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American Nuclear Hegemony in Korea

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The author draws on Cox and Schurmanns' differing conceptions of hegemony to analyze the exercise of American nuclear power in the Pacific. American hegemony was nuclear because strategic weapons were integral to alliance ideology, institutional integration, and force structures. In many ways, nuclear weapons became the military principle around which regional security alliances were organized, just as capitalist production was the essence of economic hegemony. By the same token, he argues that allied elite consent is the key characteristic of a system of hegemonic nuclear alliances. While the South Korean military is increasingly integrated with American nuclear strategy, the South Korean state has not publicly legitimated the strategy. To minimize public opposition, the South Korean and American military have kept secret details of American nuclear forces in Korea. The United States especially values nuclear weapons in Korea for the message they send to the Japanese security elite, itself unable to overcome public opposition to ground-based nuclear weapons in Japan. Across the Pacific as well as in Korea, the hegemonic alliance ideology of nuclear deterrence is increasingly contradicted by the American strategy of nuclear war-fighting. As a result, American nuclear hegemony in the Pacific is vulnerable to counter-hegemonic challenges. In the short term, however, Korea is arguably the only place where an irreparable fracture could emerge in the American system of regional nuclear hegemony.

1. Introduction: On Hegemony

The intellectual problem posed by the international politics of the nuclear era is not balance-of-power politics, but nuclear bloc politics. As Edward Thompson puts it, 'nuclear weapons are the supreme weapons of sustained, external confrontation between power blocs, but are useless for exploitation within the blocs' (Thompson 1982, p. 24). Nuclear weapons only keep the two blocs from leaping at each other's throat.

In such a world, what may be called nuclear politics continues in two ways. One realm is the politics of managing conflicts between the two blocs to avoid nuclear war and to regulate the nuclear arms race. The other is how nuclear weapons structure each bloc—the subject of this paper.

On the latter, there may not be much to say in the case of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has thousands of nuclear weapons. It only recently stationed them on the territory of its allies, although its effort to do so in 1962 ended in the Cuban Missile Crisis. It does not share the slightest control over its nuclear weapons or strategy with its allies. As Soviet alliances are based on military intimidation and occupation, its allies rarely demur at Soviet policies. Until the INF debate, there was little evidence that the Soviet Union paid much attention to its

allies' views on its nuclear strategy. In short, there are no nuclear intra-*bloc* politics on the Soviet side, just the Soviet politics of its nuclear strategy.

The American side, however, is very different. American nuclear weapons have motivated and structured bloc politics in Europe and Asia since the start of the nuclear era. The United States has shared nuclear weapons with its allies to varying degrees. It has accommodated and co-opted the British and French independent nuclear forces, as they were barely credible without American guarantee, implicit or not. The United States has institutionalized and legitimated its own nuclear strategy in alliance relations, while preserving its overwhelming dominance in nuclear affairs. In short, it has pursued a distinctly *hegemonic* nuclear politics within its own bloc.

1.1 Political-Economic Hegemony

For Robert Cox, hegemony means the exercise of power by a state in which cooperation of less powerful states is gained by rewarding their consent rather than coercing compliance by the threat or application of punishment (Cox 1984, 1987). States Cox:

[A] hegemonic order is one in which power takes a primarily consensual form, as distinguished from a non-hegemonic order in which there are manifestly

rival powers and no power has been able to establish the legitimacy of its dominance. There can be dominance without hegemony; [hegemony] is one possible form dominance takes (Cox 1982, p. 153).

This definition does not suggest that power relations are symmetrical, or that power is not being exerted. But coercion, argues Cox, is latent. Physical force or unpleasant sanctions in an international hegemonic system are applied only against deviant states which refuse to accommodate the hegemon's practices.

In this view, hegemonic world orders are not reducible to interstate relations. Instead, they are the result of a coherent fit in an expansive state of great-power capabilities, a universalistic ideology, and institutions which encompass civil society as well as state power. The rise and fall of such combinations of power, ideology, and institutions is said to be determined by the emergence of new social forces, in turn engendered by evolving social relations of production (Cox 1984, p. 141). For this reason, this type of hegemony can be called *political-economic.*

The acme of hegemonic institutionalization is said to be found in the political and economic dimensions of international life. The hegemonic state fosters the creation and expansion of international civil society beyond the control of any particular state, connecting particular sectors of the political and socio-economic classes across national boundaries and loyalties (Cox 1984, p. 171). International institutions are initiated, usually by the hegemonic power, which express universal values, issue policy guidelines, facilitate multilateral consultations, minimize disruptions from international interdependence, and harmonize national behavior consistent with the dominant, that is, hegemonic, values and norms.

The theory suggests that causation between the levels of production, state power, and world order is reciprocal. Particular world orders and types of states can stimulate or block the emergence of new social forces (Cox 1984, p. 138). *Pax Americana*, a system of rigid American security alliances, is said to have provided the stability required for the unfolding of American global hegemony anchored in capitalist

accumulation (ibid.). In this conception, hegemony is defined as essentially capitalist. There is nothing in the concept, however, which requires that hegemony be capitalist — witness the Chinese empire in its heyday or the mature Roman Empire.

