

GLOBAL ROGUES AND REGIONAL ORDERS:
THE NORTH KOREAN CHALLENGE IN POST-COLD WAR EAST ASIA

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Why, despite similar North Korean crises within a decade, have East Asia countries responded differently to the U.S. approach toward North Korea, and with what consequences? This dissertation explores the contested nature of the North Korean threat in East Asia and examines its effects on the formation of national interests and the regional order. With an empirical focus on China, Japan, and South Korea, I argue that a region-wide pursuit of greater regional roles shaped the way in which the East Asian countries respond to the U.S. approach. By employing the concepts of role congruence and conflict, this dissertation identifies different pathways to regional order in East Asia.

This project is based on a comparative analysis of the post-Cold War political dynamics surrounding the North Korean challenge. To assess the impact of role conceptions on the regional order, I compare the global, regional, and national contexts of post-Cold War North Korean crises, in particular the 1998 North Korean missile crisis and the second North Korean nuclear crisis. For this research, I conducted extensive fieldwork in China, Japan, and South Korea, gathering government documents, speeches, and other primary sources. I also utilized fifty-seven in-depth interviews with government officials and experts, along with a wide set of secondary literature, newspapers, and opinion pieces in each country.

This dissertation demonstrates that regional role conceptions play a crucial role in shaping state behavior and influencing regional order, especially in alliance politics and regionalism. The findings from this research also suggest that the success of future global proliferation campaigns hinges on grasping the complexities of regional dynamics surrounding proliferators. Facilitating role congruence among regional actors can contribute to both the success of global proliferation policy and the enhancement of regional order. It is also important to avoid role conflict on the part of the United States: its traditional role as a regional stabilizer and its new role as a global enforcer of counterproliferation and anti-terror strategies. The way it reconciles the two roles and harmonizes global and regional priorities will shape the future course of the East Asian order.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Il Hyun Cho, a graduate of Chung-Ang University (B.A.) in Seoul, began his study of international relations at Yonsei University (M.A.) in Seoul. Prior to coming to the United States for his doctoral studies, he was a research fellow at Yonsei's Center for International Studies. While pursuing his Ph.D. at Cornell, Cho was selected as a fellow at the Center for the Study of the Presidency, Washington, D.C. (2002-03), a member of the Summer Workshop on Analysis of Military Operation and Strategies (SWAMOS) sponsored by Columbia University (2003), and a research fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University (2006-07). He was also a visiting research scholar at the Institute of Social Sciences, the University of Tokyo (2005), and an exchange scholar in the Department of Political Science, Stanford University (2007-08). Cho has been a recipient of fellowships from Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, the Mellon Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation/Peace Studies Fellowship, and Cornell University's Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies and East Asia Program. In Fall 2008, Cho joined the Department of Political Science at Cleveland State University as an assistant professor in international relations.

To Seo-Hyun and Emily

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more important things in life than writing a dissertation. Now that it is done, I dedicate it to Emily and Seo-Hyun with love and gratitude.

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CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction and Framework

1-1. Introduction

This dissertation explores the contested nature of the North Korean threat and examines its effects on the formation of national interests and the regional order in East Asia. North Korea presents a dual challenge as a newly-nuclear global rogue state and, at the same time, a traditional regional security problem. At the global level, the small, isolated, communist regime has been singled out, along with Iraq and Iran, as part of the “axis of evil,” a band of global rogues bent on disrupting the international nonproliferation regime. Indeed, the Bush administration proclaimed that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is one of the two major security challenges against which a widespread global campaign should be pursued.¹ In East Asia, however, the global rogue frame did not take root. Far from being a shared security challenge as the current scholarship on nuclear proliferation² tends to assume, the very meaning of North Korea and the nature of the threat it represents have been contested in East Asia, influencing the way regional actors respond to the U.S. approach toward North Korea and igniting domestic security debates among political actors in the region.

The regional outcomes in the wake of the so-called second North Korean nuclear crisis are puzzling for several reasons. First, despite similar North Korean behavior, the regional reactions during the first and second North Korean crises are a

¹ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, The White House, Washington, D.C.

² Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe*, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2004); Joseph Cirincione, *Deadly Arsenals: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002); Alexander T. J. Lennon and Camille Eiss, eds., *Reshaping Rogue States Preemption, Regime Change, and US Policy toward Iran, Iraq, and North Korea* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

study in contrast. During the first North Korean crisis of 1993-94, North Korea went took a series of provocative steps, such as refusing UN inspections of its nuclear sites, extracting plutonium from fuel rods, and threatening to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).³ The situation became so volatile that then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili called it the “most dangerous crisis” the United States had encountered since the end of World War II.⁴ While the global rogue frame has become a catchphrase of the Bush administration, the imagery and rhetoric of rogue states—backlash states, nuclear outlaws, etc.—were also widespread during the Clinton administration.⁵ Indeed, at the height of the crisis in June 1994, President Clinton seriously considered a military strike on the Yongbyon nuclear facilities.⁶

While alarmed about the prospect of a nuclear North Korea, East Asian countries remained passive bystanders during the first crisis. Instead of taking a leading role in resolving the crisis, they were generally content to play second fiddle to the Clinton administration’s bilateral approach toward North Korea. Although concerned about the possibility that the crisis could wreak havoc on the still evolving

³ The first North Korean nuclear crisis began in early 1993 when the North Korean regime refused to allow a special inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which suspected a secret nuclear program in Yongbyon.

⁴ Cited in Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America’s Search for a New Foreign Policy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), pp. 136-37.

⁵ For the burgeoning literature on rogue states, see Anthony Lake, “Confronting backlash states,” *Foreign Affairs*, Mar/Apr 1994, Vol.73, No. 2, pp. 45-55; Michael Klare, “The Rise and Fall of the “Rogue Doctrine: The Pentagon’s Quest for a Post-Cold War Military Strategy,” *Middle East Report*, No. 208, Autumn 1998, pp. 12-13; Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America’s Search for a New Foreign Policy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999); David Mutimer, *The Weapons States: Proliferation and the Framing of Security* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000); Paul Hoyt, “Rogue State Image in American Foreign Policy,” *Global Society*, 14(2), April, 2000, pp. 297-310; and Robert Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy: Containment After the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Elizabeth N. Saunders, “Setting Boundaries: Can International Society Exclude “Rogue States”?” *International Studies Review* (2006) 8, pp. 23–53.

⁶ Ashton B. Carter and William James Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999); Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).

post-Cold War strategic landscape,⁷ both U.S. allies, namely Japan and South Korea, as well as China did not actively seek a regional approach to defuse the crisis, nor did they engage in serious domestic debates about North Korea. Once the crisis was resolved through the Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea in October 1994, East Asian countries fully endorsed the Agreed Framework, while Japan and South Korea paid most of the financial bills for the implementation of the U.S.-led nuclear deal.

Less than a decade after the first crisis, North Korea found itself in another nuclear standoff with the United States, or what Michael McDevitt calls “an instant replay” of the first crisis, involving similar provocative steps.⁸ In response, the Bush administration launched, and maintained until early 2007, a systematic campaign aimed at pressuring the Kim Jong Il regime through the Six Party process.⁹ However, regional support was scant. Unlike in the first crisis, and despite heightened tension arising from North Korea’s repeat performance, regional actors did not share the threat perception of the Bush administration. Instead, East Asian countries were united in their opposition to the Bush administration’s efforts to “globalize” the North Korean problem and showed greater activism during the second crisis.

Given America’s status in East Asia as a de facto hegemon since World War Two, the regional resistance to the U.S. approach is particularly significant and not easily explained by power-based international relations theories. While keeping

⁷ As one example of the changing regional security structure, in August 1992 the communist regime in Beijing normalized its diplomatic relations with South Korea, North Korea’s archenemy.

⁸ Michael McDevitt, “Hear We Go Again - North Korea and Nuclear Weapons,” *PacNet Newsletter*, No. 43A, Pacific Forum, Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 21, 2002. For a detailed account of the second crisis, see Charles L Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2007).

⁹ In February 2007, the Bush administration agreed to lift financial sanction against North Korean assets and managed to produce an agreement on North Korea’s “nuclear disablement.” As discussed later in this chapter and Chapter 6, the welcome development at the Six Party Talks has produced a partial success such as the halting of the nuclear facilities at Youngbyon in July 2007 and the disabling of the facilities in October 2007.

diplomatic channels open with North Korea, each East Asian country has been pressing the Bush administration to step away from its aggressive approach.¹⁰ Regional reactions in the early rounds of the Six Party Talks underscore the breadth of challenge to America's regional influence. After the first Six Party meeting in August 2003, for instance, China's chief delegate Wang Yi declared, "America's policy toward the D.P.R.K., that is the main problem we are facing."¹¹ South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun also warned that "taking too tough a stance against North Korea could cause "friction and disagreement between South Korea and the United States."¹² Despite his close ties with President Bush, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi also urged Bush to have direct talks with North Korea: "[U]nless you open the negotiation process, there will be no improvement on the issues."¹³ The region's collective concern about the hard line U.S. approach and North Korea's nuclear test eventually led to the February 2007 agreement. In an apparent about-face, the Bush administration discarded its previous position of "comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible dismantling" (CVID) of North Korean nuclear programs and showed greater flexibility toward North Korea.¹⁴

¹⁰ During the second crisis, numerous East Asian heads of state or minister-level officials visited Pyongyang, including Chinese President Hu Jintao in October 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi in May 2004, former South Korean Prime Minister Lee Haechan in March 2007, China's Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan in April 2006, South Korean Unification Minister Chung Dongyoung in June 2005, former Japan's Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Taku Yamazaki in January 2007, South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun's visit to Pyongyang in October 2007.

¹¹ Joseph Kahn, "Chinese Aide Says U.S. Is Obstacle in Korean Talks," *New York Times*, September 2, 2003.

¹² Martin Fackler, "North Korean Counterfeiting Complicates Nuclear Crisis," *New York Times*, January 29, 2006.

¹³ Howard W. French, "North Koreans Sign Agreement with Japanese," *New York Times*, September 18, 2002.

¹⁴ Through this agreement, the Bush administration retracted financial sanctions against the Kim Jong Il regime in return for North Korea's gradual disabling of its nuclear programs. "North Korea Agrees to Wind Down Nuclear Program," *The Associated Press*, February 13, 2007; Helene Cooper and Jim Yardley, "Pact With North Korea Draws Fire From a Wide Range of Critics in U.S.," *New York Times*, February 14, 2007; Helene Copper, "In U.S. Overtures to Foes, New Respect for Pragmatism," *New York Times*, March 1, 2007. The agreement seems to have yielded a partial success in July 2007 when North Korea allowed UN inspectors to visit and confirm the halting of operation at the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, followed by the October 2007 agreement in which North Korea promised to disclose and disable its nuclear programs by the end of 2007.

The regional response had implications for the regional order as well. Following successful resolution by the Clinton administration, the first North Korean nuclear crisis was a catalyst for the strengthening and renewal of U.S. alliances in the region, manifested in the so-called Nye Initiative to maintain U.S. force levels in East Asia in 1995 and the 1997 agreement on a revision of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines. Along the way, the U.S. regional influence increased substantially, paving the way for its crucial role in the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-96 and the North Korean missile crisis in 1998. During the second crisis, however, alliance management and regionalism¹⁵ have faced increasing difficulties, while the U.S. regional role has been in question and its regional influence is in decline.¹⁶

The East Asian response to the second crisis is also puzzling in that the regional countries' rejection of the global rogue frame and a collective regional response came in spite of the fact that East Asian countries have differing levels of perceived threat and disparate bilateral issues vis-à-vis North Korea. Looking at the East Asian situation through the lens of parochial national interests, however, ignores other important "regional" processes. By refusing the UN Security Council option¹⁷ and insisting on active participation in the Six Party Talks, East Asian countries essentially "regionalized" an issue that had previously been addressed bilaterally in an idiosyncratic manner (e.g., inter-Korean relations, China's defense treaty obligations, periodic bilateral meetings in Japan). In fact, in the past decade China, Japan, and

¹⁵ Regionalism in this dissertation is defined as political processes of deepening inter-governmental regional ties. In his recent study, T.J. Pempel defines regionalism as "the top-down process of government-to-government formation of institutions such as ASEAN, ARF." T.J. Pempel, "Introduction: Emerging Webs of Regional Connectedness," in T.J. Pempel, ed. *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). p. 6.

¹⁶ For a recent discussion of a "complex" regional situation, see Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), especially pp. 174-75.

¹⁷ It was only after the 2006 missile and nuclear tests by North Korea that the UN Security Council got directly involved with the North Korean issue. A Chinese expert attributed regional countries' reluctance to hand over the North Korean issue to the UNSC to their concerns about regional implications. Interview 13-04, Beijing, November 24, 2004.

South Korea have all been highlighting, albeit to varying degrees, the meaning of North Korea as a focal point of regional security and seeking to redefine their relationships with North Korea.

At the same time, the North Korean threat, which was previously perceived by regional actors in a straightforward manner, became the major source of domestic contestation, with competing domestic political actors framing the North Korean threat in starkly different terms. Specifically, for Japanese conservatives, North Korea is a “threat” armed with Nodong missiles, while moderates see it as a potential “bridge” for Japan to reenter East Asia.¹⁸ For conservatives in Seoul, North Korea’s name still retains a Cold War flavor: “*jujeok*” or the main enemy of the nation. On the other hand, South Korean liberals view their Northern neighbor as a regional “partner.” As China joins the world economy and becomes a “stakeholder”¹⁹ in the international system, some Chinese elites have begun to see North Korea as a “liability,” while others still view North Korea as a “buffer” in the U.S.-centered regional order.

What is it about North Korea in the wake of the second crisis that prompted such distinctive regional reactions and heated domestic contestation? What are the consequences of regional and domestic dynamics for the regional order in East Asia? With particular reference to the three East Asian countries, namely China, Japan, and South Korea,²⁰ this dissertation aims to show how the variable understandings of the

¹⁸ This effort is being made primarily to reverse what the Meiji era intellectual father Yukichi Fukuzawa termed “*datsu-a ron*,” a call for getting out of a backward Asia and joining the advanced West in the late 19th century. With economic integration and security consultation on the rise in the region, however, Japanese contemporary intellectuals have recently made a plea for proactively engaging East Asia.

¹⁹ Robert Zoellick, “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?” Department of State, September 21, 2005, available at <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rem/53682.htm>.

²⁰ Russia, the other participant in the Six Party talks, is not included in the analysis as a key case mainly for two reasons: 1) to my knowledge, there exists no significant domestic contestation over the meanings of North Korea in Moscow; 2) While Russia would also want to expand its influence in East Asia, its diplomatic overture toward the North in the past decade, compared with other regional powers, was neither persistently made nor anchored to greater regional status or regional vision. However, given its great power status (with the UN Security Council veto power) and its abundant oil and natural gas

North Korean challenge influence the way East Asian countries formulate their national interests and articulate long-term regional visions. More specifically, this dissertation asks two questions: 1) what explains variations in the *collective* regional response to the U.S. approach toward North Korea during the first and second North Korean nuclear crises? How, despite the continuing presence of U.S. power and influence in the region, did East Asia successfully “regionalize” the North Korean issue, along the way jointly rejecting the global frame and resisting the hard line approach of the Bush administration? And 2) what are the causes and consequences of the *diversified* interpretations of the North Korean problem within *each country* in the region?

In answering these questions, this dissertation advances regional role conceptions as a key variable and examines the East Asian experience to showcase how regional role conceptions affect foreign policy behavior. For East Asian countries, the Bush administration’s approach toward North Korea came as a profound external shock that had repercussions for how regional security was understood in each country. The resulting regional dynamic motivated East Asian states to respond collectively in ways that diverged from the U.S. frame while, at the same time, igniting varied domestic security debates in each country. Through this process, the North Korean challenge set in preparation multiple pathways to a regional order, with different degree of consensus emerging across the region and within each country.

By utilizing the concepts of role congruence and conflict, this dissertation identifies such different pathways to regional order in post-Cold War East Asia. The East Asian case provides a useful window for assessing how threat perceptions and role conceptions play out in regional contexts and, more broadly, how the region operates in a changing global context. By insisting, until recently, on its new global

reserves, Russia certainly has potential for playing a greater role over development of the Korean Peninsula in the future.

role and a particular global frame, the Bush administration ignored the changing regional context, along the way losing its formidable regional influence and worsening the regional order in East Asia. Future U.S. administrations will benefit from paying careful attention to regional role conceptions and their impact on the regional order in East Asia, a region of growing strategic and economic importance in the years to come.

