

The Relation between the United States and the Countries of the Korean Peninsula in the 1970s: A Survey of the Chinese Academic Literature

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Abstract

In recent years, the relations between the United States (US) and the countries of the Korean Peninsula began to play a more important role for China. With the improvement of the level of Chinese scholarship, as well as the rapid declassification of the archival material on pre-1980 Cold War history, there emerged a lot of academic publications in China on the 1970s history of US relations with the two Koreas. Although Chinese scholars took different perspectives on this subject, the mainstream view maintains that with the ease of the Cold War tensions in the Northeast Asia, the relations between the United States and the countries on the Peninsula changed in the varying degrees in the 1970s: on the one hand, although the United States and South Korea still maintained their alliance, their relationship was characterized by friction and contradictions, as the issue of the withdrawal of the US troops and the human rights debates had vividly demonstrated; on the other hand, US-North Korean relations were marked by the rapid process of bilateral relaxation. In general, Chinese academic literature on US-South Korean relations is much more profound compared to the scholarly work on American relations with North Korea. And while in recent years remarkable progress has been made by Chinese scholars, there is still plenty of room for improvement, especially in terms of broadening interdisciplinary studies and theory, utilizing multi-archival material, conducting in-depth research of the political systems, the decision-making processes in the relevant countries, as well as the politics within the lower levels of government, etc.

Key words: US-South Korean relations; US-North Korean relations; Korean Studies in China; Détente; U.S. Congress; U.S. foreign policy

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1. Introduction

Due to historical and geopolitical reasons, Chinese scholars working on the two Koreas have always paid much attention to the interactions between the US and the countries of the Peninsula. Furthermore, in the evolution of these relations after the World War II (WWII), the 1970s played an important role: during this period, US policy towards the countries of the Korean Peninsula, US-Republic of Korea (ROK) relations, US-Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) relations, the two Koreas' own political, economic and foreign policies, inter-Korean relations, etc., had all experienced varying degrees of changes. Those changes prompted the transition of international relations in the Northeast Asia away from the Cold War pattern, i.e., the ideological and military confrontation between two hostile political camps, to the post-Cold War model, i.e., the coordination of relevant countries and contacts between the two Koreas. It can be said that most current issues on the Korean Peninsula, such as the North Korean nuclear program, the establishment of multilateral consultations, the US military forces stationed in the ROK, and the economic and trade ties among relevant countries, etc., are inextricably linked to this historical period.

Despite the growing importance of these issues, however, Chinese scholars for a long time refrained from conducting in-depth research on these topics. There are mainly three reasons for that: the first is the so-called “shackles” of the Cold War ideology. In early Chinese publications, especially in those that were published before the end of the Cold War, Chinese scholars tended to take a hostile approach to examine the relations between the United States and the countries of the Korean Peninsula. Most of them thought that the United States and South Korea were allies within the Capitalist bloc and perceived South Korea only as a cat's-paw for the United States; they argued that the United States was the primary obstacle to Korean reunification. Estimating the situation from this perspective prevented those scholars from clarifying the complexities and conflicts within US-ROK-DPRK relations.¹⁾

1) See, for instance: Tao Bingwei, “Dui Chaoxian Wenti de Yixie Tanta,” [“Some discussions on Korean problems,”] *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu [International Studies]* 2 (1981): 18-21; Cao Liqin, “Daguo Zhengzhi yu

The second reason was the insufficiency of theoretical and linguistic training. During the decade after the end of the Cold War, although many Chinese scholars examined the interstate relations on the Peninsula, as well as the issue of Korean reunification, most of them tended to use secondary historical sources due to their lack of proper academic and language training. In order to summarize the long-term trends in relations between the United States and the two Koreas, they often turned to the publications in English language, while not paying much attention to the important events of the 1970s.²⁾

The last and the most important problem was limited access to archival materials and the slow declassification process. Since in most relevant countries the legislation permits declassification of documents of 30 years and above, many Chinese studies on the relations between the United States and the countries on the Peninsula excluded the period of the 1970s due to the lack of critical primary sources.³⁾ For these reasons, the early Chinese studies on the relationship between the United States and the two Koreas in the 1970s seemed more like political critique than actual academic research.

In the recent years the relations between the United States and the countries of the Korean Peninsula began to play a more important role for China. With the improvement of the level of Chinese scholarship, as well as the rapid declassification of the archival material on pre-1980 Cold War history, there emerged a lot of academic publications in China on the 1970s history of US relations with the two Koreas. However, compared with English and Korean scholarly works, very little of the Chinese academic literature has been incorporated and introduced into the international academic discourse. Thus, this

Chaoxian Bandaο,” [“Great Power Politics and the Korean peninsula,”] *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [*World Economics and Politics*] 2 (1988): 37-40.

- 2) Cui Zhiying, “Han Mei Guanxi de Huigu yu Zhanwang,” [“Retrospect and Prospect on the ROK-US relations,”] *Guoji GuanCha* [*International Review*] 3 (1997):13-17; Guo Xuetang, “Dongbeiya Zhanlue Sibianxing Geju yu Chaoxian Bandaο Tongyi Wenti,” [“Northeast Asia Strategic Quadrilateral Pattern and the Problem of the Korean Reunification,”] *Hanguo Yanjiu Luncong* [*Collected Papers for Korean Studies*] (1997): 58-74.
- 3) See, for instance: Shen Zhihua, *Mao Zedong, Si dalin yu Chaoxian Zhanzheng* [*Mao Zedong, Stalin, and the Korean War*] (Guangdong: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2013) [Guangdong: Guangdong People’s Publishing House, 2013]; Liang Zhi, *Zhanhou Meiguo yu Chaoxian Bandaο Guanxi Yanjiu* [*Study on the Relation between the US and the countries of the Korean Peninsula after the WWII*] (Beijing: Jiuzhou Chubanshe, 2014) [Beijing: Jiuzhou Publishing House, 2014].

paper attempts compiling a survey of Chinese books and articles⁴⁾ on the relationship between the United States and the countries of the Korean Peninsula in the 1970s published after the year 2000, introducing their main research perspectives, utilization of archival material, academic ideas and problems.

