunities, and Frustrations in East Asia.” The escalated involvement of the United States in Vietnam remains one of the lesser known dimensions of the final year in the normalization process. Tucker notes that President Lyndon Johnson became increasingly frustrated as negotiations between South Korea and Japan continued to drag on. Increasing expenditures for Vietnam and a Congress that wanted to decrease the Foreign Aid budget meant that aid to South Korea needed to drop. Because the U.S. could not allow South Korea to become even more economically unstable, Japan’s economic support following a normalization agreement became all the more necessary. Additionally, Tucker argues that Johnson’s realization that South Korean soldiers could relieve the American burden complicated the already tense situation between South Korea and the United States. Factions in South Korea wished to distance themselves from the policies of the United States and the added pressure of South Korean troops in Vietnam exacerbated the heated debates over U.S. pressure for a normalization agreement with Japan. Tucker’s inclusion of the Vietnam element to the normalization process highlights the complicated diplomatic situation of the Johnson administration.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Selig S. Harrison, “The United States, Japan, and the Future of Korea,” in *U.S.-Japan Relations and the Security of East Asia*, ed. Franklin B. Weinstein (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1978), 189-198.

<sup>29</sup> Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, “Threats, Opportunities, and Frustrations in East Asia,” in *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy 1963-1968*, ed. Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 127-131.

The historiography of the diplomatic triangle surrounding the normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan is complex but fairly limited. There are multiple perspectives on why the United States took such an avid interest in reconciling its two allies, as well as one contradictory argument that minimizes U.S. participation in the process. The Cold War environment's effects on the normalization process remained very apparent throughout multiple sources as well as the economic advantages a normalization agreement held for all three countries. The limits on U.S. diplomacy in the face of the bitter colonial history shared by Korea and Japan are also very evident in multiple sources. All of these factors contribute to the shared history of the United States, South Korea, and Japan, as well as show the priorities each country placed upon the achievement of a normalization agreement.

While varying arguments have been made about the U.S. involvement in the normalization agreement, no one body of work has examined the combination of domestic and international pressures within each country that ultimately resulted in the success of the normalization agreement. More importantly, historical scholarship about the normalization process has failed to acknowledge that the United States attempted to bring South Korea and Japan –two countries that had never shared a genuine diplomatic relationship with one another– into a modern realm of diplomatic and economic equality.

This thesis will address these issues. Using documents from the National Archives II, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, and the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, this thesis will explore the multi-faceted relationship the

United States had with both South Korea and Japan, a relationship complicated by the ever-changing Cold War. The international tensions between communists and anticommunists increased American determination to reach a normalization agreement and colored what they saw as the eventual end result. Unlike any of the other historical works on “normalization,” this thesis will address how South Korea and Japan overcame centuries of diplomatic and economic inequality and evolved into burgeoning partners by the end of the thirteen-year normalization process. What they accomplished was not “normalization,” but something completely new in their histories. To succeed, the United States endured a level of political upheaval in South Korea that has been overlooked in the scholarship until now. The animosity South Koreans held toward the Japanese encompasses a long, complex history that remained a constant burden in the normalization proceedings. In essence this thesis will provide the most complete history of the normalization proceedings to date.

What follows in chapter two is a discussion of the Eisenhower presidency and the challenges it faced when the normalization process first began. This chapter is framed in context of the first decade of the Cold War as well how the Korean War fit in this construct. This chapter will show the many difficulties Eisenhower faced, especially in regards to the problems with South Korean president, Syngman Rhee, which made a normalization agreement impossible at the time. Chapter three will show how the Kennedy presidency had to face the dilemma of two regime changes in South Korea as well as Kennedy’s struggle against Communism that took his attention away from the normalization proceedings. The political structure changes in South Korea put a halt to the normalization process, but the advent of the Park

regime allowed for a more productive phase to begin. Chapter four will continue as the torch is passed upon Kennedy's death to President Johnson. Johnson witnessed the normalization agreement come into fruition against the backdrop of his Vietnam policy. This chapter will also explore the final stages of the delicate diplomatic process. Circumstances finally progressed enough for South Korea and Japan to set aside their differences and lay the foundation for a continued working relationship.

## **CHAPTER II:**

### **DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS AMIDST DIFFICULT SITUATIONS**

To American officials, the normalization process that began in the midst of the Korean War, culminated in what they saw as a natural relationship between South Korea and Japan. However, as time went on, the United States government soon realized that what it deemed to be the development of an easy partnership between two Asian countries, the South Koreans and Japanese saw as a battleground to advance each country's individual interests and settle old scores. The United States assumed that the bond the U.S. shared with both South Korea and Japan would blossom into a triangular relationship between the three nations that would not only provide economic advantages to all three, but also create a strong level of security in Free Asia. The Americans had great difficulty getting beyond their starting perspective of the situation.

The development of the Cold War also affected this emerging relationship in ways the Americans had not anticipated. The Eisenhower administration (1953-61) had to face the limitations the Cold War environment produced on its ability to exert pressure on uncooperative leaders such as Syngman Rhee, the President of South Korea. The restrictions of the Cold War, especially the Soviet development of the



atomic bomb and the outbreak of war in China, played an important role in how the United States operated in the Asian sphere. The escalating tensions of the Cold War increased the Americans' desire for rapprochement between South Korea and Japan as they discovered additional benefits for the United States.

Additionally, Eisenhower could not overlook the domestic environments in South Korea and Japan which also greatly affected how much diplomatic pressure the president could place on either country. Eisenhower soon found himself and his diplomatic corps confronting populations and leaders who acted in ways contrary to the American script. The South Koreans and Japanese were active participants in the process of normalization and their goals did not always coincide with the priorities of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. The Korean populace feared that the reestablishment of contact with Japan would ultimately lead to the resurgence of Japanese "economic aggression" and the exploitation of Korea once more.<sup>30</sup> Many Koreans still saw the Japanese as the enemy and the Japanese remained unwilling to make any sort of formal apology for their behavior during colonial rule. South Koreans also demanded war reparations from Japan. Many Japanese felt they had done nothing wrong. If either side conceded to the other, domestic uprisings occurred. Maneuvering each country's social and political stigmas associated with a normalization agreement proved more difficult than the United States initially anticipated.

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<sup>30</sup> "Fair Practices and Restraint Urged on Japan in Korean Trade." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Aug 1, 1965. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/115556194?accountid=5683> (accessed April 10, 2012).

America's strong presence in Japanese and South Korean affairs began in the aftermath of World War II and evolved in the tense environment of the Cold War. After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States occupied Japan and took responsibility for rebuilding the country. Likewise, with the Japanese surrender, the United States also took responsibility for the southern half of the Korean peninsula: what unintentionally became the Republic of Korea. Economic factors became the basis of both relationships. The American relationship with Japan soon grew to become a successful partnership. To the Republic of Korea, the United States became a protector as well as an economic pillar that helped sustain the country and prevent a Communist takeover from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the north.

The U.S. had many objectives in encouraging a normalization agreement between the Republic of Korea and Japan. The United States hoped that Japan's increased role in Korea would enhance Korea's economy as well as its security. Following the end of World War II, the United States gave millions of dollars in economic aid to prop up a South Korean economy decimated by the loss of Japanese industry. North Korea retained the majority of factories left behind by the Japanese. The South Korean economy subsisted mainly on agriculture. During South Korean President Syngman Rhee's regime, U.S. economic assistance accounted for "75 percent of the military budget, 50 percent of the civil budget, and about 80 percent of available foreign exchange."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Morley, *Japan and Korea*, 52.

Even this economic policy, however, emerged from Cold War concerns. Following World War II, the United States retained an unparalleled position. Confident in its possession of the atomic bomb, the United States left its former preference for isolationism behind and met the challenges of the new global environment. Many Americans believed that the Soviet Union posed the most significant threat to postwar peace. Building on pre-World War II concern about communism, Americans perceived Soviet refusal to leave areas of Eastern Europe as a danger to “western civilization.” These conflicts, most of which happened without direct military action, were commonly grouped together under the label of the Cold War. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 outlined the United States’ Cold War policy. The United States pledged to come to the aid of any country resisting a Communist threat, whether internal or external. The United States used economic, political, and military aid to help prevent another ‘free country’ from falling to Communism.<sup>32</sup> The Marshall Plan, which outlined the countries included in the United States’ defense perimeter, followed the Truman Doctrine in defining the American containment strategy. However, both doctrines focused on Europe and the direct Soviet threat there.<sup>33</sup>

The American public received another shock just two months prior to the fall of Nationalist China when President Truman informed America that the Soviets had successfully exploded an atomic bomb. The United States no longer felt the security it once held immediately following World War II. Before Soviet possession of the

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<sup>32</sup> Steven Ambrose and Douglas Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 82.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

atomic bomb, the United States believed that atomic weaponry remained the only balance to the overwhelming number of Soviet troops. After the Soviet Union gained possession of an atomic bomb, the Cold War shifted to include deadly implications should the United States ever have to engage the Soviet Union in direct armed conflict.<sup>34</sup> Although the Cold War began in Europe, in Asia, the Cold War turned hot. Even as World War II drew to a conclusion, a civil war raged in China. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces battled Mao Zedong's Communist guerilla fighters for control of China. In October 1949, Mao established the People's Republic of China after Chiang Kai-shek's forces fled to the island of Taiwan. Many Republicans blamed President Harry Truman for the fall of China because he had stopped sending military and economic aid to Chiang Kai-shek earlier that year. This accusation haunted the Democratic Party for years to come, influencing both later presidents Kennedy and Johnson to not lose another Asian country to communism (this contributed to the continued escalation in Vietnam).

With American attention focused on China, Korea seemed destined to be a forgotten player until the Cold War forced it onto the world stage. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson omitted Korea completely from the "defensive perimeter" the United States would protect in Asia. This omission showed that Korea was not a top priority for the United States and convinced North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung, as well as Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, that the U.S. would not aid the South Koreans should the North invade the South.<sup>35</sup> By June 1949, the U.S. had

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<sup>34</sup> Steven M. Gillon, *The American Paradox: A history of the United States Since 1945*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 54-56.

<sup>35</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 42.

already withdrawn their troops, and the following year the North Koreans crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel pushing Korea into the center ring of the Cold War.<sup>36</sup>

On June 25, 1950 after weeks of skirmishes around Ongjin peninsula, North Korea crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into South Korea. There are conflicting accounts as to what really happened, but the official U.S. version is that the attack came as a surprise and the North Korean Army, made up of 135,000 troops, moved quickly forward to attack other places such as Ongjin, Kaesŏn, Chuncheon, and Uijeongbu. North Korean forces quickly overran the South Korean army, made up of only 65,000 troops, and forced the South to retreat. By June 28, North Korean forces had captured the South Korean capital of Seoul. The North Korean invasion of South Korea shifted the Cold War Theater from Europe to East Asia. Communist China and North Korea threatened the Free World in Asia. The United States responded almost immediately to the North Korean attack and called upon the UN to intervene on behalf of its ally. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, United States President Harry Truman announced he was sending troops to aid South Korea. After passing United Nations Security Council Resolution number 82, fifteen other UN countries joined the United States' effort to aid South Korea. By early August, North Korea occupied ninety percent of South Korea. However, the U.S. and United Nations combined forces, poured in well-armed reinforcements under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. On September 15, the UN forces landed at Inchon, just below the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and cut

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<sup>36</sup> Gillon, *The American Paradox*, 58-59.

off the majority of the North Korean Army. UN forces then turned the campaign and started moving north, beyond the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>37</sup>

The People's Republic of China sent out warnings that the PRC would enter the Korean War in defense of North Korea if UN forces crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and threatened the North Korean-Chinese border. These warnings went unheeded however, and UN forces proceeded north. General MacArthur remained confident that he could reunite the Korean Peninsula by force, under the control of the U.S. - backed South Korean government. In response to this, the Chinese crossed the Yalu River into North Korea on October 19, 1950. UN forces were quickly overrun by the onslaught of the initial 180,000 Chinese soldiers. Throughout the Korean War, the Chinese committed over a million troops to the North Korean cause. Although the UN had superior military technology, the sheer number of Chinese forces balanced the war. Eventually, both sides found themselves fighting near the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel once more, with neither side gaining any more ground. By 1953, both sides were ready to come to an accord. Both sides entered a cease-fire on July 27, 1953, with North and South Korea's boundaries set at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel once more.<sup>38</sup>

Although the Korean War ended in a stalemate, the implications of a potential Communist takeover in Asia haunted the United States. Even more importantly, the United States saw the Korean War as an investment in South Korea not only financially but in American blood. U.S. involvement in South Korean affairs greatly increased during the Korean War and continued until South Korea stabilized

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<sup>37</sup> Gye-Dong Kim, *Foreign Intervention in Korea*, (Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1993), 210-221.