1-2. Rogues, Role Conceptions and Regional Order

Despite the Bush administration's claim that the North Korean problem is a common global challenge, the actual levels of perceived threat and the degree of interest in North Korean nuclear weapons have differed. Rather than being a matter of objective reality, national interests are often forged in the process of interaction with other nations in various political contexts,²¹ and the ways nations articulate their national interests affects the way in which they perceive the level of threat coming from other countries. The presence of multiple interpretations of North Korea in East Asia itself reveals the contested nature of the North Korean threat and the contingent nature of national interests vis-à-vis North Korea. A careful analysis of the way regional actors perceive and articulate the North Korean challenge would provide insights into how national interests are contested and reshaped at the domestic level.²²

²¹ Martha Finnemore's metaphor in her *Defining the National Interest* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996) is a useful example that contrasts with the realist tradition of "defending" the national interest. See also Jutta Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 2(3), 1996, pp. 275-318.

²² For a recent study of such contested national interests at the domestic level and its impact on interstate behavior, see Jonathan Kirshner's study of caution exercised by the financial community on the road to war. *Appeasing Bankers: Financial Caution on the Road to War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). Earlier works, which similarly examined the contested nature of the national interest formation at the domestic level, include Richard Anderson, *Public Politics in an Authoritarian State: Making Foreign Policy during the Brezhnev Years* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993) and James G. Richter, *Khrushchev's Double Bind: International Pressures and Domestic Coalition Politics* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

Role Conceptions as a Variable

In this dissertation, I argue that East Asian countries' national interests surrounding the North Korean problem are shaped by what I call regional role conceptions, a set of ideas held and articulated by domestic political elites about their nation's proper roles and status in a given region. Along with material capabilities, how political actors perceive their nation's role on the regional or world stage has important consequences for national interest formation and threat perception. Of course, the domestic process of articulating regional roles is often a competitive one, since different political groups may have different, competing ideas about the role of their nation in the region. What kind of roles prevails in domestic contestation in turn has a direct bearing on the formation of policy preferences by altering "the definition of the situation and of the available options."²³

In his seminal article on role conceptions,²⁴ K. J. Holsti defined national role conceptions as policy makers' perceived "image" of "the appropriate orientations or

²³ Philippe G. Le Prestre, "Author! Author! Defining Foreign Policy Roles after the Cold War," in Philippe G. Le Prestre, ed., *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era: Foreign Policies in Transition* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 5) cited in p. 88.

²⁴ For a useful review of role theory in the field of sociology, see B. J. Biddle, "Recent Developments in Role Theory," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1986, 12, pp. 67-92. For a discussion of national role conceptions in explaining foreign policy behavior, see K.J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 14, 1970, pp. 233-309; Stephen G. Walker, ed., *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987); Chih-yu Shih, "National Role Conception as Foreign Policy Motivation: The Psychological Bases of Chinese Diplomacy," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1988, pp. 599-631; Stephen Walker, "Symbolic Interaction and International Politics: Role Theory's Contribution to International Organization," in Martha L. Cottam and Chih-yu Shih, eds., *Contending Dramas, A Cognitive Approach to International Organizations* (New York: Praeger, 1992), pp. 19-38; Michael Barnett, "Institutions, Roles, and Disorder: The Case of the Arab States System," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Sep., 1993), pp. 271-296; Glenn Chafez, Hillel Abramson and Suzette Grillot, "Role Theory and Foreign Policy: Belarussian and Ukrainian Compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1996, pp. 727-757; Philippe G. Le Prestre, ed., *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era: Foreign Policies in Transition* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Lisbeth Aggestam, "A Common Foreign and Security Policy: Role Conceptions and the Politics of Identity in EU," in Lisbeth Aggestam and Adrian Hyde-Price, eds., *Security and Identity in Europe: Exploring the New Agenda* (London: MacMillan Press, 2000), pp. 87-115; Katja Weber and Paul A. Kowert, "Language, Rules, and Order: The Westpolitik Debate of Adenauer and Schumacher," in Francois Debrix, ed., *Language, Agency, and Politics in a Constructed World* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), pp. 196-219; Michael Grossman, "Role Theory and Foreign Policy Change: The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s," *International Politics*, 2005, 42, pp. 334-351;

functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment.”²⁵ Along the line of role conceptions, international relations scholars have used various concepts such as national self-image²⁶ or elite belief systems²⁷ as key variables shaping foreign policy behavior. However, analyses based on individual leaders raise questions about the generalizability of a particular individual leader’s self-image to the national level.²⁸ Another problem with the earlier literature on role conceptions was its focus on “psychological” rather than “social” dimensions of foreign policymaking. Foreign policy, by definition, assumes relationships with other nations and each nation’s social position is inherently intertwined with that of other nations.²⁹ Alexander Wendt’s criticism of the earlier role conception literature centers on the tendency to privilege “the agentic, role-taking side of the equation” at the cost of the “structural, role-consuming side.”³⁰ The analysis of role conceptions can benefit from going beyond the individual and cognitive dimension of decision-making to capture the social and “constitutive” dimension through which actors “define the boundaries and distinctive practices of a group.”³¹ Rather than functioning merely as constraints on

Lisbeth Aggestam, “Role Theory and European Foreign Policy: A Framework of Analysis,” Ole Elgstrom and Michael Smith, eds., *The European Union’s Roles in International Politics: Concepts and Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 11-29.

²⁵ Holsti, “National Role Conceptions,” p. 246.

²⁶ Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

²⁷ Alexander George, “The ‘Operational Code’: A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision Making,” *International Studies Quarterly* 13, 1969, pp. 190-222; Stephen Walker, “The Interface Between Beliefs and Behavior: Henry Kissinger’s Operational Code and the Vietnam War,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 21, 1977, pp. 129-168; Cottam and Shih, *Contending Dramas*; Weber and Kowert, “Language, Rules, and Order.”

²⁸ Martha L. Cottam, “Recent Developments in Political Psychology,” in Martha L. Cottam and Chih-yu Shih, eds., *Contending Dramas, A Cognitive Approach to International Organizations* (New York: Praeger, 1992), p. 7.

²⁹ Stephen Walker, “Symbolic Interaction and International Politics: Role Theory’s Contribution to International Organization,” in Martha L. Cottam and Chih-yu Shih, eds., *Contending Dramas, A Cognitive Approach to International Organizations* (New York: Praeger, 1992), p. 24.

³⁰ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 227-28.

³¹ Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, “Identity as a Variable,” *Perspectives on Politics*, December 2006, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 697.

policymaking, the way nations envision their regional roles shapes the way they formulate national interests and determine the appropriate policies to fulfill them.

East Asian countries' understanding of the North Korean challenge illustrates this point. For the regional countries, the North Korea question is inescapably linked to their pursuit of new regional roles. As such, we should not approach the North Korean issue in isolation from the larger regional dimension. On the surface, East Asian countries seem to have disparate, largely unrelated bilateral concerns with their awkward neighbor. For South Koreans, North Korea represents the issues of inter-Korean relations and unification, while the Japanese view it as the source of the nationwide outrage symbolized in the abduction scandal.³² For the Chinese, North Korea remains a fragile, troubled, communist ally across the Yalu.

From these seemingly disparate threads, however, one could find a coherent regional theme anchored to the meaning of North Korea. More specifically, South Korea's sunshine policy of engaging North Korea and promoting inter-Korean reconciliation is connected to its broader regional vision called *Dongbuka Jungsim Gukga-ron* (the strategy of transforming the Korean Peninsula into the focal point of Northeast Asia), positioning itself at the hub of regional economic integration and security cooperation.³³ North Korea, in this vision, is a key partner for greater regional integration centered on the Korean Peninsula rather than the main enemy to fight against.

Japan's abduction issue, which was first acknowledged by Kim Jong Il during the 2002 Koizumi-Kim summit, was in fact an unexpected byproduct of Prime

³² Despite North Korea's initial denial, rumors about the abduction of about a dozen of Japanese nationals by North Korean agents in the late 1970s and the early 1980s had persisted in Japan. During Prime Minister Koizumi's 2002 visit to Pyongyang, Kim Jong-Il unexpectedly admitted the abduction and apologized. But the surprising revelation sparked public outrage in Japan, fueling anti-North Korean sentiments and making Japan's normalization efforts exceedingly difficult to continue.

³³ *Dongbuka-sidae Gusang [The Northeast Asia Cooperation Initiative]*, Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiative, Seoul, South Korea, 2004.

Minister Junichiro Koizumi's efforts to normalize Japan's relations with North Korea. Given that enduring controversy over its past as colonizer and regional suspicion of its future role have narrowed Japan's regional diplomatic space,³⁴ getting deeply involved in the North Korea issue was seen as a unique opportunity "to rejuvenate its troubled regional status."³⁵ By participating in the Six Party process, a former senior Japanese diplomat reasons, Japan can redefine its relations with participating countries, opening "a new strategic position in the region."³⁶ Put differently, the Korean Peninsula is "the gateway to Asia or even to "normalcy" in international relations," where Japan can "solidify a longstanding role in the emergent Northeast Asian regionalism."³⁷ Former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's normalization efforts were the epitome of that yearning.³⁸

In China, a communist allegiance to North Korea continues due in large part to China's attempts to enhance its regional influence. In short, the Korean Peninsula represents a place where China's ambitions to become a regional "hegemon" will be tested.³⁹ In this view, the Six Party process can serve as a steppingstone for an alternative regional security structure that would go beyond the current U.S.-centered regional order and enhance China's regional status accordingly. As Figure 1-1 illustrates, in the East Asian understandings of North Korea, there is an area of overlap

³⁴ The latest diplomatic isolation of Japan was provoked by Prime Minister Koizumi's annual visits to Yasukuni Shrine which worships Japan's war dead, including 14 Class A World War II war criminals. The Shinto shrine also has a war museum, *Yushukan*, which generally downplays Japan's past aggression and praises the spirit of Japanese. Both the Chinese and South Korean governments have vehemently criticized Prime Minister's visit. For a detailed analysis of the Yasukuni issue, see Daiki Shibuichi, "The Yasukuni Shrine Dispute and the Politics of Identity in Japan," *Asian Survey*, March/April, 2005, Vol. 45, Issue 2, pp. 197-215.

³⁵ Interview 05-05, Tokyo, March 23, 2005.

³⁶ Kazuhiko Togo, *Japan's Foreign Policy 1945-2003: The Quest for a Proactive Policy* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), p. 418.

³⁷ Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's Multilevel Approach toward the Korean Peninsula After the Cold War," in Charles K. Armstrong, Gilbert Rozman, Samuel S. Kim, and Stephen Kotkin, eds., *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006), p. 184.

³⁸ One Japanese expert claimed that Japan-North Korean normalization became "the crown jewel" of the Koizumi government. Interview 30-05, Tokyo, July 15, 2005.

³⁹ Xiaoxing Yi, "A Neutralized Korea? The North-South Rapprochement and China's Korea Policy," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XII, No. 2, Winter 2000, p. 79.

in terms of the meaning of North Korea as a staging ground for each nation's respective new regional role and vision.⁴⁰ Given the salience of North Korea in East Asian countries' regional role conceptions, it is unwise to assume that they would unproblematically accept the U.S. threat perception of North Korea and follow whatever path the United States would take in dealing with North Korea.

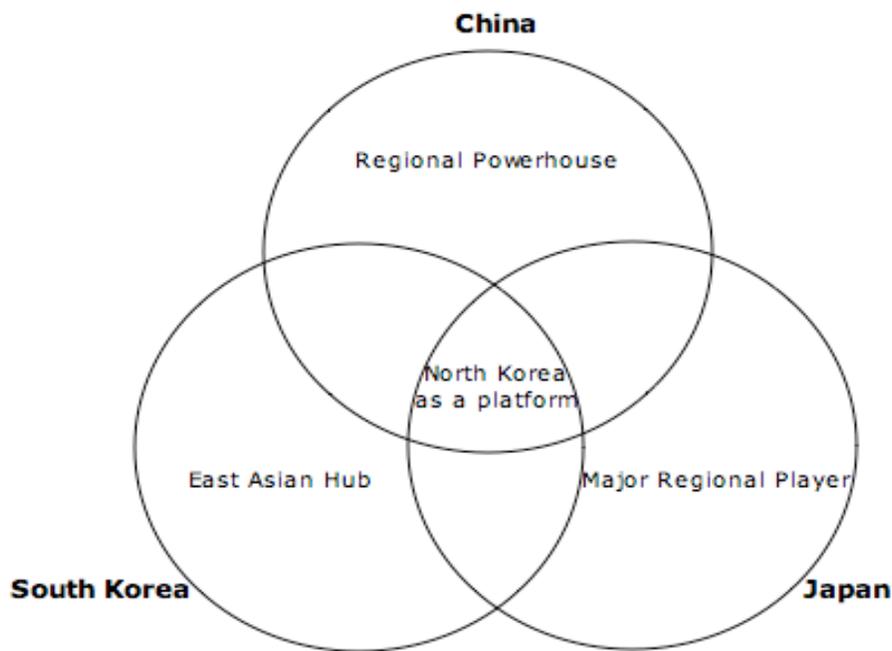


Figure 1-1. North Korea and Regional Roles

Role Conflict and Domestic Competition over the Meaning of North Korea

In advancing an argument based on role conceptions, this dissertation does not hold that the mere presence of certain role conceptions can dictate policy outcomes in a deterministic fashion. In fact, a key analytical limitation of the earlier work on role

⁴⁰ Interview 07-04, Beijing, November 16, 2004; Interview 04-05, Tokyo, March 22, 2005; Interview 05-05, Tokyo, March 23, 2005; Interview 27-05, Tokyo, June 27, 2005; Interview 33-05, Tokyo, July 27, 2005; Interview 22-05, Seoul, May 12, 2005; Interview 38-05, Seoul, August 4, 2005.

conceptions was the inability to systematically address role conflict.⁴¹ While some scholars noted the possibility of conflict among various roles,⁴² they did not investigate role conflict in a systematic manner. Michael Barnett's study on pan-Arabism is a rare exception.⁴³ Based on the case study of the pre-1967 Arab states system, he effectively demonstrates the way "overlapping institutions produce contradictory demands on Arab states' foreign policy and contribute to regional instability."⁴⁴ Similarly, countries in East Asia are subject to competing demands shaped by different role conceptions.

Two such regional roles are of particular importance: roles shaped by external forces (e.g., strategically important external powers) and those shaped internally by local actors themselves.⁴⁵ The question that naturally arises is: which type of roles prevail, and under what conditions? Early role theorists generally assumed that in case of role conflict, internally-shaped role conceptions are more influential than externally-induced ones in determining state behavior.⁴⁶ Without empirical testing, however, we cannot be sure whether internally-shaped or externally-shaped roles prevail at a given moment in time.

In East Asia, the existing power structure, in which the United States maintains a substantial military and economic presence, powerfully conditions regional role conceptions through existing U.S.-centered role conceptions. In fact, all the regional

⁴¹ Stephen G. Walker and Sheldon W. Simon, "Role Sets and Foreign Policy Analysis in Southeast Asia," in Stephen G. Walker, ed., *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 143.

⁴² Walker and Simon, "Role Sets," p. 142.

⁴³ Barnett, "Institutions, Roles, and Disorder." For an analysis of role conflict from the psychological angle, see Weber and Kowert, "Language, Rules, and Order."

⁴⁴ Barnett, *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁴⁵ Holsti called externally-shaped roles "external role prescriptions," while others used the term "role expectations" to capture the roles shaped by outside forces. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions," p. 246; Walker and Simon, "Role Sets," p. 142. Barnett's use of "position roles," as opposed to "preference roles," also refers to the external dimensions. Such external forces include the power structure of the international system, global norms, or alliance commitments. Barnett, "Institutions, Roles, and Disorder." p. 275.

⁴⁶ Walker and Simon, "Role Sets," p. 159; Walker, "Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis: An Evaluation," p. 242.

countries, to varying degrees, seek approval from the de facto regional hegemon, the United States, by cooperating with it on various security issues, including North Korea. But at the same time, they seek foreign policy autonomy by engaging North Korea in their own ways. As a consequence, rather than internally-generated role conceptions dictating policy behavior in a predictable manner (as the earlier literature on role conceptions assumes), a constant balancing act between seeking U.S. recognition and pursuing regional autonomy characterizes regional role conceptions in East Asia.

More broadly, in East Asian countries one can distinguish two active regional role conceptions: those seeking U.S. recognition by stressing externally-shaped roles (e.g., U.S. ally, strategic partner) and those striving to secure policy autonomy and greater regional status by emphasizing internally-shaped roles (e.g., independent regional player, regional hegemon). The higher the levels of congruence between internally-shaped regional roles and externally-shaped regional roles, the more likely that the regional countries will support the U.S. approach toward North Korea. But if there is a conflict between the two roles, regional countries will either resist or try to weaken the U.S. approach.