This theory suggests, however, that the security aspect of hegemonic power is relatively undeveloped in comparison with the ideology, institutions and scope of political-economic hegemony. There are no equivalents of IMF or GATT in the security sphere, only regional coalitions with little ability to override national security policies except by war. The UN Security Council and UN peacekeeping forces have not served a hegemonic function since the creation of the UN Command in Korea. Moreover, the security sphere is largely ignored in the theory of political-economic hegemony which treats security issues as epiphenomenal or merely derivative of political-economic hegemony. In that view, nuclear weapons are silent sentinels guarding the burgeoning capitalist political economy, while trade and investment are glue, binding the allies in their daily transactions.

1.2 Political-Military Hegemony

For Franz Schurmann, on the other hand, hegemony means the fairly direct political and military rule by one state over many aspects of the internal and important aspects of the external policies of other states, while eschewing colonial annexation of independent social formations (Schurmann 1974, 1987). In this conception, hegemony means the arrogation by one powerful state of significant elements of national sovereignty, especially in the security sphere, from a system of less powerful states. American hegemonists reigned supreme from 1945 until they collided with the Vietnamese Revolution. Since about 1968, argues Schurmann, the United States has ridden a roller coaster of transition from being the world's greatest hegemonic power to becoming merely central at a global level in an increasingly multipolar world.

In Schurmann's theory, strategic nuclear weapons are portrayed as a distinct source

of hegemonic power which is irreducible to the political-economic bases of hegemony. Nuclear weapons, argues Schurmann, were perfect instruments for the consolidation of American political-military hegemony:

> Nuclear policy was the weapon with which America built its empire, for no other policy so clearly stated America's global intentions with ramifications for everything else. Nuclear policy was pure policy in that its operational consequences were nil or limited to building and deploying nuclear weapons, which, of course, could not be used. The operational consequences came in other areas — military, political, economic, and even cultural (Schurmann 1974, p. 113).

In this theory, nuclear weapons do not merely serve political-economic hegemony. As a mode of warfare, the ideology, institutions, and capabilities of a political-military hegemony built around nuclear weapons do not simply reflect the mode of production nor respond to the imperatives of the political-economic hegemony. Although the nuclear 'military-industrial' complex is a small slice of the economy compared with the foundations of political-economic hegemony, this complex dominates crucial scientific and technology sectors, endowing it with disproportionate influence over state policies which affect it. State organs control most of the technical information on nuclear weapons and strategy necessary to produce and use nuclear weapons — or to oppose them effectively. This state monopoly ensures that nuclear weapons do not become market commodities, part of the private political economy (Kaldor 1982, p. 262). It also preserves the ideological and power bases of American nuclear hegemony by avoiding horizontal nuclear proliferation.

That an expansive state in possession of strategic nuclear weapons may use them to create a hegemonic political-military system does not imply that control of nuclear weapons necessarily generates hegemony. The existence of nuclear-armed states which do not sustain hegemonic international orders (such as China) or with unfulfilled hegemonic aspirations (such as France) refutes this notion. Conversely, however, the acquisition of preponderant political-economic power is a necessary but insuf-ficient basis for a state to accrue hegemonic power — witness Japan.

1.3 *Nuclear Hegemony*

In short, Cox is concerned primarily with the economic dimensions of hegemony, although he mentions the security system in passing. Schurmann places more emphasis on the strategic nuclear and military side of hegemony in his analysis of American hegemony in post-war great-power politics, although he has recently placed greater weight on the economic aspect of American global centrality. Schurmann tends to assume that the United States holds sway within its bloc as it plays the great-power game, and stresses the centrality of revolutionary challenges to state policy-making. In contrast, Cox emphasizes the consensual nature of hegemonic bloc politics, stressing that hegemonic power could not exist without the consent of and concessions to the subordinate groups in the domestic or international social system.

In this article, I draw on these complementary elements of Cox and Schurmann's differing conceptions of hegemony to analyze the exercise of American nuclear-military power in the Pacific. Until 1950, American military power in the Pacific was virtually absolute and non-hegemonic in form. American military hegemony was transformed into *nuclear* hegemony because nuclear weapons rapidly determined how allied elites in the Pacific perceived American military power. In many distinct ways, nuclear weapons were the military principle around which American bilateral security alliances were organized in the Pacific, just as capitalist production and international free trade were the hallmarks of American post-war economic hegemony.

By the same token, I argue that American nuclear alliances were *hegemonic* because obtaining allied elite consent to American military strategy was central to John Foster Dulles' successful formation of nuclear alliances in the Pacific. I therefore coin the shorthand term *nuclear hegemony* to denote *an international political-military system in which nuclear weapons and strategy play a*

central role in the military power, institutions, and ideologies which underlie that order.

In the rest of this essay, I will explore the applicability of Cox's constitutive concepts — hegemonic ideology, institutions, and power capabilities — to American nuclear alliance with South Korea. At the same time, I will assess the validity of Schurmann's fundamental insight into the role played by nuclear weapons in contemporary international relations.

