East Asian Security Today: Surprising Stability and Potential Flashpoints

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Themes and Goals

This unit explores the contemporary security situation in East Asia through student readings that provide differing views on the security outlook in East Asia and a student activity that examines one likely security flashpoint in the region — Taiwan's independence. The unit argues that there is more peace and stability in East Asia today (despite the persistence of real trouble spots that have the potential to disrupt such a trend) than is conventionally acknowledged by many observers. It also considers the validity of competing explanations of the region drawn from different aspects of international relations theory and security studies. In short, while the unit has a regional focus on East Asia and places a particular emphasis on China's position within the region, it is framed within the broader literature on international politics.

The unit draws on a recent collaborative project on Asian security that I conducted with JJ Suh and Peter Katzenstein (colleagues in Cornell's Government Department). Our research has been published in an edited volume entitled *Rethinking East Asian Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). There are three main points that emerge from this research and should be highlighted in the unit:

1. Over the course of the 1990s there was less conflict in the region than many expected — despite flare-ups and scrapes, large-scale military conflict has not taken place.

2. The security dynamic is complex, and the reasons for stability are embedded in a broad set of factors. When change occurs it is almost always due to an intersection of multiple factors.

3. The US role in the region is multi-faceted.

Audience and Uses

This unit could be used in courses including but not limited to:

- International Relations Theory
- Security Studies
- US Foreign Policy
- East Asian Politics
- East Asian Political Economy
- East Asian Nationalism
- Modern East Asian History (post Cold War)
- Contemporary Chinese Politics or Society
- Globalization
- China Taiwan cross-straits relations

Instructor Resources

There are two very useful websites to check on the day before using this unit if you are interested in tying it in with unfolding events in the region. The first is www.nautilus.org, a site that is dedicated to the study of arms control and proliferation issues and has a very comprehensive daily overview of the security situation in East Asia (as well as an archive of previous reports). The second is www.taiwansecurity.org, a site maintained by Phillip Yang of National Taiwan University, which is primarily focused on China and Taiwan, but also has a great deal of up to date reportage and analysis of the rest of the region as well.

Student Readings

*** Most important
** Recommended
* Optional

The articles listed here should work well as preparation for a week-long unit on Asian security. The two key articles to assign are the first Friedberg piece and Alagappa's chapter as they do an excellent job setting up contrasting outlooks on the region. The second Friedberg article is useful as it is quite short, and also updates the initial set of claims he made about Asia in the early 1990s. The additional readings would be very useful in a seminar, or upper-level lecture, as they contain a fairly extensive, thoughtful consideration of the theoretical issues raised in the Friedberg and Alagappa readings.

***FRIEDBERG, Aaron L. "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia." *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter, 1993/94): 3-33. Available Online through JSTOR.
**FRIEDBERG, Aaron L. "The struggle for mastery in Asia." *Commentary* 110, no. 4 (November, 2000): 17-27. Available Online through Proquest.

The first of these articles is probably the most cited piece on Asian security published during the last decade. In it, Friedberg, a professor at Princeton University, and an official advisor on East Asian security issues to the office of the Vice President, argued that Asia's future would closely resemble that of Europe's recent past. More specifically, Friedberg identified a number of factors emphasized within realist studies of international politics that seemed to indicate Asia was "ripe for rivalry." The 2000 article updates this thesis by acknowledging the lack of outright war in the region since the publication of the *International Security* article, but maintains that Asia's future is still quite bleak.

***ALAGAPPA, Muthiah. "Introduction: Predictability and Stability Despite Challenges." In *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*, edited by Muthiah Alagappa. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, pp. 1-30.

This introductory piece to Alagappa's third edited volume on Asian security takes direct issue with Friedberg's pessimism and realism. In contrast, Alagappa, the director of the East-West Center Washington and one of the most active figures in the field of Asian security studies, argues that there is a great deal more order within the region and a more complex set of causes, than the "ripe for rivalry thesis" can account for. Alagappa makes this argument by pointing to what he sees as multiple indications of peace within the region, and developing an integrative theoretical explanation of such a phenomenon.

*IKENBERRY, G. John and Michael MASTANDUNO, "Conclusion: Images of Order in the Asia Pacific and the Role of the United States," in John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia Pacific*. New York: Columbia University, 2003, pp. 421-439.