In East Asia, domestic debates on regional role conceptions began to surface in the post-9/11 era as America's regional role changed.⁴⁷ As the Bush administration zeroed in on the role of a global counterproliferation enforcer, resorting to coercive means and rhetoric, its traditional role as a regional stabilizer was increasingly in question. The role shift worried regional actors who prize regional stability and their respective regional visions tied to North Korea. In fact, during the first crisis, the

⁴⁷ It is worth noting here that despite the fact that the United States continues to maintain a formidable military presence in East Asia, its regional influence has dramatically decreased in the past few years. As of this writing, the United States still maintains about 78,000 troops in Japan and South Korea alone, even after some portion of the forces were redeployed to the Middle East due to the ongoing War in Iraq and the Global Posture Review by the Pentagon. The U.S. Pacific Command website, available at <http://www.pacom.mil/about/pacom.shtml>

Clinton administration adopted a strategy of gradual escalation, seeking regional understanding and support in the process and thus fulfilling its role as a regional stabilizer. In contrast, the Bush administration turned to a simplifying, unilateral turn in its global strategy and, until its recent about-face, applied it to the North Korean situation, often with little consideration for regional repercussions. Challenging the rogue frame, the regional countries soon moved to dampen the problem growing from the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea.

The stage was then set for a battle between the United States and regional countries on the proper handling of the North Korean challenge. As one Chinese expert succinctly put it, while there is “no regional agreement on the North Korean threat, there is a regional consensus on maintaining regional stability.”⁴⁸ A senior South Korean defense analyst in a government-affiliated defense think tank observes that in the process of preventing U.S. preemption on North Korea in the early period of the second crisis, “China, South Korea and Japan got much closer, while alliance coordination between the U.S. and its allies, Japan and South Korea, became much more difficult.”⁴⁹ Speaking during a yearlong hiatus in the Six Party Talks in 2004, a senior Chinese expert made it clear that as long as the Bush administration maintained an aggressive approach toward North Korea, “the regional consensus [on North Korea] will be maintained.”⁵⁰ Against this backdrop, as explored in this dissertation, regional cooperation among the East Asian countries improved before and during the early rounds of the Six Party talks.

However, as the Six Party talks reached a stalemate with no signs of immediate resolution, the prolonged crisis gradually gave rise to domestic contestation of the interpretation of the North Korean threat and regional roles in each East Asian

⁴⁸ Interview 08-04, Beijing, November 18, 2004.

⁴⁹ Interview 42-05, Seoul, August 5, 2005.

⁵⁰ Interview 12-04, Beijing, November 24, 2004.

country. In fact, contrary to the structural realist assumption, different domestic groups “have distinct visions of what the national interest is and how it can best be served.”⁵¹ Political actors “compete to frame the event because how the event is understood has important consequences for mobilizing action and furthering their interests.”⁵² Once changing situations call into question the prevalent regional vision, other groups may challenge the mainstream view, leading to domestic jostling for a dominant narrative that will shape a nation’s collective regional visions. In the process, different political actors project different regional role conceptions that mirror their own ideational preferences.⁵³

The domestic-international link is important to note here.⁵⁴ In his study of Khrushchev’s foreign policy, for instance, James Richter argues that international factors may affect “the authority of leaders by enabling them to or preventing them from fulfilling policy promises.”⁵⁵ Despite political leaders’ North Korea-anchored regional visions and their objection to the U.S. frame, the continued stalemate at the Six Party talks made the realization of their regional visions virtually impossible. In

⁵¹ Kirshner, *Appeasing Bankers*, p. 21.

⁵² Michael Barnett, “The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable,” in Shibley Telhami and Michel Barnett, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 69.

⁵³ In a similar vein, Amitav Acharya attributes the demand of regional organizations in Asia in part to efforts to pursue ideologically-driven foreign policy goals. For instance, Acharya links Malaysia’s pursuit of the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) to “the ideological underpinnings of Mahathirism.” See Amitav Acharya, “Regional Institutions and Security in the Asia-Pacific: Evolution, Adaptation, and Prospects,” in Amitav Acharya and Evelyn Goh, eds., *Reassessing Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: Competition, Congruence, and Transformation* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007), p. 36.

⁵⁴ Matthew Evangelista, “Domestic Structures and International Change,” in Michael Doyle, and John Ikenberry, eds., *New Thinking in International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); Leonard J. Schoppa, *Bargaining with Japan: What American Pressure Can and Cannot Do* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Michael J. Hiscox, *International Trade & Political Conflict: Commerce, Coalitions, and Mobility* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). The classic manifestation of the link is Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the Logic of Two-Level Games.” *International Organization* 42(3), 1988, pp. 427-460.

⁵⁵ Richter, *Khrushchev’s Double Bind*, p. 14.

this situation, domestic political actors who stressed stronger ties with the United States began to challenge the reigning view⁵⁶ and highlight the North Korean threat.

What followed was domestic contestation between those who sought to ride on the Bush administration's drive to demone North Korea by emphasizing U.S.-centered roles and those who remained focused on internally-shaped roles and the meaning of North Korea as a regional platform. Different interpretations of the North Korean challenge then fit neatly into different narratives about proper regional roles. Each group accepts the aspects of North Korea that conform to its own regional visions, while rejecting the contradicting aspects. Although "North Korea engagers" in each country maintained their view of North Korea as a regional platform, "North Korea bashers" exploited the North Korea threat to emphasize U.S. ties and enhance their political standing within their countries. In sum, irrespective of the objective nature of the North Korean threat, domestic political groups in each country tailored the North Korean issue to their competing regional visions.⁵⁷

As shown in Table 1-1, in each East Asian country, those who stress foreign policy autonomy and greater regional roles tend to downplay the North Korean threat (e.g., South Korean liberals, including Presidents Kim Dae Jung, Roh Moo Hyun; the People's Liberation Army, the International Liaison Department of the Communist Party in China; Prime Ministers Koizumi, Tomiichi Murayama, Yasuo Fukuda). Instead, they highlight the positive meanings of North Korea in their larger regional visions. Other domestic groups tend to focus on ties with the United States (e.g., conservatives, including the Grand National Party (GNP) in South Korea; the Foreign

⁵⁶ Leonard Schoppa's study of Japan's bargaining with the United States, for instance, shows how external pressure (*Gaiatsu*) can yield different domestic responses. He finds that foreign pressure is successful when "latent support for foreign demands can be found outside the bureaucratic and interest-group circles that ordinarily dominate the policy process." Schoppa, *Bargaining with Japan*, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁷ On a similar point made in the context of Japan's handling of terrorism and child prostitution, see David Leheny, *Think Global, Fear Local: Sex, Violence, and Anxiety in Contemporary Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 6.

Ministry in China⁵⁸; what Richard Samuels calls “a new generation of revisionists”⁵⁹ in Japan, such as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Foreign Minister Taro Aso). They tend to emphasize the North Korean threat, while using North Korea bashing as a means to strengthen ties with the United States and enhance their own political standing. For them, strategic focus remains the regional status quo, with their preferred regional roles as U.S. ally or strategic partner intact.

The predominance of North Korea bashers, however, was not uniform across the region. A crucial factor has been political leaders’ ability to garner support from the larger society and the degree of domestic resonance of the Bush administration’s rogue rhetoric. With the relatively low degree of threat perception vis-à-vis North Korea and the high level of anti-US sentiments among the public, domestic debates in South Korea and China did not result in the collapse of the regional visions anchored to North Korea. In Japan, as abduction-related anti-North Korean feeling spread nationwide, the previous consensus on the merits of a regional approach collapsed. The ensuing rise of new conservatives served to “re-nationalize” the North Korean issue away from a common regional understanding.

Specifically, as a decade of the sunshine policy of reconciliation and inter-Korean exchanges substantially lowered the South Korean perception of the North Korean threat, Presidents Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moon Hyun’s pursuit of a regional role linked to North Korea grew popular among the public, marginalizing the

⁵⁸ Here I am not making any definitive claims about the policy preferences of different political groups in China. Given its one party rule, difference in foreign policy preferences among domestic groups, say the PLA and Foreign Ministry, over the North Korean issue is often not clear-cut. That said, a careful look at the way different groups make comments on North Korea reveals discernable contrasts where Foreign Ministry officials tend to highlight the global issues such as the proliferation issue and Sino-US ties, while the Party and the military maintain their traditional emphasis on bilateral ties with North Korea. For a recent study of variations in Chinese cooperation with the United States on nonproliferation policies, see Evan S. Medeiros, *Reluctant Restraint: The Evolution of China’s Nonproliferation Policies and Practices, 1980-2004* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

⁵⁹ Richard Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo’s Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

conservatives who stress the importance of the U.S.-South Korean alliance. The anti-American sentiment since 2002 further strengthened the position of North Korea engagers in South Korea. Recently, however, the conservative Lee Myongbak government in Seoul has put greater emphasis on U.S.-South Korean ties, seemingly signaling a changing of the guard in South Korea’s regional vision.

Table 1-1. The North Korean Threat and Role Conceptions in East Asia

	<i>North Korea Anchoring</i> Strategic Priority	<i>North Korea Bashing</i> Strategic Priority
	Internally-shaped role conceptions	US-directed role conceptions
South Korea	-NK as “ <i>partner</i> ” -The Korean Peninsula as the hub of regional integration/room for foreign policy autonomy	-NK as “ <i>the main enemy</i> ” -Alliance coordination within US global strategy
	Regional hub	US ally
China	-NK as “ <i>buffer/platform</i> ” -Securing regime security -Enhancing regional influence	-NK as “ <i>liability</i> ” -China’s global image -Strengthening Sino-US ties
	Regional Powerhouse	Global “stakeholder”
Japan	-NK as “ <i>bridge/platform</i> ” -Regional influence/room for foreign policy autonomy	-NK as the “ <i>major threat</i> ” -Normal defense posture -Alliance as a global pact
	Major regional player	“Normal” state/US ally

Upon closer review, however, the reality is more complicated. The rise of the conservatives in South Korea has more to do with President Roh’s botched domestic policies than with the public’s antipathy toward the North Korea-based regional vision. In fact, domestic support for President Roh’s Pyongyang visit in October 2007

and the sudden, albeit belated, rise of his popularity after the summit attest to the continuing salience of the regional role anchored to North Korea.⁶⁰ It is in this vein that the newly elected President Lee also expressed his willingness “to meet Kim Jong Il at any time” to discuss various issues including nuclear programs and inter-Korean reconciliation.⁶¹ In China where political leaders began to question U.S. strategic intentions in the region and the North Korean threat rarely captures the minds of the general public, political elites remain focused on improving ties with North Korea in various areas.

In contrast, in Japan, despite Prime Minister Koizumi’s continued normalization efforts, the abduction fiasco became too much of a political burden to make any meaningful breakthrough in the North Korea-based regional vision. In this context, the U.S. rhetoric about a North Korean rogue also tapped into a well of Japanese post-abduction anger and anxieties, opening the way for North Korea bashers in Japanese politics. Shinzo Abe is a prime example in this regard. Within a short period of time, Abe’s widely-publicized anti-North Korean stance catapulted him onto the national political stage.⁶² His North Korea bashing paid a handsome political dividend when he succeeded Koizumi as Prime Minister in August 2006. Upon assuming premiership, he became the driving force behind Japan’s anti-North Korean campaign, while positioning himself as the leader of the “new Japan”⁶³ that purports to

⁶⁰ According to a opinion survey by KBS-Media Research, the percentage of respondents supporting Roh’s governance improved to 53.7 in October, a 18.6 % increase from the same survey in August 2007. *Ohmynews*, October 6, 2007.

⁶¹ *Donga Ilbo*, July 7, 2008.

⁶² One senior Japanese expert even depicted then Cabinet Secretary Abe as “a single-issue politician,” preoccupied mainly with the abduction issue with an eye to enhance his political stature within the ranks of the Liberal Democratic Party and the larger Japanese political scene. Interview 04-05, Tokyo, March 22, 2005.

⁶³ His book, entitled “Toward A Beautiful Nation [*Utsukushii Kuni e*],” calls for Japan’s new security strategy focused on Japan’s global role in cooperation with liked-minded democratic allies such as the United States and India.

be a global player. In the process, the influence of political actors who stressed the North Korea-anchored regional role for Japan diminished.

Regional Role Conceptions and Regional Order

The converging and diverging nature of the East Asian response to the North Korean challenge suggest that regional role conceptions surrounding North Korea have broader regional consequences. An analysis of regional role conceptions can help us better understand the evolving regional order in East Asia. In the rapidly growing literature on East Asian security,⁶⁴ one of the key debates since the end of the Cold War has been conceptualizing the post-Cold War regional security order. Drawing on the prewar European experiences, Aaron Friedberg, for one, projected an image of East Asia as “the cockpit of great power conflict,” where an emerging multipolar East

⁶⁴ Aaron L. Friedberg, “Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1993/1994), pp. 5–33; Richard K. Betts, “Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asian and the United States after the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Winter 1993/94), pp. 34–77; Peter J. Katzenstein, *Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Mike Mochizuki and Michael O’Hanlon, “A Liberal Vision for the U.S.-Japanese Alliance,” *Survival*, Summer 1998; Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shirashi, eds., *Network Power: Japan and Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Spring 1999), pp. 49–80; David Shambaugh, “China’s Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security,” *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Winter 1999/2000), pp. 52–79; Thomas C. Berger, “Set for Stability? Prospects for Conflict and Cooperation in East Asia” *Review of International Studies* 26:3 (July 2000) pp. 405–428; Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, “Japan, Asia-Pacific Security, and the Case for Analytical Eclecticism,” *International Security* 26(3), Winter 2001/02, pp. 153–185; Christopher Hemmer and Peter J. Katzenstein, “Why Is There no NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism,” with Christopher Hemmer, *International Organization* (Summer 2002); David C. Kang, “Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytic Frameworks,” *International Security*, 27(4) Spring 2003, pp. 57–85; Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Michael Mastanduno and G. John Ikenberry, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Ellis S. Krauss and T.J. Pempel, eds., *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); J.J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein and Allen Carlson, eds., *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); T.J. Pempel, ed. *Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Allen Carlson, *Unifying China and Integrating with the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); Jae-Jung Suh, *Power, Interest, and Identity in Military Alliances* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

Asian order would lead to regional instability.⁶⁵ In contrast, basing his argument primarily on the historical experiences of East Asian countries, David Kang forecasts a stable East Asian hierarchy centered on China.⁶⁶ East Asian dynamics surrounding North Korea, however, raise questions about such deterministic accounts. Simply put, the East Asian security order is not foreordained to be conflictual or stable. Instead of inferring from different, largely dissimilar social contexts (e.g., pre-war European or pre-modern Asian), I argue, an analysis of the regional order should be subject to empirical testing in specific policy domains as regional actors interact among themselves and with external powers in various political contexts.

Existing studies also tend to privilege either the effects of extra-regional, systemic forces (outside-in) or the distinctive internal dynamics (inside-out) of a region as a key factor shaping regional order. For instance, John Ikenberry demonstrates how the United States, after its victory in World War II, structured and operated a stable post-war international order by binding itself to multilateral institutional mechanisms.⁶⁷ The regional order in East Asia is a natural outgrowth of that U.S.-led global order, with the United States stabilizing the regional order through its bilateral alliances and U.S.-led institutional mechanisms. On the other hand, other scholars point to the inner workings of the region. Thomas Berger, for instance, argues that East Asia is set for potential conflict due to the salience of historical enmity among regional countries.⁶⁸ The upshot of his analysis is an image of endemic regional instability in East Asia with little prospect of reconciliation.

A more accurate account would require an analysis of both the external and internal dimensions of regional order building. Contrary to the traditional view of

⁶⁵ Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," p. 5.

⁶⁶ Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong."

⁶⁷ G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraints, and the Rebuilding of Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁶⁸ Thomas Berger, "Set for stability? Prospects for conflict and cooperation in East Asia," *Review of International Studies* (2000), Vol. 26, pp. 405–428.

regional order as a simple geographical denomination or a material reality deduced unproblematically from the power structure at the system level, regions are “social constructs” shaped by political practices.⁶⁹ In other words, the construction of order is a dynamic process,⁷⁰ where the “boundaries and salient features” of a region are constantly in the making, depending on the nature of interaction between external and internal dynamics.⁷¹ Hence, instead of focusing on either external or internal forces, we need to look at the interaction between them. Specifically, if the two regional role conceptions were deemed compatible, regional actors would be able to expand their regional roles within the U.S.-led regional order. If not, they would resist the hegemonic design and the resulting order would be more conflictual.

