

Japan's security contribution vis-à-vis South Korea

Ju Hyung Kim (January 16, 2021)



Signing of the ROK-Japan normalization Treaty (top), an US F-102 stationed in Okinawa (below)

A photograph of three world leaders walking together at a summit. On the left is South Korean foreign minister Kang Kyung-wha, wearing a light blue blazer and black skirt. In the center is US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, wearing a dark suit and yellow tie, with his arms outstretched. On the right is Japanese foreign minister Taro Kono, wearing a dark suit and yellow tie. The background features a banner with the text 'THAILAND 2019' and 'ADVANCING PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT'.

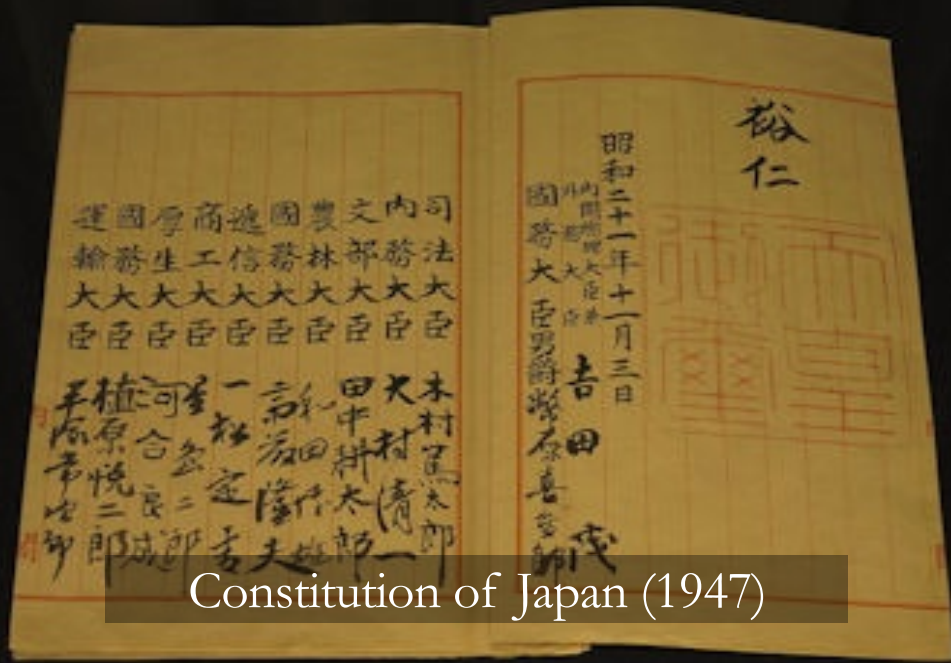
Déjà vu?

From left to right: South Korean foreign minister Kang Kyung-wha, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Japanese foreign minister Taro Kono

Key questions

- Throughout the analytical timeframe (1950 to 2020), what actually happened between South Korea and Japan, in terms of security cooperation?
- Is there a notable pattern concerning Japan's security contribution towards South Korea?
- Was Japan's contribution somewhat coerced by outside players (in particular the US), or voluntarily initiated and implemented by the Japanese authorities?
- Will the existing South Korea-Japan security connectivity be enhanced in the coming days ahead?

Structural settings: Japan



Constitution of Japan (1947)

- Jointly written by the government of occupied Japan and the American government the 1947 constitution of Japan was signed by emperor Hirohito.
- Article 9 (1) of the constitution stipulates as follows: “...the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the national and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.”
- Article 9 (2) of the constitution stipulates that “...land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”



Emperor Hirohito signs the Japanese constitution

Structural settings: Japan



September 8, 1951

- US-Japan Security Treaty was signed in the San Francisco Presidio on September 8, 1951.
- The Security Treaty, which was signed shortly after the signing of the Japanese Peace Treaty that would be the basis for ending the occupation of Japan, permitted American land, sea and air forces to remain in and around Japan indefinitely.



January 19, 1960

- The 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty was amended further in January 1960.
- In the 1960 version of the Treaty, articles that delineate mutual defense obligations and the US obligations to inform Japan before US forces mobilized were included to alleviate unequal status suggested in the 1951 version.