2. The Multinational Interaction Approach

The political alliances and geopolitical considerations shaped the Korean Peninsula to become a zone where major powers interacted, cooperated and got engaged in a conflict. Thus, the relations between the United States, China, Japan and the Soviet Union, their policies toward the two Koreas played a very important role in the relationship between the United States and the countries of the Peninsula. The idea of multinational interaction as the key factor in the modern history of Korea is the traditional and mainstream academic approach adopted by the Chinese scholars when exploring the relationship between the United States and the two Koreas. The studies which explored the relationships under this perspective have two noteworthy features: first, they paid special attention to the integrity and coherence of the US policy towards the two Koreas in the 1970s, emphasized the impacts of the US “strategic contraction” or the so-called Nixon Doctrine on US-ROK or US-DPRK relations; second, they argued that it was the external factors, namely, the great powers’ policies and the international situation, which played the leading role in the triangular relationship.

Chen Fengjun and Wang Chuanjian’s book *Asia-Pacific Powers and the Korean Peninsula*⁵⁾ is one of the best examples of scholarly literature supporting this view. Using various publications from China, Japan, the ROK and the United States, the authors analyzed the evolution of relations between the two Koreas and the United States, Japan, Russia and China, as well as their main features. The authors

4) Articles cited in this paper are mainly collected from the China Academic Journal Network Publishing Database (CAJD). It is the largest and a regularly updated online publishing platform for Chinese academic journal all over the world.

5) Chen Fengjun, Wang Chuanjian, *Yatai Daguo yu Chaoxian Bandao [Asia-Pacific Powers and the Korean Peninsula]* (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2002) [Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002].

believed that because of the adjustments in US East Asian policy and changes of Sino-US-USSR relations, US-ROK and US-DPRK relations saw a varying degree of change during the 1970s: on the one hand, although the United States and South Korea still maintained their alliance, their relationship was characterized by friction and contradictions, as the issue of the withdrawal of the US troops and the human rights debates had vividly demonstrated; on the other hand, US-North Korean relations were marked by the rapid process of bilateral relaxation, this was particularly true for the Carter period. Carter's North Korea policy insisted on two basic principles: one advocated "cross-recognition" and required the two Koreas to join the United Nations simultaneously; the other emphasized that the dialogue between the US and the DPRK must be held with the guaranteed participation of the ROK representatives. The Americans insisted that that was the premise of improvement of US-DPRK relations.

These basic trends in US-ROK and US-DPRK relations during the 1970s were recognized by many Chinese scholars. Among them, Qi Jianhua and Wang Qingdong⁶⁾, Chen Zongquan⁷⁾, Zhao Jinlong⁸⁾, Han Xiandong⁹⁾ and Xu Ping¹⁰⁾ argued that changes of the relations among major powers, especially the normalization of relations between China and the United States and the changing perception of threat originating from the other, were crucial factors that influenced the situation on Korean Peninsula in the 1970s.

In addition to analyzing basic trends and influencing factors of US-ROK-DPRK relations, it is worth mentioning that Chinese scholars had also paid special attention to how relevant parties tried to solve the issues on the Peninsula during this transformative period. In this regard, Zhu Qin¹¹⁾ explored the US proposals

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- 6) Qi Jianhua, Wang Qingdong, *DongYa Anquan yu ZhuHan Meijun* [East Asian security and United States Forces in Korea] (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2009) [Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2009].
- 7) Chen Zongquan, "Zhong Mei zai Chaoxian Bandao Wenti shang de Hudong zhi Yanjiu (1950 Nian zhi Jin)" ["Study on the Sino-US interaction-Process on the Korean Issue: from 1950 to Today"] (Fudan Daxue Boshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2008) [PhD diss., Fudan University, 2008].
- 8) Zhao Jinlong, "Zhong Mei Han Sanjiao Boyi zhong de Zhong Han Guanxi Jiangou" ["Sino-S. Korea Relations Constructed among the PRC-US-ROK Tripartite Relations"] (Qingdao Daxue Shuoshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2005) [MA diss., University of Qingdao, 2005].
- 9) Han Xiandong, *Chaoxian Bandao de Anquan Jiegou* [The Security Structure on the Korean Peninsula] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2009) [Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2009].
- 10) Xu Ping, *Lengzhan yu Dongbeiyu Shilun* [Cold War and the History of Northeast Asia] (Changchun: Jilin Daxue Chubanshe, 2011) [Changchun: Jilin University Press, 2011].

of “cross recognition” in the 1970s. She believed that in order to reduce its strategic burden in the ROK and Japan, the United States proposed a policy of cross recognition in 1975 which “sought to create a situation in which the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Soviet Union recognized the ROK, while the United States and Japan gave diplomatic recognition to the DPRK.” Upon this proposal, the United States, Japan and South Korea formed the “Southern Triangle” which in turn confronted the “Northern Triangle,” composed of the PRC, Soviet Union and North Korea. Zhu argued that the cross-recognition in the 1970s was a period of both serious confrontation between the Southern and the Northern Triangle and the irreconcilable contradictions between the two Koreas. Therefore, this proposal was unlikely to succeed. Zhu concluded that the essence of the cross recognition was the bloc diplomacy against the background of the Cold War. However, in the light of the current North Korean nuclear crisis, the proposal might seem as a viable option for solving the Korea issue.

Meng Qingyi, Zhao Wenjing and Liu Huiqing discussed this question from a broader perspective.¹²⁾ Based on the official publications and other materials, they argued that in the view of its own “national interests,” the United States put forward the Nixon Doctrine and advocated appropriate strategic contraction. The succeeding Ford and Carter administrations basically inherited the Nixon Doctrine. Influenced by the adjustments of the US policy and the détente between the East and the West, the relations between two Koreas also changed. Yet, while the United States had made some adjustments to its Korea policy, it did not give up on its strategy of containment towards North Korea and its defense of South Korea. In contrast, China always supported the North Korean policy of peaceful reunification. Overall, the major powers all hoped to maintain peace and stability on the Peninsula, and that was a positive factor for Korean reunification.

11) Zhu Qin, “Zhoubian Daguo zai Jiaocha Chengren Chao Han Wenti shang de Boyi,” [“Game of Boundary Powers on the Cross Recognition Issue of Two Koreas,”] *Liaodong Xueyuan Xuebao* [*Journal of Eastern Liaoning University*] 2 (2010): 131-139.