While the Clinton administration’s North Korea policy complemented South Korea’s sunshine policy and Japan and China’s greater regional aspirations around the Korean Peninsula, the Bush administration’s approach conflicted with regional yearnings for greater roles, setting in motion a gradual transformation in the regional order.⁷² More specifically, the Clinton administration’s approach during the 1998 North Korean missile crisis, commonly known as the Perry Process, showed a mutually reinforcing mechanism between the United States and East Asian countries. For instance, President Kim Dae-jung did not have to balance alliance ties and South Korea’s regional policy. Instead, South Korea’s regional vision thrived under the leadership of the United States. Regional consultation during the Perry Process enabled the regional actors to play greater roles in dealing with North Korea, while at the same time allowing them to support U.S. leadership. No serious domestic

⁶⁹ Peter J. Katzenstein, “Regionalism and Asia,” *New Political Economy*; Nov 2000, 5(3), p. 354.

⁷⁰ Muthiah Alagappa, “Introduction,” in Muthiah Alagappa ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 34.

⁷¹ Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 12.

⁷² Hideya Kurata, “North Korea’s Renewed Nuclear Challenge,” *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Summer 2003, p. 91.

contestation over relationships with the United States and North Korea occurred. Compatible understandings of the North Korean challenge and the practices of coordination and consultation during the Perry Process served to mitigate mutual suspicion among East Asian countries and promoted regionalism in the process. In this way, both alliance coordination via the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) among the U.S., Japan, and South Korea and regional cooperation among China, Japan, and South Korea through the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) greatly improved.

In contrast, during the Bush presidency, until recently, the gap between the U.S. and regional understandings of the North Korean question made the U.S.-driven roles and the internally-shaped regional roles incongruent. In addition, the rogue frame and the coercive U.S. policy stance toward North Korea complicated East Asian countries' efforts to expand regional roles by engaging North Korea. By intensifying role conflict, the Bush administration's approach has weakened alliance ties. As for regionalism, by late 2004, a shared regional understanding of North Korea and the collective regional resistance to the Bush administration's approach facilitated regional cooperation. But as the rise of conservatives in Japan pushed that country in the other direction, the earlier pattern of regional cooperation deteriorated. As a result, the U.S alliances in East Asia have been losing a trilateral dimension, while regionalism fragmented.

Under these circumstances, trilateral cooperation of the TCOG became the first victim of growing tensions among U.S. allies. In China, in the face of Bush's inflexible attitude toward North Korea, many suspected that the United States was trying to rebuild the regional order to its liking via the Six Party talks.⁷³ In the process, domestic groups portraying North Korea as a liability dwindled, while the leadership

⁷³ Interview 07-05, Beijing, April 18, 2005.

moved to emphasize the traditional ties with North Korea. In June 2008, for instance, Xi Jinping, widely speculated about as Hu Jintao's successor as China's top leader in 2012, made his first official foreign visit to Pyongyang. During his visit, he reiterated to Kim Jong Il, "the China-DPRK friendship is inalterable and has withstood international flux," while agreeing with the North Koreans to celebrate the year 2009 as "the DPRK-China friendship year."⁷⁴ Meanwhile, Japan's initial focus on regional dimensions was reversed. As the conservatives assumed key government positions in Tokyo, trilateral cooperation with the U.S. and South Korea was replaced by a growing focus on the global role of the U.S.-Japan alliance.⁷⁵

In sum, the Bush administration shaped the regional order in two ways: In the early rounds of the Six Party talks (by the end of 2004) it provoked a *collective* regional response. Such regional reactions made alliance coordination very difficult, while they improved the pattern of regional consultation and cooperation developed during the Perry Process. As the hard line U.S. approach and the stalled crisis intensified role conflict and affected domestic political dynamics after 2005, a *contested* regional dynamic emerged, pitting Japan against China and South Korea. In the process, regional cooperation was replaced with mounting tensions, including a renewed China-Japan rivalry and a struggle between South Korea and Japan. Overall, as summarized in Table 1-2, while a more inclusive and cooperative regional order emerged in the late 1990s, during the second crisis the region has become more fragmented and conflictual.

⁷⁴ "Kim Jong Il meets Chinese vice president," *People's Daily*, June 18, 2008.

⁷⁵ "Koizumi, Bush trumpet new global-scale alliance," *Japan Times*, June 30, 2006.

Table 1-2. Role Conceptions and Regional Orders

	Role Congruence	Role Conflict
US Impact on Regional Role Conceptions	The Perry Process in the 1990s - Congruence between US-directed roles and regional roles	The Bush Doctrine - Conflict between the US-driven roles and regional roles
Shape* of Regional Order	Broadened, Multi-Tiered -Trilateral alliance ties -Inclusive, open regionalism	Narrowed, Fragmented -Ad hoc bilateral alliance ties -Fragmented regionalism
Character** of Regional Order	Cooperative -Alliance cooperation (TCOG) -Open regionalism (APT, ARF)	Conflictual -Alliance problem (end of TCOG) -By 2004: regionalism (APT) -Post-2005: regional rivalry (weak APT)

*The structural dimension refers to the underlying organizational template of the regional order, such as a bilateral hub-and spokes order built around U.S. alliances and a fusion of trilateral alliance mechanism and broader, open regionalism.

**The character of the regional order concerns whether patterns of regional interaction are conflictual or cooperative.

1-3. Alternative Explanations

In accounting for the variation in the regional response to the U.S. approach toward North Korea, we can consider several explanations, informed respectively by power, threat perception, and national interest. The first set of theories concerns the power variable. Both the hegemonic stability theory⁷⁶ and the literature on U.S. primacy⁷⁷ stress the hegemon’s material capabilities and its “ability to put forward

⁷⁶ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), Stephen D. Krasner, “State Power and Structure of International Trade.” *World Politics* 28(3), 1976, pp. 317-347; William Wohlforth, “The Stability of the Unipolar World,” *International Security*, 24(1), Summer 1999, pp. 5-42.

⁷⁷ On U.S. primacy, see G. John Ikenberry, ed., *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002); Henry R. Nau, *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002); Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Charles A. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Knopf, 2002); Robert J. Art, *A*

new ideas, to define (or redefine) international society, and to exclude those states that do not comply.”⁷⁸ Similarly, critical IR theorists highlight the role of hegemonic discourse in shaping state behavior. Roxanne Doty, for instance, argues that by repeatedly using such terms as the “foreign,” the “exotic,” and the “other,” a discourse by a hegemon could “[make] it virtually impossible to think outside of it.”⁷⁹ Be it hegemonic capability or hegemonic discourse, from this vantage point of power, we would expect regional countries to generally follow the U.S. lead in the second North Korean nuclear crisis, as they did in earlier crises. The regional resistance in the second crisis reveals the indeterminacy of U.S. power in affecting state behavior.

A refined realist argument, however, may be better suited to explain the regional outcome during the second crisis. Irrespective of the objective levels of U.S. material capabilities, if the *perceived* level of U.S. power decreased, we could see subsequent changes in state behavior.⁸⁰ Crucial here is the regional perception of U.S. power. The image of a bounded hegemon captures this possibility in East Asia: By the time the second crisis intensified in early 2003, the Bush administration had “bigger

Grand Strategy for America (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003); Keir Lieber and Daryl Press, “The Rise of U.S. Nuclear Primacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006, pp. 42-54. For a recent review of this burgeoning literature, see Colin Dueck, “New Perspectives on American Grand Strategy,” *International Security* Vol.28, No.4 (Spring 2004), pp.197-216.

⁷⁸ Saunders, “Setting Boundaries,” p. 25.

⁷⁹ Roxanne Doty, “Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 37 (3), p. 316. Also, see David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); David Mutimer, *The Weapons State: Proliferation and the Framing of Security* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000); Jae-Jung Suh, *Bound to Last: Power, Interest and Identity in the U.S.-Korea Alliance*, Ph. D. Dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 2000; Jae-Jung Suh, “The Two-War Doctrine and Regional Arms Race: Contradictions in U.S. Post-Cold War Security Policy on Korea,” in Matthew Evangelista and Judith Reppy eds., *The United States and Asian Security*, Ithaca, New York, Peace Studies Program, Cornell University, May 2002; Roland Bleiker, “A Rogue is a Rogue is a Rogue: US Foreign Policy and the Korean Nuclear Crisis,” *International Affairs*, 79(4), 2003: pp. 719-737; Roland Bleiker, “Identity and Security in Korea,” *The Pacific Review* 14 (1), 2001, pp. 121-148; Jae-Jung Suh, *Power, Interest, and Identity in Military Alliances* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

⁸⁰ William Curti Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 294.

fish to fry” in Iraq.⁸¹ Given the U.S. preoccupation with, and the subsequent quagmire, in Iraq, U.S. influence in regard to North Korea may be questioned in the minds of the regional actors, opening room for regional resistance during the second crisis. A corollary to this perceived power account is the growing power and influence of China, which may have weakened the U.S. regional standing further.

The main problem with the perceived power account is the fact that the Bush administration had already been challenged by the regional countries in its dealings with North Korea *prior to* the War in Iraq. For instance, throughout the first two years of the Bush presidency, preceding the War in Iraq, the Kim Dae Jung government in South Korea was persistent in its efforts to change and curb the Bush administration’s hard line approach toward North Korea. Similarly, the Chinese leadership raised question over the U.S. initial handling of the second crisis, which led to a dangerous action-reaction dynamic between the United States and North Korea. After the 2002 summit with Kim Jong Il, the Koizumi government in Japan also called for negotiation between the Bush administration and North Korea. If anything, what worried the regional countries during the second crisis was not the perceived decline of U.S. power, but the prospect that the Bush administration might indeed imprudently use its overwhelming military power against the North, endangering regional visions anchored to North Korea.

As for China’s power and influence, it is often assumed that over time its neighbors will be more likely to accommodate to China’s preferences on various regional issues, including North Korea. In this regard, without systematic empirical testing, many point to South Korea’s growing deference to China as a key example.⁸²

⁸¹ Victor Cha, “Why We Must Pursue ‘Hawk Engagement,’” in Victor Cha and David Kang, *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 75.

⁸² Jae Ho Chung’s recent study is a rare exception, highlighting South Korea’s strategic dilemma between the United States and China. See his *Between Ally and Partner: China-South Korean Relations*

Although some scholars have begun to explore the underlying sources of such regional deference to China,⁸³ upon closer observation it is not entirely clear whether the perceived power of China is the main driver shaping regional behavior. Despite China's regional ascendancy, the Japanese intensified their rivalry with China. Even in South Korea, the story is more complex than the bandwagoning-with-China hypothesis typically assumes: South Korea has been in conflict with China on issues that are critical to its regional visions. The South Korean government, for instance, made a strong protest against the Chinese claim that the ancient Korean kingdom of Koguryo was "part of an ethnic minority history under the ancient Chinese empire." When the Chinese foreign ministry appeared to sanction such an interpretation of Koguryo history on its Web site in 2004, it provoked strong South Korean opposition.⁸⁴ In short, it is the compatibility of their approaches toward North Korea (i.e., internally-shaped role conceptions anchored to the North), not China's growing influence, that helped facilitate Sino-South Korean relations.

The second group of explanations centers on threat perceptions. Stephen Walt, for instance, views perceived threats as a key driver behind balancing behavior.⁸⁵ According to this logic, it is not the U.S. power per se but regional threat perceptions vis-à-vis North Korea that should determine regional outcomes. In fact, all the East Asian countries are, albeit to varying degrees, concerned about the threat coming out of North Korea (e.g., missiles, artillery shells, or refugees). Given the East Asian

and the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Also see David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

⁸³ For an account that points to the historically-shaped hierarchical order in East Asia as a source of the bandwagoning behavior of regional countries, see David Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong," *International Security*, 27(4), Summer 2003, pp. 57-85 and a rejoinder by Amitav Acharya, "Will Asia's Future be Europe's Past?" *International Security*, 28(3), (Winter 2003/2004), pp. 149-164.

⁸⁴ Yong Deng, *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 211-12.

⁸⁵ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* Vol. 9, No. 4 (Spring 1985), pp. 3-43; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). Similarly, Barry Buzan points to a high level of mutual threat/fear as key factor defining "security complexes." See his *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishing Company, 1991), p. 194.

alliance posture that is arrayed to address North Korean contingencies, in this view, North Korean aggressive intentions manifested in its renewed nuclear provocation should serve to strengthen the alliance ties between the United States and its Asian allies.⁸⁶ However, not only did the regional countries resist the U.S. approach, alliance coordination faced mounting difficulties during the second crisis.⁸⁷ In addition, the fact that the South Korean threat perception of North Korea has dramatically lowered without any discernable decline in both North Korea's material capabilities and aggressive behavior begs an explanation.⁸⁸

A more plausible alternative is differences in threat perceptions *between* the United States and the regional countries vis-à-vis North Korea. Despite the U.S. rogue frame, according to this reasoning, East Asian countries expressed more concerns about the prospect of U.S. preemption on North Korea than about North Korea per se. For the East Asian countries, the collapse of the North Korean regime, either by a preemptive strike by the U.S. or through coordinated and prolonged sanctions, would “wreak an unbearable havoc” in the region as a whole and on the Korean Peninsula in particular.⁸⁹ In this worst-case scenario, regional instability can materialize in several forms. While the Japanese are wary of North Korea's intermediate-range Nodong missiles landing on their territory, South Koreans are still being held hostage to the barrage of tens of thousands of North Korean artillery shells targeted at the metropolitan city area around Seoul.⁹⁰ A North Korean contingency would be a

⁸⁶ Ok-Nim Chung, “Solving the Security Puzzle in Northeast Asia: A Multilateral Security Regime,” *CNAPS Working Paper*, The Brookings Institution, September 1, 2000.

⁸⁷ Robyn Lim, “Papering Over the Cracks,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 5, 2003, p. 21.

⁸⁸ Ted Hopf thus calls for developing a “theory of threat perception.” Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in IR Theory,” *International Security*, 23(1), Summer 1998, p. 187.

⁸⁹ Chung-in Moon, “Dongbukasiaui Anbohwanngyung Byunhwawa Bukhanui Haek, Gurigo Bukhanui Suntaek, [Change in Northeast Asian Strategic Environment, North Korean Nuclear Programs, and North Korea's Choice],” in Chung-in Moon, et. al. *21Segi Kukjehwangyong Byunhwawa Hanbando* [Change in the International Environment and the Korean Peninsula, in the Twenty First Century] (Seoul: Orum Publishers, 2004), p. 294.

⁹⁰ Masao Okonogi, “Dealing with the Threat of a Korean Crisis,” *Japan Review of International Affairs*, 17(2), Summer 2003, pp. 76; Victor D. Cha, “Japan's Grand Strategy on the Korean Peninsula,” *Japan*

nightmare scenario for the Chinese as well, since it could entail millions of North Korean refugees flowing into the northeastern part of China, a region about which Beijing is sensitive because of its role in a new economic development plan.⁹¹

This approach is useful for explaining a cautious regional approach toward North Korea during the second crisis. A comparison with the Perry Process illustrates this point. While the Clinton administration in the 1998 missile crisis did not take an aggressive, coercive approach toward North Korea, from a regional perspective, the Bush administration's approach, especially in the wake of the War in Iraq, appeared to have a greater potential to endanger regional stability. In other words, the perceived costs during the second crisis may have been far too substantial to ignore for the regional actors. As such, it would be in the interest of the regional countries to seek a workable regional solution to dampen growing tension between the hawkish U.S. administration and the equally risk-acceptant North Korean regime. From this perspective, we would expect to see the Six Party Talks functioning as a regional venue for crisis management, pitting the United States against the regional actors over proper means to resolve the North Korean problem.

While regional actors value reducing threats/costs coming out of the crisis in and of itself, the North Korean question goes beyond the issue of crisis management. Indeed, during the 1998 missile crisis and the crisis since 2002, the main focus in East Asia has rarely been on short-term crisis management. Rather, at stake was how to transform the long-term relationship with North Korea in ways that enhance existing regional roles and articulate new ones. As one Chinese expert writes, along with the goal of "crisis management, China's diplomacy never lost sight of its strategic

Journal of Political Science, 1(2), November 2000, pp. 268; Gary Samore, "The Korean Nuclear Crisis," *Survival*, 45(1), Spring 2003, p. 19; Tom Plate, "Seoul's survival hangs on U.S. restraint," *Japan Times*, February 21, 2005.