<sup>38</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and The Cold War*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 88-116.

economically and politically. Japan participated minimally in the Korean War. Japan's main role in the conflict encompassed its use as a supply base and its contribution of technical advisors. The absence of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan hindered other potential support.<sup>39</sup>

During the Korean War, the United States' attention also focused upon the San Francisco Peace Treaty that officially ended Japanese imperial power as well as provided compensation for the Allies from World War II. This treaty formally acknowledged the end of Japan's sovereignty of the Korean Peninsula. Neither Korea was invited to participate in this treaty, but it did spark a request from Syngman Rhee for the U.S. to facilitate a dialogue between South Korea and Japan to negotiate outstanding issues. The U.S. readily complied with this request, but remained undecided at this time about directly overseeing the negotiations. When the United States approached Japan, the Japanese government expressed reluctance at opening negotiations about fisheries and financial claims with the Rhee regime. In order to combat this reluctance, the United States suggested to both sides that the subject of the nationality of Koreans living in Japan be the only issue addressed at this first meeting.<sup>40</sup> Japan and South Korea agreed to these limitations and the first meeting to address this issue occurred in October 1951. This meeting broke down in the wake of disagreements over issues that fell outside the parameters of the status of Koreans in Japan. Tensions mounted leading up to the first normalization conference held on February 15, 1952.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea*, 133.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 128.

In order to gain the upper hand, Rhee proclaimed the 'peace line' on January 18, 1952. The 'peace line' extended South Korean control of waters surrounding the peninsula up to 200 miles from the Korean coast and came to be known as the Rhee line. Although many foreign observers, including the Japanese, were outraged, Rhee claimed that his action was "supported by well-established international precedents and urged by impelling need of safeguarding, once and for all, interests of national welfare and defense."<sup>42</sup> Rhee's proclamation further hindered South Korean-Japanese relations. The first normalization conference failed even before it began. President Rhee made a normalization agreement impossible to reach. To hinder the progress of the normalization talks, the Rhee regime greatly distorted negotiation problems involving territorial waters, dual claims of Dokdo Island, and the issue of Korean residents in Japan. Bitter feelings and the failure to yield on both sides resulted in the breakdown of this conference within two months. The swift resolution the United States hoped for fell farther out of reach as past prejudices infiltrated the normalization proceedings.<sup>43</sup>

The Rhee line continued to be a problem every time normalization proceedings commenced. According to a telegram discussing fishery disputes between South Korea and Japan on September 19, 1953, from Acting Secretary of State Walter B. Smith to the Japanese Embassy,

Neither Japanese nor we can admit principle of demarcation line  
in international waters not based on conservation and mutual

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<sup>42</sup> As quoted in Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea*, 109.

<sup>43</sup> Bitter feelings, especially on the part of the South Koreans against the Japanese tainted the proceedings. Neither side could let go of their shared colonial past. South Koreans could not forgive the Japanese for the atrocities committed during colonial rule (especially during World War II). Likewise, the Japanese could not endure Rhee's insults and the repercussions of the Rhee line.



agreement. Possibility Japan and ROK reaching agreement fishing issue predicated upon hope Japanese would make sufficient concessions in direction conservation measures so Koreans would believe their fisheries interests adequately protected and would therefore no longer insist upon concept Rhee line.<sup>44</sup>

Neither side would agree to back down on the question of the Rhee line without some sort of compensation. The Rhee line continued to cause disputes between the two countries as South Korean officials arrested Japanese fishermen who crossed the line and often detained them for months on end. Often the prelude to a normalization conference involved the release of Japanese fishermen by South Korean officials.<sup>45</sup>

Dwight D. Eisenhower ran for president during the beginning stage of the Cold War. A four-star general and the hero of D-Day, Ike renewed Americans belief that everything would be alright. They trusted him to handle the Soviets, the Chinese, and whatever else might threaten their way of life. Campaigning for office with the Korean War still waging, Ike promised to go to Korea. With America's focus still centered on the Soviet Union and what had been deemed as Soviet puppet states such as the People's Republic of China and North Korea, Eisenhower explained in one of his most famous election speeches, why Americans had to keep up the fight against communism:

There is a Korean war-and we are fighting it-for the simplest of reasons: Because free leadership failed to check and to turn back Communist ambition before it savagely attacked us. The Korean war-more perhaps than any other war in history-simply and swiftly followed the collapse of our political defenses. There is no other reason than this: We failed to

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<sup>44</sup> William B. Smith to Japanese Embassy, telegram, September 19, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume XIV China and Japan* (Washington, DC: Department of State), available online at <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1952-54v14p2/reference/frus.frus195254v14p2.i0003.pdf>, accessed on June 20, 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea*, 139.

read and to outwit the totalitarian mind.<sup>46</sup>

Eisenhower pledged to correct this problem. He made ending the Korean War a priority as well as preventing another war against communist infiltration. Eisenhower knew that this meant going beyond military expansion. Other avenues had to be explored to create a bulwark against the communist threat. The U.S. saw the normalization agreement as one such avenue for South Korea. U.S. officials thought that an alliance with Japan would strengthen South Korea against further communist encroachment from North Korea.

Eisenhower inherited the difficulties of not only the Korean War, but also the difficulties of trying to reopen the normalization agreement. Syngman Rhee continued as key orchestrator of these obstacles. Rhee's strong (and well publicized) anti-Japanese sentiments as well as his desire to have all of Korea united under his rule caused many headaches for the Eisenhower administration who promised to bring the Korean War to a swift end. When Eisenhower engaged the North Koreans and Chinese in peace talks, Rhee threatened to expel all American troops unless the United States continued fighting for reunification. Eisenhower refused to yield to Rhee's threats. Instead, Eisenhower reinforced America's commitment to the Korean people, but Rhee continued to be a nuisance to the peace talks.<sup>47</sup>

When Rhee used the sensitive subject of the transfer of prisoners of war, especially those who did not wish to return to North Korea or China, to derail the

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<sup>46</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 25, 1952, speech, Detroit, MI. Eisenhower Presidential Library, [http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online\\_documents/korean\\_war/I\\_Shall\\_Go\\_To\\_Korea\\_1952\\_10\\_24.pdf](http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/korean_war/I_Shall_Go_To_Korea_1952_10_24.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Jim Newton, *Eisenhower: The White House Years*, (Anchor Books: New York, 2011), 100.

peace talks, Eisenhower had had enough. Eventually the UN agreed to return all prisoners to their original nation-state. However, Syngman Rhee secretly authorized the release of twenty-five thousand North Korean prisoners, a move that severely jeopardized the armistice talks. Eisenhower responded to this blatant insubordination by threatening to abandon Korea altogether, leaving Syngman Rhee to fight the Chinese and North Koreans on his own. Eisenhower warned, "Unless you are prepared immediately and unequivocally to accept the authority of the UN Command to conduct the present hostilities and bring them to a close, it will be necessary to effect another arrangement."<sup>48</sup> Syngman Rhee's willingness to taunt Eisenhower showed how unmanageable Rhee started to become. This insubordination toward the United States mirrored his continued antagonism towards the Japanese. Syngman Rhee knew not to push Eisenhower to the point of withdrawal, but he still stirred up other forms of trouble for the Eisenhower administration.

Syngman Rhee's hatred for the Japanese became very apparent to the U.S. administration during his rule of South Korea. He continually used anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea for political advantage. Rhee staged various demonstrations that called on the Japanese to acknowledge their war crimes against the Korean people as well as make reparations. Public sentiment against the Japanese remained a bitter issue that the United States had to learn to manage.<sup>49</sup> Syngman Rhee's lack of cooperation with U.S. diplomats and continual anti-Japanese demonstrations exacerbated an already fragile situation with the Japanese. The

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<sup>48</sup> As quoted in Newton, *Eisenhower*, 100.

<sup>49</sup> Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea*, 135-136.

United States sought solidarity in the face of Communist aggression, such as what North Korea instigated (and later China joined) against South Korea. The Korean War highlighted the growing need for a South Korean rapprochement with Japan in order to provide greater stability in the region. However, Rhee's continual sabotage and use of anti-Japanese rhetoric for political gain frustrated U.S. officials. The United States saw Korea's security as part of a greater plan to protect Japan's security interests.<sup>50</sup>

Japan officially regained its sovereignty from U.S. occupation during the Korean War in 1952. Almost immediately, the United States sought to rehabilitate Japan economically as well as allow for Japanese rearmament. However, the Japanese remained reluctant to rearm, settling for a National Police Reserve and the reliance on a military alliance with the United States. Japan granted the United States military access which the U.S. used as a base of operations to send supplies and troops into Korea. Additionally, the United States retained Okinawa under the provisions of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Japan also benefited economically from the boom the Korean War provided. The Eisenhower administration continued U.S. economic support of Japan throughout the 1950s, which allowed Japan to become economically and politically independent by the mid-1960s. The following administrations hoped that Japan would follow the example of the United States and invest in the economy of South Korea and become a mentor to developing countries in Asia.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 41.

<sup>51</sup> Morley, *Japan and Korea*, 2.

The economic aid the United States gave to South Korea soon became a burden and a waste amongst the mass corruption of the Rhee regime. From 1953-61, South Korea received \$2.6 billion in economic aid and \$1.8 billion in military aid. South Korea remained so economically unstable, that aid had to be given in the form of grant-in-aid since any form of loan repayment would cripple the very fragile economy.<sup>52</sup> The United States almost completely funded the South Korean Army as a deterrent from future North Korean attacks. The U.S. also left a number of U.S. troops along the Demilitarized Zone in a state of constant readiness in the face of North Korean aggression.

Meanwhile, Eisenhower had to endure his own “trouble maker” at home in the person of Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin. Senator McCarthy’s Communist witch-hunt in the State Department created a domestic minefield for Eisenhower. Eisenhower had to balance McCarthy’s claims of Communist spies in the State Department with his own personal judgment. He could not publicly write off McCarthy because of the senator’s popularity, nor could Eisenhower allow McCarthy’s theatrics to take center stage when more pressing matters emerged. Eisenhower could not risk being labeled “soft” on Communism, nor could he minimize the threat of subversion as mid-term elections drew near in 1954. Mid-term elections also had to show that the Republican Party remained unified, despite rumors of splintering between McCarthyites and the more level-headed members of the Party.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 41.

<sup>53</sup> Jim Newton, *Eisenhower*, 144.

In September 1954, Eisenhower turned from domestic politics towards Asia once more. Not only did Eisenhower begin to give direct aid to South Vietnam, but he also approved of Ngo Dinh Diem's seizure of power. Eisenhower hoped that with direct American aid (not routed through the French), South Vietnam could escape the fate of North Vietnam and also become a model for Third World development.<sup>54</sup> Eisenhower also came in direct confrontation with Communist China over Quemoy and Matsu, two Chinese harbors garrisoned by Nationalist troops of Chiang Kai-shek.