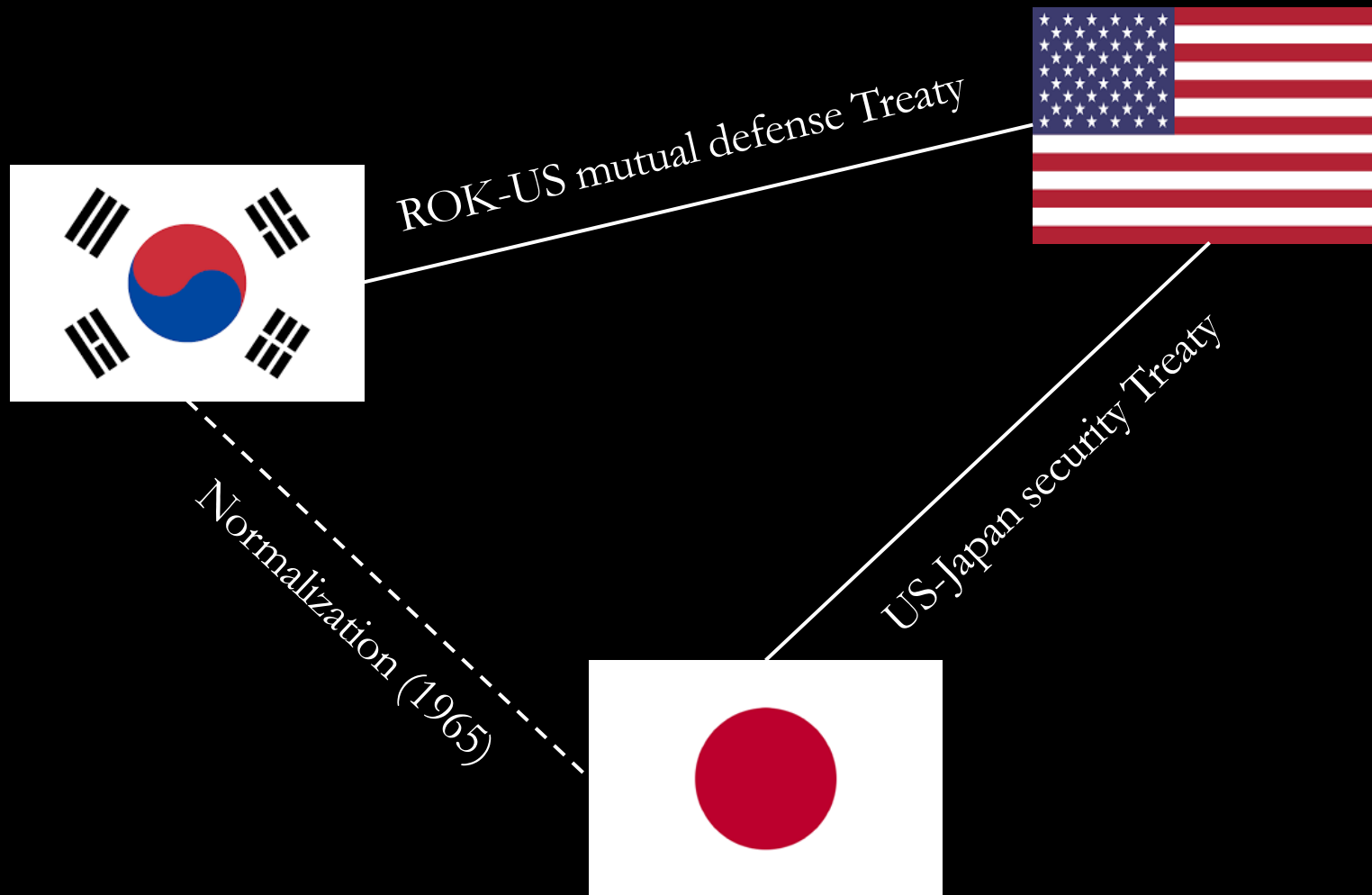
Structural settings: South Korea



Initial signature, August 8, 1953

- In October 1953, Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea was signed by the two sides.
- Article III of the mutual Security Treaty stipulates that “the Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.”