12) Meng Qingyi, Zhao Wenjing and Liu Huiqing, *Chaoxian Banda: Wenti yu Chulu* [*Korean Peninsula: Problems and Outlets*] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2006) [Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2006].

3. US-ROK and US-DPRK Relations

In addition to the comprehensive studies of the relationship between the United States and the countries of the Peninsula from a multilateral perspective, there are many Chinese researchers who used historical materials (e.g., declassified archival documents from the United States and the ROK) and interdisciplinary theories to explore US-ROK or US-DPRK bilateral relations in more depth. Compared to the relations between Washington and Pyongyang, studies on US-South Korea relations are far better developed both in terms of their quantity and quality.

a) Studies on US-ROK Relations

1) The Policies of the Two US Administrations towards the ROK

The issue of the withdrawal of the US troops from the ROK and the human rights violations in South Korea were inextricably linked to the policies of Nixon and Carter administrations. As these caused much friction between the allies during the 1970s, Chinese historians paid much attention to this period.

Ma Deyi's dissertation *The Study of U.S. Policies towards the ROK from the Kennedy to Carter Administration*,¹³⁾ is a relatively systematic research that examined US-ROK relations in the 1970s from the perspective of US policy-making process. Ma argued that in the 1970s, the US government's policy towards South Korea mainly focused on two key issues: "the withdrawal of the American troops from the ROK" and "the improvement of the human rights conditions in the ROK." When discussing these issues more specifically, Ma focused mainly on the military withdrawal. He believed that the Nixon administration was successful in reducing the size of the US troops stationed in South Korea, as well as convincing the South Koreans in the necessity to share the cost of their own defense.

The Carter administration also raised the issue of military withdrawal. Ma thought reasons behind this decision were the facilitation of cooperation between

13) Ma Deyi, "Cong KenNidi dao Kate Shiqi Meiguo dui Han Zhengce Yanjiu" ["The Study of the U.S. Policies towards the ROK from Kennedy to Carter Administration"] (Jilin Daxue Boshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2009) [PhD diss., Jilin University, 2009].

the major powers in order to maintain the stability on the Korean Peninsula, the awareness that South Korean military capabilities had improved, the attempt to avoid direct involvement in the military conflict in Korea, and the need to exert pressure on the Park administration about the human rights conditions in the ROK. The suspension of the withdrawal policy was mainly due to the opposition from the US executive and legislative branches and the country's East Asian allies. The withdrawal policy had an important impact on Park Chung-hee's efforts to develop nuclear weapons. The US policy toward the ROK embodied the principle of "national interests first" and reflected the inevitability of contradictions between the "unequal diplomatic actors." Changes in the international situation made the both the "withdrawal" and "stationing" of the United States Forces Korea (USFK) a viable possibility.

Based on the documents collected from the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) and the Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) databases, Feng Dongxing focused in his work on the Nixon government's policy towards South Korea.¹⁴⁾ Feng said that the basic principle of Nixon's policy was "to reduce US troops in the ROK while providing greater aid and helping to strengthen ROK's self-defense capabilities." During the Nixon administration, the withdrawal of the US government efforts were pushed by rethinking the strategy of overstretch in the Vietnam War and the optimistic assessment of the military balance on the Korean Peninsula. But after Ford took office, the US government changed its optimism and then abandoned its withdrawal policy. The Nixon government's unilateral withdrawal policy increased South Korea's distrust in their alliance and its demand for greater independence.

Sun Yanshu analyzed the adjustment to US security policy towards the ROK during Nixon's first term.¹⁵⁾ Using the declassified American and South Korean

14) Feng Dongxing, "NiKesong Zhengfu dui Han Zhengce Yanjiu" ["The Study of Nixon Administration's Policy towards South Korea"] (Henan Daxue Shuoshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2007) [MA diss., Henan University, 2007]; Feng Dongxing, "NiKesong Zhengfu Chetui Zhuhan Meijun Wenti Shulun," ["On the Withdrawal of the US Troops Stationed in South Korea by Nixon Government,"] *Junshi Lishi Yanjiu [Military History Research]* 4 (2015): 76-84.

15) Sun Yanshu, "20 Shiji 60 Niandai mo Meiguo dui Hanguo Anquan Zhengce Tiaozheng ji qi Yingxiang," ["U.S. Security Policy Adjustment to South Korea at the End of 1960s and its Influence,"] *Shixue Jikan [Collected Papers of History Studies]* 4 (2013): 122-128.

official documents, the author argued that the reassessment of Korean policy by the Johnson administration in 1968 had a significant impact on Nixon's understanding of the adjustments that needed to be made to US security policy in the ROK. The starting point of Nixon's policy was to adjust US aid and defense obligations to the ROK according to South Korea's own military capabilities and the extent of the North Korean threat. Its fundamental motivation derived from the Nixon Doctrine which embodied as "the United States strategic contraction in the ROK." The adjustment affected the trust relationship within the US-South Korea alliance and made Seoul actively seek to improve its relations with the DPRK in the early 1970s.

Feng Dongxing explored the characteristics of Carter's policy towards South Korea in his article *On the Carter Administration's Policy toward South Korea*.¹⁶⁾ The author argued that basic characteristics in Carter's policy were the promotion of political democracy in the ROK as an important part of the Korean policy; and the proposition raised for the first time to completely withdraw US ground forces from the Korean Peninsula. In general, Carter's policy towards the ROK was unsuccessful, because of the long-term goals that the US policy set on the Peninsula, the realist nature of US foreign policy, and counterproductive influence of the Park Chung-hee government.

Compared to studies on the issue of withdrawal, there is very little research conducted on the topic of the US government human rights policy towards the ROK. Although lots of researches had mentioned this was a priority for Carter's policy in South Korea, there was little systematic and specialized research on this subject.

Currently, there is only one article specialized on this topic: *On Human Rights Policy towards the ROK and the Divergence between the American Government and the Congress in the 1970s*.¹⁷⁾ In this paper, the author, Ma Deyi, discussed the divergence between the US governments and the US Congress on their stance

16) Feng Dongxing, "Lun Kate Zhengfu de Dui Han Zhengce," ["On the Carter Administration's Policy towards South Korea,"] *Shixue Yuekan [Journal of Historical Science]* 4 (2016): 115-122.

