

## U.S. POLICY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

*The following is an abridged text of a talk given by Dr. Paul D. Wolfowitz at the Hyundai Group Headquarters on October 28, 1995.*

### *Is the U.S. Becoming Isolationist?*

If you read the American press these days, you may hear sounds of a debate in the United States in which this word "isolationism" appears often. The President of the U.S. Mr. Clinton, has accused the Republican Congress of being isolationist. Let me admit -- I'm a Republican. I don't think the Republican Congress is isolationist. I think there is an argument between Mr. Clinton and Congress about foreign policy, but it is not about whether or not America should be involved in the world. Both sides agree that we have an important role to play.

The argument between President Clinton and the Congress is about how we should be involved in the world. I think President Clinton wants us to rely very heavily on the United Nations to play our role in the world whereas the Republicans in Congress would say, "The United Nations is okay, but it's not something you can rely on. What we have to rely on in the world are our good friends and allies." They would say we need to put much more emphasis on our relationships with NATO, with Japan, and with the Republic of Korea. That is really what the American debate is about right now. Don't believe just because the President is accusing the Congress of isolationism that the Congress is really isolationist.

I think that the Americans have learned the lessons of the 21st century, and they realize that to protect our own interests, we have to play a significant role in the world. If we say the problems of the world are for others to take care of, we will end up paying a big price.

But there are two specific issues where the American debate becomes more detailed, and these are issues that affect the U.S.-Korean relationship. The first has to do with the question of should the United States continue to keep an open market for the products of other countries. The second has to do with whether the U.S. should continue to maintain troops overseas to support security commitments to our allies in Europe and in Asia.

### *Not Really Isolationism, but Protectionism*

Let me talk about the economic issue first. In the case of economics, the position isn't really isolationism, it's protectionism, and protectionism has been a significant force in American politics for many years. I was the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of East Asian Affairs for President Reagan and Secretary of State George Schultz from 1982 to 1986, and we had a great many arguments at that time with the Congress over protectionism. There were a great many Congressmen who said, "It's not fair. We keep our market open; other people close their markets. We should close ours, too." This debate went on year after year, and is going on even now. It was a very big debate in the United States two years ago, when the question came to the Congress of whether or not to ratify NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The Congress always has a certain tendency to be protectionist. The reason is that the Congressmen don't represent the whole country.

Each Congressman represents his own district; each Senator represents his own state. So guess who are the protectionists in the United States Congress? Many of them come from the state of Michigan. Why from Michigan? Because in Michigan, they produce automobiles, and the Congressmen and Senators from Michigan think General Motors and Ford and Chrysler would be better off if we closed our market. In Congress, there is a special strength that comes to special interest groups.

### *America has its Economic Priorities Straight*

But the experience in American politics has usually been that when these issues are taken to a national level, or even a state level, there is still a majority of Americans who believe that their own interests are best served by an open American market. It's not that these Americans want to do a favor to Korea, and they certainly don't want to do favors for Japan, but they believe the American economy is healthier when we keep an open market.

You can see this in a number of political events in the United States. If you go back to the Republican primaries in 1988, George Bush was running against Senator Robert Dole and they had a primary in the state of North Carolina. In North Carolina, there are many textile manufacturers, people who produce clothing. The clothing industry, like the automobile industry, has a tendency toward protectionism. Sen. Dole thought he could win votes in North Carolina by advocating a more protectionist trade policy. George Bush had to defend Ronald Reagan's policy of keeping the American market open. But guess who won the Republican primary in North Carolina? George Bush. Because even though this was a state with strong protectionist interests, when the issue was

argued at a state level, the larger interest won.

Go to the 1992 Democratic primary. In the state of New Hampshire, Senator Robert Kerry was running against Bill Clinton. Senator Kerry thought in New England, there would be a sentiment for protectionism. He even ran an advertisement that showed a hockey goalie standing in front of the goal, keeping out the puck, keeping out foreign goods. Senator Kerry lost in New Hampshire; he lost very badly.

### *The Battle of NAFTA*

I think the most significant indication of this American majority view of keeping our markets open was the fight in Congress two years ago over the North American Free Trade Agreement. When that Agreement was signed, Ross Perot denounced it. Ross Perot said, "We're going to defeat NAFTA in the United States Congress." He said that there was a giant sucking sound -- the sound of American jobs going to Mexico -- and he was going to stop that. He had powerful allies. The labor unions lined up on his side against NAFTA. A Republican candidate now for President, Patrick Buchanan, lined up strongly against NAFTA. And for a couple of months, it seemed as though President Clinton wasn't really sure whether he was going to take on this fight, because it looked like such a difficult fight. But finally, he said, "I have to fight this and win it," and he took it on. I have to give him credit -- he took it on with a great deal of courage and strength. Vice President Gore, particularly, debated Ross Perot on national television, making the argument that it was in the national interest to keep our markets open and to expand to NAFTA. And guess what happened -- NAFTA won in the United States Congress.

But there is an important footnote to put here. NAFTA won in the U.S. Congress, but a majority of the Democrats voted against it. Even though

the Democratic President was in favor of NAFTA, a majority of the Democratic Party voted for protectionism. In fact, I believe that in many ways the Democratic Party, especially the Democrats in Congress, are still majority protectionists. But in 1994, the Republicans won control of the Congress. On the whole, historically, Republicans have been against protectionism, and the Republican leaders of this Congress, particularly Sen. Dole and Mr. Gingrich, have been very strongly in favor of keeping the American market open.