The authors of this chapter are noted experts in the field of international relations theory. Their approach to the region is comparable to Alagappa's, but places a heavier emphasis on the role of the US.

* Kang, David C. "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytic Frameworks," *International Security* 27, 4 (Spring 2003): 57-85. Available online through Project MUSE.

An excellent overview of recent academic and policy-oriented writing on the region. Kang in particular argues against an extension of theoretical lessons drawn from European experiences to the East Asian region.

* Suh, JJ, Peter Katzenstein, and Allen Carlson, *Rethinking Security in East Asia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

A comprehensive study of the region with contributions from top scholars in the field. Constitutes a sustained attempt to develop an eclectic, integrative approach to Asian security and show the benefits of doing so to both area specialists and generalists.

Student Activity: An Independent Taiwan?

Background Information

See also the China section of Background Information for the Instructor. While the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Beijing is adamant that the island is a part of China, Taiwan has remained outside the control of the People's Republic of China (PRC) ever since its founding in 1949.

For much of this time Taiwan was governed by the Guomindang (GMD; also Kuomintang/KMT) or Nationalist Party. The GMD governed the Republic of China on the mainland from 1912 until 1949 when they retreated to the island of Taiwan after being defeated by the Communists in the Chinese Civil War. After fleeing to the island, the GMD set up the ROC government in exile, and to this day Taiwan is also known as the Republic of China. While the GMD and CCP remained in staunch opposition to each other through the early 1980s, neither saw Taiwan as an independent entity (their point of contention was over who should rule all of China, not the island territory).

Over the last two decades the situation in Taiwan has changed in a dramatic fashion. The GMD has gone from the single legal political party on the island to one amongst a number of competing parties in an increasingly democratic political system. At the same time, Taiwanese identity has grown into a powerful force on the island with the Democratic Progressive Party or DPP, the party of current President CHEN Shuibian being the main beneficiary of such a shift. This development has resulted in a push to secure Taiwan's status as an independent state — a move that Beijing adamantly opposes and has promised to use force to prevent.

The US role in all of this is crucial. Washington was the main ally of the GMD in Taiwan through the early 1970s, officially recognizing the GMD's government on Taiwan as the legitimate government of China. In 1979, the US established formal diplomatic relations with the PRC government on mainland China and in so doing cut all official ties with Taiwan. However, soon after this change in American policy took place, Washington re-affirmed its commitment to defend Taiwan against attack through the passing of the Taiwan Relations Act (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive_Index/Taiwan_Relations_Act.html) and has shown its support for such a policy with repeated arms sales to the island in the 1980s and 1990s. During most of this period Washington, Taipei, and Beijing have reluctantly accepted the current status quo in Taiwan (de facto Taiwanese separation from the mainland, but no actual, or de jure recognition of this status). So, with a few notable exceptions (like the 1995-1996 crisis set off by then President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the US), a tenuous, but relatively stable, stand off has prevailed across the Taiwan Strait.

This being said, this ambiguous situation has been challenged by the words and actions of Taiwan's President CHEN Shui-bian. Chen has raised the stakes across the Taiwan Strait to a new high, and a peaceful resolution of the current stalemate there seems quite improbable. As Chen prepared for the March 2004 presidential election, he called a nation wide referendum related to the island's relations to the mainland on the same day that Taiwanese voters cast their ballots for president. While Chen's referendum gambit failed at the polls, he was able to win re-

election by a narrow margin, and is now governing Taiwan for a second four-year term. Therefore, the question of Taiwanese independence is likely to continue to occupy center stage in cross-Strait relations, and by extension in Sino-US relations.

Activity

Divide the class into four groups. Each group will discuss the questions below for about 15-20 minutes and come up with five recommendations that they will then report to the rest of the class. A representative from each group will deliver a report to the class. Reports should be no longer than four minutes. Briefly discuss each report after it is delivered. Leave at least ten minutes at the end of class for a less formally structured discussion of these issues.

