PSECF (Policy Streams & Expert Group Standing Change Framework) for Wartime Operational Control Transition

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Abstract This study applies Policy Streams and Expert Group Standing Change Framework (PSECF) proposed by SangJung Park and Chan KOH to analyze the Roh’s Participatory government’s decision making process on the wartime Operational Control (OPCON) transition. PSECF case study’s results are as follows: Strong commitments of the former president Roh Moo-hyun and the progressive National Security Committee (NSC) were primary drivers in the policy developing process. But military expert groups such as the Ministry of National Defense (MND) and the Joint Chiefs of Staffs (JCS) were thoroughly excluded due to their passive role against the wartime OPCON transition. After the policy resolution, the standing of expert groups changed: the standing of advocate effects, the former progressive NSC who led the wartime OPCON transition in the Roh’s Participatory government, went down but the conservatives such as ROK MND and JCS improve their standing because the conservative government kicks off 8 months later from the policy decision. In conclusion, the proposed PSECF through the Roh’s Participatory government’s case-study is worthy as an explanatory framework for high level national policies.

Key Words: Multiple Streams Framework, Policy Community, Expert Group, ROK-U.S. Alliance Relation, Wartime Operational Control (OPCON) Transition

요약 이 연구는 박상중교수가 제안한 ‘정책흐름 및 전문가집단 위상변동모형’(Policy Stream and Expert Group Standing Change Framework, 이하 PSECF)을 활용하여 참여정부의 전시작전통제권(이후 전작권) 결정을 분석하는 것이다. 전작권 전환 결정과정에서 노무현 전 대통령과 진보성향의 국가안전보장회의(National Security Committee, 이하 NSC)의 강력한 의지는 정책발달과정의 주요 동인으로 작동하였으며, 국방부 및 합참 등 군사전문가집단의 의견은 정책에 수동적인 이유로 철저하게 배제되었다. 전문가집단의 위상변동 측면에서 볼 때 전작권 전환 결정이후 8개월 만에 보수성향의 정부가 출범하게 됨으로써 참여정부의 전작권 전환을 주도한 NSC는 위상이 약화된 반면에 국방부 및 합참과 같은 보수진영은 그 위상이 향상되었다. 결론적으로 참여정부의 전작권 전환에 관한 이 연구는 상위 수준의 국가정책을 설명하는 정책도구로서 PSECF의 적용가능성을 제고하였는데 의미가 있다.

주제어: 다중정책흐름, 정책공동체, 전문가집단, 한미동맹, 전시작전통제권

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1. Introduction

In the beginning of last October 2012, ROK Minister of National Defense and U.S. Secretary of Defense during the 45th Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) in Seoul agreed to put off the wartime Operational Control (OPCON) transition date.

They considered practical and effective deterrence capabilities against North Korea’s threats concerning its nuclear standoff, instable national security situation on Korean peninsula, and the delays of acquisition in ROK core military capabilities. Furthermore they concurred to establish the mini ROK and U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC) after the wartime OPCON transition during the 44th SCM, and develop a blueprint for the future ROK and U.S. combined command and control structure transformation in the 45th SCM. Currently ROK and U.S. military authorities are developing a detailed plan by year 2014.

In 2010, the former ROK president Lee Myeongbak and U.S. president Obama have concurred the delay of the wartime OPCON transition date from 17th of April in 2012 to 1st of December in 2015. Because, in that period, ROK national security situation was deteriorating due to North Korea’s Cheonan provocative incident and ROK military preparation dissatisfaction which was politically assessed in short of theater operational planning capabilities and ROK and U.S. combined C4I systems. As a result, the wartime OPCON transition policy itself is losing its standing identities and stable development.

Despite this political vortex, military authorities of the two countries, ROK and U.S., are keeping their consistent position of pushing the wartime OPCON transition thoroughly on the basis of the Strategic Transition Plan (STP) until year 2010 and the Strategic Alliance 2015 (SA 2015) from year 2011 [1]. Therefore they are firmly standing against the former ROK president Lee Myeongbak, and the ROK president Park Geunhye administrations’ political logic to postpone the transition date.