17) Ma Deyi, "Meiguo Zhengfu yu Guohui zai Dui Han Renquan Zhengce shang de Fenqi," ["On Human Rights Policy towards South Korea and the Divergence between the American Government and the Congress in the 1970s,"] *Waiguo Wenti Yanjiu [Journal of Foreign Studies]* 3 (2013): 47-54.

on human rights policy towards the ROK in the 1970s. Ma argued that divergences between the two American administrations and the US Congress reached their peak in 1974-1978, and the bone of contention was “whether or not the human rights issue should be linked to the issues of security or security assistance.” When Carter took office, due to the president’s concern for human rights, contradictions between the two sides eased off. By 1978, the Congress and the US government gradually managed to create an atmosphere of cooperation on the human rights issue in South Korea. Ma concluded that both sides had only achieved partial success in their human rights policy towards the ROK. It was mainly because of their compromise in maintaining US national interests, namely, ensuring South Korea’s “pro-US, anti-communist” position. The contradictions in American human rights policy towards the ROK manifested many irrational elements in its human rights diplomacy.

In addition, many Chinese scholars tended to give a more negative evaluation to Carter’s human rights policy towards the ROK. For example, Shen Dingchang said that on the surface, Carter’s human rights diplomacy aimed to advocate democratic values and human rights, but in fact it was just political means to “reduce the US military defense cost while continuing to maintain political and diplomatic influence in the ROK.” The so-called human rights diplomacy was actually based on “the standard of American democracy and human rights,” and “linked all economic and military assistance with political relations.” The same was true for human rights policy of the US administration in the ROK.¹⁸⁾

2) US-ROK Relations from the Alliance Perspective

In addition to studying the US foreign policy, Chinese scholars have also explored US-ROK relations from an alliance perspective. Among them, Liang Zhi examined the impact of Sino-US rapprochement on the bilateral alliance.¹⁹⁾ He pointed out that since anti-communism was at the foundation of the alliance

18) Shen Dingchang, *Hanguo Waijiao yu Meiguo [Korean Diplomacy and the United States]* (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2008) [Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2008], 96-97.

19) Liang Zhi, “Zhongmei Huanhe yu Mei Han Tongmeng Zhuanxing(1969-1972),” [“Sino-US Rapprochement and the Transformation of the US-ROK Alliance, 1969-1972,”] *Lishi Yanjiu [Historical Research]* 1 (2016): 98-114.

between the United States and its Asian partners, Sino-US rapprochement, especially its secrecy, contributed significantly to the increasing feeling of distrust towards America within the South Korean political circles. Although after this rapprochement, the United States reaffirmed its security commitments to the ROK, their mutual trust was far from being rebuilt. In the first half of the 1970s, South Korea was determined to pursue multilateral foreign relations and to improve its self-defense, while the United States attempted to prevent the Park Chung-hee government from undertaking a unilateral attack on the DPRK. In this regard, the rapprochement between China and the United States prompted transformation of the US-ROK alliance in the first half of the 1970s. It led to the improvement of South Korean autonomy and the reduction of the asymmetry in the US-ROK alliance. In addition, this rapprochement also caused the feelings of distrust towards the United States in Japan, Philippines, Thailand, etc.

Wang Rongrong and Liu Qiang believed that the US-ROK alliance was mainly influenced by the evolution of global political environment, the understanding of their respective strategic positions, regional threats and interests in both countries.²⁰⁾ In the context of global détente, the US-ROK alliance in the 1970s underwent significant changes: the United States believed that the Peninsula was no longer of military significance, thus it made a decision to withdraw the US troops. Nevertheless, some scholars, among them Wang Chuanjian, maintain a different outlook.²¹⁾ Wang believed that the US-ROK alliance was not only a bilateral military union, but also a balancing tool for the US to maintain regional capabilities while building its global military strategy. Therefore, although the United States considered withdrawal of the US troops from Korea in the 1970s, as long as the alliance served for “double containment of the DPRK and the PRC-Soviet Union tandem,” those policies did not endanger the relationship between Washington and Seoul.

20) Wang Rongrong and Liu Qiang, “Mei Han Tongmeng: Chaoyue de Liubian Qushi,” [“The US-ROK alliance: the Rheological Trend of Transcendence,”] *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi Luntan [Forum of World Economics and Politics]* 4 (2009): 52-59.

21) Wang Chuanjian, “Cong ‘Shuangchong Ezhi’ dao ‘Shuangchong Guizhi’: Zhanhou Mei Han Junshi Tongmeng de Lishi Kaocha,” [“From ‘Double Containments’ to ‘Double Regulations’: A Historical Investigation of the Postwar U.S.-ROK Alliance,”] *Meiguo Yanjiu [American Studies]* 2 (2002): 31-46.

Using alliance theory and the concepts of “abandonment” and “entrapment” in the alliance dilemma, Wang Weimin analyzed the evolution of the US-Japan-ROK security relations during the Cold War.²²⁾ Wang thought that the US-Japan-ROK relations in the 1970s showed the following trends: in the early 1970s, the adjustment of the US policy in Asia-Pacific raised Japanese and South Korean concerns about “being abandoned” by the United States. Thus, Japan and the ROK quickly strengthened their security cooperation on the question of “USFK withdrawal from the ROK.” However, after improving its relations with China, the Japanese side began to worry about “being entrapped” by the ROK, and it adjusted its policy towards South Korea accordingly. The Japan-South Korea relations began to cool down. During the Carter period, because of the re-emergence of the issue of troops withdrawal, concerns about “being abandoned by the United States” once again prevailed. This, in turn, had the ties between Japan and the Republic of Korea see certain improvement. Wang concluded that it was the United States that played the decisive role in the US-Japan-ROK triangular relations.

3) The US influence on South Korean Policies

During the recent decade, under the influence of the so-called “the New Cold War History” trend, Chinese scholars have begun to draw lessons from the transnational history research method.²³⁾ When exploring the relationship between the US and the Peninsula in the 1970s, Chinese scholars tended to collect and utilize historical materials from the two Koreas in order to analyze the impact of the US factors on the political, diplomatic, military policies of the DPRK or the ROK, and then paid more attention to the autonomy and initiative of two Koreas in dealing with their relations with the United States.

22) Wang Weimin, “Lengzhan Shiqi de Mei Ri Han Anquan Sanjiao: Zhun Lianmeng Lilun yu Lianmeng Kunjing de Shijiao,” [“The Safe Triangle of US-Japan-ROK in Cold War: From the Perspective of Quasi-Alliance Theory and Alliance Dilemma Theory,”] *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* [Studies of international Politics] 4 (2005): 116-127.

