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**EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS**

**TITLE/TITRE**

**The Implications of the US Military Transformation  
for the Republic of Korean Military**

By Lt Col Jongsoon, KIM (KOREA)

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## INTRODUCTION

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Korea (ROK) announced the official long-term defence plan for the future Korea national security. It was aimed to achieve an ‘Advanced, Elite, and Strong Force’ together with its people. In fact, Korean armed forces have accomplished their missions with excellence and provided the foundation on which this nation has been able to accomplish its rapid economic growth and development in the midst of military confrontation and territorial division of South and North Korea.

However, being under the ROK-US alliance system for more than half a century, Korean national defence institutions have seen little significant change. Consequently, it desperately needs to reform to actively cope with rapid changes in the security environment and recent technological developments.<sup>1</sup>

To this end, the new Lee Myung-Bak administration’s National Vision is ‘a country that stands tall in the world through advancement.’ The government is working to create a country that fulfills its roles and responsibilities in the international community.<sup>2</sup> Taking a more prominent role in world affairs will require Korea to collaborate with the US.

Especially given North Korea’s nuclear bomb and missile programs, the security environment of The Korean peninsula is under flux. Thus, understanding the U.S. Military Transformation (MT) on relevance array of strategic issues, a core capability in the U.S. national security strategy, is critical.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of National Defence, The Republic of Korea, *Defence Reform 2020: The Way Ahead*, available at [www.mnd.go.kr](http://www.mnd.go.kr), p.3.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mnd.go.kr/mndEng/About MND/profile/speech/200818821/1\\_3600.jsp](http://www.mnd.go.kr/mndEng/About%20MND/profile/speech/200818821/1_3600.jsp); internet; accessed 27 March 2009.

## **METHOD AND SCOPE**

This paper starts by examining US MT program and its implications to the ROK Defence Reform Plan. Considering the new security environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it can be argued that the ROK-US alliance is the most important for deterring North Korean Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) development. Without understanding MT, South Korea will face challenges in interoperability and the ROK-US alliance itself could be strained. Given the importance of this subject, this paper will examine the various concepts of MT, and its progress. Consequently, through the understanding of US MT, the main purpose of this paper is to examine its implication for The ROK Defence Reform.

This paper is structured in four parts. First, it will address why the US military is transforming. Second, this paper will examine in detail key US MT concepts and components. Third, it will address impacts and implications upon the ROK defence. Finally, this paper will conclude with recommendation.

## **WHY US MILITARY IS TRANSFORMING**

On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2001 George W. Bush became the 43rd president of the United States. In his inauguration speech, he declared:

“We will build our defence beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge. We will confront weapons of mass destruction, so that a new century is spared new horrors. The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake: America remains engaged in the world by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favors freedom. We will defend our allies and our interests. We will show purpose without arrogance. We will meet aggression

and bad faith with resolve and strength. And to all nations, we will speak for the values that gave our nation birth.”<sup>3</sup>

President Bush pledged that the US would not retreat inside its own borders and it would continuously engage in international affairs and world trade. At the beginning of his administration, however, the US military and foreign strategy was limited to selective engagement. This strategy changed significantly after the 9/11 terror attack. The Bush Administration then pursued a policy of American internationalism which espoused American values and national interests abroad.

The US armed forces are an important element of this strategy. An enormous effort to develop the armed forces is being undertaken to meet the new security environment. This development, coined the “Military Transformation (MT),” was led by the US Secretary of Defence Ronald Rumsfeld. Accordingly, MT became a basic requirement to preserve American values and national interests. Operations Iraqi Freedom and Operations Enduring Freedom continue to show the evolution of war in the future security environment.

## **CONCEPT OF MILITARY TRANSFORMATION**

Since the inauguration of President Bush in 2001, interest in MT was accelerated by the publication of the Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) 2001.<sup>4</sup> In the report, Rumsfeld stated that four key goals would guide the development of US force

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<sup>3</sup> George W. Bush First Inaugural Address Saturday, January 20, 2001  
<http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres66.html> ; internet ; accessed 26 December 2008

<sup>4</sup> On 30 September 2001, US Department of National Defence (DND) issued its Quadrennial Defence Review Report (QDR). Rumsfeld announced that the major goal of MT was a transition from a threat-based model to a capability-based model to cope with future threats.

capabilities: assuring allies and friends of US steadiness of purpose and its capability to fulfill its security commitments; dissuading adversaries from undertaking programs of operations that could threaten US interests or those of its allies and friends; deterring aggression and coercion by deploying forward the capacity to swiftly defeat attacks and impose secure penalties for aggression on an adversary's military capability and supporting infrastructure; and decisively defeating any adversary if deterrence fails.<sup>5</sup> Rumsfeld's direction represented a change from a threat-based to a capabilities-based model. In other words, for the benefit of US and its allies, US is trying to maximize its military capability.