In 1953, Eisenhower allowed Chiang's Nationalists to begin a series of bombing raids, using American planes, against mainland China's shipping and ports. By 1955, Mao had had enough. The Chinese Communists began to strike back by bombing the Tachen Islands which lay 230 miles north of Formosa (Taiwan). The Chinese Communists then began to mount cannon opposite Quemoy and Matsu. Eisenhower viewed the Tachen Islands as expendable, but saw the defense of Quemoy and Matsu as essential to the defense of Taiwan. Quemoy and Matsu became a key example of the domino theory. Eisenhower believed that if Quemoy and Matsu fell, Taiwan would then follow, which in turn "would seriously jeopardize the anti-Communist barrier consisting of the insular and peninsular position in the Western Pacific, e.g. Japan, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.' Indonesia, Malaya, Cambodia, Laos, and Burma 'would probably come fully under Communist influence."<sup>55</sup> In order to prevent this, Eisenhower asked Congress for permission to put the U.S. military at the discretion of the president for

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<sup>54</sup> Steven Ambrose and Douglas Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism*, 141.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

use in protecting Taiwan and any other necessary areas for the security of Taiwan. The Chinese threat to Taiwan revealed to Eisenhower how vital a unified East Asia remained. However, under the rule of Syngman Rhee, a normalization agreement appeared virtually impossible.

Syngman Rhee remained such a continual problem throughout the 1950s that the United States continually contemplated the use of Operation Everready. In 1953, U.S. operatives in South Korea formulated Operation Everready, a secret contingency plan, as a way to remove Syngman Rhee, seen as too unpredictable and detrimental to the armistice negotiations, by military means. In essence, the South Korean Army would enforce martial law and a military government would be established under the control of the UN.<sup>56</sup> Although the United States never implemented Operation Everready (mostly out of the fear of what U.S. allies would think), Syngman Rhee still played political games to gain U.S. economic aid. At a White House summit in July 1954, Rhee denounced the armistice that halted the Korean War and criticized U.S. softness on Communism. Eisenhower warned that a resumption of hostilities would lead to an atomic war with disastrous consequences. Instead, Eisenhower promised to help strengthen South Korea politically, economically, and militarily in exchange for Syngman Rhee's cooperation in leaving the problem Korean unification to the United Nations to sort out.<sup>57</sup>

Even without Syngman Rhee's anti-Japanese rhetoric stirring up political unrest, the South Korean public still balked at renewing ties with the Japanese. U.S. officials failed to realize the correlation that less than a decade prior, the Japanese

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<sup>56</sup> Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 34.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

existed as the colonial overlords of the Korean peninsula. As much as the United States hoped for the quick occurrence of a normalization agreement, the bitter feelings held by the South Koreans continued to slow down the normalization process for another decade. The fact that Japan refused to apologize or even acknowledge certain aspects of its colonial history did not help matters.

The Koreans were not the only ones who needed to adjust their attitudes. The Japanese also had to change their own attitudes towards their former colony. South Korean officials were often insulted by the terminology Japanese negotiators used when addressing them (the Japanese often used colonial terminology).<sup>58</sup> Likewise, the United States also had to decide on how much it would be involved in the normalization proceedings. Throughout the normalization proceedings, the United States varied the amount of pressure it applied to both countries. Until these issues could be sorted out, the culmination of the normalization proceedings remained a distant prospect.

The Eisenhower presidency faced many challenges that threatened U.S. ties to Korea and Japan as well as internal problems that the Cold War environment exacerbated. Eisenhower's time in the White House lent the non-communist bloc the benefit of a balanced individual who recognized the need for military readiness as well as patience. He refused to be bullied by the likes of McCarthy or Rhee. Eisenhower recognized that American interests in the normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan as vital to the security of East Asia and the

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<sup>58</sup> William B. Smith to Japanese Embassy, telegram, September 19, 1953, *FRUS*, available online at <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1952-54v14p2/reference/frus.frus195254v14p2.i0003.pdf>, accessed on June 20, 2007.



containment of Communism. However, the wounds from World War II and the Japanese occupation of Korea remained too fresh for any serious progress on the normalization agreement to be made. As much as Eisenhower wished for a stronger alliance in the Far East, agitators like Syngman Rhee remained too strong a barrier to overcome in the 1950s. Although Eisenhower knew that a normalization agreement would never come to fruition under the Rhee regime, he allowed Rhee to remain in charge of South Korea.

Events in South Korea took care of the Rhee problem just before Eisenhower left the White House. In April 1960, student demonstrators gathered in South Korea to protest Syngman Rhee's blatant rigging of democratic elections. Rhee's designated successor, Yi Ki-bung, ran for vice-president. No one expected that eighty-five year old Rhee would live his entire term so the citizens of South Korea saw the vice-presidential race as the real contest for the next president of South Korea and the new hope for a different regime. When the results of 1960 election showed that Yi had won by a landslide, riots broke out all over Korea. The next day, on April 19, 30,000 university and high school students marched toward the presidential mansion. Rhee used police force against the demonstrators, even firing upon the crowds, killing 139. Demonstrations continued to spread however, with common citizens joining the students. Amidst these demonstrations, coupled with U.S. pressure, Syngman Rhee resigned on April 26, 1960.<sup>59</sup> The Second Republic of South Korea, formed with a new constitution on June 15, 1960, created a cabinet

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<sup>59</sup> Michael Seth, *Modern Korea*, 151-152.

form of government with a diminished presidency and a newly created position of prime minister filled by former vice-presidential candidate Chang Myon.

The end of the Rhee regime and the conclusion of Eisenhower's second term warranted a new beginning in South Korea and the torch of the normalization proceedings passed on to the new president-elect: John F. Kennedy. South Korea gained its first true democracy in regards to the Chang Myon government. However, the Chang administration's failure to deal a decisive blow to governmental corruption left it vulnerable to the military coup that followed in 1961. The Second Republic of South Korea fell before any real progress could be made. For the United States, the Cold War created new situations in developing countries that warranted America's focus. As much as President Kennedy tried to focus on Europe, as had his Cold War predecessors, events in Asia as well as Cuba forced his attention to new dangers that threatened 'western civilization.' These events also pushed his attention away from the normalization proceedings, however South Korea's changing political climate would pull his attention back once more.

### **CHAPTER III:**

#### **A CHANGING WORLD: PUSHING AND PULLING THE NORMALIZATION PROCEEDINGS**

The advent of the Kennedy administration brought forth a new era in the Cold War for the United States. Kennedy's strong anti-communism rhetoric and approach to foreign policy meant that the normalization proceedings for South Korea and Japan needed to be jumpstarted in order to fit in with Kennedy's fight against communism. However, internal events in South Korea stalled any progress Kennedy hoped to gain in the normalization proceedings. The Cold War environment also affected how much attention and how much pressure Kennedy could place on South Korea and Japan to come to an accord. Often, Kennedy remained distracted by the events in other countries; however, South Korea's political upheaval forced his attention back onto the peninsula. Japan also began to assert a stronger sense of independence from American influence in the course of the 1960s. Kennedy soon learned that the normalization agreement he hoped for still remained out of reach despite U.S. pressure on both governments. However, the military regime that took power in South Korea in 1961 offered a new opportunity for the progression of the normalization proceedings.

In his inaugural address, Kennedy made multiple pledges to the American public as well as to nations around the world. This speech set the tone for his presidency. In his speech Kennedy made a request to any nation deemed America's "adversary." He asked that both sides attempt to maintain peace in order to prevent the destruction possible because of the advancement of weapons technology. However, Kennedy also noted that the United States would remain prepared. He stated: "We dare not tempt them [adversaries] with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient, can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed." Kennedy refused to be found at a disadvantage to any nation. He also set America to a higher standard, calling to mind the generations of World War II who sacrificed for their country.

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.<sup>60</sup>

In addressing America as he did, Kennedy not only set the tone for his foreign policy, but also his desire to create a better world, one that thrived amidst freedom.

The normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan fit into his picture of readiness. Kennedy wished to see a strong coalition against the People's Republic of China as well as against the spread of communist elements into South Asia. The military coup of 1961 in South Korea brought to power a new government

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<sup>60</sup> John F. Kennedy, January 20, 1961, Inaugural Address. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library. <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/BqXIEM9F4024ntF17SVAjA.aspx>.

that put the United States one step closer to its goal of seeing the normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan come to fruition.

The military coup, led by Kim Jong Pil, placed General Park Chung Hee in power on May 16, 1961.<sup>61</sup> When Chang Myon resigned as Prime Minister, a Military Revolutionary Committee formed to oversee the transition to military rule. The Military Revolutionary Committee then established the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction (SCNR). The SCNR took control of the government and dissolved the National Assembly. All political activity was banned. A Revolutionary Tribunal tried thousands of offenders for corruption or activities favorable to North Korea. Under the SCNR, officials arrested corrupt businessmen, demolished criminal gangs, shut down many newspapers, and detained anyone suspected of Communist activity. The SCNR chose Park Chung Hee to continue as its leader until the re-establishment of civilian rule, scheduled for some time in 1963.<sup>62</sup>

The military coup of 1961 created a delicate situation in U.S.-Korea relations that forced a contradictory situation on President Kennedy. President Kennedy's election platform showed that Kennedy sought to be 'tough' on Communism. He had accused the Eisenhower presidency of being too soft, of not doing enough to thwart Communist advances in the Third World. South Korea's new leader, Park Chung Hee, posed a new problem for Kennedy, a challenge to his tough stance against Communists. According to a Central Intelligence Agency document, "The moving spirit of the coup appears to be Major General Pak Chong-hui (Park Chung Hee)....

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<sup>61</sup> The Romanization of Park Chung Hee's name is also translated as Pak Chung Hee. Certain U.S. documents refer to Park as Pak, however, for the purposes of this thesis, the author will use today's standardization of the name: Park Chung Hee.

<sup>62</sup> Lie, *Han Unbound*, 53.

Convicted by court martial in 1949 for Communist activities, Pak was dismissed from the army.”<sup>63</sup> The CIA analyst admitted that “evidence does not support allegations of Pak’s continuing ties with the Communists.” The author cautioned that the Agency could not “rule out the possibility that he is a long-term Communist agent, or that he might re-defect.”<sup>64</sup> Kennedy had to decide whether the United States could allow a potential Communist to take charge of South Korea. A Presidential Task Force on Korea report to the National Security Council concluded that given the solidarity with which the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction took charge, the United States had no alternative but to try to work to reassure those in control of the South Korean government of the continued support of the United States. The report also attributed the organization of the individuals involved with the success of the military coup.<sup>65</sup> Given South Korea’s immediate history, especially in regard to Park’s coup being the second overthrow of government in just over a year, a wait-and-see approach appeared the best course of action. The Kennedy administration limited public statements about the state of affairs in Korea and decided that personal communication between newly appointed ambassador to South Korea, Samuel D. Berger and Park would have the greatest

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<sup>63</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Subsection II. The Coup Group,” Special National Intelligence Estimate Number 42-2-61: Short-Term Prospects in South Korea, May 31, 1961. Korea, General, 6/61. Box 127A, Papers of President Kennedy [Hereafter Kennedy Papers], National Security Files [Hereafter NSF], Countries. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA [Hereafter JFK Library]. It must be noted that Syngman Rhee often accused political opponents of Communist activities. Park Chung Hee’s military service made him a natural threat to Rhee. However, CIA intelligence would not know this at the time this report was drafted. It is unknown whether Park Chung Hee ever had true Communist ties, however, he was able to regain standing by pointing out known Communists in the ROK Army during the Korean War.

<sup>64</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Subsection 5,” Special National Intelligence Estimate Number 42-2-61: Short-Term Prospects in South Korea, May 31, 1961. Korea, General, 6/61. Box 127A, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries. JFK Library.