Controversy arguments about the wartime OPCON transition have been continuing since the beginning of discussions between two countries, ROK and U.S., in the time of the Roh’s Participatory government. Considering the fact that the wartime OPCON transition date adjustment happened two times by exclusive political decisions not reflecting military expert group’s perspectives. The arguments are expected to maintain a main topic of national security areas. In accordance with these complicated outstanding environments, the wartime OPCON transition seems to have more difficulty in its steady propulsion [2].

Therefore it is necessary to study these issues specifically as follows: why is the wartime OPCON transition policy can neither be promoted continuously nor be stabilized even though the two countries’ governments have agreed? Are there any fundamental problems on the decision to the wartime OPCON transition by agreement between two ROK and U.S. presidents? Furthermore was the military expert groups’ professional stances fully reflected in the process of policy changes to the wartime OPCON transition? How did the expert groups’ standing have changed after the wartime OPCON transition decision?

At this point, it is timely meaningful to review the Roh’s Participatory government’s wartime OPCON transition decision for the upcoming re-negotiation to the date adjustment, and the stable and constant progress on it.

For this study, Policy Streams and Expert Group Standing Change Framework (PSECF) proposed by SangJung Park and Chan Koh will be utilized to analyze the Roh’s Participatory government’s policy making process on the wartime OPCON transition.
2. Related Works

2.1 Multiple Streams Framework

Kingdon (1995) developed an applicable multiple streams framework in policy making process of the public sectors to complement the uncertainty of policy decision in the garbage can model [3].

Kingdon’s multiple streams framework is as shown in [Fig. 1]. Policy change is generated by intense interaction of participants when the policy window is opened through multiple streams such as policy problem stream, policy alternative stream, and political stream [4].

[Fig. 1] Multiple Streams Framework

In the garbage can model, policy developing process and its participants are separated. Its participants are classified into visible and invisible ones and it illustrates that each of them influences every policy process. For example, participants of policy problem streams are mass media, policy targeting groups and so on. Participants of policy alternative streams are government employees, expert groups, and scholars. Participants of political streams are president, lawmakers, political parties’ leadership, and interest groups’ representatives.

Kingdon emphasizes the importance of politics which cannot be found in the garbage can model. Multiple streams framework utilizes the concept of policy window and especially regards policy entrepreneur’s role as important.

Since policy window opens and closes instantly, it can create a policy change when the urgency of the problems, the political situations and policy applicability meet the situations. Kingdon’s model is not a normative or theoretical model but a practical model which reflects policy developing process in its political reality. Besides, it is a comprehensive model to translate a lot of public policy developing process by highlighting the point that it can be done beyond the window policy only through the process of governmental issues, agendas and decisions.

Policy alternatives and political streams are developed regardless of whether they reflect the policy problems, they face the current political challenges and the policy communities. But it does not mean these flows are absolutely independent. For example, political steams influence policy alternatives by expert groups’ predictability of political or budgetary constraints. Policy problem streams affect voter’s awareness with political streams on the current critical problems during the election campaign.

Kingdon puts a notice that these three streams are mutually independent and also they are influenced by their own factors such as different considerations and behaviors. There is a time when three independently moving streams combine. Kingdon mentions that the policy problems, policy alternatives, and political situation could independently be improved in accordance with their dynamics and rules. When these streams meet in the critical junctures, policy window opens to have an opportunity for policy change decision.

The proposed PSECF adapts multiple streams from Kingdon’s model but suggests necessity of expert groups’ each participations in policy problem stream and political stream as well as policy alternative steam for reinforcing their professional perspectives about high level national policies such as national security, diplomacy and reunification.
2.2 Interest Group Standing Change Framework

Mucciaroni suggested Interest Group Standing Change Framework focusing on the interest groups’ standing change in accordance with policy change as shown in [Fig. 2] [5]. Mucciaroni emphasizes highly on the institutional context rather than issue context for consideration factors. Because the policy goes to the negative direction even if the issue context stands better position for certain expert groups while the institutional context is unfavorable.

On the other hand, the policy will not be bad even though the issue context is in adverse condition but the institutional context still keeps favorable stance [6].

2.3 Multiple Streams and Interest Group Standing Change Framework

Seungil Yang addressed Multiple Streams and Interest Group Change Framework derived from Mucciaroni’s model and Mucciaroni’s model [7].

Yang’s model is a comprehensive model that includes multiple streams, window of policy and interest groups’ standing change when the policy change happens. It approaches more logically to explain complicated policy changes compared to the existing policy models. However, Yang recently proposed his model as a proto-type frame model therefore no case studies are identified so far on it.

