

South Korea Should Defend Itself

November 29, 2010 by [Jason Sorens](#)

[So saith Doug Bandow in the *American Spectator*](#). (BTW, how far has the *American Spectator* come in publishing a piece like this?)

Why hasn't the South put its resources to better military effect? Because it doesn't have to.

So long as America offers a security guarantee, maintains a tripwire troop presence on the peninsula, and promises to do whatever is necessary to protect the ROK, the South Koreans have little incentive to take over their own defense. Granted, it's a bit humiliating to constantly beg Washington for aid: it would be a bit like the U.S. going hat-in-hand around the world asking for help to defend against Mexico. Still, better for Seoul to get the gullible Americans to pay its defense bill than to have to cover the cost itself.

Making the ROK's behavior even more outrageous has been Seoul's attempt to buy off Pyongyang while relying on American military support.

The argument here is for an interesting combination of noninterventionism (on the part of the United States) and muscular deterrence (by South Korea). It just goes to show that you don't have to be a dove to be a noninterventionist. Still, Bandow doesn't go so far as to advocate withdrawal of the U.S. nuclear deterrent shield from South Korea.

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WHAT IS A PILEUS?

In ancient Rome, a pileus was a felt cap given to slaves upon receiving their freedom. Since then, this simple cap has been a powerful symbol of liberty.

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