In the US Pacific Command — the regional unified military command which covers the whole of Asia–Pacific, including the Indian Ocean — nuclear hegemony is the central core of a broader nuclear *sphere of influence*. In this sphere, American influence is more diffuse and less visible. The United States may have informal security commitments or none at all with these friendly or neutralist but nonetheless aligned states. The boundaries of the sphere are demarcated by such activities as military aid and nuclear warship visits (see Kurth 1986, p. 442; Keal 1983, pp. 15–33; Kaufman 1976, pp. 10–11). Maintaining a sphere of influence may require the Navy to conduct 'psychological operations' to ensure American strategic access to naval facilities, and strategic denial of access to potentially hostile powers (US Department of the Navy 1978, p. 23–1).

This article does not examine nuclear coercive diplomacy in the entire American sphere of influence in the Pacific. Instead, the analysis is limited to the exercise of hegemonic nuclear-military power in one of the most important American Pacific allies, South Korea. For reasons of space, reference to the other allies in the hegemonic core is parenthetical.

2. American Lake

In an earlier work, my co-authors and I suggested that the Pacific has long been and remains an 'American Lake' — the US Navy's revealing term for the region (Hayes, Zarsky & Bello 1987). Once the United States defeated Japan, it was absolutely dominant rather than hegemonic in the Pacific for the rest of the 1940s. The United States dropped Big Boy and Fat Man on Japan without consulting its allies. It occupied Japan and southern Korea, and ruled by military decree. It tested scores of nuclear weapons on Pacific atolls, evicting and irradiating hapless islanders. Indicative of this atmosphere, in the midst of the Korean War, the 7th Fleet historian wrote that the American military 'so completely dominate[s] the Pacific Ocean that ships of our nation and our allies are able to use the Pacific sea lanes without restriction. We are free to pursue any selected course of action throughout the Pacific, or in particular in the Far East' (Commander US Seventh Fleet 1952, p. 8).

During the Korean War, the United States reached for nuclear weapons for the first time since August 9th, 1945. The nuclear arsenal, however, barely existed at this time (Borowski 1982). Moreover, the US military quickly discovered in Korea the difficulty of organizing the delivery of nuclear weapons with conventional military organization (Rumbaugh 1951). It was this inability as much as the restraining influence of the allies which stayed Eisenhower's trigger finger at the end of the Korean War.

Truman and Eisenhower's nuclear threats over Korea established a long-standing pattern. While the United States did not use nuclear weapons in Korea, the American national security elite believed that nuclear threats had pushed the Chinese and the North Koreans to settle at Panmunjon. They drew the fundamental historical lesson from the Korean War that nuclear threats could be used to deter or compel behavior by adversaries, even though nuclear weapons were virtually unusable on the battlefield. The sacking of General Douglas MacArthur — who favored dropping nuclear bombs on North Korea and China — established a tacit understanding between the United States and its allies: nuclear threats could be used to contain communist expansion. But nuclear weapons would not be used to 'roll-back' socialist states (Foot 1985, pp. 205–246). This understanding became the basis of the ideological consensus at the center of hegemonic nuclear alliances which became known as 'extended deterrence'. At this stage, of course, the South Korean regime was barely more than an American creation

and was not party to these concerns. In any case, nuclear weapons were not deployed in Korea and the 'heat' in the Cold War quickly moved south from Korea. Nuclear weapons in Asia remained a completely unilateral American activity under the firm control of Far East Command headquartered in Tokyo. As far as is known, at this time the Commander of United Nations Command in Korea played no role in nuclear affairs. Nuclear hegemony therefore began in the Pacific primarily as a weak unilateral military force without doctrinal basis and totally lacking in institutional integration with the allies.

2.1 Nuclear Protectorates

The Korean War inspired and enabled the American Secretary of State to jury-rig a system of bilateral alliances in the Pacific. These alliances radiated out from Hawaii like spokes which ended at US military bases on host nations such as Japan or client states such as Taiwan. Created to implement the policy of Massive Retaliation — the substitution of naval and air-delivered nuclear threat for non-nuclear force, especially ground troops — the Pacific alliances rested on nuclear foundations from their inception (Osgood 1968, p. 77; Dissette 1960, p. 26). The Korean War also militarized American foreign policy in the Pacific. Great emphasis was placed on expanding and institutionalizing military power, resulting in the creation of Pacific Command, the United States' first regional unified military command in the Pacific region (Walker 1975, pp. 905–908).

The United States entertained using nuclear weapons in Asia under the Massive Retaliation philosophy on at least four occasions: during the Korean War; at Dien Bien Phu, 1954; in 1955 in the first Taiwan Straits crisis; and again in 1958, during the second Taiwan Straits crisis. The United States may have come closer to actually using nuclear weapons in this latter crisis than it did four years later in the Cuban Missile Crisis (Hayes, Zarsky & Bello 1987, pp. 49–62).

The alliances struck in 1951–52 enabled the United States to implement this doctrine. By committing itself to immediate first-use on the containment line thousands of miles from US territory, the United States had virtually conflated American and allied security, creating an American security bloc. Yet almost no institutional integration existed in the Pacific security alliances to transmit nuclear ideology to allied elites or to allow nuclear forces to expand without creating political problems. At this stage, therefore, the regional alliances were still more like an American-controlled nuclear protectorate than an American-led hegemonic security system.

2.2 Bases of Power

The Pacific Command base system was constructed when the US military occupied hundreds of sites in World War II. After a short period of consolidation and contraction, the Korean War initiated a new phase of base expansion, peaking in the mid-1960s (Hagerty 1977, p. 8).