⁹¹ Interview 08-04, Beijing, November 18, 2004.

interests.”⁹² In this vein, “[n]o matter how the regional environment changed, North Korea would always be of importance to Chinese security and power diplomacy, and China would not forsake the DPRK’s sense of a special relationship.”⁹³ During the early rounds of the Six Party Talks, South Korea and Japan also made efforts to maintain bilateral channels with North Korea with greater regional roles and new regional visions in mind.

Alternatively, from the perspective of liberal/institutionalist theory,⁹⁴ finding a solution to the North Korean challenge may involve a collective action problem. In this interest-based account, the regional resistance to the U.S. approach may be due to the presence of uncertainty, private information, or transaction problems. Specifically, East Asian countries’ idiosyncratic national interests vis-à-vis North Korea, such as Japan’s emphasis on the abduction issue and South Korea’s preoccupation with inter-Korean reconciliation, may be key factors shaping regional behavior. Given parochial national interests vis-à-vis North Korea, East Asian countries should be expected to reject the hard line US approach in that it may complicate their own bilateral approaches toward the North.

By highlighting the *divergence* between the U.S. and regional countries, this account can shed light on the difficulty of finding a coordinated solution at the Six Party Talks. One could also link diverse national interests to the different weight of North Korea in the regional strategies of each East Asian country. Considering the salience of inter-Korean nationalism, the North Korea issue may be most central to South Korea’s conception of national interests. In Japan, the North Korean threat is

⁹² Deng, *China’s Struggle for Status*, p. 208.

⁹³ Liu Ming, “China’s Role on the Korean Peninsula: Its Characteristics and Development,” *Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies*, Vol. 11 (2001), p. 100, quoted in Deng, *China’s Struggles for Status*, p. 210.

⁹⁴ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane and Celeste A. Wallander eds., *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Celeste B. Wallander, “Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War,” *International Organization*, 54(4), Autumn 2000, pp. 705-35.

more pronounced, while less so in China. However, what seem to be disparate, nationally specific interests vis-à-vis North Korea are in fact the result of different political groups stressing different regional roles. One could highlight the emergence of Shinzo Abe in Japan as an example of forging distinct national interests on the basis of the North Korean threat. Yet, his North Korea bashing was mainly for the purpose of stressing Japan's externally-shaped regional roles as U.S. ally and normal state, rather than stressing parochial national interests or mitigating the threat coming from North Korea. More importantly, this account overlooks elements of regional *convergence* on the meaning of North Korea as a steppingstone for greater regional roles and visions. To test the validity of each claim, we need to examine the different regional contexts under which power, threat and interests affect state behavior surrounding the North Korean challenge.

1-4. Research Design and Outline of Chapters

This dissertation employs a comparative analysis of the post-Cold War political dynamics surrounding the North Korean challenge as the issue intersects with the different understandings and policies of the United States and East Asian countries. To assess the impact of role conceptions and the changes in regional order, I compare the political dynamics both in the spatial dimension (i.e., global, regional, national contexts) and the temporal dimension (i.e., the North Korean missile crisis and the Perry Process in 1998-2000; and the second nuclear crisis of 2002-present).

The research for this dissertation has benefited from multiple data sources gathered from China, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. First, I rely on various official documents concerning the North Korean issue in each country. With the exception of Japanese,⁹⁵ I use materials both in local languages and in English.

⁹⁵ For Japanese sources, I used translated materials available on the websites of the government agencies and other government-related think tanks such as Defense Agency's The National Institute for

Second, I draw on fifty-seven in-depth interviews that I conducted with government officials and experts in the three East Asian countries, as well as scores of interviews by the local media. I also utilize a wide set of secondary literature, local newspapers and opinion pieces concerning the North Korean challenge in each country. I identify the salience of regional role conceptions by examining various regional sources including speeches, policy documents, and interview materials. Throughout the empirical chapters, I employ a method of process tracing which tracks the policymaking process to identify the mechanism by which role effects lead to policy behavior.

Drawing on a comprehensive survey of policy documents, speeches, and interview data, in Chapter Two and Three, I examine and compare the American and East Asian understandings of the North Korean challenge in different political contexts and trace how such understandings led to different regional role conceptions and policy behavior. Chapter Two delineates the similarities and differences in the American and regional understandings of the North Korean challenge during the first nuclear crisis and the ongoing second nuclear crisis. After mapping out broader patterns, in Chapter Three, I explore the particular meanings attached to North Korea in domestic debates in East Asia and show how they are linked to their countries' regional role conceptions.

More specifically, Chapter Two explores how 9/11 and the specter of nuclear terrorism gave new meaning to the problem of rogues states and the threat of WMD proliferation, altering previous understandings and policy trajectories laid out by the Clinton administration. In contrast to the perceptual fluidity in East Asia on what North Korea represents, there has been an increasing rigidity in the U.S. perception of

Strategic Studies, Japan Forum for International Relations, while covering a wide variety of English versions of Japanese news media (Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi, Japan Times, Kyodo News) and scholarly journals.

North Korea as an urgent, global security problem. This perceptual rigidity/fluidity contrast led to different policy orientations toward North Korea. Unlike the Clinton administration, the Bush administration has taken more risk-taking, inflexible choices vis-à-vis North Korea. In East Asia where traditional threat perceptions of North Korea have weakened amid the search for greater regional roles, that U.S. policy shift was seen as problematic for the pursuit of such role.

Chapter Three delves into domestic contestations over North Korea in the three East Asian Countries. Here, the key task is to delineate the link between regional role conceptions and policy orientations toward North Korea in the three East Asian countries. Crucial in this process is to identify the sources of different role conceptions in each country and to show how the roles so conceived have lead to particular policies. I will pay particular attention to the policymaking process on North Korea in each country by “triangulating” various data sources such as interviews, opinion polls, regional scholarly journals, and official documents.⁹⁶

The next two chapters, Chapters Four and Five turn to the impact of role congruence and role conflict on the regional order in East Asia. To demonstrate the causal effects of regional role conceptions on regional order building, I compare alliance politics and regionalism during the Clinton and Bush presidencies. More specifically, I assess the contrasting regional dynamics shaped by different U.S. approaches toward North Korea and see how alliance management and community building worked out differently in different global contexts, transforming the shape and character of regional order. Chapter Four traces the Clinton administration’s approach toward North Korea during the North Korean missile crisis and North Korea’s suspected nuclear activities and reactions to the U.S. approach at the time, demonstrating how such negative reactions affected alliance relationship and

⁹⁶ Jeffrey T. Checkel, “International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework,” *International Organization* 59 (Fall 2005), p. 817.

regionalism. Chapter Five turns to the regional order as shaped by the Bush administration's policy toward North Korea and shows how alliance cooperation and regional frameworks changed.

Finally, Chapter Six concludes the dissertation with a summary of findings and a discussion of theoretical and policy implications. I also suggest possible avenues of further research and the possibility of extending the analytical framework advanced in this dissertation to other regional contexts (e.g., the Middle East) where a similar rogue problem intersects with the regional order. I also explore the potential implications of the latest developments at the Six Party Talks where the Bush administration began to take a more flexible approach toward North Korea. Although the final outcome remains to be seen, how this recent policy shift unfolds in the coming years will have significant consequences for regional role conceptions and the regional order in East Asia.

CHAPTER TWO:
Global Rogues and Regional Responses:
The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Challenge

2-1. Introduction

Throughout the post-Cold War period, U.S. responses to North Korea's nuclear ambitions have been based on a simple premise: the United States will not accept a nuclear North Korea. At the height of each of the North Korean nuclear crises, both the Clinton and Bush administrations imposed a series of economic sanctions and considered military options.⁹⁷ The similarities, however, go no further. During the first North Korean nuclear crisis, the Clinton administration relied primarily on bilateral negotiations with North Korea. The underlying assumption was that the North Korean threat, while dangerous, was manageable, requiring long-term political solutions. In contrast, the Bush administration took a unilateral, coercive approach on the assumption that North Korea represented a global challenge—both urgent and unconventional in nature—demanding immediate, decisive measures.

The different U.S. understandings of and approaches toward North Korea shaped, in turn, the East Asian reactions in the course of the crises. While largely bilateral in scope, the Clinton administration's approach was to secure multilateral backing in the form of alliance support from Japan and South Korea. During the first crisis, the Chinese government also provided support for the Clinton administration's approach on many occasions.

A completely different picture emerged in the aftermath of the second crisis. While the Bush administration put negotiations with North Korea into a multilateral

⁹⁷ According to Joel Wit, Daniel Poneman, and Robert Galluci, U.S. officials did in fact meet at the White House on June 16, 1994 to “help make a fateful decision on the number of additional troops to send to South Korea, and to deliberate further on the “Osirak option.” See Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 220.

setting, Michael Armacost observes that it was the United States that was pressured by regional countries to take a more conciliatory approach.⁹⁸ When Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice raised the idea of imposing economic and political penalties against North Korea, referring to what she called “other options in the international system,” her message fell on deaf ears in East Asia. Throughout the second crisis, writes Glenn Kessler, it has been “the United States, not North Korea that seemed isolated.”⁹⁹

This chapter takes a systematic look at the Bush Doctrine in general and its application to the North Korean case in particular. The Bush Doctrine represents a radical shift in the perception of and policy toward potential proliferators, such as North Korea. Underneath this transformation a new assessment of the uncertainty surrounding the proliferation challenge.¹⁰⁰ From the Bush administration’s perspective, the terrorist attacks of September 11th and the ensuing specter of nuclear terrorism gave new meaning to the North Korean challenge. Put simply, the post-9/11 context has enabled “a new American vision of national security that has redefined both the nature of the threat and the U.S. response.”¹⁰¹ Different understandings led to different policy prescriptions. Unlike the Clinton administration, the Bush administration has until recently opted for riskier and more inflexible policy choices vis-à-vis North Korea. In East Asia where the North Korean threat has become a matter of domestic political contestation as nations search for greater regional roles, the U.S. policy shift was seen as problematic and threatening to regional stability.

In what follows, I locate the changes in U.S. policy toward North Korea in the broader global strategic context and examine how that shift prompted a distinct

⁹⁸ Michael Armacost, “Daunting U.S. Tasks in Asia,” *Japan Times*, January 11, 2005.

⁹⁹ Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2007), pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁰ For a useful conceptual discussion of the role of uncertainty in International Relations Theory, see Brian C. Rathbun, “Uncertain about Uncertainty: Understanding the Multiple Meanings of a Crucial Concept in International Relations Theory,” *International Studies Quarterly* (2007) 51, pp. 533–557.

¹⁰¹ Robert Litwak, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy through the Prism of 9/11* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2007), p. 8.

regional response. In doing so, this chapter maps out broad patterns in the global and regional understandings of and policy behavior toward the North Korean challenge. I pay particular attention to similarities and differences in American and regional understandings of the North Korean challenge during the first and the second nuclear crises. The next section provides a brief overview of the contrast in the regional responses to the different U.S. approaches during the first and second crises. This is followed by an exploration of the nature of the Bush Doctrine as it relates to the post-9/11 global security vision, proliferation strategy, and the North Korean challenge. Particular emphasis is placed on the contrast between the Bush administration's strategy and that of the Clinton administration. The chapter then moves to the regional level, examining East Asia's response to the Bush Doctrine during the second crisis, followed by a concluding section summarizing the chapter.

2-2. Different Regional Responses to Similar Crises

In 1992 when the North Korean government rejected a request for special inspections of suspicious nuclear facilities in North Korea by the International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA), the newly formed Clinton administration found itself in the first nuclear crisis of the post-Cold War era. In striking similarity to the second crisis, North Korea announced in early 1993 its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). In May 1994 when North Korea began removing fuel rods from its 25-megawatt reactor, the Clinton administration made public its intention to seek economic sanctions on North Korea at the U.N. Security Council, prompting Pyongyang to respond with a warning that sanctions would provoke military actions by North Korea.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America's Search for a New Foreign Policy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), p. 140.

Concerned about rapidly developing tensions on the Korean peninsula, the Clinton administration adopted a strategy of gradual escalation as it attempted to build a coalition with its regional allies and China. The U.S. allies, Japan and South Korea, quickly endorsed the escalation strategy. In response to North Korea's announcement of its withdrawal from the NPT, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono made it clear that Japan would support sanctions should efforts to forestall North Korea's withdrawal fail.¹⁰³ Similarly, the Kim Young Sam government in South Korea not only declared that it would take "all necessary steps" to support sanctions, in June 1993, it unilaterally suspended trade with the North and banned South Korean companies from contacting North Koreans altogether. At the time, those supporting sanctions in South Korea included Kim Dae Jung, then the leader of the main opposition party and later the architect of the sunshine policy.¹⁰⁴ The message from South Korea was unmistakable: "unless and until North Korea cleared itself of all suspicions by way of inspections, there would be no progress in inter-Korean economic exchanges and cooperation."¹⁰⁵

At their meeting in 1994, Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and President Kim Yong Sam reiterated their shared view that unless North Korea allowed IAEA inspections of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, the two countries would join the international sanctions against North Korea.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the crisis, South Korea and Japan sided with the United States over the North Korean issue.¹⁰⁷ During a tripartite meeting in June 1994, for instance, the United States and its two Asian allies formed

¹⁰³ Wit, Poneman, Gallucci, *Going Critical*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁰⁵ K.D. Kapur, *Nuclear Diplomacy in East Asia: US and the Korean Nuclear Crisis Management* (New Delhi, India: Lancers Books, 1995), p. 152.

¹⁰⁶ Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's policy toward North Korea," in Tsuneo Akaha, ed., *The Future of North Korea* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 82.

¹⁰⁷ Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), p. 129.

“a united front against North Korea” and urged the UN Security Council to consider sanctions on North Korea.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile, Kim Jong Il’s planned visit to China in early 1993 was reportedly cancelled as China refused to accept North Korea’s request for support for its position on the issue of nuclear inspection.¹⁰⁹ In June 1994, in a meeting with a North Korean ambassador, China’s Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxian even suggested that China’s role in resolving the issue of expected sanctions at the UN Security Council were “limited,” with the implication being that North Korea should not count on China’s veto at the UN Security Council.¹¹⁰ As Japan’s Foreign Minister Koji Kakizawa put it, “it was important for Japan, South Korea and China—as Pyongyang’s neighbors—to send North Korea the right message together.”¹¹¹ Overall, the regional response at the time was not very different from that of the Clinton administration. As summed up in a Congressional testimony by Ambassador Robert L. Gallucci, the chief U.S. negotiator with the North Koreans at the time, the regional response during the first crisis and after the Geneva Agreement was in accord with that of the United States: “We stayed in touch with allies . . . [W]e are, all three, together on this agreement.”¹¹²

In contrast, even prior to 9/11, the Bush administration’s attitude toward North Korea caused discord between the United States and East Asian countries. When the new administration in Washington refused to follow through on the engagement policy pursued by the Clinton administration, East Asian concerns began to grow.¹¹³ Worried

¹⁰⁸ “US, Japan, ROK adopt United Front on North Korea,” *Japan Times*, June 16, 1994, p. 1, cited in Kapur, *Nuclear Diplomacy in East Asia*, p. 352.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

¹¹⁰ Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, pp. 208-09.

¹¹¹ “Kakizawa will visit Seoul and Beijing,” *Japan Times*, June 8, 1994, p. 1, cited in K.D. Kapur, *Nuclear Diplomacy in East Asia: US and the Korean Nuclear Crisis Management* (New Delhi, India: Lancers Books, 1995), p. 355.

¹¹² *Implications of the U.S.-North Korea Nuclear Agreement*, Hearing before the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, Second Session, December 1, 1994, p. 31.

¹¹³ David E. Sanger, “White House Memo; Global Realities Redefine Bush’s Agenda,” *New York Times*, June 11, 2001.

about the negative consequences for the region of the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea, even the European Union announced that it would play a mediating role in dealing with North Korea. Referring to America's sudden change of heart toward North Korea, the foreign minister of Sweden, at the time holding the rotating presidency of the European Union, declared, "This means that Europe must step in."¹¹⁴

The situation took a turn for the worse as a new post-9/11 global strategic blueprint took shape in Washington and Bush's "axis of evil" speech signaled a new direction in addressing the proliferation challenge. The second North Korean nuclear crisis hardened the Bush administration's position. East Asian countries, however, called for flexibility. Under the pressure from South Korea and Japan, the Bush administration briefly relaxed its stance in a US-South Korea-Japan statement issued on January 7, 2003, that expressed a willingness to meet with North Koreans and discuss the nuclear issue.¹¹⁵ But the hard line position persisted as the crisis deepened. Soon the Bush administration found itself "on a collision course not just with Pyongyang, but more importantly with U.S. allies in northeast Asia."¹¹⁶ Before exploring the tension between the Bush administration and East Asian countries, however, we need to discuss the nature of the Bush Doctrine and its application to the proliferation challenge, including North Korea.