Connectivity among/between the tripartite



Perennial issues

Korea under Japanese occupation (1910 to 1945)



Comfort women



Dokdo/Takeshima



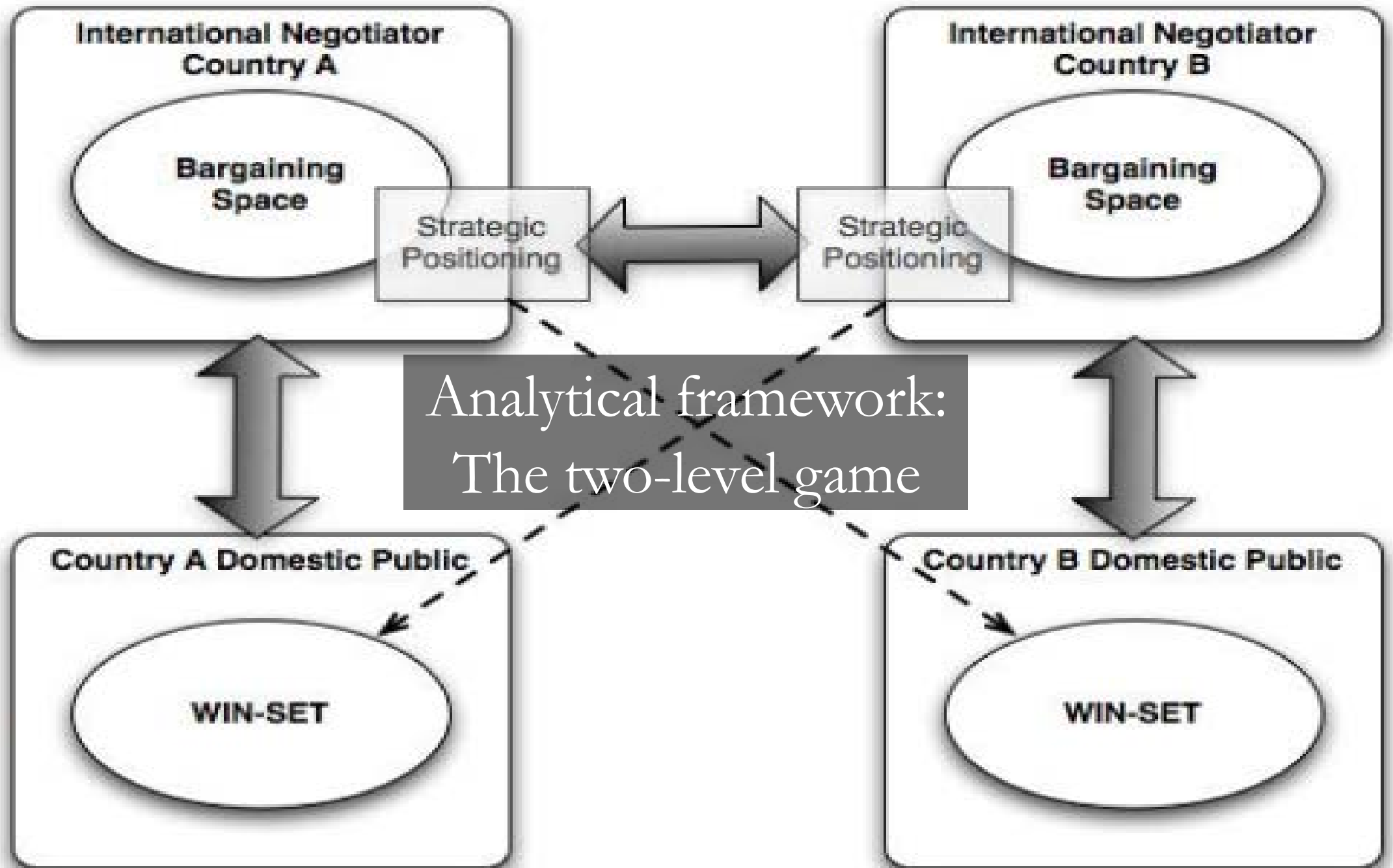
Japanese textbook



Yasukuni shrine



Level 1

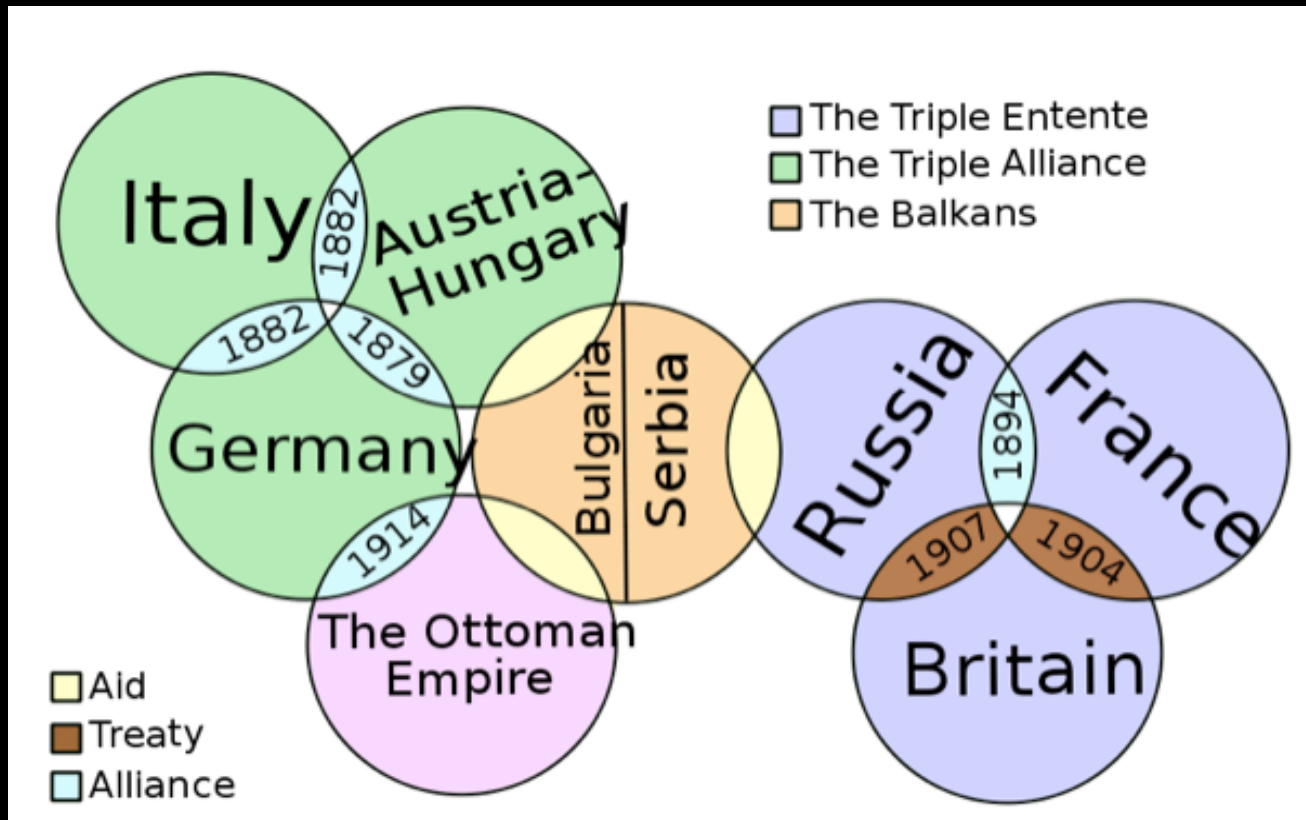


Level 2

Analytical framework:

Fear of entrapment and abandonment concerning alliance management

Notable example: International relations before WWI



Source: Vern Cleary & Stephen Pinkerton

Application via notable events

The Korean War



Construction of the
Pohang Steel mill



1980s Korea-Japan security
economic cooperation




Post WWII era: Japan and South Korea

A black and white photograph showing the signing of Japan's surrender. A man in a dark suit is seated at a long table, signing documents. Several other men in suits stand around the table, and a large crowd of people is visible in the background.

Signing of Japan's surrender
(September 1945)

A black and white photograph showing a large crowd of people celebrating the liberation of Korea. Many people are raising their arms in the air, and the scene is filled with a sense of joy and triumph.

Liberation of Korea
(August 1945)