Questions:

- If you were appointed by the United Nations Secretary General to investigate the situation across the Taiwan Strait and make recommendations to the UN for an equitable settlement of what Beijing calls the "Taiwan issue," what sort of roadmap for peace would you suggest?
- What is your sense of how each of the main players in the dispute would respond to your report?
- What actions could be taken to convince any one of the disputants to compromise?
- Who do you think has the normative high ground in the conflict and for what reasons?
- What similarities do you see between Taiwan's struggle with the mainland and other political and military conflicts around the globe?
- Is there a possibility that dispute resolutions that worked elsewhere might be applied here and, if not, why does it seem this conflict is even more volatile and less likely to be addressed via such mechanisms?

Background Information for the Instructor

This section provides a quick country-by-country tour of the East Asian region focusing on China, Japan, and Korea (North and South) with reference to three issues in each state: (1) conventional wisdom on main security issues within each country, (2) predominant and contradictory understandings of the US that have emerged in each over the last decade, and (3) recent developments regarding how Washington's new security agenda may change the status quo in each state (with reference to the war on terrorism and Iraq).

China

1. Conventional Wisdom: China is a "rising dragon" and a threat in the East Asian region.

a. Over the last two decades, Beijing has quietly become in many ways a status quo power with regard to many issues in the region.

- China's membership in international institutions and organizations has increased steadily and quite dramatically in the post-Mao period. From the mid 1960s to the mid 1990s, China moved from virtual isolation from international organizations (such as the

International Monetary Fund, International Labor Organization, and the International Atomic Energy Agency) to membership numbers that nearly match those of other nations of comparative size.
- In the United Nations Security Council, Beijing has been very reluctant to use its veto power.
- China has not been involved in a major border war since 1979.
- China is actively involved in both the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Security Co-operation Organization or Shanghai Six, which includes China, Russia, and four Central Asian nations.
- Since 2001, China has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO.)

b. On the other hand, the Chinese remain adamant about a number of issues that may cause Beijing to use force, or at least threaten to do so, in a way that would seriously undermine the current relatively, peaceful security dynamic in the region.

- China steadfastly maintains it right to rule over both Tibet and Xinjiang, despite the fact that many living in both regions refuse to recognize the legitimacy of Chinese rule and are actively pushing for independence from China. The most public face of such efforts is the Dalai Lama's international appeals to protect and save Tibet from China.
- While Tibet and Xinjiang are administered by Beijing and, unlikely to ever break away from China, Taiwan (Republic of China or ROC) has been outside of Beijing's control since 1949 when CHIANG Kai-shek's Guomindang (GMD; or Kuomintang/KMT) Party fled the mainland following its defeat to the Chinese Communist Party. During most of the period since 1949, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait agreed that there was only one China, but disagreed violently over who had the right to rule over such a state. Since the early 1990s with the democratization of Taiwan, the basic terms of the stand off between Beijing and Taipei changed, as many on the island began to think of its future apart from China. While the majority of people in Taiwan support the current status quo (which is de facto independence, with no de jure declaration of such a status), the ROC's previous (LEE Teng-hui) and current (CHEN Shui-Bian) Presidents both actively pushed for increasing Taiwan's independence within international politics. For both strategic and historical reasons, Beijing vehemently opposes this development, and has repeatedly threatened to use force to prevent any direct declaration of Taiwanese independence. The US position on this issue is a study in ambiguity. On the one hand, the US supports Beijing's contention that there is only one China; on the other hand, it is obligated (via the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act) to help defend Taiwan against any attack. The re-election of President Chen in the spring of 2004 has insured that cross-Straits relations are likely to remain quite turbulent in the coming years, a trend that will pose a real challenge to both Beijing and Washington.

2. Sino-US Relations

a. The complexity of the US-China relationship is embedded in a series of divergent trends. Economically, the two countries are closely linked and to a certain extent mutually dependent. In military affairs, the two sides are willing to cooperate on many issues, but divided over the Taiwan issue (a source of intense, prolonged tensions between Washington and Beijing). Culturally, China is more open today to the West than ever before since the 1949 establishment

of the PRC (but, at the same time China is far from becoming a democratic state in the way that South Korea and Japan have). Also, on both sides, conservative ideologues have seized on the mis-steps of the other side to bolster nationalist arguments about the need to counter growing threats. In other words, some in Washington have overstated the China threat to find support for the development of a national missile defense system, while at the same time some in Beijing have played up the American threat in an attempt to win more support for the rapid modernization of the Chinese military. Such efforts pose the biggest obstacle to sustaining relatively cooperative relations between the two sides.