<sup>65</sup> Presidential Task Force on Korea Report to the National Security Council, June 5, 1961. Korea, General, 6/5/61 Task Force Report. Box 127, Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries. JFK Library.

effect.<sup>66</sup> President Kennedy accepted this approach, but warily watched the progression of the Park government in South Korea.

In the meantime, Kennedy's liaisons made sure to inform the Park administration that a military regime would not be acceptable forever. The United States could not be seen supporting what appeared to be a military dictator. The Kennedy administration made it very clear that in order to continue receiving military or economic aid, Park must restore South Korea's government to civilian rule as soon as possible. In a National Security Council Task Force Report on Korea, the United States outlined what it expected of the new military government as well as what the U.S. offered in return for its conditions. Kennedy instructed Ambassador Berger, that Korea's military government should

publicly and regularly reaffirm their intention eventually to restore representative government and constitutional liberties; and that failure over the long run to demonstrate their good faith in this matter will compromise them in the eyes of the people of the United States and other Free World countries and in the United Nations.<sup>67</sup>

The U.S. also asked that the Korean government undertake a long-range social planning goal that included the reform of the civil service and police as well as the improvement of relations with intellectuals and the press.<sup>68</sup> In return for such assurances as well as progress toward these mutually agreed upon plans and programs, the United States extended an invitation to Park for an informal "working" visit to Washington to confer with the President and Secretary of State,

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<sup>66</sup> Ambassador Berger to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, July 9, 1961, 6:36AM. Korea, Cables 7/61, Box 128A. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries. JFK Library.

<sup>67</sup> Draft National Security Council Action, Task Force Report on Korea, June 5, 1961. Korea, General, 6/61, Box 127A. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries. JFK Library.

<sup>68</sup> The Korean Press had long been censored since the Rhee regime, and the April Revolution that ended Rhee's regime made Korean governments that succeeded him fear intellectuals and the effect student uprisings could have on Korean society.

agreed to release remaining defense support funds for the 1961 fiscal year (approximately \$25 million), as well as U.S. aid in the expansion of the National Construction Service. The United States also offered technical experts and the resources necessary to implement Park's Five-Year Development Plan.<sup>69</sup> Kennedy's conditions helped lay the foundation for the regeneration of Korean society and economy. Park's willingness to cooperate proved very advantageous.

Aside from Park's questionable past, Park had another quality that benefited American foreign policy goals. Park Chung Hee greatly respected the Japanese system and saw the benefits of a normalization agreement with Japan. Park had witnessed the efficiency of the Japanese during colonial rule (even serving in the Japanese Imperial Army) and wished to end the blatant corruption that hindered South Korea's progress. When the United States approached Park about reopening negotiations with Japan, Park readily agreed. Negotiations reopened on August 23, 1962 with a letter from Kennedy to Park. In response to this initial letter, Park wrote that the normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan would create a firm foundation that would benefit both Korea and Japan. In addition, he pointed out that such an agreement would "greatly contribute to strengthening the unity of the entire free world as well as the security of the Far East." He insisted that he had "long regarded the early solution of this perennial problem as a matter of utmost importance."<sup>70</sup> Park wished for South Korea to become economically stable and less reliant upon economic aid from the United States. Park saw Japan as a new

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<sup>69</sup> Draft National Security Council Action, Task Force Report on Korea, June 5, 1961, Kennedy Library.

<sup>70</sup> Park to President Kennedy, September 12, 1962. Korea Subjects, Park Correspondence, Part I, Box 127A. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries, Korea. JFK Library.



partner as well as a potential economic teacher. Park marveled at Japan's own economic miracle, and he set out to achieve the same economic progress beginning with his first five-year plan.<sup>71</sup>

In terms of a ROK-Japan settlement as well as U.S. economic aid, Park became a welcome addition to the American sphere of influence. His willingness to restart the normalization talks again set the course for the achievement of a normalization agreement into high gear. Park represented a faction that recognized that the benefits of working with the Japanese far outweighed the risks. Even more so, Park believed that to protect his country from any sort of foreign encroachment, the South Korean economy must be strengthened. More progress would be made in the negotiations of a settlement in Park's first four years of rule than in Rhee's twelve years of control. However, as much as Park wanted to come to a settlement, he would not sacrifice South Korea's essential needs for the sake of speed. Negotiations over fishing rights, the citizenship status of Koreans living in Japan before the end of the war, as well as reparations disputes still plagued the proceedings.<sup>72</sup> Prejudice and the desire to "save face" on both sides made the process drag on for another four years, frustrating American officials who continued to seek a unified East Asia. Neither side wished to appear to their people to concede too much ground in the negotiations.

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<sup>71</sup> Martin Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development: Economic Change and Political Struggle in South Korea*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993), 141-144.

<sup>72</sup> The Last Line of Concession in the Korean Position for the Settlement of Outstanding Issues Between Korea and Japan. Korea Subjects, Park Correspondence, Part II, Box 127A. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries, Korea. JFK Library.

As time went on, Kennedy found that his wait-and-see approach yielded mostly positive results. Almost immediately, a dramatic change in South Korea occurred. Park's government attacked social issues and corruption head on. In a telegram from U.S. Ambassador Berger to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Berger related that the new government had moved forward

with energy, earnestness, determination, and imagination... Projects of reform long talked about or under actual consideration by previous governments are becoming realities in banking and credit policy, foreign trade, increased public works for unemployed, agriculture, education, public administration, social welfare, and other fields. Many reforms are constructive and some long urged by American advisors.<sup>73</sup>

Berger also praised the Park administration's increased efforts to deal with bribery and corruption in the government as well as smuggling and blackmail of the press.

Berger found the increased efforts against Communist subversion and anti-Communist propaganda very much in line with American thinking.<sup>74</sup> Park's government moved toward stabilizing South Korea which in turn meant progress in the stabilization of East Asia. With the efforts to implement social welfare programs as well as make the South Korean economy grow, Communism appeared less appealing. Park believed that strengthening South Korea's economy meant strength against another Communist invasion from the North. Park also wished to surpass the production of North Korea (which ultimately happened by the mid 1970s).<sup>75</sup>

While Kennedy observed the Park government's progress toward the reestablishment of civilian rule, issues with Japan over the normalization agreement

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<sup>73</sup> Ambassador Berger to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, October 28, 1961, 5:29PM. Korea, Cables, 10/61-11/61, box 128A. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries, Korea. JFK Library.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Edward Olsen, "Korea, Inc.": The Political Impact of Park Chung Hee's Economic Miracle," in *The Two Koreas in World Politics*, ed. Tae-Hwan Kwak, Wayne Patterson, Edward A. Olsen, (Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1983), 44-45.

arose. Unlike relations with South Korea that saw the U.S. in a dominating role, American relations with Japan had to be conducted in a more delicate manner. Japan's economic boom in the 1950s put Japan on a more equal footing with the United States than that of South Korea. Although the United States still gave Japan economic aid, this aid took the form of investment loans whereas aid to South Korea remained grants.<sup>76</sup> Japan's economic stability allowed it a certain independence from U.S. influence that developing countries like South Korea could not yet enjoy (not that U.S. influence ever truly went away). The normalization process raised multiple issues for Japan. One involved the growing movement in Japan to create distance from the United States and the policies the U.S. pushed. The Progressive Parties in Japan, or those on the political Left, felt that Japan should be independent of U.S. influence and form its own foreign policy. Some went so far as to call for non-alignment in the Cold War.<sup>77</sup> The United States knew that losing the support of Japan would be detrimental to future Cold War conflicts in Asia, such as that emerging in Vietnam. The United States countered these opposition groups by escalating economic aid to help strengthen those who followed the Yoshida line of support for the United States. The United States continued its policy of aiding political parties who favored U.S. policies, such as the Ikeda cabinet.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, 150.

<sup>77</sup> Morley, *Japan and Korea*, 25.

<sup>78</sup> Tadokoro Masayuki, "The Model of an Economic Power: Japanese Diplomacy in the 1960s" in *The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan*, ed. Makoto Iokibe, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 81-83. The Yoshida line involved Japanese focus on the economy while leaving matters of defense and security to the United States. Yoshida Shigeru served as Prime Minister in Japan following the end of the U.S. occupation in Japan. Yoshida refused to heed American calls for a remilitarization of Japan, instead Yoshida wished to focus on improving the Japanese economy. Prime Minister Ikeda followed his mentor's policy, even taking it to a new level during the 1960s.

In addition to struggling with Japanese attempts to pull away from the American sphere, Kennedy officials also found themselves confronting problems from their ally, South Korean president Park. The United States could not condone what happened in South Korea as the government prepared to move away from martial law. Although Park's military government announced that South Korea would return to civilian rule, with free elections, in mid-1963, he banned political activity. He did not reverse this decision until right before the election. Park's government claimed that the prohibition of political activity remained necessary for the cleansing of corrupt politicians. Although the Kennedy administration condemned this move by Park, officials did little to reverse it other than try to shame the military government.<sup>79</sup> The strategy did nothing to stop Kim Jong Pil from taking advantage of the absence of other political challenges to establish the Democratic Republican Party (DRP) in secret in 1962. The DRP became the political party that Park Chung Hee campaigned under for the presidency of the Third Republic of Korea. The political activity ban cemented Park's narrow victory. Park Chung Hee won the October 1963 election, just one month before the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas.<sup>80</sup>

Events in South Korea and Japan occupied only a portion of JFK's time. Focused on foreign policy, President Kennedy still had to deal with an emerging civil rights movement, a stalled economy, and other domestic issues. His attention continually reverted to what he perceived to be the threat of communism around

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<sup>79</sup> Ambassador Berger to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, March 17, 1962, 4:24AM. Korea, Cables, 2/62-3/62, Box 128A. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries, JFK Library.

<sup>80</sup> Seth, *Modern Korea*, 182.

the world. In fact, Kennedy's short presidency encompassed many close-call situations. In April 1961, a month before the military coup in South Korea, Kennedy dealt with his first fiasco in regards to the Bay of Pigs invasion that failed horribly. Kennedy implemented a plan that had been orchestrated under Eisenhower to overthrow Cuban leader Fidel Castro who had been declared a communist by the State Department. The abject failure of the mission caused Kennedy the first great humiliation of his presidency. One month after the military coup in South Korea, the Berlin Crisis arose amidst renewal of the Soviet Union's demand for the withdrawal of Western armed forces from West Berlin, and an end of all western ties with the city. All three Western powers (the United States, United Kingdom, and France) refused to comply with Soviet demands. This led to the building of the Berlin Wall that separated East and West Berlin. Soviet and American tanks remained at a stand-off over the incident until both sides agreed to ease tensions by withdrawing their tanks in November of 1961.<sup>81</sup>

Cuba became center stage for Kennedy once more in October 1962 with the Cuban Missile Crisis. When the Soviet Union sent nuclear missiles by boat to Cuba to deter Americans from any further invasions of the island, President Kennedy ordered that the ships be turned around. He would not tolerate having enemy nuclear missiles within firing range of the United States. This thirteen day stand-off became one of the most intense situations of the Cold War. The crisis ended when

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<sup>81</sup> Herbert S. Parmet, *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 157, 183-192.

Kennedy quietly made a deal to withdraw U.S. nuclear missiles from Turkey in exchange for the Soviet missiles turning away from Cuba.<sup>82</sup>

Kennedy also found himself increasingly involved in another region of East Asia. Americans had begun supporting anticommunist factions in governments in Vietnam and Laos under the Eisenhower Administration. Believing that the situation was deteriorating and not wanting to allow another country to fall to communism, Kennedy ordered additional military aid as well as military advisors into the area. By November of 1963, he had stationed close to 17,000 American troops in what had been called Indochina.<sup>83</sup>

The spread of communist activity into other parts of Asia made the stability of the Japanese-South Korean relationship all that much more important. Consequently, despite the other crises that drew Kennedy's attention away from East Asia, he did not ignore normalization. The normalization process found a better footing amidst the Park government, and despite the many interruptions to the negotiations, the normalization process began again in 1962 and continued on until it came to fruition under the Johnson administration.