23) See Akira Iriye, “The Transnational Turn,” *Diplomatic History* 31 (2007): 373-376; Niu Ke, “Chaoyue Waijiao Shi: cong Waijiao Shi Pipan Yundong dao Xin Lengzhan Shi de Xingqi,” [“Beyond Diplomatic History: from the Criticism of Diplomatic History to the Rise of New Cold War History,”] *Lengzhan Guoji Shi Yanjiu* [Studies on the Cold War International History] 1 (2014).

In terms of studies that look into the American impact on the ROK foreign policy, Shen Dingchang's book *Korean Diplomacy and the United States*²⁴⁾ is of particular importance. The book was published in both Korean and Chinese. Based on a large number of Korean official materials, Shen discussed the American impact on the formation of the South Korean foreign policy making and its adjustment. Shen believed that US-ROK relations were the core area of the South Korean diplomacy, while national security remained to be its main concern. In the 1970s, the Park Chung-hee government adjusted its foreign policy in two key aspects: one was carrying out independent national defense construction; the other was seeking to transform the US-ROK alliance from a "unilateral dependence on the United States" into a bilateral interdependence and multidirectional diplomacy. Shen believed that these adjustments originated not only from the changing political dynamics at home, namely, the South Korean economic development strategies, but that they also derived from the adjustments of the American global strategy and its policy on the Peninsula. US policies, especially the USFK withdrawal from the ROK and the link between the human rights issues and the economic assistance to South Korea, raised many doubts about the credibility of the US security commitment to Seoul. The structure of South Korean diplomacy was dependent on the United States, which was an inevitable choice if one was to guarantee the country's survival. However, the ROK could also maximize its own benefits within the framework of US foreign policy and actively carry out its own diplomatic activities.

The internal and external motivations in South Korean diplomacy were recognized by many Chinese scholars. Wang Yanda further summarized that the 1970s was a formation stage for Seoul's "independent and open diplomatic strategy."²⁵⁾ The strategy was mainly the result of the changes in the American policy towards the East Asia and the economic development of South Korea; the implementation of this strategy led to a greater independence from the US and an open outlook towards socialist countries. The strategy established Seoul's

24) Shen Dingchang, *Hanguo Waijiao Yu Meiguo* [*Korean Diplomacy and the United States*], 1-118.

25) Wang Yanda, "Hanguo Dongbeiya Waijiao Zhanlue de Yanbian ji Dongyin" ["Evolution of South Korea's Northeast Diplomatic Strategy and Its Motivation"] (Dongbei Shifan Daxue Shuoshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2012) [MA diss., Northeast Normal University, 2012].

autonomy in US-ROK relations and thus achieved the desired objectives. Sun Ji shared this view as well.²⁶⁾ In his book which focuses on the ROK unification policy, Sun concluded that there were two reasons which led Park Chung-hee to change his policy toward the DPRK in the 1970s: one was the need to meet US policy requirements; the other was the necessity to respond to the progressive views on unification propelled by public opinion at home.

In terms of political influence, Tao Wenzhao²⁷⁾ thought that Washington had a particularly big impact on the process of democratization in the ROK. Compared to its previous anti-communist demands, the US took a more proactive position in promoting democracy in South Korea since the late 1970s, this in turn resulted in a series of contradictions between the United States and the authoritarian regime residing in Seoul. Wang Feiyi,²⁸⁾ however, took a different view. She pointed out that “during the Cold War, the foundation of the US policy in South Korea was maintaining the ROK as a strategic base to fight against communism,” and that “democracy was just a slogan.” Therefore, due to the importance of South Korea for the American defense strategy, Park’s dictatorship was tolerated by the U.S. government in the 1970s.

With the impact of the US on the ROK's defense strategy, Hu Liangmeng argued that 1972-1990 was the initial period of “autonomous national defense” of the ROK.²⁹⁾ The impulse behind Park Chung-hee’s decision to shift towards the autonomous defense strategy was the receding trust in the United States, a feeling that was brought into existence by the US troop’s withdrawal policy and Sino-American summit diplomacy. The development of the nuclear weapons became an important milestone in the Park Chung-hee's autonomous defense

26) Sun Ji, *Hanguo de Chaoxian Zhengce [South Korea's Policy towards North Korea]* (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2011) [Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2011].

27) Tao Wenzhao, “Hanguo Minzhu de Meiguo Yinsu,” [“The Role of the United States in Korean Democracy,”] *Dongbeiyu Luntan [Northeast Asia Forum]* 6 (2007): 67-71.

28) Wang Feiyi, “Guojihua, Zhiduhua yu Minzhuhua: Hanguo Zhengzhi Fazhan yu Zhuanxing de Guoji Yinsu Yanjiu” [“Internationalism, Institutionalism and Democratization: International Factors of Development and Democratic Transition in South Korea”] (Fudan Daxue Boshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2009) [PhD diss., University of Fudan, 2009].

29) Hu Liangmeng, “Hanguo Zizhu Guofang Yanjiu: Yi Piao Zhengxi yu Lu Wuxuan Shiqi de Guofang Zhengce Bijiao Yanjiu wei Zhongxin” [“The Study of South Korean Administrations’ Autonomous Defense Strategy”] (Fudan Daxue Shuoshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2012) [MA diss., University of Fudan, 2012].

strategy. In this regard, Gao Qiqi further explored the relationship between the ROK and the United States with regard to the South Korean nuclear weapons program in the 1970s. The author pointed out that the awareness of increasing security threats and the weakening of the US-ROK alliance were important incentives for Seoul to pursue the acquisition of nuclear capabilities.³⁰⁾ The bilateral alliance played a decisive role in the development of the ROK nuclear weapons program. In addition to that, South Korea also launched a missile development program as part of its defense project.

