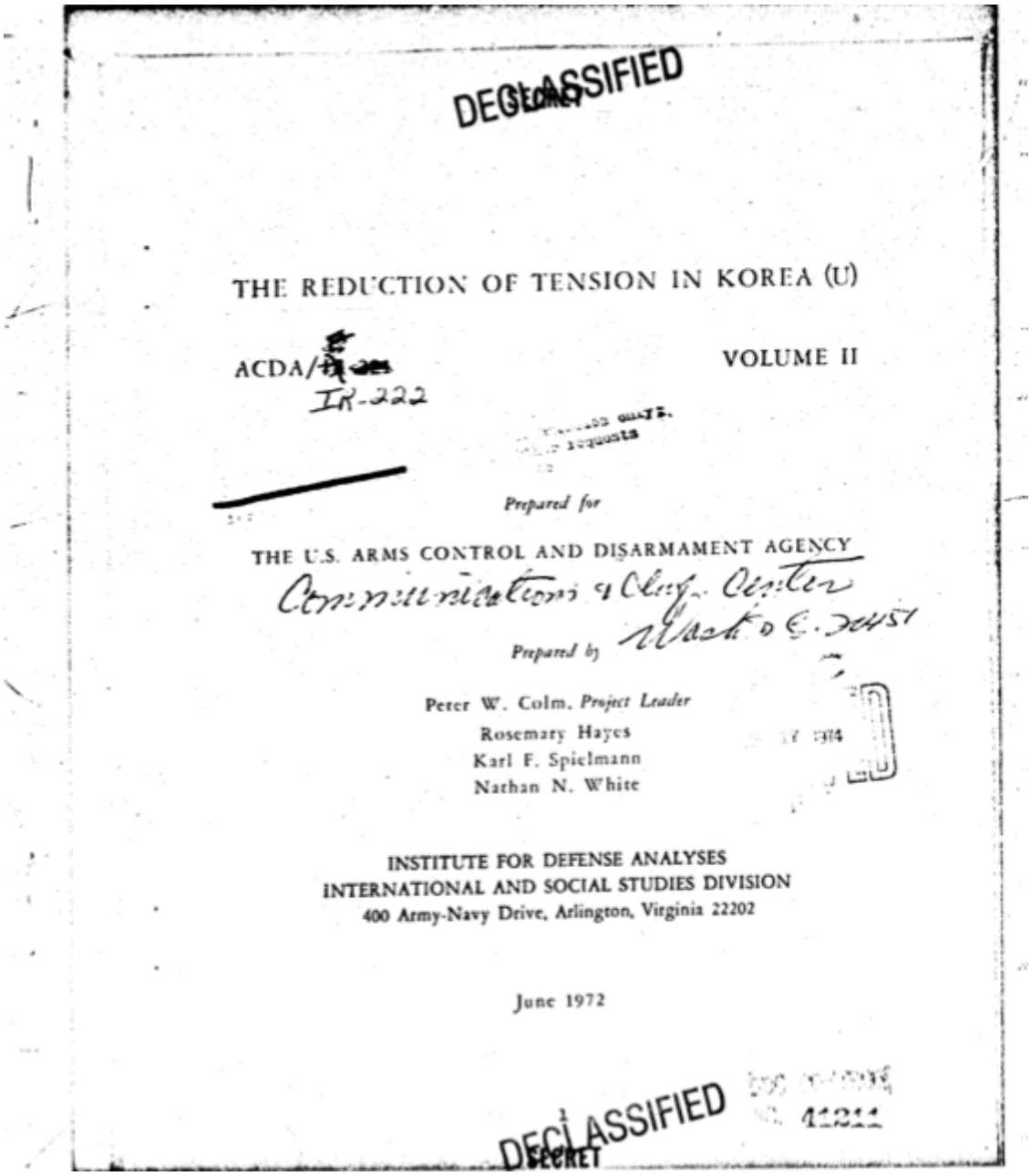
# The Reduction of Tension in Korea Vol. II



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THE REDUCTION OF TENSION IN KOREA (U)

ACDA/IR-222

VOLUME II

*Prepared for*

THE U.S. ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

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The so-far unproductive multilateral talks on North Korea's nuclear program are not new. For many years, the great powers in the region have separately and collectively engaged the two Koreas in efforts to resolve the Korean conflict. American analysis of how best to achieve tension reduction in the peninsula also goes back many decades. Yet the nuclear standoff between the United States and North Korea has increased the risk of war and nuclear war on the Korean peninsula since October 2003 and in spite of the talks, we are no closer today to resolving the critical insecurities driving the standoff than a year ago. It is useful, therefore, to revisit earlier reflections on how best to reduce tensions in Korea.

The US Government's Institute for Defense Studies produced a technical report in 1972 that details ways to reduce the threat of conflict on the peninsula through constructive confidence building between the powers in the region. The cornerstone of their proposal rested upon promoting dialogue, the same missing element between the United States and the DRK that impedes the current six-party talks. The authors argued dialogue with the DPRK can be achieved without offering concessions that might prove politically dangerous or sacrifice bargaining chips needed in actual negotiations.

The IDA report states:

"Undue optimism is seldom warranted in international politics and least of all in arms-control matters, which normally develop with agonizing slowness. In regard to Korea, there are some common interests among the parties involved in reducing tension, but the burden of a quarter of a century of domestic and international conflict and confrontation is not easily shed. The negotiating plan presented here is designed to probe the intentions of the parties involved and to remove obstacles to the arms-control process in Korea." [page 9]

*This report was released to the Nautilus Institute under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).*

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