The Dictionary defines transformation as "the act of transforming or the state of being transformed" or "a marked change in appearance or character, especially one for the better."<sup>6</sup> However, transformation in the military implies much more than this simple definition. The 'Transformation Study Report', for example, issued by the US Department of National Defence describes military transformation as "Changes in the concepts, organization, process, technology application and equipment through which significant gains in operational effectiveness, operation efficiencies and/or cost reductions are

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<sup>5</sup> DoD, *Quadrennial Defence Review Report* (Washington: 2001), p. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/transformation>; internet; accessed 1 February 2009.

achieved.”<sup>7</sup> This definition is refined and includes not only state-of-the-art technology but also ‘organization’ and ‘process.’

Meanwhile, the Transformation Planning Guidance (TPG), published in 2003 by US DoD, provides that transformation is,

a process that shapes the changing nature of military competition and cooperation through new combinations of concepts, capabilities, people and organizations. One exploits one’s nation’s advantages and protects against one’s asymmetric vulnerabilities to sustain their strategic position, which helps underpin and stability in the world.<sup>8</sup>

The constant theme in the two definitions is that the US’s MT has a concrete purpose. Keeping this in mind, the US has sought to transform its military by promoting a culture of innovative leadership, adjudicating risk using future operating concepts, and transforming key capabilities.<sup>9</sup> There are three parts to the US MT :

<Table 1.> Components of Defence Transformation

Transformation of Technologies and Weapons	Transformation of Force Structures	Transformation of Force Operations
Information systems and grids Technologies and subcomponents Legacy weapon systems New platforms Smart munitions	Combat force structures and organizations Logistic support and mobility C4ISR Domestic/overseas - infrastructure	Joint/service doctrines Networking of forces Regional commander in chief’s operation plan and campaign plans Interoperability with allies

SOURCE: Hans Binnendijk, *Transforming America’s Military* (Washington: National Defence University Press, 2002). p 61.

<sup>7</sup> Transformation Study Report April 27 2001 p 5.

<sup>8</sup> Transformation Planning Guidance, April 2003, p 3.

<sup>9</sup> Transformation Planning Guidance, April 2003, p 8-9.

To expand our understanding of MT, it is worth examining the motive. There are three which are very closely related and driving the US MT: (1) the new security environment represented by the post-cold war, (2) the new mission which the 21<sup>st</sup> century granted military, and (3) new national security goals of the US.

The first imperative of MT is “the new security environment in the post 9/11 era”.

The number of casualties of 9/11 was huge. It also amplified the worry of a possible attack by terrorists using WMD. There are a number of other significant threats. First, a number of states have the capability and desire to threaten US national interests through coercion and aggression. Second, transnational threats do not respect national borders and often arise from non-state actors, such as terrorists and criminal organizations. Third, weapons of mass destruction pose the greatest potential threat to global stability and security. Fourth, we can expect that despite international prevention efforts, some states will be unable to provide basic governance, safety and security. Lastly, environmental and health problems can undermine the welfare of US and allies.<sup>10</sup>

The theories on world order are relevant to the new security environment: the balance of power theory and the theory of hegemonic stability. The former has a long history; however, as the collapse of Soviet Union was not caused by US conventional attack, this theory is not suitable for current security environment. Thus, the theory of hegemonic stability is the nature of the current world order which is favorable to US. It is perhaps best summarized by Samuel P. Huntington:

Contemporary international politics is a uni-multipolar system with one superpower and several major powers. The settlement of key international issues requires action by the single superpower but