Forward bases were so important to American nuclear strategy that some American defense analysts viewed them as the 'invariable components' of US security arrangements (Greene 1968, p. 169). Forward bases were a particularly flexible yet enduring instrument of power projection, even more so than security accords which, like politicians, come and go. Most importantly, the bases coupled American allies with military power, reassuring local pro-US elites in the Pacific that the United States was committed to remaining a Pacific power (US Senate 1979, p. 9; Paul 1973, pp. 48–49, 120–121).

At this time the United States needed forward bases to implement its nuclear strategy of massive retaliation due to the predominance of bombers in the nuclear force which depended on forward air bases in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines for refuelling, and from which interceptors would interdict Soviet bombers attacking American Pacific allies or the United States itself.

Anti-communist ideology sufficed to secure the legitimacy of the Massive Retaliation doctrine and nuclear bases in the Pacific. Allied elites did not concern themselves with doctrinal matters, preferring to

regard them as an American prerogative and responsibility. Whereas European elites sought explicit expressions of the US nuclear commitment in the form of ground nuclear deployments in Europe, Asian elites remained ambivalent about nuclear deployments, especially in Japan. Nonetheless, compared to the events which followed the end of the fifties, the decade was the Golden Age of American nuclear strategy in Asia, a time when local elites concurred uncritically with American nuclear strategy. Local popular movements lacked the information or political power to successfully challenge the strategy.

Yet even then, there were limits to how far the allies were willing to go. Pacific allies were concerned that they not be implicated openly in the use of nuclear weapons against China or the Soviet Union. The United States, for example, had to shift nuclear bombers out of Japan during the 1958 Taiwan Straits crisis to avoid alarming the Japanese elite. Japan also objected to its ports being used to support US Seventh Fleet operations in the Taiwan Straits during the crisis, as the official history reveals:

> Japan wants no active part in OSI [Offshore Islands] crisis, and is concerned about U.S. Navy ships using her ports for damage repair (Commander US Seventh Fleet 1959, p. 6).

Nonetheless, the United States would have likely ignored allied objections to use of forward bases at this time if push-had-come-to-shove with the Soviets. As Rand strategist Albert Wohlstetter argued in his influential 1954 study of overseas air bases:

> [I]n the case of hostilities, the possibility is not excluded that we may take control by a show of force. We did this in the case of Iceland in the last war. And, in another war, it is plain that several areas now scheduled for use by our bombers will be candidates for such control — at the very least to insure [sic] that they shall not be used to refuel enemy bombers (Wohlstetter 1954, p. 39).

In short, American nuclear might was held to be more important than American leadership. In a real crisis, American interest would have become imperative and American power would have overruled the limits of nuclear hegemony.

3. *Inflexible Response in Korea*

The United States introduced ground-based nuclear weapons to bases in Korea in January 1958, although they were not introduced in response to any specific event in Korea or even in Asia. Rather, these deployments were part of a world-wide reorganization that year of Army units into nuclear war-fighting groups called Pentomic Divisions (Interview 1; Bacevich 1986).

In the 1960s, the United States was especially concerned about the disruptive effects of the Chinese bomb on American alliances in Asia. American strategists worried especially about the Chinese nuclear threat in Korea at this time — one of the places where it was conceivable that the United States and China could come into direct military confrontation.

Guarded by American troops, the nuclear weapons in Korea were kept near the DMZ and at Osan Air Base south of Seoul. Tactical nuclear weapons such as Nike-Hercules air defense missiles virtually required early first use to avoid capture by North Koreans of weapons or engineers. In effect, elements of Massive Retaliation doctrine were retained indefinitely in Korea, long after Kennedy and McNamara had abandoned the ideology in Europe. Thus the United States stuck with Inflexible Response in Korea even as NATO adopted Flexible Response as official doctrine in 1969.

Throughout this period (1958–78), American forces in Korea had not only unilateral control over American nuclear weapons and strategy in Korea, but they also had operational control over the bulk of South Korean military fighting forces. The 1961 and 1979–80 military coups interrupted and narrowed this American control. Nonetheless, in nuclear affairs and mundane military planning, the American military retained effective supremacy until 1978. In that year, a bilateral Combined Forces Command was created, accountable to a joint United States–South Korean policy committee. The Command, however, did not impart any control over American nuclear strategy to the South Koreans. Nor was any doctrine or nuclear ideology enunciated specific to Korean circumstances. New nuclear

weapons were introduced, but were not reflected in nuclear ideology or institutional adjustments. Nuclear hegemony in Korea, therefore, rested completely on the desire of the South Korean military to maximize the American nuclear threat projection north of the DMZ, without regard to South Korean participation or control in nuclear command or strategic direction.

3.1 *Nuclear Hegemony in Korea*

Although it has not been politically influential in the formulation of nuclear strategy or deployment of nuclear weapons in Korea, the South Korean military — unlike its counterparts in the rest of the American sphere of influence — has been integrated for a long time into American nuclear forces and strategy. It has participated in defensive and offensive nuclear war exercises. Since at least 1968, the United States has provided it with sanitized versions of the American *Standard Operating Procedures* for nuclear war in Korea. It has also practiced nuclear communications using dummy codes. The American military regards such participation as necessary to convince the South Koreans that the United States still extends nuclear deterrence to the South, and to convince the North Koreans that American nuclear threats are credible.

