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Foreign and Security Policy of the Republic of Korea**

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**Military Innovation through Civil Technology:
An Interview with the Director of JMAD at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command**

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The U.S. presidential election, often referred to as the "world's presidential election," has concluded. The second Trump administration is set to begin in January 2025. Having experienced Trump's first term, nations around the globe are individually preparing to safeguard their national interests. This can be described as each country's survival strategy for the next four years under Trump 2.0.

The foreign and security policy of the Biden administration was centered on the principle of value-based alliance, as a means to counter challenges on the liberal international order posed by revisionist states like China and Russia. The key aspects of Biden's policy included collective responses to Russia -- which undermined the liberal international order through the war in Ukraine -- through support for Ukraine, and preparations

for an international response to a potential Taiwan crisis. To achieve this, the Biden administration strengthened NATO alliances and bolstered global partnerships with key Indo-Pacific nations, including Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand.

In the Indo-Pacific region, the U.S. reinforced minilateral frameworks such as U.S.-Japan-South Korea, U.S.-Japan-Philippines, and AUKUS (Australia-UK-U.S.) to address the Taiwan crisis. Additionally, reflecting elements of Trumpism, the administration prioritized economic security in trade: notable measures include incentives for semiconductor manufacturing through the CHIPS Act to bring production back to U.S. soil, and increasing tariffs on allied nations as a means to promote domestic middle-class.

Now, the era has arrived where nations must navigate Trumpism 2.0, moving beyond the "benevolent Trumpism" of the Biden administration.

It is essential to understand American society in order for an effective response to the second Trump administration. Contrary to widespread predictions of a close race, Trump defeated Harris in all of the battleground states, winning both the Electoral College and the popular vote, while Republicans secured control of both the Senate and the House. This outcome highlights that Trumpism is not merely a temporary phenomenon but a fundamental rejection of policies historically driven by Democratic and Republican elites.

In the realm of foreign and security policy, Trump supporters' opposition to these elites stems from their prioritization of maintaining the U.S.'s global role as a "world police" since World War II over addressing domestic issues. Democrats, under the banner of expanding liberal democracy and human rights, and Republicans, in their pursuit of geopolitical hegemony, have long neglected critical domestic concerns such as the economy, jobs, and immigration. This critique has been a recurring theme against recent foreign and security policies under Democratic administrations like Obama and Biden, as well as Republican administrations like George W. Bush's.

Trumpism challenges this status quo by advocating for wealthier allies, such as NATO members in Europe and countries like Japan and South Korea, to shoulder their own security costs, allowing the U.S. to focus on domestic priorities.

While the international community initially viewed Trump's foreign policy as a disruptive anomaly during his first term, hoping it would fade quickly, Trumpism has only strengthened over the four years of the Biden administration. Its base has expanded across racial and generational lines, becoming mainstream in American society. The phenomenon of the "shy Trump voter" that marked Trump's initial election has disappeared, replaced by an era where an open support for Trump is no longer stigmatized.

In this context, there is growing public demand to eliminate institutional resistance from elite officials within the State Department, the Department of Defense, and intelligence agencies, against Trump's foreign and security policy agenda. This has resulted in the second Trump administration appointing a new cadre of young, loyalist officials committed to advancing Trumpism and controlling opposition within these agencies.

The second Trump administration cannot be assessed based on the experience of his first term. The pace, momentum, and focus on implementing Trumpism in his second term will be markedly different, signaling a new chapter in American governance and global engagement.

South Korea must prepare for a new set of foreign and security policies in order to address the challenges of the second Trump administration. This requires a thorough review of the policies maintained under the Biden administration and alignment with the shifting priorities of the incoming Trump administration.