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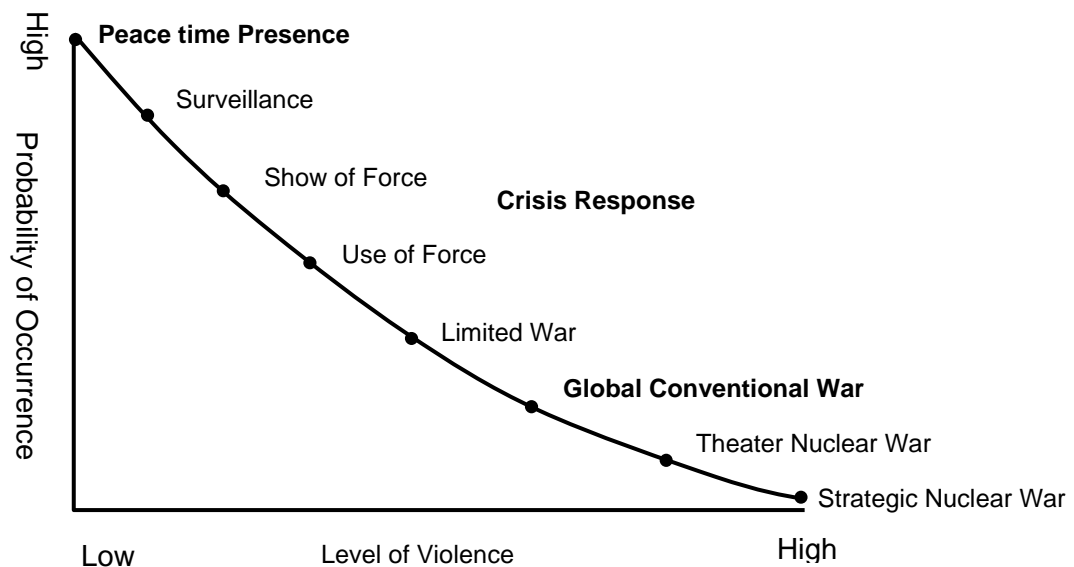
<sup>10</sup> A National Security Strategy for A New Century (The White House, Dec. 1999), p 2-3.



always with some combination of other major states; the single superpower can, however, veto action on key issues by combinations of other states. The United States, of course, is the sole state with preeminence in every domain of power -- economic, military, diplomatic, ideological, technological, and cultural -- with the reach and capabilities to promote its interests in virtually every part of the world.<sup>11</sup>

The second imperative of MT responds to the “new mission required in the 21<sup>st</sup> century post cold war world.”(Table 2.) Under the new security environment in which uncertainty has increased, there are several capabilities and missions that are required by the new armed forces.<sup>12</sup> These missions are represented by the Spectrum of Conflict model below. (Figure 1.)

<Figure 1.>



Source: *The Maritime Strategy*, U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, January 1986 supplement, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Lonely Superpower,” *Foreign Affairs*, 78-2(March/April, 1999): 35-37.

<sup>12</sup> Transforming the U.S. global defence posture-Under Secretary of Defence for Policy 2004. 5. 20.

The Armed forces defined their activities and structure by using this spectrum of conflict model during the cold war period. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the possibility of a strategic nuclear war all but disappeared. As a current American military commitment demonstrates, the spectrum is moving toward to left side of the graph. Clearly, although a global war has become unlikely following the end of the cold war, other things such as non-state terrorism, international crime, and destruction of nature have emerged as more important and more likely issues for national security.

<Table 2. New missions for the military>

<b>Survival Interests</b>	Survival of the Nation	Territorial Integrity	Economic Security
	Nuclear deterrence National missile defence Strategic reconnaissance	Critical infrastructure protection Counter proliferation Counterterrorism	Freedom of seas and space Access to raw materials and SLOC protection Integrity of financial operations(against foreign threat) Counterdrug and counter international crime operations
<b>Vital Interests</b>	Defence of Treaty Allies	Defence of Democratic and Pivot States	Deter of Win Regional Conflict
	Overseas and forward presence Power projection and conventional rapid response Conventional C4ISR	Forward presence with limited infrastructure support Long and intermediate-range strike Special operations	Forward presence with limited infrastructure support Counter-antiaccess operations Long and intermediate-range strike Special operations
<b>Value Interests</b>	Prevent Internal Conflict or Peacemaking		Peace Operations
	Noncombatant evacuation Low-intensity conflict Special operations Peace enforcement Psychological operations Civil-military affairs Foreign military training C4ISR support		Multinational peacekeeping Peacetime military engagement Humanitarian assistance Other interagency assistance

*Source:* Hans Binnendijk, Transformation America's Military (Washington: National Defence University Press. 2002)

The third imperative responds to the new national security goals. Highly enduring in nature, US national objectives remain the establishment of national security, economic prosperity, the spread of democracy, and human rights improvement. The foreign policy objectives are international peace-keeping, expansion of the democratic system, and sustained economic development. All of them have not changed.