Given the lack of nuclear doctrinal development for Korea and the weak institutional foundations of the nuclear strategy in the American–South Korean alliance, the main pillar supporting extended deterrence has been American nuclear forces in the Korean Peninsula. Little information exists in public print about the deployment or the organization of American nuclear forces in South Korea. In its telephone book, however, the Eighth US Army lists a *Plans and Operations Nuclear Division* in South Korea. The *Division* has three branches which cover nuclear plans and operations, control of the weapons, and emergency disposal (Headquarters First Signal Brigade 1985). According to the *Organization and Functions Manual* of US Forces Korea, the *Division* 'analyzes nuclear targets,' 'performs nuclear fireplanning,' and 'prepares nuclear con-

tingency plans' (US Forces Korea 1986, pp. 5–27).

Being under American operational control all the time — unlike the NATO allies — the South Korean military had little alternative but to consent to these activities. Nonetheless, the South Korean military was loath to remain subordinate forever. In 1968, it began to participate in the American command structure for the first time. The same year, it began to acquire nuclear power technology which soon proved useful for a South Korean bomb program. Not long after President Nixon's Guam speech and his overtures to the Soviet Union and China — the allies of South Korea's northern arch-enemy — the military clamped down on democratic dissent.

Sometime in the early 1970s, the South Koreans reportedly requested — and the United States rejected — a bigger role in nuclear war-planning in Korea. This request might have tipped off American intelligence that the South Korean military was restive. It was not until 1974 (after the Indian explosion) that they realized that the South Koreans were seeking equipment for their own bomb. It later emerged in the Koreagate scandal that this process had begun in 1971 (Spector 1984, pp. 20–21, 340–341).

However, the United States could not allow a client state such as South Korea to leapfrog past Japan to nuclear great-power status and undermine the global non-proliferation regime, a buttress of American nuclear hegemony. In 1975, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger ended the South Korean bomb program by threatening the security alliance which kept American troops and nuclear weapons in Korea. The South Korean gambit had failed. They were just as uninformed about American nuclear strategy in 1976 as they had been in 1968. Nonetheless, the fact that they tried shows that the most senior figures in the South Korean military had lost faith in American nuclear commitments — the pillar supporting American nuclear hegemony. In the years to follow, the United States only partly restored the South Korean military's faith in the credibility of the American nuclear umbrella.

3.2 *Hot War in Asia*

In the 1960s, the military situation in Indochina and Korea was heating up rather than cooling down. Service rivalry had generated a nuclear triad of submarine/naval, bomber, and long-range missile forces. In the mid-1960s, the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction was grafted onto the doctrinal legacy of Inflexible Response for theater nuclear war in Asia. In 1964, the first Polaris submarines entered the Pacific. Intermediate-range cruise missiles stationed in Taiwan and Okinawa were removed by 1969. The Polaris submarines freed up the two aircraft carriers which until then had been stationed off the Soviet Far East loaded with nuclear weapons. The surface fleet became preoccupied with bombing Indochina from Yankee Station in the South China Sea. Further west, the Seventh Fleet linked the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets through the Indian Ocean, creating a global American Navy for the first time.

Nuclear weapons never really affected how the United States fought the Indochina War — except to ensure that Chinese and Soviet forces did not directly enter the war; and to stop American forces from violating Vietnamese airfield and logistical supply sanctuaries in China. One of the few major studies done on the issue for the Pentagon concluded that introducing American nuclear weapons would work to their adversary's advantage (Dyson 1967). The United States could hardly fire nuclear weapons at guerrillas spread out in jungles and swimming in the sea of the Vietnamese people. American bases in Southeast Asia, on the other hand, were concentrated sites of personnel and materiel which would have been vulnerable to nuclear retaliation by China or the Soviet Union (Interview 2). Consequently, American allies fighting in Vietnam never had to address nuclear policies to participate in American strategy.

3.3 *Nuclear Crutch*

As the Vietnam war wound down, the United States leaned heavily on its nuclear crutch to shore up its dwindling conventional firepower in Pacific alliances. American strategists also worried that American tac-

tical nuclear doctrine and operational concepts for limited nuclear war in Asia inadequately matched political objectives with forces and operations. The new emphasis on nuclear war-fighting introduced by James Schlesinger in 1974 was transposed to Korea in 1975 when US Forces Korea began to plan for 'Regional Nuclear Options' (US Forces Korea/Eighth US Army 1976, p. iii).

Jimmy Carter ran for President by tapping post-Vietnam, populist 'Never Again' sentiment. Thus, it was domestic politics rather than technological innovation or a doctrinal shift arising out of developments in Korea which prompted him to announce in 1977 that the 2nd Infantry Division would begin withdrawal from South Korea in 1978 — a move which would have pulled out most if not all of the nuclear weapons.