¹¹⁴ Roger Cohen, "Storm Clouds over U.S.-Europe Relations," *New York Times*, March 26, 2001. Cited in Charles A. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), p. 150.

¹¹⁵ Samore 2003, p. 16.

¹¹⁶ Leon V. Sigal, "Try engagement for a change," *Global Asia*, Vol. 1., No. 1, p. 53.

2-3. The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Challenge

The Bush Doctrine: 9/11 and Global Strategic Context

With the strategic blueprint laid out in the 2002 *National Security Strategy*,¹¹⁷ the Bush administration gave a decidedly militaristic turn to America's global strategic posture. The main assumption of that document was that the United States faced undeterrable, irrational regimes bent on threatening their neighbors and disrupting the global nonproliferation regime to satisfy their nuclear ambitions. In an era where nuclear proliferation increases the danger of nuclear terrorism, so the argument goes, the business-as-usual approach is untenable. Such a drastically change in threat perception necessitated a new, more proactive approach based on preemption¹¹⁸ (rather than deterrence), counterproliferation (rather than nonproliferation), and military means (rather than diplomatic means).

In this radical strategic shift, 9/11 proved to be a watershed moment, a transformative event that opened up the way for a new frame of reference in U.S. global strategy. In fact, John Lewis Gaddis called the Bush Doctrine “the most sweeping shift in U.S. grand strategy since the beginning of the Cold War”¹¹⁹ In remarkable similarity to the Truman Doctrine which laid out a new strategic doctrine of containment and the building of a national security state after World War II, President Bush effectively “[turned] the crisis of 9/11 into an opportunity to secure the endorsement of the American public for a new kind of national security strategy

¹¹⁷ *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, The White House, September 2002.

¹¹⁸ The preemption doctrine itself has been subject to criticism because preemption, as understood in international law, requires “incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent.” I thank Professor Matthew Evangelista for clarifying this point. On both counts of imminence and degree of certainty, the Bush administration's use of the term as applied to the War in Iraq is problematic. As I elaborate further later in the chapter, the Bush administrative deliberately conflated the meanings of preemption and prevention.

¹¹⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, “A Grand Strategy of Transformation,” *Foreign Policy*, 133, 2002, p. 50, cited in Roxanna Sjostedt, “The Discursive Origins of a Doctrine: Norms, Identity, and Securitization under Harry S. Truman and George W. Bush,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2007) 3, pp. 233–254.

encapsulated in the slogan ‘the war on terror.’”¹²⁰ As one prominent neoconservative puts it, “[September 11] changed the world, and changed our understanding of the world.” In this post-9/11 world, he continues, neo-conservatism is “the most plausible explanation of the new reality and the most compelling and active response to it,” and avoids “the danger of a foreign policy centered on the illusion of stability and equilibrium.”¹²¹

However, the origins of the strategic transformation reflected in the Bush Doctrine date further back than September 11th. Christian Reus-Smith, for example, links the Bush Doctrine to the ideological underpinnings of the Reagan administration: “deep-rooted politico-cultural conceptions of American exceptionalism, democratic mission and security through world order tutelage; and the chance confluence of historical events.”¹²² However, it was only after the end of the Cold War confrontation that a concrete strategic blueprint based on such beliefs took shape. In 1992, the Pentagon worked on the first biennial National Defense Planning Guidance (NDPG), a document that, for the first time since the end of World War II, would not highlight the Soviet Union as the main threat. Written by key neoconservatives who would later become high-ranking officials in the Bush administration, namely, Paul Wolfowitz, Zalmay Khalilzad, and L. Scooter Libby, the 1992 NDPG envisioned a potent global power so powerful that it would “sufficiently account for the interests of the advanced industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership or seeking to overturn the established political and economic order.”¹²³

The document listed proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles and terrorist threats as the main threat, singling out Iraq and North Korea as

¹²⁰ Alejandro Colas and Richard Saull, *The War on Terror and the American Empire after the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

¹²¹ Charles Krauthammer, “The Neoconservative Convergence,” *Commentary*, July 5, 2005.

¹²² Christian Reus-Smit, *American Power and World Order* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2004), p. 38.

¹²³ Lou Dubose and Jake Bernstein, *Vice: Dick Cheney and the Hijacking of the American Presidency* (New York: Random House, 2006), p. 94.

primary cases. In dealing with these countries, the report made it clear that the United States would act unilaterally.¹²⁴ When the document was leaked to the media, it created a huge controversy, with the rest of the world criticizing it as “a blueprint for American hegemony.” President George H.W. Bush, and other government officials soon dismissed the document altogether. However, Dick Cheney, then Secretary of Defense, saw its potential for transforming the global order and told Khalilzad, “You’ve discovered a new rationale for our role in the world.”¹²⁵

Although completely discredited during the Democratic administration of the 1990s, the ideas behind the 1992 NDPG survived, only to resurface with a vengeance during the Bush presidency. With the proponents of the 1992 NDPG in key government positions, the Bush administration after 9/11 moved quickly on a new agenda of reshaping the global order and regional dynamics in key parts of the world. In fact, IR scholars in general view the Bush Doctrine as a manifestation of a broader strategy of reshaping the global order. The combination of power, fear, and perceived opportunity, writes Robert Jervis, enabled the Bush administration to “seek to reshape global politics and various societies around the world.” Absent U.S. intervention, from this perspective, “the international environment will become more menacing to the United States and its values, but strong action can help increase global security and produce a better world.”¹²⁶ In fact, the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, issued by the Pentagon, made clear a new U.S. strategic focus:

[The U.S. strategic goal is] to ensure that *no foreign power can dictate the terms of regional or global security*. It will attempt to dissuade any military competitor from developing disruptive or other capabilities that could enable

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 94.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 94-95.

¹²⁶ Robert Jervis, “The Compulsive Empire,” *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2003, p. 84.

regional hegemony or hostile action against the United States or other friendly countries.¹²⁷ (Emphasis added)

The Bush Doctrine and Nuclear Proliferation

In its new global strategic transformation, the Bush administration has put particular emphasis on the proliferation challenge and the threat from rogue regimes. The salience of framing in the policymaking process makes this emphasis significant across a broad range of foreign policy issues.¹²⁸ A single objective reality can be interpreted in a myriad ways by different political actors, all with implications for subsequent policy behavior. Crucial in this regard are not just the specific terms political actors use (e.g., rogues, axis-of-evil, etc.), but “who has the ability to shape the international agenda and how they choose to shape it.” In the post-Cold War era, it is the United States that, as the sole superpower, has “the ability to put forward new ideas, to define (or redefine) international society, and to exclude those states that do not comply.”¹²⁹ In this process, whether a particular regime actually has the wherewithal to inflict substantial costs on the United States becomes secondary. What matters instead is the type of regime the United States designates as a threat: regimes that are considered hostile to the United States and known to pursue weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

In its new focus on the threat of WMD, the Bush Doctrine places more emphasis on counterproliferation than on nonproliferation.¹³⁰ The doctrine of

¹²⁷ *The Quadrennial Defense Review*, The Department of Defense, 2006, p. 30.

¹²⁸ Michael Barnett defines framing as “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate collective action.” See Michael Barnett, “The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable,” in Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).p. 69.

¹²⁹ Elizabeth N. Saunders, “Setting Boundaries: Can International Society Exclude ‘Rogue States’?” *International Studies Review* (2006) 8, pp. 29, 25.

¹³⁰ For discussion of the concepts and change in emphasis, see Angus McColl, “Is Counterproliferation Compatible with Nonproliferation? Rethinking the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative,” *Airpower*

preemption,¹³¹ figured prominently in President Bush's speeches and *The 2002 National Security Strategy*, marks such a shift.¹³² Since its inception in 1968, the nonproliferation norm, the ideational backbone of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) regime, has been successful in prohibiting the possession and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. For more than three decades, the nonproliferation norm spread by the international nonproliferation regime has been relatively effective, with the notable exception of the South Asian cases of the late 1990s.¹³³

Technically speaking, however, India and Pakistan are not in breach of the rules and regulations specified by the nonproliferation regime, since the two have never been signatories of the NPT. Nevertheless, they were not free from global condemnation as norm violators. Referring to the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998, Spurgeon Keenly notes that both countries violated "the 30-year international norm against new nuclear-weapon states and the newly established taboo against nuclear testing."¹³⁴ Although critics questioned both the enforcement mechanism of the nonproliferation regime and the effectiveness of international sanctions against

Journal, Spring 1997, pp. 99-109; Jason D. Ellis, "The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security," *The Washington Quarterly*, 26(2), Spring 2003, pp. 115-133; Jeffrey Record, "Nuclear Deterrence, Preventive War, and Counterproliferation," *Policy Analysis*, No. 519, Cato Institute, July 8, 2004.

¹³¹ Similar military strikes couched in the misguided notion of preemption include the allied attack on German nuclear facilities in Vermok in 1944, Iraqi destruction of the Iranian nuclear facilities in Busher in 1985 and 1987, and of course, the well-known Israeli attack on the Osirak reactor in Iraq in 1981. But these examples are fundamentally different from the latest drive led by the U.S. in that the latter marks the first application of the preemption doctrine and signifies a major shift in the global proliferation campaign.

¹³² George W. Bush, Remarks at 2002 Graduation Ceremony of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, June 1, 2002. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>.

¹³³ Another example of violation of the global nonproliferation norm, of course, is the case of Israel. However, Israel's de facto nuclear status had been achieved long before the emergence of the nonproliferation regime.

¹³⁴ Spurgeon M. Keenly, Jr., "South Asia's Nuclear Wake-Up Call," *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 28, No. 4, May 1998, p. 2; Nina Tannenwald, "The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use," *International Organization*, 53(3), 1999, pp. 433-68.

proliferators, the effects of the nonproliferation norm in curbing the temptation to go nuclear were generally viewed in a positive light during the Cold War period.

The first sign of change emerged in the early years of the Clinton administration when the Pentagon began to use the term “counterproliferation.” With the specter of facing Saddam’s WMD retaliation in the First Gulf War still vivid in 1993, then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin launched the Counterproliferation Initiative (CPI) to explore military options for dealing with WMD-armed adversaries.¹³⁵ However, while the program was further developed through various counterproliferation plans and programs in subsequent years, the Clinton administration’s initiative remained “subordinate to a larger national strategy predicated primarily on traditional and more recent nonproliferation measures.”¹³⁶ The term counterproliferation was carefully “embedded within a comprehensive non-proliferation policy that included non-military instruments,” and thus was viewed as an effort to complement, rather than supplant, existing nonproliferation options.¹³⁷ Furthermore, the Clinton administration’s counterproliferation initiative did not include “nuclear first strikes or preventive war aimed at stopping a regime from acquiring WMD. Intra-war attacks on enemy WMD facilities were envisaged, but not starting a war itself— and certainly not a nuclear war.”¹³⁸

The Bush administration added a whole new dimension to U.S. proliferation policy with the 2002 *National Security Strategy*. The report frames the new strategic

¹³⁵ Peter L. Hays, Vincent J. Jodoin, and Alan R. van Tassel, eds. *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998); Counterproliferation Initiative Presidential Decision Directive PDD/NSC 18, December 1993, available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd18.htm>. Also McColl, “Is Counterproliferation Compatible with Nonproliferation?” p. 100.

¹³⁶ Ellis, “The Best Defense,” p. 116.

¹³⁷ Robert S. Litwak, “Non-proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change,” *Survival*, 45(4), Winter 2003-2004, p. 18. Also, McColl, “Is Counterproliferation Compatible with Nonproliferation?” p. 100; *Counterproliferation and Treaty Activities*, US Department of Defense, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/execsec/adr95/cp.html>.

¹³⁸ Jeffrey Record, “Nuclear Deterrence, Preventive War, and Counterproliferation,” *Policy Analysis*, No. 519, Cato Institute, July 8, 2004, p. 8.

environment in a way that emphasizes WMD threats and requires proactive actions, including preemptive strikes. The basic assumption is that the post-Cold War threat environment is fundamentally different from that of the Cold War years:

In the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction were considered weapons of last resort whose use risked the destruction of those who used them. Today, our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice.¹³⁹

While the nonproliferation norm, with its related policies, was “multilateral at its core” and “primarily a diplomatic strategy,” the 2002 *National Security Strategy* calls for proactive and, if necessary, unilateral actions.¹⁴⁰

Parallel to the doctrinal change, a series of action plans included the use of nuclear weapons. While briefly mentioning the problem of “rogue states,” the previous Nuclear Posture Review submitted in 1994 concluded, “the threat they posed did not warrant significant changes in U.S. nuclear forces or policies.”¹⁴¹ However, the latest *Nuclear Posture Review* leaked in March 2002 called for, if necessary, specific nuclear options targeted at countries including North Korea.¹⁴² In December 2002, the U.S. Department of Defense also set out policy for combating the proliferation of NBC weapons in *The National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*.¹⁴³ The report declared that the “primary objective of a response is to disrupt *an imminent*

¹³⁹ *The National Security Strategy*, 2002, p. 15.

¹⁴⁰ J. Bryan Hehir, “The New National Security Strategy,” *America*, April 7, 2003, Vol. 188, No. 12.

¹⁴¹ Philip C. Bleek, “Nuclear Posture Review Leaks; Outlines Targets, Contingencies,” *Arms Control Today*, April 2002.

¹⁴² Paul Richter, “U.S. Works Up Plan for Using Nuclear Arms Military,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 2002; *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, submitted to US Congress, December 31, 2001, excerpt available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm>; Also Record 2004, p. 8.

¹⁴³ Seo-Hang Lee, “Global WMD Question: Issues and Policies,” Institute for Foreign Affairs and National Security, January 17, 2003, p. 11.

attack or an attack in progress, and eliminate the threat of *future attacks*” (emphasis added).¹⁴⁴

Overall, the Bush administration’s counterproliferation drive has two distinctive features that represent a sharp break from the nonproliferation campaign. First, as the above quote from *The National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* shows, the new strategy makes no distinction between the threats of “imminent” and “future” attacks. Effectively conflating the terms preemption and prevention, the current proliferation drive is focused on the mere *possibility*, not the *probability* or imminence of enemy attacks. John Lewis Gaddis attributes the blending of the terms to the impact of 9/11: “In mounting its post-September 11 offensive, the Bush administration conflated these terms, using the word “pre-emption” to justify what turned out to be a “preventive” war against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq.”¹⁴⁵ Donald Rumsfeld himself admits that when he remarked at a congressional hearing, “the coalition did not act in Iraq because we had discovered dramatic new evidence of Iraq’s pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. We acted because we saw the evidence in a dramatic new light—through the prism of our experience on 9/11.”¹⁴⁶ The bottom line is that now WMD threats have acquired *an ever-present sense of urgency*.

Secondly, the main targets of the Bush administration’s counterproliferation drive are not *weapons*, but *regimes* that seek such weapons. The main rationale for setting up the NPT system in the first place was a belief that the existence of nuclear weapons themselves was the main source of the problem.¹⁴⁷ The emphasis on removing weapons, not regimes, continued in the Clinton administration, which

¹⁴⁴ *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, December 2002, available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-17.html>.

¹⁴⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, “Grand Strategy in the Second Term,” *Foreign Affairs*, 84(1), Jan/Feb 2005, p. 4. Also see Litwak, “Non-proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change,” p. 18.

¹⁴⁶ Cited in Litwak, *Ibid.*, 2003-4, p. 17.

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Cirincione, “How will the Iraq War change global nonproliferation strategies?” *Arms Control Today*, Apr 2003, 33(3), pp. 1-4.

described the main security threat as the one “posed by the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery.”¹⁴⁸ The Bush administration dramatically shifted focus in proliferation policy. As Bill Keller writes, from the Bush administration’s perspective, “the main problem is not nuclear weapons themselves, but bad regimes armed with nuclear weapons.”¹⁴⁹ When Saddam’s regime collapsed, President Bush proclaimed:

By a combination of creative strategies and advanced technology, we are redefining war on our terms. . . . In this new era of warfare, we can target *a regime*, not a nation.

Terrorists and tyrants have now been put on notice, they can *no longer feel safe* hiding behind innocent lives. (Emphasis added)¹⁵⁰

Laying out the rationale for his new doctrine of preemption, President Bush went further by declaring that containment policy is of little use in the face of rogue states and dictators bent on using nuclear weapons.

. . . [N]ew threats also require new thinking . . . Containment is not possible when *unbalanced dictators* with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.