In 2002, the National Security Strategy of the United States of America stressed the requirement to obtain these objectives. The key focal areas were to:

- Champion aspirations for human dignity;
- Strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends;
- Work with others to defuse regional conflicts;
- Prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction;
- Ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade;
- Expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;
- Develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power; and
- Transform America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.<sup>13</sup>

## **MAIN CONTENTS OF MILITARY TRANSFORMATION**

MT started well before the Bush Administration; however, it was intensively developed during his tenure. Bush's national security strategy was characterized by

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<sup>13</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (The White House, Sep. 2002): Chap 1.

American Internationalism. He revealed plans to transform the US armed forces to confront the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a speech.

We have to think differently, the enemy who appeared on Sept. 11 seeks to avoid our strengths and constantly searches for our weaknesses. So America is required once again the way our military thinks and fights.<sup>14</sup>

As well, Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld expressed his perspective on MT:

We must change not only the capabilities at our disposal, but also how we think about war. Imagine for a moment that you could go back in time and give a knight in King Arthur's court an M-16. If he takes that weapon, gets back on his horse, and uses the stock to knock in his opponent's head, that is not transformation. Transformation occurs when he gets behind a tree and starts shooting. All the high-tech weapons in the world won't transform the U.S. armed forces unless we also transform the way we think, train, exercise, and fight.<sup>15</sup>

Based upon these perspectives, it is clear that the development of advanced technology is one of the most important issues. One can say that it is not an exaggeration to say that the US remains the world hegemony based on superior technology and armed forces. Among all the modern methods of war, a precision-guided munition is one of the most important technologies. The use of precision-guided weapon in the war in IRAQ result an increasingly higher percentage of target success. During the Gulf War in 1991, the rate was 7.7% however; Iraq War in 2003, the rate increased to 67%.

With the development of this type of military technology, American power projection capabilities have increased. The most significant development is low

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.defencelink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=4435>; internet; accessed 21 January 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2002): 29.

observable technology or stealth technology. Stealth technology has a big advantage because it can penetrate through high threat enemy areas then employ precision-guided munitions. Even though the portion of stealth aircraft (F-117) in Gulf War was only below 2% among all fighter aircraft, it covered 43% of all the primary targets.

Moreover, battlespace awareness and control technology contributed to the reduction of the fog of war. Satellites and manned/unmanned aircraft vehicles made it possible to monitor specific battlefield with great degree.

Second, the strengthening of joint operations capability remains the core of the joint concept development and the achievement of interoperability. To enhance these abilities, US DoD's overall strategy for transformation consists of three parts: transforming culture; transforming processes; and transforming capabilities through military transformation.<sup>16</sup> The US assumes that alliances and future partners will eagerly maintain interoperability with US in the way of achieving the transformation. Hence, the US thinks that international military cooperation is important to keep the US's national interests.

Under the new security environment, the US is required to have unprecedented information capability specially in network centric force, because it can not know when, where, and how enemy will attack. Although the current US intelligence capabilities are outstanding, further efforts to increase the information capacity continue to advance.

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<sup>16</sup> DoD, Military Transformation: A Strategic Approach(Washington: 2003, fall), p. 20.

On November 25, 2003 President Bush announced the strengthening of a report the review of foreign troops.<sup>17</sup> After this, the plan has been attracting the attention called Global Posture Review Report (GPR). Based on changes in international security environment, the DoD's new strategic approach was reoriented to develop a basing system that provides greater flexibility for US forces in critical areas of the world, placing emphasis on additional bases and stations beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia.<sup>18</sup>

In the context of these issues, each forces is also trying to transform themselves. The Air Force is moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an expeditionary aerospace force. The Navy is developing new concepts of maritime pre-positioning, high-speed sealift, and new amphibious capabilities for the Marine Corps.<sup>19</sup> Creating a modular organization is an important component in Army transformation. In line with Rumsfeld's long-standing view that the force should be more deployable, responsive and flexible, he also initiated a major change in the military's worldwide force posture in conjunction with a major domestic Base Realignment and Closure(BRAC) effort.