By 1978, however, Carter's policy had collided with a brick wall of bureaucratic resistance from the Army, alarmed at the prospect of losing its last domain in the Pacific, and the State Department, appalled at the impact of the withdrawal on relations with Japan, China, and South Korea. When it became clear that Congress would not allow the troops to be withdrawn without a major showdown in Washington, Carter killed in the policy in a move carefully orchestrated by the State Department. Carter appointees in the Pentagon then tried to ensure that the nuclear stockpile would be further reduced to only a few token weapons, de-linking the issue from the troop presence (Interview 3). 'We concluded that South Korea was a nice place and all that', said one American policymaker later, 'but the stakes were just not worth risks like those we were taking in Europe' (Interview 4). The nuclear weapons stayed, however, as it would have been impossible to disguise a fake stockpile for long.

When Reagan hardliners vaulted into the saddle in 1980, they reportedly boosted the nuclear stockpile again. With the power component restored, they did not find it difficult to reinvigorate the ideology of extended nuclear deterrence in South Korea. In fact, ever since 1975 the United States had constantly reiterated the rhetoric of first use and nuclear deterrence in Korea. Under

Reagan, the US military also deployed a new nuclear weapon to Korea, when a battery of Lance missiles was installed in February 1987. It also conducted exercises designed to send a message about nuclear war as much to Seoul as to Pyongyang (see Hayes 1987).

As important, since 1978 the South Korean military has participated in nuclear targeting and intelligence activities in the Combined Forces Command. While the new Command did not give the South Koreans any *control* over nuclear forces nor any say in nuclear war-planning, it did upgrade their role in nuclear operations in ways which substantially expanded the institutional basis for South Korean participation in implementing the nuclear strategy.

In many ways, the South Koreans are as integrated into American nuclear strategy as are the Dutch in NATO. The American *Weapons Support Detachment-Korea*, for example, would use South Korean artillery tubes to fire nuclear shells at North Korea. But unlike the Dutch, Korea has virtually no official information about nuclear war-plans or stockpiles in Korea. Without Congress approving a 1958-style Program of Cooperation, the American military cannot legally transfer such information to the South Korean Government. Nor can the South Koreans legally fire nuclear weapons from their delivery systems, unlike some of the NATO allies.

The South Korean military may view such integration as *de facto* consultations. It cannot expect that an uninhibited nuclear debate will secure broad public support for the nuclear strategy, especially as many thousands of first, second, and third generation Korean victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings reside in South Korea. In South Korea, therefore, nuclear hegemony has been achieved only minimally in terms of elite consensus and partial institutional integration at the military level. Public legitimation, however, remains almost non-existent. Indeed, it is taboo to talk in public about military matters in Korea under national security laws, even when international newspapers covering the topic are available in downtown Seoul.

Even in South Korea, however, the taboo has been transgressed. After the American military brazenly adopted a nuclear warfighting stance in Korea in the early 1980s, South Korean religious figures began to openly criticize nuclear weapons in Korea. In September 1987, a group of citizen organizations wrote an open letter to the South Korean military asking embarrassing questions about the taboo topic. 'How many nuclear weapons are in Korea?' they asked. 'Don't nuclear weapons in Korea increase the risk of nuclear war which thousands of Koreans have already seen at Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Isn't control wholly in the hands of the Americans?'

That the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff felt obliged to send a lame reply testifies to the ideological potency of this issue in Korea. Anti-nuclearism and anti-Americanism are now twin themes of popular opposition movements in South Korea.

4. Japanese–Korean Nuclear Nexus

South Korea's integration into American nuclear forces is still limited, and the ideological aspect of nuclear hegemony is restricted to a very thin elite strata. Moreover, the United States has been unable to create a multilateral institutional framework around the iron triangle of American, South Korean, and Japanese military power in Northeast Asia. The slightest hint of Japanese military dominance over South Korea evokes immediate antipathy from right- and left-wing circles in Korea. South Korean demands for multi-billion dollar concessional loans in return for Japan's free ride on South Korea's frontline are regarded in Tokyo as those of an upstart dragon. Apart from minor intelligence-sharing, a few warship visits, and some personnel exchanges, South Korean–Japanese military integration remains virtually non-existent (Ahn 1983, pp. 138–148; Park 1985, US Army War College 1985).

4.1 De Facto Integration

The United States has mediated in this conflict, and encouraged Japanese accommodation of South Korean demands. More

importantly, in the early 1980s the United States pushed for an overt security linkage between Japan and South Korea. When this proved politically impossible, the United States reconciled itself to achieving *de facto* integration. The US Pacific Air Force already manages the defense of Northeast Asian airspace as an integrated entity. Similarly, military communications systems in Northeast Asia are run as a regional system, with a backbone running from Japan up the Korean Peninsula and are managed on a regional basis (US Defense Communications Agency 1985, p. 1).

To this end, the American military places a high priority on achieving *interoperability* (or compatibility of equipment and procedures) of US and allied military communications (Shamla 1983; BDM Corporation 1982). Full integration of United States–Japan–South Korean military communications systems remains distant, however, not least because the Japanese military services find it difficult to agree on common standards with each other, let alone with the Americans. Nonetheless, the Northeast Asian military communications system shows that 'subterranean' regional integration of military systems can become quite advanced before the political implications are recognized.

In effect, American orchestrated military integration substitutes for political integration, avoiding the political–ideological headaches of collective security organizations. Admiral Thomas Hayward, head of the conservative think-tank Pacific Forum in Hawaii, underscored the point in 1983: '[O]ur investment strategy for military systems,' he said, 'must bridge the bilateral political realities and be based on interoperable, compatible C^3I [command/control, communications/intelligence] concepts that take on clear "coalition" images in every possible dimension' (Hayward 1984, p. 58).