Under the Biden administration, South Korea pursued extended deterrence against North Korea through the Washington Declaration and the Camp David trilateral summit with the U.S. and Japan. It also participated in NATO summits and positioned itself as a leading middle power in a values-based global alliance. South Korea actively strengthened its alliances to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, collaborating with the U.S., Japan, NATO, and Indo-Pacific nations. Additionally, South Korea joined sanctions against Russia and provided steadfast support for Ukraine during the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, these policies must be re-examined and adjusted to reflect the foreign and security priorities of the Trump 2.0 administration. President Trump, as outlined during his campaign, is likely

to pursuit ceasefire agreements for the Russia-Ukraine war and Middle Eastern conflicts while demanding higher cost-sharing from European NATO members. Unlike the Biden administration's focus on security issues related to the Taiwan Strait, Trump is expected to shift U.S.-China competition toward economic and trade domains.

Regarding South Korea, Trump's campaign rhetoric suggested an interest in increasing tariffs, raising defense cost-sharing, reviewing and potentially reducing U.S. Forces Korea, and a flexible stance on South Korea's own nuclear capabilities. In addition, Trump may seek to restore relations with North Korea, albeit through unconventional means. The implementation of these policies is expected to be swift and resolute, driven by a team of loyalist officials in the Trump administration.

South Korea must thoroughly reassess its existing policies and implement new foreign and security strategies in light of the anticipated shifts under the second Trump administration.

First of all, if the Trump administration successfully negotiates a ceasefire agreement in the Russia-Ukraine war, South Korea should pivot its role to avoid escalating tensions while actively contributing to post-conflict reconstruction. Ukraine is likely to request South Korea's expertise in rebuilding infrastructure such as roads, water supply systems, power plants, rivers, hospitals, schools, and public facilities. South Korea's strong construction and engineering sectors position it as a vital partner in this endeavor. South Korea could also play a role in post-conflict stabilization by contributing peacekeeping forces to manage disputes and ensure security.

If U.S.-Russia relations improve following a ceasefire agreement, South Korea should discreetly prepare to rebuild its ties with Russia. South Korea should leverage its bilateral relationship with Russia to guide North Korea-Russia cooperation toward economic and cultural exchanges rather than military collaborations.

Secondly, if the Trump administration initiates nuclear arms control or disarmament negotiations with North Korea to re-establish U.S.-North Korea relations, South Korea must proactively expand its role to ensure it is not sidelined in critical discussions. It is necessary that South Korea engage in high-level diplomatic dialogue with the

U.S. to ensure that South Korea's perspectives and interests are fully integrated into any U.S.-North Korea negotiations.

At the same time, South Korea must use the opportunity created by U.S.-North Korea negotiations to lower inter-Korean tensions and prepare for the resumption of South-North dialogue. It should leverage the momentum from U.S.-North Korea talks to rebuild trust and initiate practical measures for inter-Korean engagement, such as humanitarian aid, joint economic projects, and cultural exchanges.

Thirdly, South Korea must actively manage its relations with China and trilateral relations with China and Japan. As the Trump administration is expected to focus more on economic and trade issues rather than the Taiwan crisis or security matters, South Korea should work to ensure that its relationship with China remains stable in the security domain. Efforts should be made to resume relations with China and pursue initiatives such as a South Korea-China-Japan summit and visits by Chinese and Japanese leaders to South Korea. These actions would help reduce the likelihood of physical conflict in Northeast Asia and create opportunities to enhance South Korea's diplomatic influence.

Fourthly, South Korea should continue to strengthen its solidarity with NATO and Indo-Pacific nations, but the focus should shift away from military responses to the Taiwan crisis. Instead, these alliances should be leveraged to reduce tensions in the Indo-Pacific region and promote multilateral dialogue, including with China. South Korea should position itself not as a frontline state in a new Cold War but as a pivotal global power that works to ease tensions in this emerging geopolitical divide.

Lastly, the second Trump administration is expected to revisit efforts to establish a trilateral framework for nuclear and missile arms control, incorporating China alongside the U.S. and Russia. As a model nation under the NPT regime and an advanced power in nuclear energy and defense, South Korea should take the lead in creating a new multilateral arms control system designed to lower the risks of nuclear and missile conflicts, including those involving AI and other cutting-edge technologies.