## **WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS UPON SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY**

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<sup>17</sup> Original sentence is "We will ensure that we place the right capabilities in the most appropriate location to best address the new security environment."

<sup>18</sup> DoD, Quadrennial Defence Review Report (Washington: 2001. Sep. 30), p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> DoD, Quadrennial Defence Review Report (Washington: 2001. Sep. 30), p. 27.

Like Rumsfeld's plan to transform the Department of Defence, the ROK Defence Reform Plan has addressed long-standing issues that have ranged across the gamut of Ministry of National Defence (MND) activities and provoked considerable controversy. The plan, entitled "National Defence Reform," envisions a major overhaul of the military by 2020. It is not as far-reaching as Rumsfeld's transformation plan, but is certainly radical in Korean terms.<sup>20</sup>

The ROK Defence Reform Plan 2020 was implemented in 2003. The Plan lays the groundwork for a transition from a conscript-based force to a professional one. It reduces the size of the Army relative to the other services, giving the Navy and Air Force more power and influence over all aspects of force posture. It will reduce the proportion of draftees, shift many tasks from the military to civilians, and outsource many others. In the course of replacing all major weapons systems, it will also transform logistics operations as well.<sup>21</sup>

Specifically, key elements include a major downsizing of the military and a move away from what the MND terms "its manpower-centric large force structure;"<sup>22</sup> exploiting the latest developments in information technology; enhancing the armed forces' operational planning and execution capability; creating a more efficient and

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<sup>20</sup> Dov S. Zakheim, U.S. Military Transformation and the Lessons for South Korea on its Path Toward Defence Reform 2020. *The Korea Journal of Defence Analysis*, Vol. XIX, No. 4 (Winter 2007): 22.

<sup>21</sup> For an extended discussion of the issues surrounding the Defence Reform Plan, see Bruce W. Bennett, A Brief Analysis of the Republic of Korea's Defence Reform Plan (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006). Bennett summarizes the risks to the plan on pp. 35-39.

<sup>22</sup> The Ministry of National Defence, The Republic of Korea, *Defence Reform 2020: The Way Ahead*, available at [www.mnd.go.kr](http://www.mnd.go.kr), p.4.

rational defence management structure; and, most importantly, changing what the MND identified as “an outdated military culture.”<sup>23</sup>

In terms of ROK-US alliance, one of the greatest success stories in the history of alliances worldwide, the best description of the alliance is a slogan “we go together.” This is a slogan of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command (CFC). The security commitment of the United States, backed up by the ROK-US Mutual Defence Treaty and US Forces in Korea (USFK), has been on the most crucial factors in maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, the present and future security environment of the globe is very much unclear, and it is true in North-East Asia as well. Recently, the US National Defence Strategy (NDS, June 2008) said that the foreseeable future environment will be defined by a global struggle against a violent extremist ideology and the quest by rogue states for nuclear weapons and rising military power of other states.<sup>25</sup> On top of that, US think that they must harness and integrate all aspects of national power and work closely with a wide range of alliances, friends and partners. This means that US wants to manage unstable areas which are Iran and North Korea through close cooperation with existing allies.

The ROK Defence Reform Plan is thus required to prepare itself not only for the North Korea threat, but also for the future security environment and related issues. As

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<sup>23</sup> The Ministry of National Defence, The Republic of Korea, *Defence Reform 2020: The Way Ahead*, available at [www.mnd.go.kr](http://www.mnd.go.kr), p.5.

<sup>24</sup> Du-Hyeogn Cha, *The Future of the ROK-US Alliance: Toward the Evolution of a Strategic Cooperation Alliance*. *KIAD PAPERS* No.7 (December 2004): 5.

<sup>25</sup> National Defence Strategy, DoD U.S.(June 2008) p 2.



well, considering US recognition on counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation, those strategies will continue to be the main theme in the international strategic field; consequently, the ROK will be requested to make a contribution to accomplishing such goals.

However; there are some difficulties in the ROK Defence Reform. First, excessive expenditure on defence management is a hindrance to invest in force improvement, modernization of the weapon systems, training and building of an elite force. Therefore it is timely and necessary to improve the military structure and the defence management system for a balanced budget allocation and technology-centered elite force.