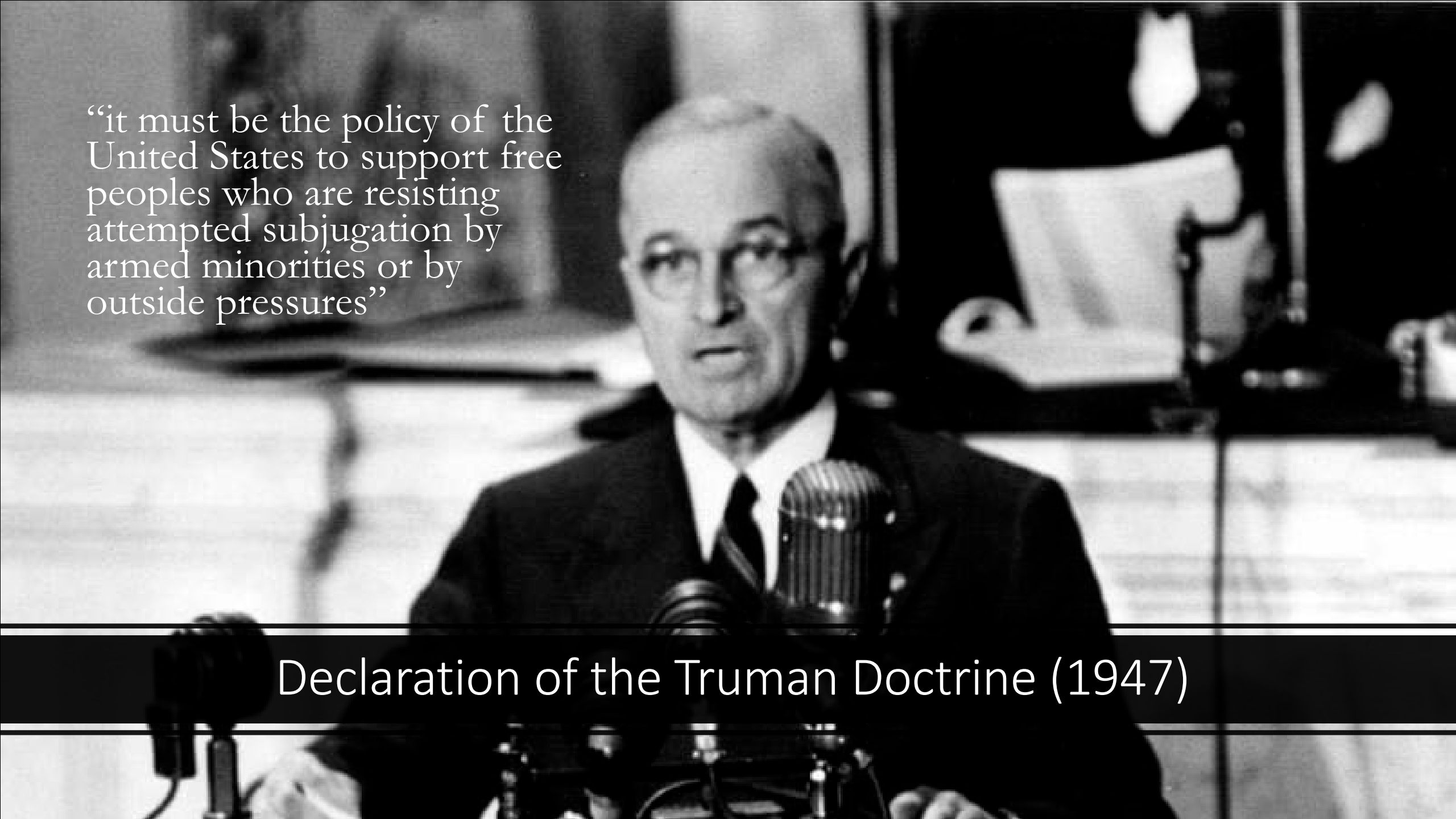
A black and white photograph of the General Headquarters (G.H.Q.) building in Tokyo. The building is a large, multi-story structure with many windows and a prominent flagpole on the roof. The caption indicates it was also used as SCAP headquarters.

General Headquarters, Tokyo
(or SCAP headquarters)

G. H. Q. Building at Tokyo

A color photograph showing the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) government. A large crowd of people is gathered in front of a building, and a large South Korean flag is prominently displayed. A banner with Korean text is visible across the top of the image.

Establishment of the ROK government
(August 1948)

A black and white photograph of George Marshall, an older man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is standing at a podium, speaking into several microphones. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be a window or a large screen.

“it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures”

Declaration of the Truman Doctrine (1947)

A black and white photograph showing soldiers in a battlefield. In the foreground, a soldier is seen from the back, carrying a large backpack. To the right, another soldier is aiming a rifle. In the background, there is a large plume of smoke rising from a hillside, and a tank is visible in the distance. The text "The Korean War broke out (June 1950)" is overlaid in the center.