We cannot put our faith in the word of *tyrants*, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them. If we wait for threats

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

¹⁴⁹ Bill Keller, “The Thinkable,” *New York Times*, May 4, 2003.

¹⁵⁰ White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “President Bush Outlines Progress in Operation Iraqi Freedom,” April 16, 2003, cited in Litwak, *Regime Change*, p. 93.

to fully materialize, we will have waited too long . . . In the world we have entered, *the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.*¹⁵¹

(Emphasis added)

The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Challenge

The shifts in the U.S.'s broader strategic focus and proliferation policy directly affected America's policy toward North Korea. Even before the doctrinal change, the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea was confrontational. After its refusal to endorse South Korea's sunshine policy and continue Clinton's engagement policy toward North Korea, the Bush administration in June 2001 issued a long-awaited policy review on North Korea. It proposed a "comprehensive approach" toward North Korea, including the issues of ballistic missiles, conventional forces, as well as the nuclear issues. While the Bush administration expressed an interest in addressing a wide variety of issues with North Korea, it called for North Korea's compliance on all these aspects as a condition for U.S. counter-offer.¹⁵² As such, the expanded agenda itself amounted to "a marked stiffening of U.S. policy from that of the Clinton administration." North Korea in turn reacted sharply by depicting the Bush administration's approach as "an attempt to disarm [North Korea] through negotiations . . . hostile in its intention" and a major shift from the Clinton administration's approach that, from a North Korean perspective, had been "in conformity with the interests of both sides."¹⁵³

A key point here is that behavior does not matter much in the Bush administration's designation of threat. As Jae-Jung Suh observes, the change in the Bush administration's perception of the North Korean threat came without significant

¹⁵¹ George W. Bush, Remarks at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>.

¹⁵² Litwak, *Regime Change*, p. 266.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 262-263.

change in North Korea's material capabilities or regime behavior. In the broader global campaign against proliferation, the Bush administration stressed the North Korean image as a major proliferation threat, while discounting its willingness to cooperate with the Clinton administration on a number of issues.¹⁵⁴ As a matter of fact, North Korea's reaction after 9/11 was anything but provocative. One day after the attacks in New York and Washington, the North Korean government issued a public statement denouncing all forms of terrorism, while conveying, through Swedish diplomats based in North Korea, a private message of condolence to the United States. Moreover, it signed a number of international protocols on terrorism.¹⁵⁵ Some observers interpreted North Korea's behavior as an expression of interest in renewing contacts with the United States.¹⁵⁶

Nonetheless, nothing came of North Korea's diplomatic initiatives toward the Bush administration. Instead, a few months later, President Bush opted to denounce North Korea as part of the axis of evil. Still, North Korea did not give up hopes of renewing talks with the United States. In September 2002, North Korea announced an indefinite extension of the moratorium on testing long-range missiles as long as dialogue continued with the United States. Again, positive North Korean behavior did not inspire similar reactions from the United States. The Bush administration simply responded with a White House statement that Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly would visit Pyongyang and "explain U.S. policy and seek progress on a range of issues of long-standing concern to the United States and the international community."¹⁵⁷ Regional expectations that the Bush administration would finally make progress on a variety of issues with North Korea were disappointed by Kelly's

¹⁵⁴ Jae-Jung Suh, *Power, Interest, and Identity in Military Alliances* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pp. 158-161.

¹⁵⁵ Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 378.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 378.

¹⁵⁷ Paul Kerr, "North Korea Extends Missile-Test Moratorium; U.S. to Send Kelly," *Arms Control Today*, October 2002.

confrontation with his North Korean counterpart over North Korea's alleged uranium enrichment program, which produced the second North Korean nuclear crisis.

What followed was the end of the Agreed Framework, which in turn sparked a chain of reactions North Korea, including the reprocessing of material from the Yongbyon reactor and withdrawal from the NPT. Despite similarities in early developments of the two crises, the different approaches of the Clinton and Bush administrations are emblematic of a broad contrast in their assumptions about how the North Korean challenge could be managed. Whereas the Clinton administration pursued a policy of "deepening engagement with North Korea," the Bush administration sought a policy of "rigidity and toughness."¹⁵⁸ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was adamantly opposed to U.S. engagement toward North Korea and argued in a series of memos that the United States should focus on the collapse of the North Korean regime, not on dialogue with Kim Jong Il.¹⁵⁹ Prior to the recent about-face in U.S. North Korean policy, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also maintained a similar position in regard to the North Korean regime. In an interview in May 2006, a reporter asked her whether North Korea was still part of the axis of evil. With little hesitation, she responded, "absolutely."¹⁶⁰

The different understandings of the North Korea challenge led to different means of addressing it. While the Clinton administration engaged in a series of direct talks with North Korea, the Bush administration, until 2007, did not allow its representatives at the Six Party Talks to have bilateral meetings with their North Korean counterparts. While the Clinton administration considered the use of force only as a last resort, the Bush administration did not hesitate to single out North Korea

¹⁵⁸ Michael D. Swaine, "U.S. Security Policy under Clinton and Bush: China and Korea," in Chae-Jin Lee, ed., *U.S. Security Policy Under Clinton and Bush: Continuity and Change*, Monograph Series, Number 17, The Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies Claremont McKenna College, 2005, pp. 70-71.

¹⁵⁹ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) p. 475.

¹⁶⁰ *Donga Ilbo*, May 26, 2006.

as a potential target of U.S. attacks, even nuclear attacks as revealed in the 2001 *Nuclear Posture Review*.¹⁶¹ This policy orientation stood in stark contrast to that of the Clinton administration, which in the Geneva Accord agreed to provide a “negative security assurance” of not using nuclear weapons against North Korea as long as it remained a member of the NPT.¹⁶² With extension of the NPT hanging in the balance, the Clinton administration was both determined to resolve the first North Korean nuclear crisis and willing to seize an opportunity to “conduct the first truly international diplomatic campaign to promote nonproliferation.”¹⁶³

Although the Bush administration has used the multilateral Six Party framework, it did so mainly as a venue in which to put unified pressure on North Korea. Washington hardliners, including those in Vice President Dick Cheney’s office and Robert C. Joseph, the nonproliferation director at the National Security Council, prohibited direct talks between the U.S. delegation and North Koreans even on an informal basis. The chief U.S. delegate James Kelly’s talking points prepared by the State Department were often replaced with a harsher White House version.¹⁶⁴ The hardliners viewed the Six Party talks mainly as site “for the United States to set out its nonnegotiable demands with the support of the other four partners.”¹⁶⁵ As Lawrence Wilkerson, Colin Powell’s chief of staff, characterizes the attitude, Cheney ensured that U.S. negotiators in their meeting with North Korean counterparts would be able to “say little more than ‘welcome and good-bye.’”¹⁶⁶ Again, this is a far cry from the Clinton administration’s stance. As U.S. negotiators at the time revealed in their

¹⁶¹ Mel Gurtov, “The Bush Doctrine in Asia,” in David P. Forsythe, Patrice C. McMahon, and Andrew Wedeman, eds., *American Foreign Policy in a Globalized World* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 294.

¹⁶² Litwak, *Regime Change*, p. 257.

¹⁶³ Michael J. Mazarr, *North Korea and the Bomb: A Case Study in Nonproliferation* (New York: St. Martin’s press, 1995), p. 115.

¹⁶⁴ DeYoung, *Soldier*, p. 475.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 499.

¹⁶⁶ Dubose and Bernstein, *Vice*, p. 185.

memoirs, the Clinton administration at times appeared to focus too much on multilateralism, “being too deferential to Seoul and Vienna.”¹⁶⁷

Moreover, documents associated with the Bush Doctrine use preemption and counterproliferation “almost synonymously” in their discussion of military actions on WMD targets.¹⁶⁸ This opened up the way for a stress on military means as a key proliferation strategy. The 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review* thus emphasizes “WMD elimination operations that locate, characterize, secure, disable and/or destroy a state or non-state actor’s WMD capabilities and programs in a hostile or uncertain environment.”¹⁶⁹ Similarly, in September 2005, Secretary Rumsfeld urged a resumption of “studying the feasibility of an earth-penetrating nuclear warhead,” which can be used against underground targets.¹⁷⁰ Amid this series of events, even some prominent members of the Republican Party began to question the validity of the post-9/11 U.S. global strategy. For instance, former State Department Middle East negotiator Dennis Ross expressed concern about the Bush administration’s “instinct toward regime change” rather than changing regime behavior.¹⁷¹

In a rare off-the-record interview in November 2002, a Bush administration official specifically linked the focus on regimes to the North Korean case.

I think we need to stop thinking about what we’re going to give [North Korea]. Instead, we need to think about how we’re going to change this [Kim Jong Il] regime. How are we going to bring this government down? That’s the threat, the government. That’s what our President thinks. Our diplomats are uneasy with it but that’s what our President thinks. He’s very clear on that. He was

¹⁶⁷ Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 400.

¹⁶⁸ Litwak, *Regime Change*, p. 329.

¹⁶⁹ *The Quadrennial Defense Review*, the Department of Defense, 2006, p. 34.

¹⁷⁰ Walter Pincus, “Rumsfeld States Case For Burrowing Weapon,” *Washington Post*, February 17, 2005.

¹⁷¹ David E. Sanger, “Dueling Views Pit Baker Against Rice,” *New York Times*, December 8, 2006.

quoted in the Post and on Sixty Minutes saying that he loathed the leader, “the dear leader.” That’s our President. That’s what he thinks! There’s not much mystery in this. *Change the regime.*¹⁷² (emphasis added)

While acknowledging the need for diplomatic channels, President Bush did not rule out military options: “If they don’t work diplomatically, they will have to work militarily. And military option is our last choice.”¹⁷³ Under Secretary of State John Bolton made the same point, “If rogue states are not willing to follow the logic of nonproliferation norms, they must be prepared to face the logic of adverse consequences. It is why we repeatedly caution that no option is off the table.”¹⁷⁴ In another speech, Bolton went further in saying that “North Korea and Iran would be the next targets after the war with Iraq ended.”¹⁷⁵ Secretary Rice also suggested that Kim Jong Il ruled “a wounded, isolated nation that can be enveloped by troops and unhappy neighbors, and squeezed until its bleeding economy shatters.”¹⁷⁶ In fact, in early 2003, it was reported that there was a “planning for a possible military strike” on North Korea’s nuclear facilities. Although US officials downplayed them as “no more than contingency plans,” they include a host of military scenarios ranging from “surgical cruise missile strikes to sledgehammer bombing,” and “even talk of using tactical

¹⁷² “Off the Record Interview with U.S. Defense Department Office,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 1, 2002, cited in C. Kenneth Quinones, “Dualism in the Bush Administration’s North Korea Policy,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2003, p. 222.

¹⁷³ David L. Greene and Mark Matthews, “Bush: U.S. Could Use force Against N. Korea; Military Action Would Be His ‘Last Choice,’” *Baltimore Sun*, March 4, 2003.

¹⁷⁴ John R. Bolton, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, “The New World After Iraq: The Continuing Threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” Remarks to the Bruges Group, London, United Kingdom, October 30, 2003, available at <http://www.brugesgroup.com/mediacentre/speeches.live?article=191>

¹⁷⁵ “Iran Next on W’s List,” *New York Daily News*, April 1, 2003, cited in Chung-in Moon and Jong-Yun Bae, “The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis,” *Asian Perspective*, 27(4), December 2003, p. 31.

¹⁷⁶ David E. Sanger, “The World: Over There; A New Front Opens, but It’s Still One,” *New York Times*, October 20, 2002.

nuclear weapons to neutralize hardened artillery positions aimed at Seoul.”¹⁷⁷

Overall, the combination of 9/11 and America’s preponderance enabled the Bush administration to uphold a new strategic doctrine aimed at reshaping the world order. In this sense, Stephen Walt argues that the Bush Doctrine is not a policy of preemption, but “a war fought to forestall a shift in the balance of power, independent of whether or not the opponent was planning to attack.”¹⁷⁸ In the long-term, he further argues, the strategy will fail since “the key is not power but persuasion” that U.S. primacy is in fact better than other scenarios for the rest of the world.¹⁷⁹ To East Asian countries, the Bush administration’s global strategy in general and its applications to North Korea in particular were hardly persuasive.

2-4. The East Asian Response to the Bush Doctrine

Regional Understanding of the North Korean Challenge

Despite the U.S. perception of North Korea as an urgent global problem, East Asian countries are united in their view of the North Korean challenge as a regional problem and, thus, have sought to “regionalize” the issue. Instead of following the U.S. approach, one Japanese expert predicts, the North Korean problem could serve as a “basis for stabilizing the rest of East Asia.”¹⁸⁰ With the vestiges of the Cold War years still lingering in the region (e.g., enmity over the history issue, divisions on the Korean Peninsula and around the Taiwan Straits, a plethora of territorial disputes, etc.), East Asian countries still harbor a traditional security mentality, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the regional status quo and avoiding regional rivalry. In this view, the North Korean challenge, which is intricately linked to the continuation of the

¹⁷⁷ Nicholas Kristof, “Secret, Scary Plans,” *New York Times*, February 28, 2003.

¹⁷⁸ Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), p. 224.

¹⁷⁹ Walt, *Taming American Power*, p. 247.

¹⁸⁰ Takeshi Igarashi, “The Evolution of Japan-US Relations,” *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Spring 2004, pp. 15-16.

Cold War tensions surrounding the Korean Peninsula, is merely one of many sources of tension in the region, rather than an imminent and unpredictable danger to regional stability. As a consequence, the U.S. narrative of an urgent and unconventional threat has little resonance in East Asia.

In terms of the nature and magnitude of the North Korean challenge, East Asian states think less about the nuclear issue itself than the impact of the issue on broader regional security dynamics such as the China-Japan rivalry and anti-U.S. sentiment on the Korean Peninsula.¹⁸¹ For instance, many Chinese consider the greatest threats they face to be Taiwanese, not North Korean.¹⁸² The North Korean threat is seen primarily in the context of the potential to create a regional nuclear arms race that might result in a nuclear-armed Taiwan. Similarly, South Korean policymakers increasingly express concern about the impact of the North Korean factor on Japan's path to becoming a "normal state."¹⁸³ A former Japanese ambassador and high-ranking Foreign Ministry official puts it most succinctly: "the regional perception of North Korean threat is to a large degree a function of regional security dynamics."¹⁸⁴

Far from fitting into the category of a proliferation threat, the North Korean factor is construed in the region as a complex regional security issue that has "both profound historical origins and complicated realistic factors."¹⁸⁵ For instance, one Chinese expert contends that "the remaining shadow of the Cold War in the Korean Peninsula" and the lack of mutual trust between the U.S. and North Korea is the root

¹⁸¹ Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005; Interview 15-05, Beijing, April 29, 2005.

¹⁸² Interview 04-04, Beijing, November 10, 2004; Interview 05-04, Beijing, November 11, 2004; Interview 07-04, Beijing, November 16, 2004; Interview 09-04, Beijing, November 22, 2004; Interview 11-04, Beijing, November 23, 2004.

¹⁸³ A South Korean security expert at a government-affiliated think tank even observed that North Korean provocations have been speeding up Japan's progress toward normal statehood beyond the constitutional constraints to about ten years faster than otherwise would have occurred. Interview 25-05, Seoul, May 13, 2005.

¹⁸⁴ Interview 01-04, Tokyo, September 30, 2004.

¹⁸⁵ "The six-party talks and "China factor," *People's Daily*, July 28, 2005.

cause of the North Korean nuclear crisis.¹⁸⁶ The U.S. description of the urgent nature of the challenge is replaced in East Asia with a demand that the United States consider North Korea's security needs. For instance, one Chinese expert contends that North Korea's nuclear ambitions derive from "its acute sense of insecurity and vulnerability and, hence, any resolution must address this issue."¹⁸⁷ In a November 2004 speech, South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun also remarked that he was sympathetic to the North Korean stance that its pursuit of nuclear weapons stemmed from its need to deter external threats.¹⁸⁸

The Japanese, for their part, maintain that the North Korean issue represents the last chapter of Japan's postwar settlements with its East Asian neighbors, a key factor that has motivated Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's stated goal of diplomatic normalization with North Korea.¹⁸⁹ Despite the abduction scandal and the subsequent anti-North Korean sentiment in Japan, Prime Minister Koizumi in his last months as the leader of the nation repeated his willingness to normalize diplomatic relations with North Korea before the end of his term as prime minister in September 2006.¹⁹⁰

Regional Response to the Bush Administration's Approach

When discussing the proper response to the North Korean challenge, both the Western media and policy makers tend to stress the need for coercive measures and backing from China's for their use. Calling on China to use its leverage over North

¹⁸⁶ "China calls for efforts to end Korean nuclear standoff," *People's Daily*, March 5, 2005.