The proposed PSECF takes some ideas of Yang’s model: multiple streams of policy process and specific groups’ standing change after policy decision.


Policy Streams and Expert Group Standing Change Framework (PSECF) is developed as shown in [Fig. 3] by exploring and revising three existing models discussed in Chapter 2 [8].

3.1 Policy Streams and Expert Group Change Framework (PSECF)

Kingdon’s model is adapted as original concept but added expert groups’ participation to all 3 streams in PSECF: policy problem stream, policy alternative stream and political stream.

Mucciaroni’s model influenced only its idea to PSECF. It substitutes Mucciaroni model’s components for vital national interests applying on high level national policy area such as national security,
diplomacy and reunification; institutional and issue contexts to Kingdon's multiple steams in the policy process; and interest group to expert groups.

Seungil Yang’s model also contributed some conceptual ideas to PSECF. PSECF accepts Yang model’s combination between Kingdon’s framework as policy decision making process and Mucciaroni’s framework for standing change after new policy decision.

The proposed PSECF, as a comprehensive high level national policy model, is summarized as shown in <Table 1>.

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As a result, the policy developing process uses multiple streams deleting institutional and issue contexts for its simplicity; expert groups’ participation is required as an essential element to every 3 multiple streams to interpret expert groups’ professional perspectives logically in the complicated policy circumstances. In addition, it makes clear expert groups’ identities including their standing change after the policy change happens.

To improve the proposed PSECF, it is required to develop evaluation index of expert groups’ standing change through additional various case studies.

4. Case study of the Roh’s Participatory government’s wartime OPCON transition

4.1 Characteristics on ROK and U.S. alliance along with the military operational control

ROK and the U.S. alliances have traditionally held an asymmetric relationship as shown in [Fig. 4]. It is evaluated as a security and autonomy tradeoff alliance [9].

![Fig. 4] Relation between National Security Support and National Autonomy

ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty, signed in 1953, was established to prevent North Korea’s threats. ROK has been firmly supported national security from U.S. In return, ROK, the top 10 largest economy in the world, still cannot ignore the U.S. influence.

During the Korean War, ROK former president Rhee Seungman had transitioned ROK military OPCON to the United Nation Command (UNC) in a danger of national crisis. After the transition, ROK OPCON has been dynamically transforming along with historical events: establishment of the ROK and U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC), ROK military capabilities’ improvement, and U.S. global strategy change toward 21st-century as shown in <Table 2> [10].

Current CFC centered single command and control structure will be transitioned into parallel command and control structure, ROK-Supported and U.S.-Supporting as shown in [Fig. 5].
The wartime OPCON transition debates between the progressives and conservatives are still continued since the Roh’s Participatory government proposed to U.S. government in 2006. As a result, ROK and U.S. military authorities are difficult to be executed stably on plan of the policy.

The progressives who advocate the policy raise wartime operational control transition as a justification of military sovereignty recovery. On the other hand, the conservatives who stand against the policy request ROK military capabilities’ acquisition first and the wartime OPCON transition later for strong national security. Especially in the 44th SCM, the two countries’ defense top officers had politically agreed to establish mini-CFC without any considerations of the continued progressive and conservative’s debates and then in the 45th SCM took a close look at the new future ROK and U.S. military command and control relations in detail [12][13].

4.2 Policy Problem Stream

Roh’s Participatory government’s primary defense policy problem was considered of U.S. forces’ strategic flexibility as the new global military strategy which is launched in terms of ROK and U.S. asymmetric alliance.

For the first time, Strategic flexibility of U.S. forces Korea (USFK) was addressed in the SCM joint communiqué 2003.

Approximately 30,000 ROK stationed U.S. troops’ primary task areas will be expanded from defense against North Korea’s threat to mitigate disputes in Northeast Asia areas after the rapid transformation: stationed troops in the Korean peninsula into rapid maneuver troops. After the wartime OPCON transition, USFK will cover dispute between China and Taiwan along with other disputes out of the Northeast Asia.

If the wartime OPCON transition is completed, USFK will be no longer stay in the CFC strong single command and control structure. Therefore USFK...
troops’ out or let in the Korean peninsula would be easy.