The Korean War broke out (June 1950)

Japan's role and the Korean War

Repair and resupply function



Mine sweeping operation



Supplying men and weapons to Korea



Military advisory role



Enabling US bases in Japan



Providing hospital to the wounded



Assessment of Japan's role during the Korean War

General Douglas MacArthur



“...without thousands of Japanese specialist who knew Korea well, Korean War would not be fought.”

General Matthew Ridgway



“...the Korean War would not have lasted three months had Japan's vehicle repair and maintenance services weren't provided.”

Admiral Arleigh Burke



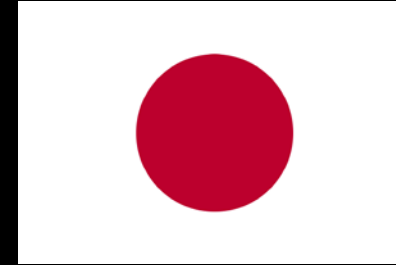
Pointed out the critical role of Japan's demining operation during the Korean War.

Result of the Korean War armistice: UNC & UNC-Rear

South Korea



Japan



United Nations Command



UNC was established in 1950 following the UN's recognition of North Korean aggression against South Korea.

United Nations Command-Rear



UNC-Rear was established in 1957 as a result of the relocation of UNC from Japan to South Korea following the Korean War.

Normalization between South Korea and Japan

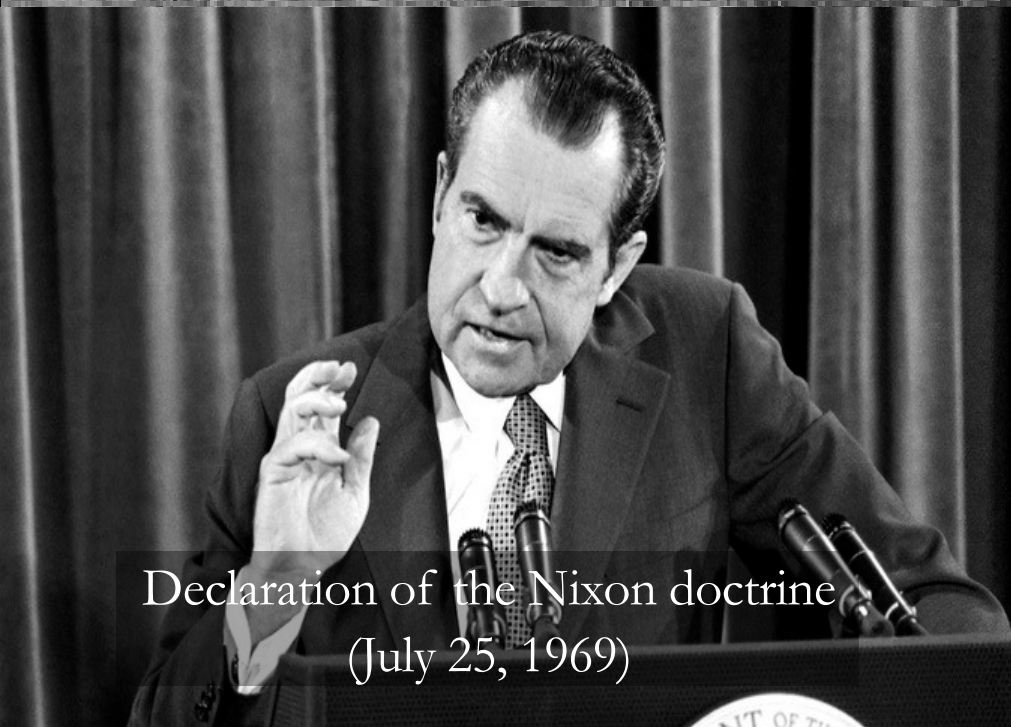


December 18, 1965

Vietnam War and the Nixon Doctrine



Photo taken in South Vietnam,
June 21, 1968



Declaration of the Nixon doctrine
(July 25, 1969)

- In 1965, the United States officially entered the war in response to North Vietnam's attack on a US military vessel.
- President Nixon eventually signed a ceasefire in January 1973 that formally ended the hostilities. And in 1975, communist forces from North Vietnam overran the south and unified the nation.
- In 1969, President Nixon announced that the United States would thereafter support allies facing military threats with economic and military aid rather than with ground troops.
- Acting in accordance with the Nixon doctrine, President Nixon withdrew the 7th Infantry Division from South Korea in 1971.



