



# **An Ally and Empire: Two Myths of South Korea- United States Relations, 1945-1980**

*Tae Gyun Park, Translation by Ilsoo David Cho*

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U.S.-South Korea relations have a special significance for scholars in Korea because of the special role the United States has played in the history of Korea since 1945. For Korea, particularly for South Korea, the United States was not just a country that exerted its influence from the outside because the United States has been an agent that has shaped the history of South Korea from the inside in just about every aspect.

While the Republic of Korea was formally an independent country, it was not so in substance. In particular, the United States held on to operational control of the South Korean military forces. The fact that an independent nation released the power to control its own military forces to another nation holds a special meaning. Of course, the only party to be problematic of this fact was North Korea; most South Koreans never questioned it.

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