Existing arms control frameworks have been

rendered ineffective as they do not address emerging technologies such as AI and hypersonic cruise missiles. The international community is increasingly concerned about the risk of nuclear war driven by the integration of these advanced technologies with nuclear weapons systems.

As a leading nation in advanced science and technology, South Korea is uniquely positioned to spearhead efforts to establish a new arms control framework that individual countries like the U.S., China, or Russia cannot pursue alone. To achieve this, South Korea must carefully manage its relations with the U.S., Russia, and China, positioning itself as a pivotal player in global arms control. By taking a proactive role in addressing these challenges, South Korea can solidify its status as a key actor in the international community and contribute to global peace and stability.

To ensure that the second Trump administration becomes an opportunity rather than a crisis for South Korea, it is essential to establish a new foreign and security policy, secure robust U.S.-South Korea communication channels, and strengthen the U.S.-South Korea alliance. In addition to government-level efforts, public diplomacy between the two nations should be expanded and reinforced across various sectors, including academia, civil society, local governments, and even at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

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Hackyoung Bae
Professor, Korea National Defense University

Introduction

In recent years, the key strategy in Korean defense innovation, especially given the challenges of demographic changes (the lowest fertility rate in the world, etc.), has been the application of civil technologies. This trend is not unique to Korea but is actively pursued by the United States, especially within the U.S. Department of Defense and the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM). One notable example of this integration of civil technology to defense is the Joint Mission Accelerator Directorate (JMAD), established in December 2023 in the INDOPACOM. JMAD is designed to swiftly adopt and integrate innovative civil technologies for practical use in combat environments.

On October 24, 2024, at the TechNet Indo-Pacific event in Hawaii, I had the opportunity to interview JMAD's director, Rob Morrison. This exchange provided valuable insights, especially in adopting civil technologies to meet operational needs at the combat command level, a perspective that holds numerous implications for Korea.

Why is Hawaii the Strategic Hub for Initiating JMAD and Advancing the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy

Hawaii serves as a critical nexus for the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy, making it an ideal location to establish and operationalize the Joint Mission Accelerator Directorate (JMAD). Situated at the frontline of U.S.-China competition, Hawaii's historical, strategic, and geopolitical significance underpins its suitability for advancing U.S. defense initiatives in the region.

First, Hawaii's role as the headquarters for the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) highlights its strategic importance. As the largest Unified Combatant Command, INDOPACOM oversees an area encompassing more than 50% of the Earth's surface, including critical geopolitical hotspots like the South China Sea, Taiwan, and the Korean Peninsula. Its

operational scope and integration of all military branches—Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force—make it uniquely positioned to lead initiatives like JMAD, which require cross-domain collaboration and technological integration. Hawaii's proximity to Asia and its historical experience as a frontline in the Pacific War reinforce its operational relevance in countering contemporary threats, including China's growing influence in the South Pacific.

Second, Hawaii embodies the convergence of diplomacy and defense. As a central meeting point for U.S., South Korea, Japan, and other Pacific allies, it facilitates high-level trilateral discussions and joint military exercises. The presence of institutions like the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) and the East-West Center enhances Hawaii's capacity to serve as a hub not only for education, collaboration, and strategic planning but also civil cutting-edge technology. These platforms foster regional partnerships and align military objectives with broader Indo-Pacific strategies, which are essential for initiatives like JMAD that depend on multilateral engagement.

Finally, Hawaii's geographical location offers unparalleled advantages for both strategic defense and operational logistics. Its mid-Pacific position ensures accessibility to both North America and Asia, reducing logistical burdens for participating nations. Additionally, Hawaii's isolation provides a secure environment for military exercises and technological experimentation, making it a prime venue for integrating advanced capabilities such as AI, cyber systems, and multi-domain operational tools central to JMAD's mission.