Pohang steel mill.
(July 3, 1973)

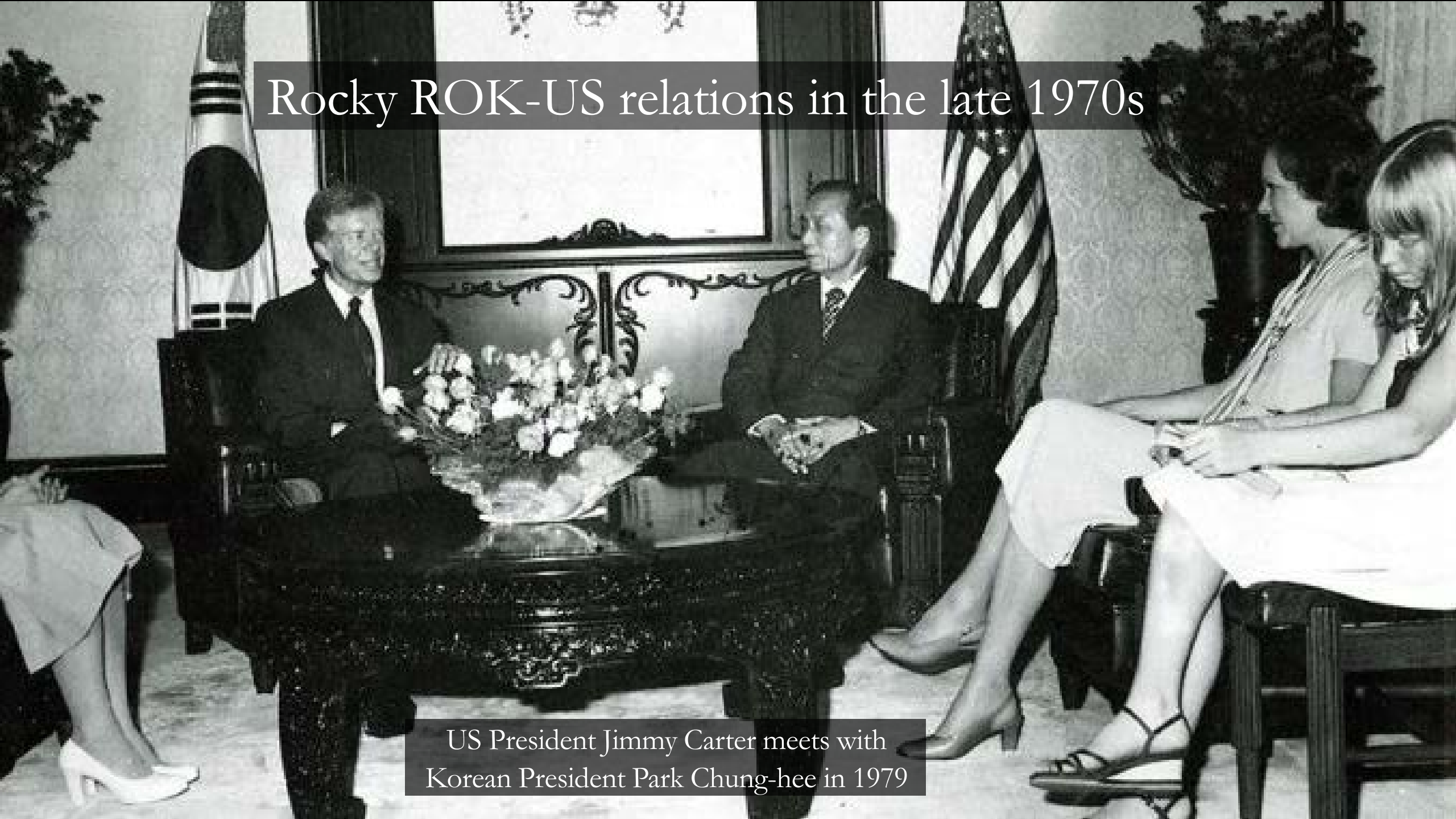


Changwon industrial complex
(April 13, 1977)

Pohang steel mill & ROK's military industry

- In general, steel production capability is considered as one of the crucial pillars that comprise a basic industry.
- Successful defense industry buildup is possible through a well-functioning heavy and chemical industry. Undoubtedly, such a feat is achieved through the existence of a solid steel industry.
- In that context, South Korea's establishment of the Pohang Iron and Steel Company (POSCO) in 1968, can be regarded as the very first step in the defense industry set up for the 1970s.