President Kennedy's assassination made Lyndon B. Johnson President of the United States. The shock and turmoil surrounding Kennedy's death plunged the country into grief. Lyndon B. Johnson, however, vowed to carry on Kennedy's legacy. This involved finishing what Kennedy had left behind. The normalization agreement remained one such matter. Johnson also remained determined to fight the spread of Communism with the same hard line stance of his predecessor.

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<sup>82</sup> Ambrose and Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism*, 184-186.

<sup>83</sup> Parmenter, *JFK*, 131-154.

America would not be caught off guard in the Cold War, despite the mourning for President Kennedy. Johnson vowed to fulfill the legacy Kennedy left behind including finding the requisites necessary to finally bring South Korea and Japan into agreement and in doing so, further stabilize the non-communist Asia.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **GETTING IT DONE: HOW THE NORMALIZATION AGREEMENT CULMINATED AFTER THIRTEEN YEARS**

The combination of Park's pro-Japanese government, a Japanese willingness to yield on certain issues, and Johnson's calculated maneuvering between the two countries led to the culmination of a normalization agreement after thirteen years. The advent of the Park regime brought about a change in the normalization proceedings that the United States had not thought possible. The United States soon learned to mold Park's pro-Japanese stance for maximum benefit. Kennedy had first witnessed the changes Park made in South Korea. Upon Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon B. Johnson continued the push for the achievement of a normalization agreement. However, even President Johnson learned to accept the limits of U.S. pressure in the face of anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea. Likewise, President Park had to tread a fine line when it came to his people in regards to how far he could push for a rapprochement with the Japanese without being overthrown by South Korean protestors, and opposition elements in Japan also made the final years of the normalization process just as precarious. The escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam as well as the implementation of the Mansfield Amendment that cut



foreign assistance aid also brought a new dimension to the need for a normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan.

When Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the presidency following his predecessor's assassination, he followed JFK's lead. The Kennedy administration's wait-and-see approach to the military coup yielded great reward in regards to the normalization agreement. However, officials in the U.S. State Department remained skeptical about whether the military junta could retain power and worried that any sort of destabilization of the South Korean government would create an opening for a North Korean takeover. According to a CIA document from April 4, 1962, the threat from communism remained real. The document's author warned that the enemy would attack South Korean independence "by various forms of political warfare and subversion." In particular, the CIA operatives warned that "political dissension, economic stagnation, and social unrest will render it increasingly vulnerable to this Communist effort."<sup>84</sup> Park's assurances that free elections would be held in 1963 only slightly lessened U.S. concerns about the instability of the South Korean government. Park's narrow victory in the 1963 elections highlighted the uncertain environment in which the normalization process proceeded. However, despite the unpopularity of rapprochement with Japan amongst South Koreans, Park remained willing to continue on with the proceedings.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> "Conclusion: The Outlook for South Korea," April 4, 1962, South Korea, Folder 42, Box 6, National Intelligence Estimates, Papers of President Kennedy [Hereafter Kennedy Papers], National Security File [Hereafter NSF], John F. Kennedy Presidential Library [Hereafter JFK Library], Boston, MA.

<sup>85</sup> Seth, *Modern Korea*, 163, 182.

Although the Japanese withdrew from normalization talks during the political upheaval that began with the fall of Syngman Rhee,<sup>86</sup> the Park government's pro-Japanese sympathies allowed for a full-scale resumption of the normalization negotiations to occur. Talks resumed on August 23, 1962, but this time, the Japanese emerged as the less-than-willing participant. The normalization process raised multiple issues for Japan. The first problem revolved around the political implications of normalizing relations with South Korea. Leftist groups in Japan, those who favored North Korea, thought that normalizing relations with South Korea would lead to a permanent division of the country as well as the continued isolation of North Korea. The United States avoided this issue since the North remained under Communist control, but instead yielded to the UN decision of 1948 that declared "the government of the Republic of Korea is the only lawful government of Korea."<sup>87</sup> Despite this resolution, many in Japan still opposed the official isolation of North Korea. South Korea required that Japan acknowledge, in the normalization treaty, that the government of South Korea represented all Koreans (including those in the North). Although Article III of the final treaty stipulated that Japan adhered to the UN Resolution on the lawful government of Korea, Foreign Minister Shiina assured the Japanese Diet in 1965, when the debate on the treaty began, that "as far as this Treaty is concerned the area of the treaty application is limited only to the area where the present jurisdiction of South Korea extends."<sup>88</sup> The problem of North Korea remained unresolved, but the wording of

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<sup>86</sup> See Chapter 2, page 15-16.

<sup>87</sup> Morley, *Japan and Korea*, 59.

<sup>88</sup> Harrison, *U.S.-Japan Relations*, 197.

the treaty allowed for ambiguity on the issue. This did not fully appease the opposition, but it allowed Japan to entertain the idea of opening relations with North Korea later on.<sup>89</sup>

Japan's economic growth became another issue. In 1962, economic growth dropped ten percent.<sup>90</sup> The slowing of Japan's economy led Japan to try to bargain with the United States over the normalization agreement. Prime Minister Ikeda hoped to derive further benefit from the United States for the achievement of a normalization agreement with South Korea. According to a telegram from Secretary of State Rusk to Ambassador Berger, concern over Japan's economic slow-down caused Prime Minister Ikeda to try to draw maximum benefit, in the form of balance of payments assistance to Japan, from the United States' eagerness for a normalization agreement. Rusk informed Berger that the United States refused to strike such a bargain, instead opting to continue to relate to Prime Minister Ikeda the benefits Japan could derive from a normalization agreement, i.e. a new market and labor source which could revive the Japanese economy.<sup>91</sup> The United States remained willing to provide benefits for those political parties that agreed with U.S. policy, but would not give in to diplomatic blackmail to achieve a normalization agreement.

The Park government's well-known Japanese sympathies, especially the work of Kim Jong Pil, made the normalization process a policy of delicate maneuvering to overcome the bitter public opinion of Japan still held by many South

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<sup>89</sup> Harrison, *U.S.-Japan Relations*, 197.

<sup>90</sup> Morley, *Japan and Korea*, 104.

<sup>91</sup> Secretary of State Rusk to Ambassador Berger, telegram, January 11, 1962. Korea, Cables, 1/62, Box 128A. Kennedy Papers, NSF, Countries, Korea. JFK Library.

Koreans. Kim Jong Pil emerged as Park's second in command in all but title. Kim Jong Pil organized the military coup that brought Park to power. He later created and became head of the Democratic Republican Party, the ruling party in Korea at the time of normalization talks. Kim also established and ran the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA). However, it would be his involvement in the normalization talks that would make him one of the most hated figures in the eyes of the Korean people. Park sent Kim Jong Pil to Japan as an unofficial member of the normalization talks. Park wanted Kim to meet with multiple Japanese high officials to help smooth a path for a normalization agreement.<sup>92</sup> In 1962, Kim Jong Pil negotiated the first of many economic agreements between South Korea and Japan. The Kim-Ohira memorandum laid out a ten-year economic commitment from Japan that included "\$300 million in grants-in-aid, \$200 million in long-term low interest government loans, and more than \$100 million in commercial loans."<sup>93</sup> Japan offered this economic package as a sign of good faith for the Korean people to show that Japan only wished to help South Korea become economically stronger.

During Kim Jong Pil's time in Japan, mass student demonstrations rose in the Republic of Korea. Because of the size of the protests, Park had to recall Kim Jong Pil. The students felt that Kim Jong Pil made too many concessions in order to speed up the achievement of a normalization agreement. The students compared him to Yi Wan-yong, the Prime Minister who signed the Treaty of Annexation in 1910. Upon his return to the ROK, Kim Jong Pil defended his actions in a *New York Times* article

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<sup>92</sup> "Korea Halts Talks with Japan After Protests." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Mar 27, 1964. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/115556194?accountid=5683> (accessed April 10, 2012).

<sup>93</sup> Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 54.

on April 2, 1964 stating, "I have done my very best to heal up the lukewarm attitude of the Japanese and as a result, I have been branded a traitor." In the same article Kim Jong Pil claimed he would embark on a campaign to educate the public on the needs of normalization of relations with Japan.<sup>94</sup>

The U.S. had viewed Kim Jong Pil with frustration for some time because of the influence he had in the government, especially on President Park. In a telegram sent on April 9, 1964, from the U.S. Embassy in Seoul to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Ambassador Berger wrote

Paradoxically, Pak[sic] has appointed Kim Jong-Pil to lead DRP (Democratic Republican Party) program of public persuasion. We are told Pak is determined give Kim himself a chance to defend his activities and believes that Kim's persuasive powers are great enough to reverse un-favorable opinions of Kim and his role in ROK-Japan settlement. In our opinion, Kim remains controversial and vulnerable to his opponents inside and outside of govt. Therefore, if he continues to be actively associated with ROK-Japan settlement, public support for normalization will not be easy to obtain.<sup>95</sup>

U.S. diplomats knew that the controversy surrounding Kim Jong Pil would severely jeopardize the still fragile normalization talks. The situation surrounding Kim Jong Pil became so intense that U.S. officials in the State Department went to great lengths to remove him from the ROK. American officials arranged a place for Kim Jong Pil in Henry Kissinger's exclusive economic lecture series at Harvard to provide a cover for his sudden departure from South Korea. With Kim Jong Pil out of the country, the U.S. believed that student demonstrations would lessen.

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<sup>94</sup> Chapin, Emerson. "Top Korean Aide Firm on Need for Tokyo Ties," *New York Times*, April 2, 1964. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/115735373?accountid=5683> (accessed March 26, 2012).

<sup>95</sup> Ambassador Samuel Berger to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, April 9, 1964, Volume I, 11/63- 6/64, Box 254, Country File, Korea , National Security File[Hereafter NSF], Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library [Hereafter LBJ Library], Austin, TX.

American officials, who were no strangers to mass public unrest, found the student demonstrations in Korea against normalization a tricky situation to handle.<sup>96</sup> In a telegram to Secretary of State Dean Rusk dated June 3, 1964, Ambassador Samuel D. Berger related a conversation he had had with President Park about the demonstrations. Park believed the government had been patient and lenient long enough, but the riots were going too far. Rioters vandalized police stations and police vehicles; at least one officer had been killed by the students. Park went on to outline the conditions of martial law that he declared on June 3, 1964. These conditions included:

All schools down to primary would be closed and would be reopened gradually as situation permitted. Manipulators of students would be investigated and indicted by prosecutor general. Press censorship would be established. Civil cases would be tried by civil courts. More important cases by military courts.<sup>97</sup>

Park could not give an answer as to how long martial law would last, but hoped to lift it as soon as possible. Park feared that the student demonstrators would resist martial law, which would make the situation worse.

Student demonstrations had been an integral part of Korean history since colonial times and had succeeded in bringing about change. On April 19, 1960, 30,000 students marched toward the presidential mansion in protest of election rigging. Police fired on the demonstrators and killed 139 while wounding hundreds more. Koreans later commemorated this day as 'Student Revolution Day.' These demonstrations, along with U.S. pressure, led to the resignation of Syngman Rhee

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<sup>96</sup> Gillon, *The American Paradox*, 221-223. The United States in the 1960s saw mass social upheaval. Between the civil rights movement and protests against the Vietnam War, U.S. officials, especially during the Johnson years, witnessed mass student demonstrations across college campuses.

<sup>97</sup> Ambassador Samuel Berger to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, June 3, 1964, Volume I, 11/63- 6/64, Box 254, Country File, Korea, NSF, LBJ Library.

seven days later.<sup>98</sup> The Park regime remembered how much power mass student movements could yield. They feared the students would become strong enough to push them from office as well. These fears caused President Park to declare martial law and send in two military divisions to restore order.