Second, because the ROK military priority lies in early militarization to defend against intermittent threats from North Korea, the ROK has focused on efforts to build superiority over North Korea in terms of military capability, which resulted in a wide gap between military technology and highly-improved technology in general.

Therefore, the ROK Defence Reform should give birth to reasonable result especially for the ROK-US alliances.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS/ WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE**

In the conclusion of NDS 2008, the U.S. indicated that it can not win the “Long War” and nor successfully address other security challenges alone. Rather, forging a new consensus for a livable world requires constant effort and unity of purpose amongst American allies. Similarly, the ROK should implement an audacious defence reform. One

can say that the ROK-US alliance finds itself in a process of irresistible transformation. Also, this corresponds to the enhanced national prestige that Korea has gained in the global community. As well, the ROK and the US are working toward transferring the wartime operation control (OPCON) of the ROK military to the chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).<sup>26</sup>

Given the requirement, the ROK should pay close attention to some lessons from US MT. Points to consider include:

Korea must be equipped with combat capabilities strong enough to alone deter the threat of a potential enemy nation. When deterrence fails, Korea should be able to defeat adversaries with minimal damage. On further, improving planning capability in terms of strategic and operational level is important as software of the military capability. Therefore, undergoing preparation of transferring operational wartime control should be done with great concern. These are fundamental requirements to Korea's national security.

Second, considering the political and economical situation of Northeast Asia, the direction of transformation should lie in securing reasonable sufficiency in the peninsular. In other words, reasonable sufficiency means securing defence capabilities sufficient enough to defend itself by effectively utilizing its own limited resources and securing external assistance.

Third, the roll will require significant organizational change. The present organization which is highly conservative and inefficient should be changed to a revolutionary and change-receptive organization. For restructuring of the military,

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<sup>26</sup> The two sides have agreed to transfer the OPCON on 17 April 2012. The OPCON of ROK forces is currently under control of the commander of ROK-US Combined Forces Command(CFC)

administrative units and support units should be slimmed down by utilizing a common support system without downgrading the support capability in each service.

Fourth, culture change is also a necessary condition for successful transformation. Loss of focus on cultural change among uniformed military and defence department civilian will undo progress which is made in matters of acquisition, training, logistics and operations.<sup>27</sup>

Last, it is important to realize that the ability to control change appropriately will determine the nation's future. This applies to all members of the ROK from the senior leadership to rank-and-file soldiers. Most importantly, ROK needs its own military transformation strategy as US MT is based on the expansive geography of North America. Therefore, the ROK needs to develop its MT strategy which can meet the requirement that tailored to its territory.

Even though, defence reform will be an arduous process, it is vital to the security of the ROK. As well, if one considers the revolutionary change of US military, and US national security strategy, the ROK Defence Reform should reflect lessons from US MT as much as possible.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper examined the U.S. MT composed of three major parts and its implication to the ROK Defence Reform 2020. The U.S. MT is composed of new technology, doctrine, and organization. These form the key issues in US national security strategy. Several implications arose from the analysis of the ROK Defence Reform Plan:

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<sup>27</sup> Dov S. Zakheim, U.S. Military Transformation and the Lessons for South Korea on its Path Toward Defence Reform 2020. *The Korean Journal of Defence Analysis*, Vol. XIX, No. 4 (Winter 2007): 5-28.

equipping Korea with combat capability, securing reasonable sufficiency, organizational change, cultural change and a realization that the ability to control the process of change appropriately will determine the nation's future.

The US MT provides many lessons to the ROK. Primarily, the ROK needs to adapt its strategy to cope with the unpredictable future of conflict. The key point is that the ROK should start its '**own**' reform plan to meet the requirement of changing world politics and the future military security environment.

One can say that the ROK defence reform plan should not be the same as the US MT in context and scope because the ROK and US situation are completely different. To change the ROK military from an old fashion force to a technology based force like US is not feasible for KOREA. The US is the only nation in the world to pursue their style of MT.

In conclusion, the ROK-US alliance is a crucial issue for the security of Korea, especially in an unstable future security environment. It is not easy to reform an organization. The same can be said for the ROK Military Reform Plan. Despite the fact that the global economy is in decline, the ROK should maintain its large defence budget due to the threat from North Korea. Furthermore, the US MT has been positioned at the core of national security strategy. Therefore, the ROK should seriously consider the US MT and pursue their Military Reform Plan, thereby enhancing ROK-US alliance and interoperability.

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