But I don't think we can take this for granted. Many of the new Republican Congressmen know little about foreign affairs, and they care very little. In fact, a majority of the Republicans in Congress were elected in 1992 or 1994. In other words, most of them were not in Congress four years ago, and their attitudes are still very open. As long as their leadership has the right idea, I think they will vote in the right direction. But it is important to persuade them that this is what is good for the country. That is why I think all of our allies, and frankly Korea up at the top of the list, can expect continued pressure from American administrations, Republican or Democrat, to open the Korean market. It doesn't mean that all of these people want to find an excuse to close our market. In fact, many of them want to find the arguments to keep the American market open. But it is hard to argue to keep our market open if the markets of other countries are closed. So this will continue to be an issue, and a very important issue. But I think we've been making progress on this issue over the ten years that I have followed it, and I think we can continue.

### *Will the U.S. Forces Stay in Korea?*

The other big question that I mentioned is the question of American security commitments. There have been times when people have

wondered, "Will the United States continue to maintain its commitment to the security of Korea?" I think that that commitment is more solid today than it was even at the height of the Cold War. There is really no one in the United States Congress now who says that we should withdraw our troops and bring them home. In fact, unlike President Jimmy Carter, who did talk about bringing American troops home, President Clinton has talked about keeping our troops here, even though we are cutting the level of American military by around 50% by the time we are finished.

How can we cut our military by 50% and still keep our forces in Korea? The answer is that most of the cuts are in Europe. During the Cold War, we had 300,000 American personnel in Europe. There is no need to keep that many in Europe anymore, and those numbers are coming down. In fact, once we are done, there will be roughly as many American troops in Asia as in Europe, about 100,000. In fact, not only is the President taking this position, but the Congress is very strongly in support of American security commitments.

You may have heard the name of Senator Jesse Helms. Senator Helms is the new Republican Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate. Senator Helms has a big fight with the Clinton Administration. He would like to abolish the Agency for International Development, an agency that gives foreign aid. I'm not sure I agree with him about this, but I can assure that Senator Helms is not interested in abolishing the U.S. military. He is not going to abolish the American commitment in Korea, and he is a great friend of Korea and of the U.S.-Korean relationship. In fact, as I look through the list of Republican candidates for President, I think all of them will be strong supporters of the U.S.-Korean relationship, with the possible exception of Patrick Buchanan. Patrick Buchanan worries me, because I think he is a real isolationist, but I don't think Patrick Buchanan is going to win the Republican

nomination.

In fact, I think you will find when you talk to Americans about the American role in Korea that, if anything, there is criticism that the Administration has not been firm enough in its dealings with North Korea. There is very strong support for maintaining our commitments, not only now, when Korea is divided, but even into the future, if a unified Korea wishes to preserve a security relationship with the United States.

### *Looking to the Future*

That takes me to where I would like to conclude. More and more, the U.S. relations with Korea are going to be part of a larger picture of U.S. relations with Asia. For many years, the U.S. and Korea dealt with one another almost as though the only issues were those of the Korean Peninsula. I came here in early 1981 as a State Department official, and almost all of our discussions were about our bilateral relationship and about the problems with North Korea. Now we would spend at least half of our time talking about the role of China in Asia, the role of Japan in Asia, the problems of Southeast Asia where Korea is now playing an active role in the ASEAN dialogue. We would also probably talk about issues outside of Asia, like the security of oil supplies in the Persian Gulf. As Korea becomes stronger economically and more self-confident politically, Korea has a role to play that goes far beyond the Korean Peninsula.

A unified Korea is going to be a rather big country. A unified Korea may look small compared to the People's Republic of China, and even Japan is much larger. But if you compare a unified Korea to the big countries of Europe -- to France, England, Italy, or even Germany -- a united Korea is going to be one of the big players on the world scene and a very big player in Asia. And I believe that American relations with Korea can play an

important role in peace and prosperity in this big part of the world.

I would summarize it in this way: As we go into the future, I think American relations with Japan will continue to be maybe the most important relationship in Asia because of the size of Japan's economy. But American relations with Japan will continue to have trouble because Japan's economy is closed. Until Japan undertakes fundamental economic change, there will be constant frictions in the U.S.-Japan relationship. Those frictions, I believe, will not make our relationship with Korea better; they will tend to make our relationship with Korea worse, and they will put more pressure on solving economic problems between the two of us. We will have problems with China in the future of a different kind, over security issues and political issues. I think the more problems we have with China, the more Americans will see that the relationship with Korea plays an important role in managing our relations with China, particularly because Korea is now a democracy, and a solid democracy. As we try to persuade China to move in more democratic direction, it will be important to work with our democratic allies in this region.

The bottom line is that I believe Asia is going to be the most important region in the world in the 21st century. American interests in Asia will be as important as our interests anywhere in the world, and a strong, and hopefully unified, Korea has an important role to play in supporting American interests just as I believe the United States will continue to have an important role in supporting Korean interests. Even though we have many problems to work on together, the future of U.S.-Korean relations is a very bright future. **VIP**

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