Rocky ROK-US relations in the late 1970s



US President Jimmy Carter meets with
Korean President Park Chung-hee in 1979

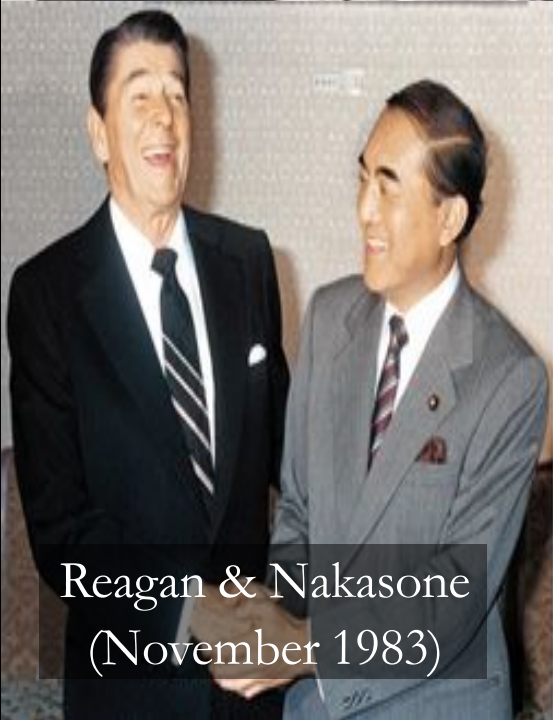
Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan (1979) and the New Cold War



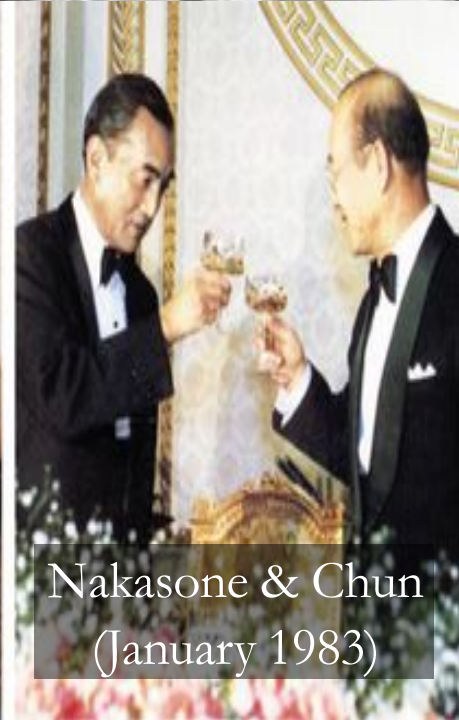
1980s Korea-Japan security economic cooperation



Korea-Japan foreign minister conference
(August 20, 1981)



Reagan & Nakasone
(November 1983)



Nakasone & Chun
(January 1983)

- Facing multiple issues (legitimacy, threat from North Korea, economic recovery from the 1979 oil shock, etc) South Korea's newly elected President Chun asked for the Japanese to alleviate the given problems.
- In the name of “security economic cooperation,” the Japanese government accepted the South Korean request and approved \$4 billion in January 1983.
- Although in-depth analysis is required, the Korea-Japan security economic cooperation incentivized South Korea to lessen the defense burden under the belief that Japan will back South Korea.

Coming back... to the Key questions

- Throughout the analytical timeframe (1950 to 2020), what actually happened between South Korea and Japan, in terms of security cooperation? => In the seven decades timeframe, Japan's contribution was comprehensive and can be summarized as the followings: (1) logistical support during the Korean War; (2) boosting South Korea's military industry buildup in the 1970s; (3) government loan under the rubric of security economic cooperation in the early 1980s; (4) efforts in countering North Korean threat in the post-Cold War era.
- Is there a notable pattern concerning Japan's security contribution towards South Korea? => Due to the structural setting, Japan's contribution was executed in the form of "security economic" cooperation throughout the period. However, Japan provided security around the region in the context of US-Japan alliance; this tendency gained momentum especially in the post-Cold War period.
- Was Japan's contribution somewhat coerced by outside players, or voluntarily initiated and implemented by the Japanese authorities? => It was initially coerced by the US, but it became more voluntary once Japan's economic clout increased in the region.
- Will the existing South Korea-Japan security connectivity be enhanced in the coming days ahead? => It depends. Further person-to-person interview is crucial in analyzing the recent developments.