Hawaii's unique combination of strategic location, historical significance, and institutional infrastructure makes it the ideal location for advancing JMAD and other U.S. defense initiatives. As the cornerstone of the Indo-Pacific strategy, Hawaii not only strengthens the U.S.-South Korea-Japan alliance but also positions itself as a pivotal hub for addressing evolving threats in the region.

Role and Key Programs of JMAD

JMAD is central to INDOPACOM's efforts to enhance combat readiness and secure strategic superiority. Admiral John C. Aquilino, former Commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), established the Joint Mission Accelerator Directorate (JMAD) to address and accelerate INDOPACOM's most critical strategic requirements through enhanced integration and interoperability. Aquilino envisioned JMAD as an organization focused on unifying essential initiatives within INDOPACOM to meet urgent operational demands. The primary programs under JMAD's management include the Joint Fires Network, Indo-Pacific Mission Network, Pacific Multi-Domain Training and Experimentation Capability (PMTEC), and Stormbreaker. These programs are coordinated to align seamlessly with support from the Department of Defense (DoD). JMAD is tasked with developing and synchronizing a unified technical roadmap for these four core programs. This integrated approach maximizes operational efficiency by streamlining key functions and enabling more effective resource deployment.

JMAD collaborates with several key defense organizations, including the Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU). Communication with DIU has been led by JMAD's Deputy Director and Chief Technology Officer, Justin Norman; however, recent organizational restructuring has prompted a re-evaluation of this liaison. Additionally, JMAD operates an Industry Engagement Team, which fosters partnerships with commercial enterprises capable of delivering advanced, innovative technology solutions that align with JMAD's operational requirements, further strengthening collaboration with the Department of Defense.

The directorate provides integration and real-time application to the Indo-Pacific combat environment with four main projects:

1. **Joint Fires Network:** This system combines real-time threat data into a cohesive battle management system, delivering actionable intelligence to joint and allied forces. It supports quick threat assessment and target prioritization, ensuring seamless interoperability with various command systems.
2. **INDOPACOM Mission Network:** Utilizing Zero Trust Architecture and data-centric security, this network is a highly secure information domain, supporting real-time command and control (C2) and information sharing among allies, thereby enhancing the safety and efficiency of joint operations across the Indo-Pacific region.

3. **Pacific Multi-Domain Training and Experimentation Capability (PMTEC):** PMTEC offers a simulated, competitive operational environment, allowing allied forces to train within a realistic, integrated network. Through this, joint forces can bolster readiness against diverse threats.

4. **STORMBREAKER:** A joint operational planning toolkit based on artificial intelligence, STORMBREAKER aids multi-domain operations by providing rapid data analysis for decision-making. It optimizes strategic scenarios and reinforces tactical preparedness through advanced AI analytics.

These four initiatives underscore JMAD's core mission: leveraging civil technology and data for strategic advantage across the Indo-Pacific. The project will initially be implemented in the Indo-Pacific region, with plans to extend its application to the broader defense framework beyond Indo-Pacific region.

The Objective of Knowing Ourselves

While the military invests heavily in understanding adversaries, it has often overlooked its own capabilities and readiness states. Without a systematic approach to evaluate available assets and weapon systems at a theater level, it's challenging to make informed operational decisions. Here, commercial programs serve as a valuable model, such as companies like Amazon and FedEx in terms of resource optimization and real-time status tracking, which can be adapted for military asset management. Systems like GIS Arta, used in recent conflicts, illustrate the power of real-time asset assessment to counter adversaries efficiently. Integrating these algorithms supports optimal resource allocation and improves combat readiness.

The Importance and Direction of Integration

Effective integration requires more than simply adopting technology; it demands breaking down silos within organizations. During last year's TechNet event, I asked AI and machine learning specialists if they understood how neighboring departments operated—most did not, revealing a gap in inter-departmental collaboration. In military contexts, organizational walls hinder alignment with broader objectives. Here, the approach of figures like Adm. Hyman G. Rickover, who pursued nuclear fleet capability despite internal resistance, is instructive. The process of integration may present challenges for internal organizations; however, it remains an inevitable path forward.