In a telegram to the Secretary of State on June 3, 1964, Ambassador Berger expressed concern over the declaration of martial law and related the concerns of some critics that Korea would only be manageable under martial law. The official American position supported the declaration of martial law in order to restore order, but condemned an extended period of restricted freedoms, especially in a supposedly democratic government. The United States funded the ROK military and had enjoyed joint command since the Korean War. General Howze, the acting commander at the time, gave his permission for the release of two ROK divisions of troops to restore order. The United States wished to avoid any negative involvement on their part. Ambassador Berger also advised President Park that Kim Jong Pil's resignation from head of the Democratic Republican Party and removal from the country would also help the situation. Berger recognized the danger student demonstrations posed to the progress of the normalization agreement with Japan, especially if the general public joined the students as had occurred in 1960. Berger wanted to avoid such complications at all costs.<sup>99</sup>

The student demonstrators represented much of the public feelings towards normalization talks. The Korean public had deep rooted fears towards Japan. They

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<sup>98</sup> Seth, *Modern Korea*, 152.

<sup>99</sup> Ambassador Samuel Berger to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, June 3, 1964, Volume I, 11/63- 6/64, Box 254, Country File, Korea, NSF, LBJ Library.

believed that opening trade with Japan would expose them once again for Japanese encroachment and exploitation. They wanted Japan to apologize for its treatment of Koreans during colonial rule and to pay reparations. The status of Koreans living in Japan since colonial times also continued as an issue. Most of all, the students demonstrated against what they saw as humiliating concessions in regards to fisheries and other arrangements. They felt they had suffered enough humiliation at the hands of the Japanese and did not want to open the door for the possibility of owing their entire livelihood to Japan. Although the students did not admit to it, public fears also included the possibility of a U.S. troop withdrawal. Many resented the U.S. for what they saw as pushing Korea toward talks with Japan, but they did not dislike the U.S. enough to want the troops out of the country. They saw national defense as a bigger issue. Many South Koreans feared another invasion from the North, whose economy remained more advanced at the time. The demonstrations also expressed the frustrations South Koreans felt at the corruption in their government and their inability to change the fact that they were still a divided peninsula. As much as they feared North Korea though, they mourned the loss of their brethren even more. Overall, the political situation proved more complicated than the U.S. ever anticipated.<sup>100</sup>

An October memorandum of conversation between South Korean Prime Minister Chung Il Kwon and William Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, outlined the main issues the South Korean government faced in 1964. Prime Minister Chung gave three major problems the South Korean

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<sup>100</sup>Kenneth B. Lee, *Korea and East Asia*, 200.



government had to address in order to persuade the people of South Korea of the need for a settlement with Japan. The first problem involved the belief held by the South Korean public that South Korean officials pursued “low posture diplomacy” in regards to the normalization proceedings.<sup>101</sup> The second problem Chung mentioned was that South Koreans wanted the Rhee line to be maintained. In this regard, Japanese fishermen would only be allowed inside the Rhee line with the permission of the South Korean government. The third problem, according to Chung, remained from the Kim-Ohira agreement. The South Korean public believed that the \$600 million settlement was set too low; many people argued that the South Korean government should terminate the agreement altogether and negotiate for a better settlement. In this conversation, Prime Minister Chung pointed out that opposition elements have seized these three issues to continue to stir up trouble and feed the public sentiment against a normalization agreement. These lingering antagonisms further weakened the Park government’s authority.<sup>102</sup>

Prime Minister Chung used this opportunity to highlight what the United States could do to strengthen the Park government. He began by mentioning that although the U.S. government had, on numerous occasions, declared its support of the Park government, this was not enough to prove to the South Korean people that the “U.S. means what it says about its support and its present government.” In order

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<sup>101</sup> In this case “low posture diplomacy” indicates that the South Korean public believed that South Korean officials were making too many concessions to bring about a normalization agreement which was seen as degrading to South Korea.

<sup>102</sup> Prime Minister Chung to William Bundy, memorandum of conversation, October 2, 1964, Political Affairs & Rel. Area Relationships-ROK-Japan, Korea 1964 [Hereafter Political Affairs], Box 12, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of East Asian Affairs, Central Files 1947-64, Korea: Balance of Payments to Korea: Political-Economic Reports [Hereafter Korea Political-Economic Reports], National Archives II, College Park, MD [Hereafter N.A. II].

to prove this, Chung suggested that the U.S. government should provide material support in the form of increased economic aid. This is one of many instances where South Koreans used political bargaining over the normalization agreement for an increase in economic aid to their country. Chung also took it a step further and warned that a reduction in U.S. military forces could be detrimental to the security of South Korea, especially in regards to the South Korean public's fear of domination at the hands of the Japanese that could occur following the conclusion of a normalization agreement.<sup>103</sup>

Chung also noted that the implications of the overthrow of the Rhee regime haunted succeeding South Korean governments, namely the Park regime. Chung related that ever since the student demonstrations succeeded in overthrowing Syngman Rhee, there had been a diminished respect for authority. He cited an incident where police officers who fired upon the student demonstrators in 1960 were executed. Chung knew the political upheaval that could occur following the conclusion of a normalization agreement with Japan and wanted to make sure that the government would be prepared to handle it. This included asserting governmental authority such as martial law in order to prevent a breakdown of power that might ultimately lead to the fall of the Park government.<sup>104</sup>

Student demonstrations made up only one aspect of the tense political environment. Government officials outside of Park's immediate circle made normalization negotiations difficult. Since the U.S. strongly advocated the

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<sup>103</sup> Prime Minister Chung to William Bundy, memorandum of conversation, October 2, 1964, Political Affairs, Box 12, Record Group 59, Korea Political-Economic Reports, N.A. II.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

resumption of normal relations with Japan, many officials wanted to know what benefits South Korea would receive. Many South Korean officials worried that the United States planned to end the economic aid it had poured into the country since the end of World War II. The U.S. had spent billions in supporting the South Korean economy. The little economic development that had occurred thus far relied heavily on U.S. funding. U.S. military support concerned South Koreans just as much as economic aid. A modern South Korean army that stood constantly ready for an attack became vital because of the militant state to the north.

The U.S. had to give multiple assurances that a normalization agreement with Japan would not eliminate U.S. financial assistance nor change the status of U.S. military involvement in the country. On January 30, 1964, *The New York Times* reported that "Secretary of State Dean Rusk met with President Chung Hee Park today and assured him that the United States would 'continue to stand guard' with South Korea against Communist aggression."<sup>105</sup> Later that year, on October 4, *The New York Times* reported that Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy reiterated "that United States commitments of military and economic aid would remain 'absolutely unchanged' even in the event of a normalization of relations between Japan and South Korea."<sup>106</sup> The United States used these public statements to reassure South Koreans and to convince them to continue with the normalization process.

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<sup>105</sup> "South Korean Get Rusk's Assurances," *New York Times*, January 30, 1964.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/115735373?accountid=5683> (accessed March 26, 2012).

<sup>106</sup> "Bundy Assures South Korea U.S. Will Not Curtail Help," *New York Times*, October 4, 1964.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/115735373?accountid=5683> (accessed March 26, 2012).

Despite giving these assurances, the United States did not really understand why they had to keep remaking the same promises. Many U.S. officials saw the South Koreans as paranoid. However, in an October 1964 conversation between South Korean Minister Yun Suk-Heun and Allen S. Whiting, Director of the Office of Research for Far Eastern Affairs, Minister Yun pointed out that the United States still lacked understanding about South Koreans' perceptions of the Japanese. Yun told Whiting that

It was the US view that Korea's anti-Japanese feeling was largely a personal bias of Syngman Rhee and that once Rhee had left the scene there would be little obstacle to normalizing relations with Japan. This is a superficial view. Suspicion of Japanese motives runs deep in the Korean people who have experienced it in past generations and have passed it on to the generation which has had no actual contact with Japan. When the US urges Korea to normalize relations with Japan, Koreans suspect that the US wishes to give up its responsibilities for Korea and turn them over to Japan.

When Whiting tried to reassure Yun that Japan remained unable to adequately

defend even its own borders, let alone try to militarily dominate the Korean

peninsula once more, Yun once more had to explain what the Koreans feared.

According to Minister Yun, military conquest was not what made the South Korean

public wary of a normalization agreement with Japan; it was the fear of economic

domination. Japan's superior economy could allow the Japanese the opportunity to

"buy off" South Korean politicians and dominate the country once more. In this

conversation Minister Yun also brought up Assistant Secretary Bundy's remark in a

Tokyo speech that relations with Japan were "of paramount importance in the Far

East" for the United States. For many South Koreans, this statement showed that the

United States favored Japan and delegated South Korea to a secondary position at

best. American favoritism towards Japan increased the fears of South Koreans that America would just stand by and allow Japan to take over Korea.<sup>107</sup>

Although Assistant Secretary Bundy's speech in Tokyo might have resulted from diplomatic delicacy, his remarks provide insight into the American position and made Minister Yun's concern understandable. Bundy's statements highlighted the fact that the United States placed a high value on its relationship with Japan. In regards to its economic success, Japan provided the United States with a strong trading partner as well as a strong diplomatic ally. As much as South Korea wanted to be seen as an equal to Japan, especially in regards to how the United States treated both countries, in 1964 South Korea remained economically and diplomatically inferior. South Korea's status in world affairs remained at a "third world" level. South Korea did not yield the influence that Japan wielded thanks to its economic success. So even as the United States pushed South Korea and Japan together, it still failed to realize how much the inequalities affected the potential diplomatic relationship.

For their part, Americans had a new reason to push the normalization process: the escalating conflict in Vietnam. The Vietnam War became the Achilles heel to Johnson's legacy. Johnson felt he needed to continue what Kennedy escalated. Kennedy's expansion of the Vietnam conflict evolved from the embarrassment of the Bay of Pigs fiasco as well as the potential damage to American prestige if South Vietnam were to fall to Communism. Kennedy remembered all too well how Truman got blamed for "losing China." Kennedy wished to avoid this

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<sup>107</sup> Minister Yun to Allen S. Whiting, memorandum of conversation, October 2, 1964, Political Affairs, Box 12, Record Group 59, Korea Political-Economic Reports, N.A. II.

stigma attached to his presidency (especially shadowing his campaign for re-election). His platform of being “tough” on Communism depended upon victory in South Vietnam. Kennedy sought to turn the tide of the Cold War.<sup>108</sup> However, as the United States learned too late, Vietnam became a war unlike any other. The environment as well as the people resisted American encroachment. Johnson inherited Kennedy’s implications of what a loss in South Vietnam would mean for America and worked tirelessly to prevent such an occurrence.<sup>109</sup>

The escalation of Vietnam had a direct impact on South Korea. Not only did the U.S. administration realize that it funded a fully equipped (and experienced) army in South Korea, this particular army sat geographically closer to South Vietnam than sending U.S. troops and advisors. To the U.S. administration, South Vietnam’s security directly affected South Korea’s. South Korea enjoyed the protection of the bloc of nations making up the Free World, namely the United States. What these nations saw as a threat, South Korea should also view as a threat to its national security. Another Communist victory in Asia could drastically increase North Korea’s appeal and fuel its propaganda machine. Although Johnson approached South Korean leaders with one step at a time, first beginning with

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<sup>108</sup> Lawrence J. Basset and Stephen E. Pelz, “The Failed Search for Victory: Vietnam and the Politics of War,” in *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Patterson, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 252.

<sup>109</sup> For Kennedy, the normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan surfaced as a distraction from the bigger issues of the Cold War. While the events in South Korea, such as the military coup and the development of the Park government, forced Kennedy to acknowledge Korea once more, his attention generally lay in other fields of Asia (such as Vietnam) where the battle for the Free World reigned.

sending non-combatant forces,<sup>110</sup> eventually South Korea would have the second highest number of troops serving in South Vietnam.