Former deputy minister of the national defense Yongok Park said, "U.S. had been trying to reduce the Korean peninsula defense burden. When former president Roh Moohyun requested the wartime OPCON transition for the ROK’s self-reliable national defense, U.S. immediately accepted ROK proposal to enhance their strategic flexibility.”

Some military experts have spoken out that U.S. authorities was very quickly accelerating the wartime OPCON transition because there was a possibility that the next ROK government would not actively work on it.

Finally the Roh’s Participatory government’s wartime OPCON transition was made from ROK military sovereignty restoration not from practical ROK national security improvement in conjunction with U.S. Strategic flexibility.

### 4.3 Policy Alternative Stream

On the wartime OPCON transition, it emerged in the late 1980s with the end of Cold War, ROK national power growth and pro-democracy movement. Since the former ROK president Roh Taewoo presented the issue as a candidate’s campaign promises during the presidential election 1987, it has been afloat unresolved over 20 years.

With increased ROK military capabilities, the OPCON transition were sought in terms of policy alternatives for the ROK self defense by their own capabilities.

According to some officials’ statement, the former ROK president Roh Moohyun has kept in strong belief that “… even ROK has its own wartime OPCON, war will not happen in Korean peninsula and ROK will have the capabilities to deter North Korea’s threats by year 2011. Furthermore U.S. troops withdrawal will not occur and station in the Korean peninsula.”.

Finally, Roh’s Participatory government has been assessed that the policy change to the wartime OPCON transition is pursuing ROK military sovereignty recovery not effective ROK and U.S. defense efforts against North Korea’s military threat.

### 4.4 Political Stream

With the launch of Participatory government in progressive trend, a policy change of the wartime OPCON transition has been made for military sovereignty restoration and dependent escape from U.S. influence by one way top-down method and strong time tied-up approach.

According to Gwangsik Kim’s survey on the wartime OPCON transition at the Participatory government’s period (2010), the majority of the ROK citizens have revealed their serious concern that if it happens, that results negative effects to the national security and instability on Korean peninsula. Furthermore it causes negative impacts to ROK and U.S. friendly lasting alliance.

On the other hand, U.S. was actively promoting the wartime OPCON transition to relieve their burden and get the strategic flexibility in conjunction with the Roh’s Participatory government’s efforts for military sovereign recovery.

Once USFK takes the strategic flexibility, USFK role will be more diverse ranging from deterring North Korea’s threats while stationed in the Korean peninsula to conducting numerous tasks beyond the region. Through the strategic flexibility, USFK will be freed up inflow and outflow to the ROK and use its military bases and facilities in the Korean peninsula.

Thus the policy change of the wartime OPCON transition can be judged to promote both countries’ interests: Roh’s Participatory government pursues the ROK military sovereignty restoration and U.S. gets the USFK strategic flexibility.

### 4.5 Role of policy entrepreneur and policy community
Former ROK president Roh Moo-hyun had actively been promoted the wartime OPCON transition as a part of the national policy tasks in the cooperative self-defense. Through the policy change, he was framing military sovereignty restoration to overcome the weakness of the progressive administration against conservative’s existing strong points.

The wartime OPCON transition as a major national task was strongly pushed by the former ROK president Roh Moo-hyun’s will. Even the policy was not recommended by ministry of national defense, agency of primary responsibility for this policy.

In addition, the wartime OPCON transition method was determined by placing not condition satisfaction first to minimize the national threats but the transition date first to support the president’s decision with all government’s efforts.

Thus Participatory government which trends in group thinking skipped intentionally any ministers’ meeting for its discussion and approval. It was difficult to reflect the opinions of the respective governmental departments with the former ROK president Roh’s strong top-down style authoritarianism and to downplay the reality of security awareness. These working environment causes carelessness to the wartime OPCON transition among the respective governmental departments.

The policy change to the wartime OPCON transition was led by the Blue house NSC those who proactively support the policy with the Janis’s group thinking but expert groups including ROK MND and JCS are totally expelled due to slow and careful approach to the policy.

At the time of Participatory government, the presidential NSC trended the Janis’s group thinking to conduct the over-tuned and excess loyalty in accordance with former president Roh Moo-hyun’s intentions and they are in the lack of a sense of responsibility as officials. Finally they had actively supported and promoted to the wartime OPCON transition. Especially in the process of ROK and U.S. coordination, it was revealed that the ROK NSC meeting was held just one time and there was no ministers’ meeting on the wartime OPCON transition.