When it comes to the research about the economic side of the US- South Korean relations, Dong Xiangrong, a scholar working on the evolution of US economic assistance to the ROK, argued that under the Nixon Doctrine, the US government not only reduced its troops in South Korea, it also transformed its military aid into military trade.³¹⁾ Accordingly, the relationship between the ROK and the US moved from the full dependency in the direction of greater autonomy. Ren Ping believed that although the bilateral ties slid to their lowest in the 1970s, the alliance itself did not experience any drastic change³²⁾. Due to the pro-American diplomacy pursued by the ROK, the economic and trade relations between the two nations were further consolidated and developed in the 1970s.

b) Bilateral Relations between the United States and the DPRK

Compared to the studies on the US-ROK relations, Chinese research on the relations between the US and the DPRK in the 1970s remains scarce. There are fewer publications, and material is mainly acquired from Chinese newspapers and the American academic literature.

In terms of their views, Chinese scholars generally agree that, with the relative

30) Gao Qiqi, "Mei Han He Guanxi (1956-2006): dui Tongmeng Maodunxing de GeAn Kaocha" ["U.S.-ROK Nuclear Relations, 1956-2006: A Case Study on Alliance Contradiction"] (Fudan Daxue Boshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2008) [PhD diss., University of Fudan, 2008].

31) Dong Xiangrong, "Meiguo dui Hanguo de Yuanzhu: Yuanqi, Yanjin yu Jieguo," ["U.S. Foreign Aid Policy toward ROK: Origins, Evolution and Results,"] *Shijie Lishi [World History]* 6 (2004): 15-24.

32) Ren Ping, "Hanguo Qinmei Waijiao Yanghe Shi Yanjiu" ["The Study of the Goodwill Diplomacy Policy of the South Korea to the United States"] (Yanbian Daxue Shuoshi Xuewei Lunwen, 2003) [MA diss., Yanbian University, 2003].

relaxation of Cold War tensions around the world, the US began to adjust its policy toward the DPRK in four main aspects: first, it reduced the size of the USFK, easing the atmosphere on the Peninsula; second, it avoided critical incidents that would escalate the situation; third, it promoted the reconciliation of the North and the South and multilateral dialogues with participation of major powers; fourth, it eased the restrictions on the personnel exchanges between the US and the DPRK. However, those policy adjustments had not changed the hostile nature of US-DPRK relations. In general, US policy towards the DPRK in the 1970s was a “limited relaxation policy” or a dual policy of “careful rapprochement without giving up on the hostilities.”³³⁾

It is worth mentioning that in recent years, some Chinese scholars have begun to work on the diplomatic history of the DPRK. Jin Xiangbo's book *The Study on the History of the North Korea's Foreign Policy Strategy*³⁴⁾ is an example of such work. Although he basically agreed with the abovementioned conclusions about the trends in US-DRPK relations in the 1970s, Jin Xiangbo also argued that it was the DPRK that decisively influenced the development and the changes in US-DPRK relations.³⁵⁾ Jin thought that the attitude and behavior of the DPRK was a key factor in the US determination to reduce its military presence in Korea and to adjust the US-ROK military alliance, and that ultimately contributed to maintaining peace on the Peninsula. Further, in the implementation of its foreign strategy, the DPRK had very clear understanding of its fundamental necessities, its own goals and bargaining chips. Therefore, North Korea, being a skillful player, always won the upper hand in the games with its opponents, namely, the United States, the PRC, the ROK, and Japan.

Based on these assumptions, Jin concluded that the leading factor that limited

33) Zhan Debin, “Dui zhi zhong de Huanhe: 70 Niandai de Meiguo dui Chao Zhengce,” [“Relaxation while Confronting: U.S. Policy to North Korea of the 1970's,”] *Anhui Shixue [Historical Research in Anhui]* 3 (2004): 74-78; Zhang Zhimei, “NiKesong Shiqi Meiguo yu Chaoxian Guanxi de Huanhe,” [“Détente of USA-North Korea Relations in Nixon Administration,”] *Shanxi Datong Daxue Xuebao [Journal of Shanxi Datong University]* 4 (2012): 26-29.

34) Jin Xiangbo, *Chaoxian DuiWai Zhanlue Shi Yanjiu [The Study on the History of the North Korea's Foreign Strategy]* (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2012) [Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2012].

35) Like most of literature mentioned in this paper, the mainstream view of Chinese academics is that major powers play dominant roles in the relationship between the US and the countries of the Peninsula.

the breakthrough in US-DPRK relations in the 1970s was the foreign policy conducted by Pyongyang. Thus, North Korea missed the historical opportunity at easing tensions between the two sides: it inappropriately regarded the USFK as the biggest obstacle for the reunification; it tried to dismiss the status of the ROK and ignored the fact that there were two legitimate governments on the Peninsula. Nevertheless, during this period, the greatest gain of North Korea's diplomacy in regard to the United States was that the DPRK gradually found ways and means to interact with the United States and concluded smaller countries could also play games with the superpowers and achieve certain gains effectively.

4. Case studies on Accidents Around the Peninsula

In recent years, many young Chinese scholars have begun to explore the important accidents which caused tensions between the US and the two Koreas in the 1970s, and paid special attention to the characteristics and influences that are reflected in those case studies. Applying the research methods of transnational history, those scholars, relying on their language skills, not only used more archival material and diversified literature in their studies, they also employed more multidirectional analytical perspectives.

Among them, Sun Yanshu explored the response strategy of the ROK government to the EC-121 shoot down incident by using declassified documents both from the ROK and the United States.³⁶⁾ Sun pointed out that after the incident occurred, Seoul expressed extreme concern. South Korea tried to apply as much pressure as possible with the US and sought to use this incident to increase US aid and to strengthen its security. In contrast with the ROK, the Americans, nevertheless, remained calm and restrained. The contradictions between the two sides reflected the fundamental difference between the US and the ROK in terms of their core security concerns: the ROK saw the DPRK as its primary threat, but

36) Sun Yanshu, "Hanguo Yingdui Chaoxian Jiluo Mei EC-121 Zhenchaji Shijian Chutan," ["The Primary Exploration on the Response of South Korean Government to the EC-121 Shootdown Incident,"] *Shehui Kexue Zhanxian [Social Science Front]* 9 (2010): 240-243.

for the US, its main threat came from the Soviet Union rather than from the Korean Peninsula. This difference was reflected even more clearly in the subsequent withdrawal debate between the two sides.