b. Chinese perceptions of the US are deeply divided:

- Some Chinese citizens demonize the US, as was evident in the wave of protests following the 1999 American bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia.
- On both the elite and popular level there is a fascination with the West, especially the US. Beijing's main bookstores dedicate shelf after shelf to sensational memoirs of Chinese people who have spent time in the US, and advice books for would-be visa applicants. In elite circles, there are limited indications of a growing commitment to being part of international society and an understanding that within such a community China should act in a responsible fashion. In short, we can see that in an integrating China, the identity issue will become more complex and contested over time.

3. Recent Developments: Cooperation, but differing visions

a. Sino-US relations improved somewhat after 9/11 as Chinese leaders realized that both countries shared an interest in defending sovereign states against violent non-sovereign state actors.

- Rhetorical stance: Active and strong support for a global counter-terrorism coalition within the framework of the United Nations.
- Concrete actions: Joined the diplomatic coalition against global terrorism and has begun to share intelligence of global terrorism networks with the US.
- Intelligence sharing: A certain amount of cooperation and consultation has been under way since 2001. In September 2001, American and Chinese counter-terrorism experts held consultations in Washington. According to the spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, at the request of the American side, the public security departments of China have taken measures and assisted in terrorism investigations. Additional meetings were held in 2002. The US has also offered to help with security for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.
- During the October 19, 2001 meeting between President Bush and then president JIANG Zemin, both leaders agreed to establish a medium-and long-term mechanism of cooperation for combating terrorism. As the hosting country of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit meeting in Shanghai, China facilitated the passing of the APEC Leaders Statement on Counter-terrorism.
- On September 12, 2001, China voted in support of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1368, which "stresses that those responsible for aiding, supporting or harboring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these acts will be held accountable" and states "readiness to take all necessary steps to respond." Later that month, China also supported UN Security Council Resolution 1373 which laid out more

detailed, criminalizing provisions regarding the collection of funds for terrorism, denying safe havens, and preventing the movement of terrorists.

b. War in Iraq: China has generally reacted to the war with unease and misgivings, but voiced only limited opposition to the war before the start of hostilities. Opposition to the war has grown over time.

- Several factors contribute to China's reaction. These include increased resentment of the US, the realization of the absolute necessity of foreign oil supplies, and the need for a stable international environment to continue economic growth.
- Washington gave Beijing a gift prior to JIANG Zemin's visit to Bush's Texas ranch in October 2002 — the US placed the East Turkestan Independence Movement, a group that advocates the independence of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang Province (Northwest China), on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations. Evidence suggests that China has used the mantle of the war on terrorism to escalate a crack down in Xinjiang.
- In February 2003, democracy activist WANG Bingzhang, a Chinese citizen with an American Green Card, was sentenced to life on charges of espionage and supporting terrorism within China.
- China has generally maintained a low profile in the United Nations Security Council. This is in line with DENG Xiaoping's famous *taoguang yanghui* doctrine — "to hide one's capacities and bide one's time," or less ominously simply lay low.

Japan

1. Conventional Wisdom: Japan is either a pacifist state or militaristic one**.**
Data exists to support either claim.

a. Those who support the idea of a militaristic Japan can point to the following:

- In 1999, Japan's legislative body, the Diet, enacted legislation to implement new defense guidelines giving the Japanese military broader missions.
- In April 2001, controversial junior high-school history and social studies textbooks that downplayed Japanese aggression in Asia and are tinged with nationalistic sentiments passed screening by the Ministry of Education

b. Those who support the idea of a pacifist Japan highlight the following:

- Since 1993, Japan, seeking to enhance mutual confidence on security, economic, and environmental issues, has participated with China, Russia, South Korea, and the United States in the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD).

c. In reality, both contentions don't stand up under close examination. The more accurate interpretation is that the multilateralism that Japan has traditionally supported has been modest. It comprises both formal and informal bilateral approaches, supplemented by nascent forms of multilateralism. Japan will defend itself, within the umbrella of US security assurances, and with an attempt to build multilateral ties in the region.

d. Analysis that focuses solely on material capabilities tend to equate Japan's economic rise with an eventual drive by Japan for military dominance in the East Asian region. Such an explanation overlooks the extent to which Japanese interests and identities were re-shaped by World War II and its aftermath. In contrast, simply assuming that Japan is a pacifist state because it has not actively re-armed itself and participates in numerous multilateral forums, overlooks that fact that Japan's influence in the region is expanding and may, under changed conditions (either a re-distribution of power within the region, or a shift in domestic political coalitions within Japan), use such measures to become a more assertive power in East Asia. To date, Japan has not behaved in this fashion, as its policy has been grounded in a combination of factors that push it in the direction of working to maintain stability within the region.