That the United States has to respond to this imperative demonstrates how regional conflicts block the full institutionalization of American nuclear hegemony in the Pacific. For similar reasons, the United States has linked China and Japan in an informal secur-ity triangle. The United States–Japan axis is the common hypotenuse between this great-power triangle, and the informal security triangle between the United States, Japan, and South Korea. Such alignments cannot be mentioned in public, let alone institutionalized and legitimated.

Nuclear deployments in South Korea allow the United States to circumvent partly the problems of extending nuclear deterrence to Japan, which baulks at nuclear deployments. As a Pentagon study in 1974 pointed out, nuclear forces in South Korea 'are tangible evidence of the U.S. nuclear guarantee and as such have considerable political and psychological as well as military value' in Japan and Taiwan as well (Foster 1974, p. 21). In 1975, Richard Walker, later Reagan's Ambassador to South Korea, explained that:

> The presence of conventional and even tactical nuclear American forces in Korea helps to confirm strategic guarantees for Tokyo and to discourage any Japanese thoughts about a French solution: a *force de frappe* of their own. This is a fact well understood by leaders of many political persuasions in Tokyo and also appreciated in Peking (Walker 1975, p. 917)

5. Nuclear Pacific

Elsewhere in the Pacific, American power was absolute. The United States took little notice of the aspirations of island peoples for peaceful self-determination before it flung them aside to conduct sixty-six nuclear tests in the Pacific (Firth 1987, pp. 1–42). American bases in the Philippines were virtual American colonies on which the United States was free to deploy nuclear weapons as it saw fit. In these states, American nuclear power was not expressed in a hegemonic form, but appeared as naked nuclear absolutism.

Only in Australia and New Zealand, wedded to the United States by the ANZUS alliance since 1951, was the relationship purely hegemonic from the start. Immediately following the World War, both Antipodean states had split loyalties. New Zealanders hankered after the security of the British Empire for historical-cultural reasons. Australians, being closer to the 'yellow peril', were less sentimental about sever-

ing the British umbilical cord to solicit the Americans to stay in Asia. They were so fixated by fear of a 'Red Chinese' invasion that American nuclear strategy had an ideological free ride on the wave of pro-American sentiment that washed over Australia in the 1960s. American communications and intelligence bases built in Australia that decade were important elements of the global nuclear arsenal. A powerful peace movement in New Zealand was the reef on which this wave eventually broke, causing ideological consensus for nuclear alliance to break apart (see Clements' article for further details).

In general, the United States could afford to impose lesser domestic political costs on its Pacific allies than in NATO, because the Pacific is primarily a naval precinct for the United States military. Naval forces are inherently flexible and footloose, well suited to implementing unilateral strategies from international waters. There is, therefore, less military imperative to enforce nuclear discipline upon Pacific allies than in Europe, where an Army-dominated, ground-oriented coalition predominates in NATO politics and strategy.

Conversely, formulating and implementing American nuclear strategy in the Pacific is almost wholly an American affair. Not only that, but the United States' shift toward nuclear war-fighting implicates the Pacific allies whether they wish it or not. The growing American capability for nuclear war-fighting erodes the ideological foundations of American nuclear hegemony in the nations which host much of this hardware. It disrupts nuclear ideology and disturbs nuclear alliances even as it draws host nations closer to American nuclear strategy and war plans. With little role to play in the planning of nuclear forces, Pacific allies are confronted with new, improved nuclear forces much as the consumer is faced with new detergents in the supermarket: take them or leave the alliance.

Willingness to host communications and intelligence bases and visiting nuclear warships became the symbolic litmus test of allied support for American nuclear strategy. In effect, welcoming bases and warships was the minimum entry fee demanded by the United States for allied entrance into its nuclear hegemony.

Allied elites in the Pacific were thus permitted to sign on to American nuclear strategy in the 1960s by agreeing to host low profile, often secret nuclear support bases (Hayes, Zarsky & Bello 1987, pp. 434–447; Arkin & Fieldhouse 1985, pp. 214–245). These sites quickly became silent symbols of allied elite acquiescence in the American presence and nuclear strategy in the Pacific. The divergence between doctrine and alliance ideology has forced allied Governments such as Australia to actively defend the communications bases against allegations that they support nuclear war-fighting. As the allegations are incontrovertible, allied governments such as Australia have resorted to convoluted portrayals of war-fighting doctrine as reaffirming stable deterrence — when nothing could be further from the truth. While powerful subcurrents of opposition also hollowed out the foundations of nuclear ideology in Australia, to date the ideology remains intact in Australian official circles.

6. Cracked Consensus

Counter-hegemonic currents have flowed across the Pacific since the start of American nuclear hegemony. These currents have three wellsprings: (1) social and political reaction to the presence of American forces in host nations; (2) nationalist and revolutionary challenges to the hegemonic political-economy; and (3) emergence of anti-nuclear organizations which specifically foster opposition to nuclear hegemony at a regional level.