The primary objective of integration should be to strengthen deterrence by complicating adversary actions, rather than prioritizing operational

convenience. This approach ensures that integration efforts align with strategic deterrence objectives rather than merely improving internal efficiency.

The Need for a Shift from Kinetic to Non-Kinetic Effects

Military capabilities are designed to produce specific and measurable effects that align with strategic and operational objectives. Traditionally, these effects have been achieved through kinetic means—physical force delivered by weapons systems such as missiles, artillery, and other conventional platforms. While these methods remain a cornerstone of military power, they are inherently resource-intensive, requiring significant financial investment, extended operational timelines, and extensive logistical support. The cost-to-effect ratio of kinetic operations is often disproportionate, with substantial expenditures required to achieve relatively limited outcomes. In an era of rapidly evolving threats, this reliance on kinetic solutions alone is neither sustainable nor sufficient.

The transition toward integrating non-kinetic effects, such as those enabled by cyber capabilities, space-based technologies, and electromagnetic warfare, represents a necessary evolution in military strategy. Non-kinetic effects offer distinct advantages, including speed, precision, and cost efficiency. For example, a well-coordinated cyber operation can disrupt an adversary's communications infrastructure or disable critical systems without the need for physical force, achieving strategic objectives with minimal collateral damage. These non-kinetic tools expand the military's operational toolkit, allowing for a more nuanced and adaptable approach to achieving desired effects.

To effectively harness these capabilities, the traditional power structure must undergo significant restructuring. The legacy models developed during the Cold War, which prioritized large-scale kinetic engagements, are ill-suited to the multi-domain threats posed by contemporary adversaries. Today's conflicts are characterized by asymmetry, rapid escalation, and a blending of conventional and unconventional tactics. Addressing these challenges requires a force that is agile, integrated, and capable of leveraging both kinetic and non-kinetic tools in a complementary manner. For instance, an operation might combine a precision missile strike with a cyberattack on enemy command-and-control systems, maximizing the overall impact while minimizing resource expenditure.

The balance between kinetic and non-kinetic effects is critical to this transition. Neither approach can operate in isolation; kinetic power provides the physical deterrence necessary to uphold security commitments, while non-kinetic capabilities offer

strategic flexibility and operational efficiency. Striking this balance demands a shift in military doctrine, training, and resource allocation. It requires investment in technologies and expertise that enable non-kinetic operations, as well as the integration of these capabilities into existing command-and-control structures. Moreover, the development of new operational concepts, such as Joint All-Domain Operations and Multi-Domain Operations, reflects the need for a cohesive framework that unifies these diverse capabilities under a common strategic vision.

Ultimately, the transition to a balanced approach between kinetic and non-kinetic effects is not merely a matter of modernization; it is a strategic imperative for maintaining relevance and effectiveness in an increasingly complex security environment. By reimagining the power structure to incorporate these advanced capabilities, the military can achieve more precise, efficient, and adaptable outcomes, ensuring readiness for both current challenges and future conflicts.

Challenges of Human Control in Future Warfare

Automation and artificial intelligence (AI) will inevitably continue to advance in weapon systems, revolutionizing military operations with unprecedented efficiency and precision. However, the complexity of future warfare, driven by multi-domain operations, interconnected systems, and real-time decision-making, will likely exceed the cognitive capacity of humans to manage effectively without technological assistance. While automation can handle vast amounts of data and execute tasks at speeds beyond human capability, it remains incapable of exercising ethical judgment, contextual awareness, or nuanced decision-making. These limitations highlight the critical need for human oversight in automated military systems.

For instance, like self-driving vehicles that require human intervention in unexpected or ambiguous situations, military systems will depend on human operators to assess risks and make final decisions, particularly in scenarios involving potential collateral damage or escalation. The unpredictability of war, combined with the dynamic and interwoven nature of modern battlefields, necessitates a balance between automation and human control. This balance is not merely about controlling machines but also about ensuring that human operators are equipped to intervene effectively, despite the rapid pace and complexity of automated processes.