2. Japan-US Relations: Dealing with being the only Westernized Asian state.

a. Japan is squarely within the US security umbrella (both during the Cold War, and after). The strength of such ties is evident in the enhanced security mechanisms Tokyo and Washington agreed to in the 1990s.

b. Japanese youth have embraced American popular culture. Japan is the most well-established, deeply entrenched, democracy in East Asia (a system that only took root following the post-WWII US occupation of the country.)

c. Despite such close ties with the US, Japan remains steadfastly Japanese (i.e. assimilation into Western culture has only progressed so far). The dilemma for Japan is, as has long been the case, how to be both a part of the West and maintain a unique Japanese identity. This situation creates a great deal of ambiguity in Japanese national identity, its role in the region, and US-Japan relations.

d. As a result of such tensions, Japan has struggled to define its relationship with the West (especially the US).

e. One way to deal with this issue has been for some in Japan to promote a return to Japanese nationalism. This development has complicated trade relations with the US, and more recently spilled over into territorial disputes with Japan's Asian neighbors over the following islands: with China over the Senkaku (Ch: Diaoyu) Islands, with South Korea over the Takeshima (K: Tokdo) Islands, and with Russia over the Northern Territories (Southern Kuriles).

3. Recent Developments

a. September 11 presented the Japanese government with an opportunity to show resolve and to preempt the criticism of being a do-nothing power. Examples:

- Prime Minister Junichiro KOIZUMI quickly committed Japan to a seven-point emergency plan in support of possible US countermeasures in Afghanistan
- An emergency law quickly enacted by the Diet in October 2001, empowered the Japanese military to provide logistical support to US and other military forces engaged in anti-terrorist missions countering the attack on September 11 anywhere in the world.

- In 2003, Koizumi issued a statement at the start of the war in Iraq that Japan supported the US position saying, "history has proved that there are some cases in which a nation must act" and the US action is in line with the UN Charter.
- On the heals of this statement the Diet began work to once again revised the guidelines for the Japanese military to make it easier for Japan to participate in conflict; again this was temporary legislation with promises to send troops.

b. Japanese citizens engaged in large-scale demonstrations against the war in Iraq. As many as 80% expressed opposition to the war. At the same time, Koizumi's own approval rating has dipped below 50%.

c. What is interesting about these developments is how they have been interpreted by others in the region — while the US has pressed for more involvement, Japans' neighbors have seen each of these trends as evidence of creeping Japanese militarism.

<u>The Koreas</u>

1. Conventional Wisdom: The North as part of the "axis of evil," the South as a stalwart ally

a. Questioning the North Korean Threat — North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or DPRK) is less dangerous than commonly portrayed.

- Despite recent developments, the extent of the North Korean nuclear arsenal is far from clear, and probably less extensive than is often reported.
- It is unclear if North Korea actually has enough plutonium to build a bomb — estimates in 2003 ranged from seven to twelve kilograms (KG). (Somewhere between four and ten KGs are needed to build a bomb.) In 2004, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that North Korea had less than one KG. It is unknown what has been done with spent fuel rods in previously undisclosed sites (prior to the 1994 agreement in which the US and the DPRK declared moves toward normalization of political relations and strengthening international nuclear nonproliferation.) — at this point all we have is uncertainty rather than clear evidence of capacity. Although, at the same time, it is increasingly apparent that the North is committed to building up its nuclear weapons capacity.
- North Korean missile capacity is quite limited.
    - According to a 2001 American National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) the current North Korean missile project the Taepodong 2 would have a 10,000 kilometer range — enough to strike Alaska and Hawaii, while the next generation of missiles (the Taepodong 3) could hit the entire US. However, this overlooks the fact that North Korea has actually done one test of comparable missiles, and this test failed.
    - Shorter range missiles like the ND-1 exist and with a 1,300 mile range can strike Japan, but there has only been one known test of these missiles in 1993.
    - The rest of what North Korea has are scuds based on 1940s technology. The North's other more advanced weapons are just piggybacking on such backward technology, which raises real questions about future advances.