Furthermore the ROK NSC those who advocate the policy played a primary role but the ROK MND and JCS those who work slow and carefully on it had difficulties to involve through the overall process.

In conclusion, the former ROK president Roh Moo-hyun had determined the wartime OPCON transition in his own strong working style even though the continuing debates between progressives and conservatives exist. He also ignored the needs to ROK citizen’s consensus and expert groups’ professional perspectives on the policy developing process [14].

4.6 Expert groups’ standing change

Since the policy change on the wartime OPCON transition that both countries’ defense top officials had agreed in April 2007, the expert groups’ standing has never been changed. 8 months later from the agreement, there was presidential election in December and Lee Myeongbak administration in conservative trend was launched at the beginning of year 2008.

Since Lee’s government kicked off, the former progressive NSC who led the policy change on the wartime OPCON transition in the Roh’s Participatory government went down their standing; weakening the NSC’s role and losing their key positions on defense security areas. On the other hand, the conservative including ROK MND and JCS improved their standing; establishing the presidential national emergency management office and appointing a special advisory office to national defense. In addition, Lee’s government had rescheduled the date of the wartime OPCON transition to late 2015.

4.7 Case study results by applying PSECF

In this paper, Roh’s Participatory government’s wartime OPCON transition was analyzed into particularly military expert groups’ role-play and
standing change after the policy decision with the proposed PSECF.

SangJung Park and Chan Koh’s previous researches on the perception of the expert groups to Participatory government’s wartime OPCON transition was used as a basis for the analysis of its multiple streams [2][8][11][15].

The main driving factors to the stream of policy problem and policy alternative were the asymmetric ROK and U.S. alliance and mutual interdependence respectively. The main driving factors to the political stream were restoration of military sovereignty which was core interests of the progressive Participatory government and dependable escape from U.S. strong influence.

On the other hand, the expert groups’ standing change after the policy decision resulted in the opposite direction because Lee’s conservative government was kicked off less than 1 year the policy change was made by the Roh’s Participatory government. Since Lee’s government kicked off, the former progressive NSC who led the wartime OPCON transition in Participatory government went down their standing; to weaken the NSC’s role and lose their key positions on defense security areas but the conservative including ROK MND and JCS improved their standing; to establish the presidential national emergency management office and appoint a special advisory office to national defense.

5. Conclusion

Policy Streams and Expert Group Standing Change Framework (PSECF) is proposed for high level national policy areas such as the national security, diplomacy and reunification, through analyzing and applying strengths and weaknesses of 3 existing models; Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Framework, Mucciaroni’s Interest Group Standing Change Framework and Seungil Yang’s Multiple Streams and Interest Group Change Framework. PSECF is a comprehensive model to explain expert groups’ role and standing change after the policy change made.

The case study results on the Roh’s Participatory government’s wartime OPCON transition utilizing by PSECF are as follows. The asymmetric ROK and U.S. alliance and mutual interdependence are main driving factors for the streams of policy problem and policy alternative respectively. The restoration of military sovereignty and dependable escape from U.S. influence are main driving factors for the political stream. The Participatory government’s policy change was individually revealed that military expert groups were excluded due to their slow and careful participation on it. The former ROK president Roh Moohyun’s strong will and NSC’s active efforts, progressive advocate were politically made the policy change in terms of military sovereignty restoration and dependable escape from U.S. influence.

The progressive NSC who led the wartime OPCON transition in the Roh’s Participatory government went down their standing but the conservative including ROK MND and JCS improved their standing since Lee’s government kicked off. In addition, Lee’s government rescheduled the date of the wartime OPCON transition to late 2015 and Park’s government is currently under another negotiation to extend its launch date with the U.S. government. Therefore the proposed PSECF can be assessed to useful as a framework on high level national policy sectors.

It is meaningful to address new PSECF itself and put a emphasis to expert groups’ general participation for high level national policy areas including national security, diplomacy and reunification.

Applicable possibility of PSECF was confirmed by a case study of the Roh’s Participatory government’s wartime OPCON transition. PSECF will be needed to develop evaluation index for the role and standing change of expert groups, and apply a variety of policy case studies.
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