The integration of human judgment into automated systems involves more than technical mechanisms; it requires robust frameworks for decision-making,

ethical guidelines, and real-time training environments that simulate high-stakes scenarios. Developing these frameworks will be essential as military leaders face challenges in managing systems that process vast data streams, coordinate multiple platforms, and execute operations across domains such as cyber, space, and traditional combat theaters. Without these safeguards, the risks of miscalculation or unintended consequences could undermine the advantages offered by automation.

As future warfare grows increasingly complex, the military must navigate the limitations of human cognitive abilities and the potential over-reliance on automated systems. By designing mechanisms that integrate human oversight, the military can ensure that the advantages of automation are maximized while minimizing risks, creating a more adaptable and resilient force capable of addressing the complexities of future conflicts.

Reorganization and New Mission Considerations

Yesterday marked the one-year anniversary of JMAD's establishment, a milestone that reflects its ongoing evolution as a dynamic and responsive organization. On August 1, JMAD underwent significant restructuring, transitioning from an independent entity to operate under J8 (Requirements and Resources). This structural realignment was not a simple administrative shift but a deliberate move to enhance its efficiency and align its activities more closely with acquisition pathways. By embedding JMAD within J8, the organization aims to streamline its processes and ensure that its efforts are directly linked to resource allocation and capability development, while maintaining its core mission of advancing operational effectiveness.

JMAD is not a static entity but a living, evolving organization that adapts to the changing needs of the military and the operational environment. This flexibility is evident in its approach to addressing warfighter capabilities. In discussions with various industry partners, JMAD has found that while many companies claim to provide innovative solutions, few can clearly articulate specific capabilities tailored to meet the military's unique needs. This challenge highlights the evolving nature of JMAD's role—not only as a facilitator of technological innovation but as an active participant in shaping the requirements that guide industry efforts. Defining and articulating these requirements is a complex task that falls squarely within the military's domain, as only those directly involved in operations can fully understand the nuanced demands of the battlefield.

The organization's restructuring reflects its commitment to remaining relevant and adaptive. JMAD recognizes that asking companies to identify the capabilities the military requires is an inefficient approach. Instead, the onus lies on JMAD to proactively determine and define these requirements, ensuring that the solutions provided by industry partners align with operational realities. This shift toward a more deliberate and informed engagement with the defense industry demonstrates JMAD's evolving mission to bridge the gap between innovation and application.

As an organization, JMAD embodies a forward-looking philosophy. It acknowledges that the nature of warfare is constantly changing and that the tools and strategies required to succeed must evolve accordingly. By integrating its efforts within J8 and refining its approach to capability development, JMAD positions itself as a critical player in shaping the future of defense innovation. Its dynamic structure and adaptive strategies ensure that it remains at the forefront of addressing the complex challenges of modern warfare, reinforcing its role as a catalyst for meaningful and sustainable military advancements.

Conclusion

The interview with JMAD's director highlighted key strategies for integrating civil technologies into military applications, offering valuable insights for Korea. First, Korea should consider establishing an organization dedicated to adapting civil technology within combat units, facilitating rapid weapon acquisition to meet operational needs. Second, the focus of technology integration should be on deterring adversaries by increasing operational complexity rather than mere convenience. Finally, Korea should break down organizational barriers and shift from reliance on legacy weapon systems to transition to a balanced and diverse array of means for effective response. While Hawaii may embody a romantic ideal, it is also a hub of military innovation, offering lessons that could inform Korea's approach to overcoming its unique security challenges.



RINSA, KNDU
1040, Hwangsanbeol-ro, Yangchon-myeon, Nonsan-si
Chungcheongnam-do, 33021, Rep. of KOREA
Tel : +82-41-831-6414
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