In his article *On the October Restoration in South Korea in 1972*,³⁷⁾ Feng Dongxing discussed the “October Yusin” proclaimed by Park Chun-hee and the American response to it. Feng believed that there were two key factors for Washington to maintain alliance with Park Chung-hee: his government was both anti-Communist and pro-American. However, in the Nixon era, due to the fact that the United States adjusted its policy towards its East Asian allies and pursued the policy of easing tensions with China, both of these foundations were being challenged. Thus, concerned for the security of his own regime, Park launched the coup. Although it brought the relationship between Park and the Nixon administration to their lower point, in the light of the strategic importance of South Korea, Nixon had to show pragmatism and tolerate this coup.

The Korean axe murder incident was an important event affecting US-DPRK relations during the Ford presidency. Deng Feng, using declassified archives from the Eastern European countries on the DPRK and the materials from several US administrations, described the incident and Washington’s response.³⁸⁾ The author pointed out that after the incident, the Ford government assumed that the incident was a premeditated provocation of the DPRK without definitive evidence, then the US quickly made a tough response by carrying out “Operation Paul Bunyan.” In fact, the Korean axe murder incident was not merely an “accident,” it was also the result of a series of actions from both the American and the South Korean side. However, stereotypes about Washington’s decision-making process along with the “enemy image” of the DPRK prevented the United States from assuming their share of responsibility for the incident; the administration misread North Korean behavior, and thus failed to deal with security problems on the Peninsula.

37) Feng Dongxing, “Lun 1972 Nian Hanguo ‘Weixin Zhengbian’,” [“On Reform Coup in South Korea in 1972,”] *Liaodong Xueyuan Xuebao* [Journal of Eastern Liaoning University] 5 (2014): 12-16.

38) Deng Feng, “1976 Nian Banmendian Shijian de Yuanqi yu Meiguo de Fanying,” [“The Cause of the Panmunjom Axe Murder Incident in 1976 and the Reaction of the US,”] *Shijie Lishi* [World History] 6(2015): 52-60.

5. The Issues and Possible Solutions

According to the survey of Chinese literature mentioned above, however, we can still find some problems which need to be improved:

First of all, in terms of research perspectives and methods, many researchers, especially those who focused on studies of basic trends in US-Korean relations, barely used primary historical sources. Many instead preferred to apply theoretical approach of the realist school of thought in order to draw their conclusions. This led to two serious issues in Chinese scholarship: one was that a lot of academic publications had many deviations from historical facts; the other was that the scope of these studies often took prevalence over their depth.

Taking the studies on US policy towards South Korea as an example, one can observe that, on the one hand, many Chinese scholars, influenced by the realist school of thought, tended to argue that the United States and its policies played a leading role in the US-ROK relations while ignoring restrictions and limitations to the American influence on the Peninsula;³⁹⁾ on the other hand, when analyzing the motivations behind the US policy, they tended to assume that the US government within itself reached an absolute consensus on every decision; they believed that the fundamental purpose of foreign policy was to pursue “maximization of its national interest.” While many Chinese scholars promote the idea that the most fundamental basis for the foreign policy activities of a country lies in the pursuit of national interests, they fail to clarify “what the national interest is,” “what the maximization of national interests looks like” and how the different groups within the government reach consensus on this “maximization” of their national interests.

In recent years, with the opening of the archives of the US government and

39) This is especially true in the studies on Carter Administration’s human rights policy towards ROK. According to US declassified archives, even at the very start of Carter administration, few top officials had ever shared the idea that the decision on troop withdrawal from ROK or the military aid to ROK should be linked with the ROK’s human rights conditions, nor did they want to make criticisms of human rights in ROK went to public. Therefore, this policy only achieved very limited impacts. This is quite different with many arguments in Chinese researches which mentioned above. See such as “Memorandum of Conversation”, Feb. 1, 1977, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Far East, Armacost-Chron File, Box 2, JCL; “Human Rights and the Summit,” April 3, 1979, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Cables File-Far East, NSA 16, Box 12, JCL.

proliferation of the “New Cold War History” approach, Chinese scholars have partly taken note of this problem and began to collect and utilize various declassified archives to analyze policy debates and concessions within the US administration. However, with multiplicity of political actors (the President, the Congress, the interest groups and the personal interests and so on) shaping the US foreign policy making, it is clearly insufficient to reveal the complexity of policy decisions within the American government merely from the perspective of the US administrations.

Second, the degrees of acquisition and utilization of multinational archival materials need to be further improved. In recent years, Chinese scholars have paid more attention to studying policies of relevant countries and multilateral relations using primary historical sources, but in terms of collection and utilization of declassified archival materials from relevant countries, China still lags behind compared to foreign academia. In terms of the US government documentation, many Chinese scholars used documents that were mainly collected from databases such as the US Declassified Documents Online (DDRS), the FRUS, and the DNSA. At the same time, the documents from the NARA and Presidential Libraries were less used. In terms of South Korean materials, although some scholars have quoted declassified archives of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most of the Chinese studies still used the public literature, newspapers and the official statements as the bibliographical basis for their research.

There are some objective reason behind these issues. With the PRC opening to the world, Chinese scholars are seeking to solve these problems by improving their languages skills and expanding international exchanges. However, there is still an important issue that have not drawn enough attention, that is, the utilization of the Chinese archival materials.

Limited by the slow-moving declassification process of the Chinese archival documents, very few systematic studies on the subject of Chinese influence on US-South Korea and US-North Korea relations in the 1970s are being produced. The studies related to China focus mainly on the overview of the PRC-South Korea and PRC-North Korea relations, the materials they use are mainly collected from the Chinese official newspapers such as the *People's Daily*. In terms of their

standpoint, most of those studies agree that Sino-ROK relations were moving toward slow reconciliation in the 1970s, the two sides made some progress in the development of relations outside the political sphere. Both governments, nevertheless, decided to proceed with “greatest caution.” That is particularly true for China, which in the face of South Korea’s reconciliation efforts, did not make a positive response. In the aspect of Sino-DPRK relations, scholars recognized that during this period, China began to correct the excesses of the “Cultural Revolution.” At the same time, the DPRK adopted an obvious neutral and independent position in the Sino-Soviet rivalry. Even though there existed some dissatisfaction with the DPRK in Beijing, Sino-North Korean relations remained basically stable until the Chinese economic reform.⁴⁰⁾