U.S. involvement in Vietnam brought up issues with both the Republic of Korea and Japan that had previously been unrecognized. In a telegram on July 10, 1965 from Ambassador Brown to Assistant Secretary Bundy, Brown wrote

At the moment trained combat manpower is a crucial need in RVN (Republic of Vietnam). It is fair to say to Korea that this battle is hers as well as ours, that she can afford the men, that it is her duty to return in some measure the help rendered her so unstintingly by the free world in the past, and that we will ensure that this will not involve her in extra cost. But it is also a cold fact that Korea does not have to do this, that it does involve Korea in some additional risk, that a well-trained combat division can be a real contribution to the struggle, and that it can save us a great deal in blood and treasure.... Realize that this course will add something to our dollar outflow. But the amount pales into insignificance in comparison with the cost of sending a US division to RVN instead of a ROK division.<sup>111</sup>

The U.S. had realized the availability of an army it already funded that would be better politically than sending farm boys from Kansas. As time went on, the U.S. began petitioning President Park for a division of combat troops. Historical accounts of Vietnam often forget that the number of troops the ROK sent to Vietnam vastly outnumbered any other country outside of the U.S.

The first petition for combat troops came around the same time as the completion of the normalization agreement which South Korean officials then sent to the National Assembly for ratification. The U.S. advised on what order the troop proposal and the

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<sup>110</sup> Telegram from Ambassador Brown to Secretary of State Rusk, August 4, 1964, 6:52PM. Document 9, Korea Volume II Cables- 7/64-8/65, box 254. National Security Files, Country File, Korea, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX. As the normalization agreement began to come to fruition, President Johnson began negotiating with South Korea for the use of its troops. Johnson knew that the steady increase of troops would take diplomatic tact, so he began by asking for non-combat contributions. However, by the time the National Assembly began the ratification process for the normalization agreement, Johnson started requesting ROK combat divisions.

<sup>111</sup> Ambassador Brown to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, July 10, 1965, Volume II, 7/64- 8/65, Box 254, Country File, Korea, NSF, LBJ Library.

ratification vote should go in when South Korean officials formed the agenda for the August 1965 session of the National Assembly.<sup>112</sup> The United States greatly valued South Korean stability. The United States feared that without a normalization agreement with Japan, South Korea's dependence on U.S. funds and investment would never cease. China, North Korea, and the Communist encroachment occurring in Vietnam caused the U.S. to fear that the lack of South Korean stability meant the instability of the entire Asian sphere of the non-communist world.<sup>113</sup>

Japan also felt pressure from the U.S. about Vietnam, not only about direct participation, but also about the use of U.S. bases in Japan and Okinawa to launch strikes on Vietnam. By this time, Japan enjoyed greater independence from U.S. control than any other U.S. allied-Asian country. The wording of telegrams between American and Japanese officials showed an equal relationship as opposed to the dependent relationship of Korea on the U.S. In a telegram from Ambassador Reischauer to Secretary of State Rusk on September 4, 1965, Reischauer reported on a conversation with Japanese Prime Minister Sato that pointed out a feeling of stagnation in U.S.-Japanese relations because of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, more specifically "opposition to our use of bases in Japan for any purpose in any way connected with war in Vietnam."<sup>114</sup> Reischauer also discussed the importance of Japanese support in order to safeguard the free world which included the security of Japan. As much as Japan opposed communism, it wanted to be responsible for its own foreign policy and did not want to be pressured by the U.S. for military support.

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<sup>112</sup> Ambassador Winthrop Brown to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, August 13, 1965, Volume II, 7/64- 8/65, Box 254, Country File, Korea, NSF, LBJ Library.

<sup>113</sup> Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, 51.

<sup>114</sup> Ambassador Reischauer to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, September 4, 1965, Volume III, 9/64- 10/65, Box 250 (part 2 of 2), Country File, Japan, NSF, LBJ Library.



Japanese Prime Minister Sato suggested sending humanitarian aid and helping with infrastructure in Vietnam, but discussions of this in the Diet had to wait until after the ratification of the normalization agreement.<sup>115</sup>

Sato knew opposition members in the Diet would jump on the chance to associate U.S. pressure exerted on Japan to ratify the normalization agreement with the negative public opinion of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Officials in the State Department recognized that the delicate balance between too much pressure and not enough needed to be handled very carefully in regards to Japan. D.S. Macdonald, a specialist in Korean affairs who worked in the State Department, acknowledged the reality of the situation in a letter to James C. Thomson Jr., a member of the National Security Council. Macdonald explained that the Americans needed to tread carefully: "If we show too much interest in this subject to the Japanese, they may try to exact a price for going along. Too much U.S. pressure arouses suspicion of U.S. motives and hopes of Japan's being able to take advantage of our interest in unilateral, bilateral and multilateral issues."<sup>116</sup> Japan's independence from U. S. influence occasionally yielded trouble when Japan asserted said independence in ways that contradicted U.S. policy.

Another twist the U.S. had to maneuver on the road to normalization was the perception, advanced by their Cold War enemies, that Japan and South Korea were merely puppets of the United States. On July 4, 1965, *The New York Times* reported

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<sup>115</sup> Ambassador Reischauer to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, September 4, 1965, Volume III, 9/64- 10/65, Box 250 (part 2 of 2), Country File, Japan , NSF, LBJ Library.

<sup>116</sup> D.S. Macdonald to James C. Thomson, Jr, letter, National Security Council[Hereafter NSC], Executive Office of the President, November 17, 1964, "ORG-Organization and Administration- Korea, 1964" Box 11, General Records of the Department of State [Hereafter General Records], RG 59, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

that “The Soviet Union assailed today the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea as ‘a step leading to deepening of the division of Korea.” The Soviets implied that the agreement resulted “due to pressure exerted by Washington.”<sup>117</sup> North Korea saw the agreement as another betrayal by the South at the hands of ‘the imperialists,’ meaning the U.S. and Japan. Upon taking control, the military junta under Park, also tried to distance itself from seeming like a puppet of the United States. A CIA intelligence report related that, “after a period of suspicion and mistrust, the leadership now emphasizes the closeness of its ties with the U.S. Nevertheless, it is intent upon exercising full control of Korean affairs. There is an element of ultra-nationalism and Korean xenophobia underlying this attitude, especially among the younger junta members.”<sup>118</sup>

Opposition movements in the Republic of Korea and Japan both used the avid amount of U.S. influence as reasons to discredit the normalization treaty. Because of this, the U.S. avoided mentioning their involvement in the normalization as much as possible. There are multiple embassy telegrams where the Johnson administration advised U.S. ambassadors to keep from mentioning the normalization talks or any influence America may have on it. The only official releases about the U.S. and the normalization agreement involved official statements by President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk encouraging normalization talks as a step to “strengthen the free world.” However, the United States State Department maintained that “our policy toward a Japan-Korea settlement should be geared to our over-all objective of

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<sup>117</sup>“Soviet Denounces Accord of Japan and South Korea,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1965. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/115735373?accountid=5683> (accessed April 10, 2012).

<sup>118</sup> “ROK-US Relations: The Outlook for South Korea,” April 4, 1962, South Korea, Folder 42, Box 6, National Intelligence Estimates, NSF, JFK Library.

establishing Korea as an independent and self-supporting buffer state.”<sup>119</sup> The United States saw the tensions between the two countries as detrimental for the fight against Communism. Japan and South Korea were on the borders of the Asian Communist bloc: China and North Korea. The United States, already strongly committed to Vietnam by the time President Park came to power, recognized the need for a strong coalition in Asia of non-Communist countries. In order to strengthen Asia, and help with the fight in Vietnam, the United States escalated the pressure on South Korea and Japan to bring about a normalization agreement.

President Johnson took an avid interest in the normalization process. Johnson pressured the Japanese as well as the South Korean delegations to come to an accord. Johnson used state funerals to bring up the subject to each delegation. Almost immediately upon taking office, as he received delegations paying their respects at the White House following Kennedy’s funeral, Johnson brought up the possibility of achieving a normalization agreement with the Japanese delegation.<sup>120</sup> Likewise, following the funeral of General MacArthur, Johnson reiterated to the South Korean delegation what a normalization agreement would mean for their combined stand against Communism.<sup>121</sup> He also sent personal letters through U.S. diplomats to President Park to continue to convey his desire to see the conclusion of

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<sup>119</sup> D.S. Macdonald to James C. Thomson, Jr, letter, NSC, Executive Office of the President, November 17, 1964, ORG-Organization and Administration- Korea, 1964, Box 11, General Records, RG 59, National Archives II.

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, November 25, 1963, US-Japanese Relations, Japan, Memos 11/63-4/64, box 250 part 1. NSF, Country File, Japan, LBJ Library.

<sup>121</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, April 9, 1964, The President’s Meeting with Korean Prime Minister, Korea Cables Vol. I 11/63-6/64, box 254. NSF, Country File, Korea, LBJ Library.

a normalization agreement as well as a reiteration of what the conclusion of such an agreement could mean for South Korea and Japan.<sup>122</sup>

President Johnson had another pressing reason to convince South Korea of the need for the achievement of the normalization agreement: the Mansfield Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act began to cut U.S. aid to developing countries.<sup>123</sup> The Mansfield Amendment of 1959 called for an eventual phasing out of financial grants. Although slowly implemented, the Senate Committee on Foreign Assistance decided by 1964 that the Mansfield Amendment needed to be implemented. A decline in supporting assistance to developing countries needed to occur. This included aid to South Korea. The Senate Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations asserted that “the people of Korea, including the young people who rioted recently against this policy, should understand that the United States is not going to underwrite indefinitely their emotional aversion to Japan, however real it may be.”<sup>124</sup> Many in Congress believed that the U.S. had propped up the South Korean economy long enough. South Korea needed to look elsewhere to make up the deficit in economic aid. The United States continued to highlight the advantages a rapprochement with Japan held.

As much as President Johnson tried to pressure Congress into increasing Supporting Assistance, the sheer financial burden of propping up the economy of

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<sup>122</sup>Outgoing Telegram to Ambassador Brown, August 2, 1964. Korea Volume II Cables, 7/64-8/65, box 254. NSF, Korea. LBJ Library.

<sup>123</sup> Third Meeting of the Joint U.S.-Japan committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, January 29, 1964. Economic Affairs (Gen.) E 1-1 Economic Stabilization, Korea 1964, box 11. RG 59 General Records, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs: Office of East Asian Affairs: Central Files 1947-1964: Korea Alpha to Korea Finance, National Archives II.

<sup>124</sup> Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Foreign Assistance Act of 1964*, 88<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 1964, Rept. 1188 Part 1, 13-14.

multiple developing countries such as South Korea took its toll. Congress became disillusioned. The threats of the Cold War no longer justified the magnitude of Foreign Assistance spending. Johnson knew that the Mansfield Amendment was finally going to begin to take effect. In response, he put as much pressure as possible on U.S. diplomats to somehow convince both sides to concede certain points (such as fishing rights) and come to an accord. According to a memorandum pertaining to U.S. aid in South Korea, Supporting Assistance (SA) from 1961-1964 exceeded 460 million dollars.<sup>125</sup> This figure does not include the millions of dollars that went towards the Military Assistance Program (MAP) funding the South Korean Army. Despite the millions of dollars the United States allotted South Korea, the economy continued to flounder. Domestic pressure inside the United States called for a decrease in spending. According to aforementioned memorandum, "One of our basic objectives in Korea is to assure a steady increase in its capacity for self-support, with concomitant reductions of U.S. grant aid in line with the Mansfield Amendment."<sup>126</sup> The U.S. hoped that Japanese aid could replace U.S. aid, saving the United States 1 billion dollars between 1965 and 1975.<sup>127</sup> Johnson also used the lure of contracts in Vietnam to appease South Korean dissidents who claimed that the United States had too much influence in South Korea.<sup>128</sup>

Johnson saw the agreement as not only of great benefit to both countries, but also to the strength of the non-communist bloc. Johnson hoped that South Korea

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<sup>125</sup> Memorandum for Administration, "Developments Affecting AID position in Korea," January 23, 1964, Economic Affairs (Gen.) E 1-1 Economic Stabilization, Korea 1964, Box 11, General Records of the Department of State [Hereafter General Records], RG 59, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Tucker, *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World*, 129.