b. Questioning South Korea's (Republic of Korea) Ties to the US

- On the one hand, South Korea is entirely dependent on the US for security guarantees (i.e. protection from the North). It is a new democracy largely modeled on Western systems of democratic governance, and cultural and educational ties between South Korea and the US are extremely robust.
- On the other hand, in recent years there has been a growth of strong Korean nationalist sentiment in the South which places a premium on re-uniting the peninsula. These supporters of reunification resent the ongoing US presence in South Korea as an obstacle to such a goal. Evidence of such resentment is obvious in South Korea's rejection of President Bush's labeling the North as part of the "axis of evil," and in protests against the actions of US troops stationed in the South.
- So far, the strength of the South's ties to the US have over-ridden rising resentment, but the existence of this later trend should call attention to the fact that the Korea-US alliance should not be taken for granted by policy makers in Washington, D.C. and is likely to constitute an obstacle in the overall development of the relationship over time.

c. In terms of international relations theory and security studies, the complex realities of the North Korean threat and South Korean ties with the US cannot be explained by a single factor. According to material capabilities alone, North Korea does not pose a serious threat to the US (yet, it has attracted a great deal of attention in Washington in this regard, in no small part due to power of ideas about such a threat). In the case of US-South Korean relations, simply looking at close military ties between South Korea and the US, brackets a significant and dynamic facet of the relationship, mainly changing Korean perceptions of the US and the growth of Korean nationalism.

2. US-South Korean Relations

a. At the end of the 1990s the two Koreas made historic strides to overcome the conflict between them and develop a more cooperative relationship.

- This process was largely the product of the efforts of then South Korean President KIM Dae-Jung, whose efforts were dubbed the "sunshine policy".
- The high point of this effort was the 2000 summit between Kim and North Korean leader KIM Jong-Il that laid the groundwork for further exchanges, dialogues, and political rapprochement. The two leaders even agreed that their reunification policies shared a common ground.

b. President Bush's 2002 state of the union address placed North Korea on "the axis of evil," a move that sent a chill over the Korean peninsula. North Korea retaliated by calling the US the "empire of devil," intensifying the war of words and deepening the discursive enmity.

c. Since that time recriminations between the two sides have expanded, and a crisis has unfolded on the peninsula as the North has been accused of (and later proclaimed) re-starting a nuclear program in violation of its 1994 agreement to curb such activities.

d. Six Party Talks (involving the US, Japan, China, Russia, and the two Koreas) have been established to resolve the crisis, but despite three rounds of meetings (as of summer 2004), little progress has been made on this front. Moreover, it has revealed deep differences between South Korea and the US on how to deal with the North, with the US pushing for total, verifiable disarmament before talking with North Korea, and South Korea attempting to work more directly with the North prior to such a development.

3. Other recent Developments

a. The South Korean leadership has supported the US war in Iraq, while the South Korean population has generally opposed the war.
b. There have been rapid changes in South Korean domestic politics — namely the election of President ROH Moo-hyun, followed by a spring 2004 attempt to impeach him. Roh, a former human rights lawyer and pro-democracy advocate, rode to victory in 2002 by campaigning on an anti-corruption platform and by tapping into anti-American sentiment, especially among younger voters, by calling for greater autonomy from the US regarding North Korean policy. However, his popularity began to fall, ultimately resulting in the impeachment attempt, because of domestic political scandals and general disapproval over his running of the economy and foreign relations.
c. In 2004, President Roh pledged to send troops to Iraq despite controversy among supporters and the Korean public. South Korea has a history of deploying troops to support US war efforts. During the Vietnam War, South Korea sent the second largest contingent of troops, totaling more than 300,000 men. Troop deployment to Iraq has become increasingly unpopular, especially after the kidnapping and execution of a South Korean civilian in Iraq in June 2004, just before the troop deployment.