

Naval Strategy in Northeast Asia: Geo-strategic Goals, Policies, and Prospects

By Duk-Ki Kim , Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy.

261 pages. Frank Cass, London. 2000.

The end of the Cold War, which essentially meant the end of the United States and Soviet Union confrontation, has brought an unpredictable international order. This transformation has caused a change in the geo-strategic maritime environment in Northeast Asia. The majority of sub-regional disputes and high-intensity issues are primarily maritime in nature and, hence, require a maritime response. In addition, the regional states are rearming their naval forces faster than any other region in the world. This has all led to the creation of an extremely volatile situation where the potential for conflict is serious. *Naval Strategy in Northeast Asia* written by Commander Duk-Ki Kim, Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy, examines the security concerns facing the regional maritime area of common interest. He suggests that the best means of reducing the possibility of naval confrontation in the region is a co-operative maritime security structure which will assist in stabilizing the Northeast Asian maritime security environment.

Commander Duk-Ki Kim sets out his proposal for a co-operative maritime security structure by reviewing the general theories relating to maritime security. He analyzes the objectives and outcomes of three co-operative maritime security frameworks: naval arms control, maritime confidence-building and maritime co-operation measures. Duk-Ki Kim uses these three security frameworks as a theoretical background in order to establish a possible dialogue on regional maritime co-operation. This is best accomplished by taking into account the regional security situation and the security proposals that already exist. Duk-Ki Kim addresses how co-operative methods, that find their roots in European security measures, are regarded as security *with* rather than *against* an adversary. Eric Grove first introduced the application of this framework to maritime issues in his 1990 book *Maritime Strategy and European Security*. Commander Kim's book outlines how the flexibility of co-operative security allows for both formal and informal security policies that can successfully be applied to the security situation of Northeast Asia.

Commander Kim does an excellent job of outlining the regional naval arms build-up and the territorial and boundary disputes' impact upon the geo-strategic environment. He addresses not only the traditional security concerns but also the more non-traditional, including pollution, piracy, and marine resources. These changing strategic relations have created unprecedented opportunities for the development of new thinking about resolving the current maritime issues facing the region. The trend towards territorialization and coastal expansion is no more relevant than in Northeast Asia. Sea-based resources (gas, oil, minerals, and fish) and essential trade routes (Sea Lanes of Communication) have been crucial for the economic success of regional states. As a result, conflicts are more likely to be resolved through the use of force. Duk-Ki Kim highlights that these unresolved territorial and boundary disputes will be one of the greatest challenges to maintaining maritime stability. A co-operative maritime security regime is the best method to contribute to regional maritime peace and stability.

One of the study's strongest segments is the overview given to the major maritime players in the region. This overview includes an examination of the maritime policies of China, the United States, Russia, and Japan. Each of the states are analyzed in relation to their geo-strategic situation and goals in Northeast Asia, their maritime strategy, their naval force structure, and their concerns about co-operative maritime security. Multilateral maritime co-

operation in areas like the defence of SLOCs and humanitarian operations is widely supported in East Asia. The state of the greatest concern is China and its preferred bilateral approach. The problem is that Beijing views these MCBM as merely political symbols and in general has not increased their military transparency. China believes its military forces largely influence its security and position in global politics. China needs to increase co-operative activities with those regional powers that are direct victims of Chinese maritime pollution and territorial disputes. Beijing knows that in order to increase its standing in the world it cannot be seen as an obstacle to world peace.

To tackle the problems that Duk-Ki Kim identifies to regional maritime security, policy options are outlined and suggested. The study recommends that in order to generate a co-operative maritime security model, a three-step process is beneficial. First is the need to promote maritime confidence building measures (MCBMs). The advantage is that it has no effect on the combat-readiness of naval forces, the naval modernization programs, or the call for a reduction and constraint of naval force structure. The second step includes the development of maritime co-operation measures. In Northeast Asia, these MCMs could cover search and rescue operations, counter marine pollution, and illegal activities. Thirdly, on the basis of the development of MCBMs and MCMs, naval arms control measures may be considered as this problematical agenda becomes more acceptable. Commander Kim demonstrates how a stage-by-stage process, beginning with the simplest, can begin to develop elements of mutual understanding.

Naval Strategy in Northeast Asia is a well documented and informative study on an important topic that has largely been ignored until the late 1990s. Commander Kim illustrates the need for a co-operative maritime security measure in the region to the point that it becomes a significant aspect of the regional security framework. There is little tradition of this type of co-operation, especially of a multilateral nature, and simpler confidence-building measures should be the initial step. Duk-Ki Kim makes a genuine contribution to understanding of this complex issue area and proposes possible policy options for the Northeast Asian maritime security environment.

Chris
University of Calgary

Bullock