In the 1970s, these social forces coalesced into a loose coalition of local, national, and transnational networks known as the Nuclear Free and Independent Movement. Although drawing on very limited resources, these counter-currents have mustered enough support to limit the ability of allied and friendly elites to openly embrace nuclear hegemony. As CINCPAC Admiral Ronald Hays said in January 1988: 'The anti-nuclear elements so prevalent in the Pacific continue to be troublesome' (Hays 1988, p. 13).

6.1 *Friction and Corrosion*

The presence of forward bases, observed a US National War College lecturer in 1954, 'always compromises to some degree, the sovereignty of that [host] nation' (H. Eccles cited in Hagerty 1977, p. 14). Forward bases are bound to create political trouble for hegemonic powers. Eventually political-economic modernization generates social forces in the host nation capable of challenging the local elite which is allied to the United States.

By insulting nationalist sensibilities, the social impact of the bases has also undermined the legitimacy of nuclear hegemony. An archipelago of more than six hundred American bases remains scattered across Pacific Command. Struck by the extent of this system, one American anthropologist suggests calling the inhabitants of these military enclaves *Conians*. A *Conian*, he says, is someone who lives outside what the American military calls *CONUS*, that is, the continental United States (Randall 1986, p. 61).

Conian impact on local societies ranges from the virtual military takeover of the economy, as in Okinawa, to segregated enclaves of military-related 'service' industries like prostitution, as in the Philippines, Korea, and Thailand, to the catastrophic destruction of island societies, as in Bikini or Diego Garcia.

Furthermore, the overriding presence of the *Conians* is perceived to have thwarted democratic politics in states caught up in nuclear hegemony. American support polarized societies and kept pro-United States military dictators in power in Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand long after they might otherwise have fallen to democratic movements. American annexation of Micronesia as a 'strategic colony' has robbed the Pacific islanders of a chance at self-determination.

Fear of nuclear risks, resentment at the local social and political impacts of the bases, and the dominance of the American economy have generated widespread anti-American sentiment, in some cases giving rise to radical movements committed to overthrowing the *status quo*. The explosive combination of anti-nuclear sentiment with nationalism has not been limited to the core nations of the hegemonic system. Instead, a distinctively pan-Pacific movement with its own institutions and ideology has emerged. It holds tri-annual policy conferences on a regional level, and legitimates a host of decentralized and specialized oppositional campaigns.

The impact to date of these counter-hegemonic movements should not be overstated. The grit which they have thrown into CINCPAC's well-oiled machinery of nuclear war has worn down and even frozen a few moving parts — but none which would slow down, let alone stop, the motor.

State-centered support for counter-hegemonic values has been limited so far to a few tiny island states and New Zealand, which split from nuclear alliance over ideological differences with the United States. These small anti-nuclear states can lend legitimacy but little else to opponents of nuclear hegemony elsewhere in the Pacific.

It is unlikely that either Japan or China will adopt anti-nuclear policies which could form the basis for a powerful counter-hegemonic movement able to replace American nuclear hegemony. Breakthroughs are conceivable in only two places — the Philippines and South Korea. Although Philippines President Corazon Aquino swept into power evincing an anti-nuclear ideology hostile to nuclear hegemony, she has since accommodated the United States. Elite nationalist opponents opposed to the bases still control the Senate, but that institution is not a locus of significant power in the current political scene. If the insurgents take power, they could well adopt a radical neutralist foreign policy line precluding nuclear bases or alliances. But revolutionary success would be the outcome of a protracted war which would delay any challenge to American nuclear hegemony from this source. For the short-term, that leaves South Korea — also arguably the most dangerous place in the Pacific, the fuse on the Pacific powderkeg. It is conceivable that radical political change could occur swiftly and with little warning in South Korea. It currently seems unlikely that a populist-nationalist regime would displace the military-dominated state that has ruled

with an iron fist for nearly three decades. But in the summer of 1987, the students showed that anything is possible in Korea. Radical change in South Korea therefore should not be discounted. Such a change would represent a fracture in American nuclear hegemony in the Pacific which the United States could not easily repair.

7. Conclusion

Cox's three central concepts of nuclear ideology, institutional integration, and forces have proven useful in showing that nuclear weapons are indeed a distinct source of hegemonic influence in an important American security alliance. Schurmann's hypothesis as to the importance of nuclear weapons in contemporary security alliances is therefore confirmed.

If nuclear hegemony is a distinct form of strategic power in American alliances, it follows that nuclear alliance can be targeted independently of the political-economic bases of American hegemony. I have not extended the argument developed above to the political-economic basis of American hegemony in Korea. Nor does the analysis encompass the interaction of political-economic forces with nuclear-military dimensions of the alliance.

Nonetheless, the analysis suggests certain conclusions of political import. It implies that the primary popular struggle against nuclear hegemony in Asia–Pacific is necessarily to be waged in the arena of ideology. Given the centrality of brittle ideology in nuclear hegemony in the Pacific, challenges to the ideology of nuclear alliance can hamper or even disrupt nuclear hegemony without overcoming the political-economic *status quo*.

But for the same reasons that the nuclear form of military hegemony can only emerge concurrently with political-economic hegemony, nuclear hegemony probably cannot be dismantled without transforming the political-economic bases of allied elites committed to the nuclear *status quo*. Ultimately, the struggle against nuclear hegemony in the Pacific will move only as fast as the success — or as slowly as the failure — of challenges

to the prevailing political economy in host nations.

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