<sup>128</sup> Lie, *Han Unbound*, 63-64.

would take its rightful place in the Asian sphere of this bloc, especially in the face of the escalation of the Vietnam War.<sup>129</sup> President Johnson sent many messages to the Korean embassy and made public statements regarding U.S. approval of the normalization talks. President Johnson made more statements directed to the people of the ROK and to ROK ambassadors than he did to the Japanese. The necessity to keep reassuring the people of South Korea that the U.S. would continue its support arose out from the continual fear of Japanese encroachment. The United States promised to come to South Korea's aid if Japan ever tried to take control again. South Koreans, however, remembered when they sent representatives to Washington DC protesting the Treaty of Shimonoseki as well as the Treaty of Portsmouth and finally the annexation treaty. The U.S. turned a blind eye to all three protests in favor of Japanese dominance and recognition of U.S. claim to the Philippines. The South Koreans believed the U.S. favored Japanese trade over South Korean well-being.<sup>130</sup>

Two main issues hindered the completion of the negotiations of a normalization agreement. The first regarded the status of Koreans living in Japan. Many had been there since the time of colonial occupation. At that time, they had legal status because Japan regarded Korea as a colony. However at the end of World War II, their status came into question and eventually became a key problem between the two countries. The second issue involved fisheries and coastal territory. This remained the most significant issue of the treaty because the seafood industry contributed a vital portion to the economy of both countries. The Republic

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<sup>129</sup> Lie, *Han Unbound*, 63-64.

<sup>130</sup> Lee, *One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations*, 24.

of Korea remained determined not to yield on any territory encroachment. Eventually Japan, at the encouragement of the U.S., softened its position. In a gesture of taking responsibility for its imperial past, Japan also agreed to pay \$800 million in economic aid.<sup>131</sup>

The negotiators finalized the normalization treaty in June 1965. It did not go before the South Korean National Assembly for ratification until August and the Japanese Diet waited until December. The Republic of Korea ratified the Treaty of Basic Relations between Korea and Japan on August 14, 1965. A telegram from Ambassador Brown reported the circumstances of the ratification process. Ambassador Brown notes that the National Assembly ratified the normalization treaty by a vote of 110 to zero. Members of the opposition parties had already resigned in protest. Yi Hyo-Sang, the speaker of the National Assembly, told its members that it “was regrettable that the treaty was only ratified in absence of opposition party members.” Speaker Yi also promised to work to persuade the opposition members to return to the National Assembly. Ambassador Brown also related that the standing committee of the People’s Party (one of the opposition parties) passed a resolution earlier in the day that declared any decision reached in the National Assembly on the Korea-Japan agreement to be “null and void.” In regards to the public, Ambassador Brown reported that a small student rally at Korea University and an indoor meeting by the Save-the-Nation council were the only demonstrations against the treaty that took place. The lack of political

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<sup>131</sup> Seth, *Modern Korea*, 163.

demonstrations could be attributed to the strong police presence in Seoul.<sup>132</sup> In Japan, the Diet ratified the treaty on December 11, 1965. As in South Korea, those who opposed the treaty boycotted the vote.<sup>133</sup> When President Johnson heard the news of the treaty's completion, he sent personal congratulations to both countries as well as to the ambassadors who helped bring it about.<sup>134</sup>

The United States had no idea what had been accomplished with the signing of normalization treaty. For the first time in their shared history, South Korea and Japan formally acknowledged the other as being worthy to treat with one another on a diplomatic level. Although the United States had achieved its goal in bring South Korea and Japan together, the inferiority of South Korea at the time of ratification, still remained an issue, and would continue to be so for at least another two decades. The South Korean populace still maintained its grudge against Japan, but the influx of Japanese goods ebbed some of the bitter feelings away. Despite the lingering bitterness, Japan became South Korea's main trading partner behind the United States. South Koreans had a large appetite for Japanese products. Japanese investments helped the South Korean economy become the success it is today. The cultural ties between the two countries also made it easier to develop a market for their respective products. South Korea benefitted from the flow of technology from Japan. The United States no longer remained South Korea's sole investor. Japan helped stabilize South Korea not only economically, but created a further alliance

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<sup>132</sup> Ambassador Brown to Secretary of State Rusk, telegram, August 14, 1965, Volume II Cables-7/64-8/65, NSF, Korea, LBJ Library.

<sup>133</sup> "Japan Ratify South Korea Pact," *New York Times*, December 11, 1965.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/115735373?accountid=5683> (accessed April 12, 2012).

<sup>134</sup> Yi, "In Search of Panacea," 633.



between non-Communist countries that the U.S. saw as helpful to their containment policy.

The road to a normalization agreement encompassed a long process and took skillful maneuvering on the part of the United States. The U.S. recognized the need for another investor in the Republic of Korea and saw that Japan with its anti-Communist stance, economic stability, and cultural ties with the country created a perfect fit. The stability the normalization agreement helped bring to Eastern Asia furthered the advancement of the 'free world.' Although the U.S. got frustrated with the road blocks in the process, especially regarding the prejudices against the Japanese held by most Koreans, it gave gentle pushes that helped bring the two countries together. The United States' role in the normalization process involved a great deal of work and political reassurances. To further reassure South Korea, the United States worked out the 1966 Brown Memorandum that gave South Korea access to beneficial contracts in Vietnam that helped boost their economy immensely. Japan also benefited from a new market for their products. Although there is still a sore spot in South Korea towards Japan, the normalization agreement began the process of healing or at least tolerance, something that may not have occurred without U.S. help.

## **CHAPTER V:**

### **CONCLUSION**

In the years following World War II, American officials accomplished something that had never existed without even realizing what they were doing. They recognized that a normalized relationship between Japan and South Korea would work to all three countries' benefit. Although the U.S. recognized the advantages, it did not always understand the tensions between the people of South Korea and Japan. The U.S. failed to understand that what they were trying to accomplish in establishing diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan had never been done before. South Korea and Japan had never had a true diplomatic relationship because of centuries of perceived and actual inequalities that left the two at odds with each other. Even as the normalization process began, South Korea and Japan had to agree that the other country was worthy of diplomatic relations. This understanding had to take place before any real progress on the normalization agreement could be made.

The normalization process began under Eisenhower's presidency. Eisenhower's Cold War approach strove for balance in regards to the Soviet threat. He believed in military readiness, but also the practice of restraint in order to

prevent another global war. This balance served well as Eisenhower sought to end the Korean War as well as keep a level head despite the problems McCarthy's overzealous, anti-Communist witch hunt caused. Eisenhower's balanced approach to the Communist threat gave way to the Kennedy administration's tough stance on Communism. Kennedy's rhetoric and covert military operations brought the Cold War to new heights of tension. Increased action in Vietnam lent a new importance to the rapprochement of South Korea and Japan. His desire to see the conclusion of a normalization agreement was helped by the military coup that brought pro-Japanese Park Chung Hee to power in South Korea in 1961. The policies that Park enacted, with the United States help, laid the foundation for the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between South Korea and Japan. However, with the tragic conclusion of Kennedy's life came a new player in the Cold War realm. Lyndon B. Johnson's escalated commitment to Vietnam required a stability in East Asia that only a normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan could provide. Johnson's presidency saw the conclusion of a normalization agreement between South Korea and Japan which resulted in a less dependent South Korea as well as an economically stronger Japan. The normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan allowed for a new dimension of the United States' relationship with each country to develop.

For all the headaches the normalization agreement caused the United States, the reward soon surpassed all previous expectations. During Rhee's rule in South Korea, many in the U.S. government believed that South Korea would never move beyond Third World status and the United States would have to continue to prop up

the economy with no satisfactory outcome. However, after the achievement of the normalization agreement, the combination of Japanese investment with lucrative contracts in Vietnam given by the United States, and the ambitious economic five year plans put forth during Park Chung Hee's rule, helped South Korea completely change its trajectory in history. South Korea became a thriving economic powerhouse that began to rival Japan as early as the 1980s.<sup>135</sup>

Despite the decrease in aid given by the United States over the coming years, South Korea continued to flourish achieving the state of security that once many thought impossible. Soon after the normalization agreement, South Korea began to uphold the security of Asia by sending combat troops to Vietnam. The Military Aid Program that the United States had funded since the Korean War found application in the Vietnam conflict. South Korea already had experienced soldiers and officers who joined the United States once more in the fight against Communist forces. South Koreans saw the conflict in Vietnam akin to their own struggle against North Korea and soon became the second highest contributor of foreign troops to Vietnam. The United States finally gained a partner in its struggle against Communism. However, in return for Korean blood, the United States rewarded South Korea with the majority of supply contracts in Vietnam. South Korea enjoyed the benefits of the Vietnam War that Japan enjoyed during the Korean War.<sup>136</sup>

Japan also benefited significantly from the conclusion of the normalization agreement with South Korea. South Korea offered a market that hungered for Japanese products. It also supplied a cheap labor source which cut the labor costs

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<sup>135</sup> Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development*, 148-149.

<sup>136</sup> Lie, *Han Unbound*, 63-66.

that had skyrocketed during the boom of the 1950s. Japanese businesses that had flourished in Korea during World War II, returned to the peninsula once more. Fears of an economic recession evaporated in the face of new industrial growth and the rise in exportation of goods. In 1976, the volume of two-way trade reached 4.9 billion dollars.<sup>137</sup> The outstanding issues the normalization agreement addressed also greatly benefited the Japanese. No longer did Japanese fishermen have to fear sailing in the Sea of Japan and being arrested by South Korean officials. The wording of the treaty also left open the possibility for Japan to choose its own course of action towards North Korea which satisfied Leftist elements in the Diet.

After thirteen years of negotiations, the United States gained the strategic alliance of two of its most important allies in Asia. Security treaties with both countries also enhanced each relationship. The reestablishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan helped create a stronger deterrent in the escalated Cold War environment. The fear of a Communist infiltration of either country from China or North Korea lessened. The United States felt the security of the region became stronger. The United States no longer had to worry about being the referee to disputing countries that refused to acknowledge each other, thereby allowing U.S. attention to be given elsewhere. The normalization agreement validated America's postwar policy "of linking economic development and containment."<sup>138</sup> The United States also achieved its goal of partially relieving itself of the economic burden that South Korea had become. The outpouring of Japanese investment and loans greatly outweighed the deficits in the U.S. aid programs for

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<sup>137</sup> Harrison, *U.S.-Japan Relations*, 198.

<sup>138</sup> Yi, "In Search of Panacea," 662.

South Korea. South Korea became a model of success that the United States hoped to emulate in other countries. Johnson especially believed that it remained the responsibility of the United States to foster an environment of economic growth in other developing countries.<sup>139</sup>

Ultimately South Korea gained the most from the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Japan. However, the conclusion of the normalization agreement benefited all parties involved. The United States gained the benefits of a triangular alliance in East Asia as well as relieved itself of the complications of a divided Asia. The United States also gained a partner in the Vietnam conflict. The security and economic benefits afforded South Korea and Japan made the drawn out process as well as the swallowed pride on both sides worth the effort. The normalization agreement also helped begin the healing process between South Korea and Japan. Although there are many in South Korea today that still hold on to the grudges of the past, the cultural and economic exchange between the two countries is unparalleled. The economic stability the agreement brought to the region resounds into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even today, the United States still looks to South Korea and Japan as a way to balance to the economic might of the Republic of China, reaffirming the long held alliance between the three countries.

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<sup>139</sup> Kil J. Yi, "In Search of Panacea" 662.

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