However, the current Chinese materials that can be used to study Chinese attitude are not limited to the newspapers. In recent years, Chinese authorities have published a series of biographies and chronicles of Chinese leaders which can provide much help in exploring the views and ideas of the Chinese high-level officials and the policy directions of China.⁴¹⁾ *The Chronicles of Deng Xiaoping*⁴²⁾ is one of such sources. The Korean affairs that are mentioned in the chronicles vary from the meeting between the Chinese and the DPRK leaders and the Chinese attitude towards problems in the DPRK to Sino-DPRK relations in the process of the normalization of Sino-American relations. In sum, the collection and

40) Shen Zhihua, “Miandui Lishi Jiyu: Zhong Mei Guanxi Hejie yu Zhong Chao Guanxi (1971-1974),” [“Facing a Historical Opportunity: The Sino-U.S. Rapprochement and the Sino-North Korean Relations (1971-1974),”] *Huadong Shifan Daxue Xuebao* [Journal of East China Normal University] 1 (2014):1-14; Fang Xiuyu, *Zhanhou Hanguo Wajitiao yu Zhongguo: Lilun yu Zhengce Fenxi* [South Korean Foreign Policy and China since World War II: A Theoretical and Policy Analysis] (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 2011) [Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 2011].

41) Such as An Jianshe ed., *Zhou Enlai Zuihou de Suiyue, 1966-1976* [The Last Years of Zhou Enlai, 1966-1976] (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2002) [Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2002]; Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenxian Yanjiushi bian [CCP Documents Research Office (ed.)], *Zhou Enlai Nianpu(1949-1976)* [The Chronicles of Zhou Enlai,1949-1976] (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1997) [Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 1997]; Xu Xiaohong ed., *Zhou Enlai Shengping Yanjiu Ziliao* [The Life Research Materials of Zhou Enlai](Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2013) [Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2013]; Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenxian Yanjiushi bian [CCP Documents Research Office (ed.)], *Mao Zedong Nianpu(1949-1976)* [The Chronicle of Mao Tse-tung, 1949-1976] (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2013) [Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2013]; Zhang Hanzhi, *Wo yu Qiao Guanhua* [Qiao Guanhua and I] (Beijing: Zhongguo Qingnian Chubanshe, 1994) [Beijing: China Youth Publishing House, 1994].

42) Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenxian Yanjiushi bian [CCP Documents Research Office (ed.)], *Deng Xiaoping Nianpu (1975-1997)* [the Chronicle of Deng Xiaoping, 1975-1997] (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2007) [Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2007].

utilization of multinational and multilateral archives can help analyze and interpret the relationship between the United States and the two Koreas more comprehensively.

Third, both current and previous studies on the relationship between the United States and the countries of the Peninsula are concentrated on the political affairs between the higher echelons of power and diplomatic relations, while studies of the economic, cultural exchanges or other lower level exchanges are still very scarce.

Among the important questions that need to be further explored there are the following few: what were the American or South Korean economic policies in the 1970s? How were their bilateral economic and trade consultations conducted? How did the US media and the public opinion affect the withdrawal policy or the “Koreagate”? What was the origins of the anti-American sentiment among the Korean people? What were the attitudes, policy and influence of the United States and the DPRK in cultural exchanges?

Finally, when exploring the relationship between the US and the two Koreas from the perspective of the American policy making, most studies are focused on Nixon or Carter administrations, while paying little attention to Ford. There are two main points of view in China on Ford’s policy towards the countries of the Korean Peninsula: some scholars maintain that the Ford administration’s Korea policy was the continuation of the measures taken up by Nixon, and that Ford followed the Nixon’s “retrenchment strategy in Asia.” Others recognize adjustments in Ford’s policy, but mention them in their work only in passing, while barely mentioning the motivations and influences systematically.

In fact, by the time when Ford took the office, the domestic and foreign environment changed significantly compared to that of the Nixon period. Facing domestically the distrust of the Americans in their own system and doubts of foreign allies about the American commitments abroad, Ford put forward his new “Pacific Doctrine,” which sought to make some adjustments to adapt to the new situation under the framework of Nixon’s contraction strategy in the Asia-Pacific. In terms of his policy towards South Korea, Ford reaffirmed the US-ROK mutual defense treaty, suspended the reduction of American troops and reiterated its security commitment to the ROK on many occasions. At the same time, the US

Congress during this period began to pay attention to the issue of human rights in the ROK and subsequently challenged Ford administration on many aspects of US policy in South Korea. It can be said that the Ford administration's understanding of the situation in Asia and its policy adjustments towards two Koreas had an important impact on the political atmosphere at home during the Carter period and on the subjects of the debates of the US policy towards the Peninsula. Therefore, in examining the relationship between the US government and the two Koreas in the 1970s, the Ford administration's transitional role should not be overlooked.

In conclusion, the survey of Chinese academic literature demonstrates that the level of Chinese scholarship on the relations between the United States and the countries of the Korean Peninsula in the 1970s is improving both in terms of its depth and its scope.

In terms of research perspectives, the Korean studies in China have covered the general trends in relationship between the United States and the Peninsula in the 1970s, the bilateral relations of the US-ROK and the US-DPRK and the case studies of various incidents which affected the relations between the United States and the countries of Korean Peninsula in the 1970s. At the same time, Chinese scholars have started to pay more attention to the two Koreas and their independence in dealing with great powers. In terms of material collection and utilization, Chinese scholars have improved their academic thinking and skills. They are no longer satisfied with simply translating materials and summarizing the views of foreign scholars. Chinese scholars now pay more attention to the collection of primary sources and archival materials in order to shape their own opinion. This undoubtedly is a sign of positive dynamics within the Chinese academia in general, and the field of Korean studies in particular.

Therefore, the problems that the Chinese academia is facing today can be divided into two different kinds: one is related to the necessity to use multinational declassified archival material more widely and systematically, in order to interpret the relevant countries' policy and to pay more attention to the Korean-American political exchanges on the lower level. The other kind are the problems that exist not only within the Chinese scholarly circles, but are commonplace for academia

in general, such as the necessity to pay more attention to the differences in the political process that shapes the foreign policy in relevant countries as well as the need to use more primary sources from China, Japan and other relevant countries.

With the declassification of the historical documents on the Korean Peninsula and the improvement of the theoretical level of scholarship, it can be expected that the Chinese scholars will continue to develop the field of Korean studies inside the country, raise it to a more comprehensive level, and thus, provide a better understanding of the historical background to the Korean issues that the world is facing today.

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