¹⁸⁷ Jing-dong Yuan, "The Bush Doctrine: Chinese Perspectives and Responses," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No.4, 2003, p. 126; also Piao Jianyi, "The Six-Party Talks Process & the Role of China and Japan," speech at a lecture luncheon of the 4th "Japan-China Dialogue" hosted by The Tokyo Club, The Council on East Asian Community (CEAC), The Global Forum of Japan (GF) and China Association for International Friendly Contact at International House of Japan, Tokyo, Japan, on September 16-17, 2004, available at <http://www.iapscass.cn/english/publications/showcontent.asp?id=98>

¹⁸⁸ *Chosun Ilbo*, November 13, 2004.

¹⁸⁹ Masao Okonogi, "Dealing with the Threat of a Korean Crisis," *Japan Review of International Affairs*, 17(2), Summer 2003, p. 74; Interview 29-05, July 14, 2004, Tokyo, Japan.

¹⁹⁰ "Koizumi seeks normalized ties with DPRK by end of his term," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 20, 2005.

Korea, for instance, Fareed Zakaria wrote, “Washington is right to urge [China] to act boldly.”¹⁹¹ Similarly, Thomas Friedman lamented that were China to put pressure on North Korea “the proliferation threat from Pyongyang would be over.”¹⁹² In the face of China’s resistance to the use of pressure tactics, then U.S. Undersecretary of State Robert Joseph even threatened that if China does not take more action “there possibly could be very significant consequences for U.S.-Chinese relations.”¹⁹³

In this vein, the allegation of a North Korea-Libya link over uranium hexafluoride gas in February 2005 provides a unique window into the way the Bush administration used the Six Party forum as a platform for applying unified pressure on North Korea. Just as North Korea was expected to resume the Six Party Talks, Bush’s top Asian officials from the National Security Council visited China, Japan, and South Korea to brief their counterparts about the alleged link. Given that the allegation was first made almost a year earlier, David Albright, a prominent U.S. proliferation expert and a former UN inspector, said, “the timing has to make one suspicious that the information is being used to pressure allies to take a tougher line with North Korea.”¹⁹⁴ It is in this context that some South Korean observers view the Six Party Talks primarily as “a unilateral offensive in the guise of a multilateral modality to strangulate North Korea.”¹⁹⁵

Such pressure tactics, however, were not well received in East Asia. Despite the single-minded U.S. focus on disarming North Korea’s nuclear arsenal, East Asian countries “want above all to keep their neighborhood peaceful.”¹⁹⁶ China’s active

¹⁹¹ Fareed Zakaria, “Time for China to Step Up,” *Newsweek*, March 3, 2003, U.S. Edition.

¹⁹² Thomas L. Friedman, “Brussels Sprouts,” *New York Times*, May 11, 2005.

¹⁹³ Dafna Linzer, “U.S. Says China Should Prod N. Korea on Talks,” *Washington Post*, June 24, 2005.

¹⁹⁴ Glenn Kessler and Dafna Linzer, “Nuclear Evidence Could Point To Pakistan,” *Washington Post*, February 3, 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Chung-in Moon and Jong-Yun Bae, “The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean nuclear crisis,” in Mel Gurtov and Peter Van Ness, eds., *Confronting the Bush Doctrine: Critical Views from the Asia-Pacific* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 50.

¹⁹⁶ Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, “North Korea’s Nuclear Politics,” *Current History*, September 2004, pp. 278-279.

diplomacy in the second North Korean nuclear crisis, a dramatic change from its passivity during the first crisis in 1993-1994, was not in response to North Korean nuclear provocations but because of a concern in China that the standoff between North Korea and the United States was “heading toward a certain clash that would be disastrous for China.”¹⁹⁷ Put differently, it was not the imminent danger of the North Korean nuclear threat but “the clear and present danger of Pyongyang being next on the U.S. hit list” that partly drove China’s proactive role in the second crisis.¹⁹⁸

A Chinese expert warned that if the Bush administration stuck to its position of “exercising pressure on North Korea and bringing about an eventual regime change,” U.S.-China cooperation could not be maintained.¹⁹⁹ In the early weeks of the war in Iraq, a senior South Korean defense analyst even hoped for a lengthy operation there to avoid US preemptive strikes on North Korea.²⁰⁰ The Bush doctrine of a preemptive war also made a Japanese expert lament, “The United States had become a destabilizing factor in international affairs.”²⁰¹ Warning of America’s “leanings toward the use of force and unilateralism” as a worrisome problem, another Japanese opinion piece even declared, “If Bush and company mean to peddle freedom in a package with missiles and artillery shells, I wish they would keep out of the global square.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Jae Ho Chung, “China’s Korea Policy Under the New Leadership: Stealth Changes in the Making?” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Spring/Summer 2004, p. 8.

¹⁹⁸ Samuel S. Kim, “China’s New Role in the Nuclear Confrontation,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 28, No. 4, p. 162; Interview 04-04, November 10, 2005, Beijing, China. Similarly, it is worth noting that among China’s three positions on the North Korean nuclear issue the statement that “peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula should be preserved” is the first. The others include “the peninsula should remain nuclear-free,” and “the dispute should be resolved through diplomatic and political methods.” See Jingdong Yuan, “China and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis,” Center for Nonproliferation Studies, available at <http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/chidprk.htm>.

¹⁹⁹ Zhenqiang Pan, “Solution for the Nuclear Issue of North Korea, Hopeful But Still Uncertain: On the Conclusion of the Second Round of the Six-Party Talks,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Spring/Summer 2004, p. 36.

²⁰⁰ Interview 40-05, Seoul, August 5, 2005.

²⁰¹ Takeshi Igarashi, “The Evolution of Japan-US Relations,” *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Spring 2004, p. 15.

²⁰² “Missiles not welcome in global town square,” *Asahi Shimbun*, January 25, 2005

As a consequence, at the beginning of the crisis, Japan worked with South Korea “to nudge the Bush administration towards negotiations with North Korea.”²⁰³ Another Japanese expert warned of the Bush administration’s “uncompromising stance toward Pyongyang, which involves the risk of pushing the North Korean leadership into a corner.” He suggested instead that through negotiations and diplomacy, Japan and South Korea would “take approaches toward Pyongyang that are different from that of the United States.”²⁰⁴ In fact, the Japanese government stated that its objective was not “to overturn the regime in North Korea but to gradually change the nature of its political and economic systems.”²⁰⁵ After his second trip to Pyongyang, Prime Minister Koizumi even conveyed to President Bush the North Korean concern about U.S. policy toward the North at the G-8 meeting in June 2004. Then in November 2004, he again suggested to Bush that the U.S. government consider direct negotiation with North Korea. With no response coming from Bush, the sides had to agree not to include this issue in their joint press briefing.²⁰⁶

China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan directly linked the Bush administration’s pressure tactics to regional instability: “we do not believe in resorting to sanctions or pressure. These measures would not solve problems but instead could complicate the situation.”²⁰⁷ South Korean President Roh also tied the call for regime change in North Korea by U.S. hardliners to the difficulty in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.²⁰⁸ Similarly, expressing concern about the U.S. view of regime collapse in North Korea, then South Korean Minister of Unification, Chung Dong Young, made it clear that the South Korean government would play a leadership role

²⁰³ Christopher W. Hughes, Japan’s Re-emergence as a “Normal” Military Power, *Adelphi Paper* 368-9, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005, p. 43.

²⁰⁴ Yoshihide Soeya, “Democratization in Northeast Asia and Trilateral Cooperation,” p. 95.

²⁰⁵ Katsu Furukawa, “Japan’s View of the Korea Crisis,” Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, February 25, 2003, <http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/jpndprk.htm>.

²⁰⁶ *Joongang Ilbo*, January 4, 2005.

²⁰⁷ Ching Cheong, “Beijing unwilling to resort to arm-twisting,” *Strait Times*, Feb 19, 2005.

²⁰⁸ *Joongang Ilbo*, December 6, 2004.

in managing the North Korean issue, rather than meekly embracing the U.S. approach.²⁰⁹

Furthermore, East Asian countries showed little interest in U.S.-led counterproliferation initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Both China and South Korea still refuse to join the global drive that boasts of fourteen core members and more than forty states supportive of the initiative.²¹⁰ Even Japan, the only East Asian member of the PSI, has expressed apprehensions about the possibility of the initiative provoking North Korea too much.²¹¹ Mentioning the North Korean fear that the Negative Security Assurance (NSA) included in the 1994 Agreed Framework is no longer valid in the wake of the newest U.S. nuclear posture review, a report submitted by the Foreign Ministry-sponsored Japan Institute of International Affairs called for providing North Korea with multilateral security assurances.²¹² With Japan's plea for moderation and a negotiated solution added to those of other regional countries, the Bush administration "for the first time presented elements of a 'roadmap' for settlement"²¹³ at the third round of the Six Party Talks held in July 2004.

All in all, what worried the regional countries most was not so much the nuclear issue per se as the possibility of U.S. military strikes on North Korea and a sudden collapse of the North Korean regime.²¹⁴ Relating North Korean nuclear ambitions to China's own experiences in the early Cold War years, a well-known

²⁰⁹ *Donga Ilbo*, December 23, 2004.

²¹⁰ "The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) At a Glance," Arms Control Association, June 2004, <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/PSI.asp>.

²¹¹ John Kerin, "Fear US will push N Korea into fight," *The Australian*, July 10, 2003, cited in Rebecca Weiner, "Proliferation Security Initiative to Stem Flow of WMD Matériel," July 16, 2003, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, available at <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/030716.htm>.

²¹² "Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Problem: A Regional Approach and the Role of Japan," *JIIA Policy Report*, Project for Northeast Asian Security, The Japan Institute of International Affairs, July 2005, p. 9.

²¹³ Gavan McCormack, "Remilitarizing Japan," *New Left Review*, 29, September/October 2004, p. 43.

²¹⁴ Joel Brinkley, "China Balks at Pressing the North Koreans," *New York Times*, March 22, 2005.

Chinese arms control expert expressed his understanding of North Korean motives for seeking nuclear weapons and even made a plea for “accepting a nuclear North Korea.”²¹⁵ A former Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs official made a similar point that China might tolerate a nuclear North Korea if its impact on the regional security order were minimal.²¹⁶ South Korean president Roh Moo Hyun’s envoys also shocked Bush advisers in Washington in early 2003 when they revealed that they “would rather have a nuclear North Korea than a chaotic collapse of the government there.”²¹⁷

Throughout the second North Korean nuclear crisis, South Korean Presidents Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo Hyun and Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro have all sought to use quiet bargaining and the promise of economic assistance in dealing with North Korea. Along with its potential to disrupt the regional status quo, from an East Asian perspective, the Bush Doctrine was also seen as impeding the momentum toward regionalism. The Bush administration’s disregard of South Korea’s reconciliation policy toward North Korea is a case in point. Focused on the global and nuclear dimensions, the Bush administration gave short shrift to South Korea’s regional initiative centered on North Korea. Similarly, as one Japanese expert put it, the Bush administration never liked Koizumi’s visits to Pyongyang and intended to mitigate the impact of such visits.²¹⁸ Soon, regional frustration drove a willingness to question U.S. strategic intentions in the region.

Regional Concern about U.S. Intentions

As the stalemate at the Six Party Talks continued in the context of the Bush administration’s inflexible position toward North Korea, regional countries grew more

²¹⁵ Dingli Shen, “Accepting a nuclear North Korea,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 2005, pp. 51-54.

²¹⁶ Interview 07-04, Beijing, November 16, 2004.

²¹⁷ Doug Struck and Glenn Kessler, “Foes Giving In To N. Korea’s Nuclear Aims,” *Washington Post*, March 5, 2003.

²¹⁸ Interview 30-05, Tokyo, July 15, 2005.

concerned about possible motivations behind the hard line stance. Instead of accepting the U.S. rationale for the post-9/11 strategic context, East Asian countries began to view the Bush Doctrine as a new U.S. regional strategy aimed at reshaping the regional order to its liking.²¹⁹ For example, one South Korean analyst suspected the Bush administration was not forthcoming in its dealings with North Korea because it feared a loss of U.S. influence in the region and a negative impact on a planned missile defense scheme in East Asia.²²⁰ One Chinese expert of the Communist Party School seemed to agree when he observed that the crisis would “serve the U.S. goal of maintaining its predominant security posture in the region.”²²¹ The overall assessment from the region is in a phrase used by one regional analyst: the United States may be interested in “sustaining the fight rather than resolving the issue.”²²²

While a crisis metaphor has been ever-present in the United States discussion of the North Korean challenge, many regional experts suspected that the Bush administration might not be interested in resolving the crisis anytime soon.²²³ From a regional perspective, resolution of the crisis hinges crucially on whether the United States and North Korea “can be reasonable in presenting their concerns and in appreciating the concerns of others.”²²⁴ Instead of taking a leadership role at the Six Party Talks, one regional expert objected, the United States delegated the job of resolving the crisis to East Asian countries.²²⁵ Some regional analysts also suggest that the Bush administration’s main goal in the Six Party Talks might be “to wreck the talks in order to pave the way for more coercive actions,” particularly given the

²¹⁹ Interview 07-05, Beijing, April 18, 2005.

²²⁰ The view, offered by Hyun-ick Hong of the Sejong Institute in South Korea, was quoted in *Seoul Shinmun*, October 30, 2003.

²²¹ Interview 09-04, Beijing, November 22, 2004.

²²² Interview 18-05, Beijing, May 1, 2005.

²²³ Interview 12-05, Beijing, April 26, 2005; Interview 18-05, Beijing, May 1, 2005; Interview 19-05, Beijing, May 2, 2005; Interview 25-05, Seoul, May 13, 2005; Interview 40-05, Seoul, August 5, 2005.

²²⁴ Shen, “Accepting a nuclear North Korea,” p. 54.

²²⁵ Interview 25-05, Seoul, May 13, 2005.

region-wide view that President Bush has expressed “less sensitivity and respect than Clinton toward the views and approaches of South Korea in dealing with the North.”²²⁶

Overall, there has been an acute sense in the region that the Six Party Talks have little prospect of success unless the United States shows greater willingness to negotiate.²²⁷ Even if the United States made some progress on the nuclear front, one Chinese expert predicts, there will be another stalemate since having “some levels of tension on the Korean Peninsula would be helpful for the Americans” in their regional strategic plans.²²⁸ By the same logic, had the U.S. acted properly in the region, not threatening the Kim regime, the situation would have been different and might have been resolved more quickly.²²⁹ One analyst at the State Council-sponsored Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) even suggested that if regional countries alone had participated in the talks, the situation would have already been resolved.²³⁰ It was in this context that a former South Korean unification minister complained that the United States has been finding fault with North Korea over the nuclear issue whenever a mood of reconciliation surfaced on the Korean Peninsula.²³¹

The regional suspicion of the U.S. role at the Six Party Talks reveals a more alarming trend in the regional perception of long-term U.S. roles in the region. For instance, another analyst at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations observed that the ultimate U.S. goal with regard to proliferation issues is not “the resolution of nuclear crises but securing a hegemonic position in various parts of

²²⁶ Michael D. Swaine, “U.S. Security Policy under Clinton and Bush: China and Korea,” in Chae-Jin Lee, ed., *U.S. Security Policy Under Clinton and Bush: Continuity and Change*, Monograph Series, Number 17, The Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies Claremont McKenna College, 2005, pp. 74-75.

²²⁷ Interview 12-05, Beijing, April 26, 2005.

²²⁸ Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005.

²²⁹ Interview 10-05, Beijing, April 23, 2005; Interview 12-05, Beijing, April 26, 2005.

²³⁰ Interview 10-04, Beijing, November 22, 2004.

²³¹ *Shindonga*, March 2005.

the world” in the Middle East (e.g., Iraq and Iran) and East Asia (e.g., North Korea).²³² From this vantage point, the U.S.-led counterproliferation drive is in fact a hegemonic means to interfere in the sovereignty of other states and to spread democratic regimes.²³³ In the East Asian context, such a campaign manifested itself as a hard line U.S. stance on North Korea, with a broader regional goal of developing “the all-round US-Japan and US-ROK alliance.”²³⁴ Seen in this light, the U.S. defense realignment scheme in East Asia (e.g., changes in the U.S.-Japanese alliance and shifting U.S. military deployments, etc.) is part of larger “U.S. efforts to hinder China’s rise in Asia.”²³⁵ With this, the Six Party Talks have become the focus of different narratives and strategic visions. As an analyst at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences suggests, while regional countries view the venue as a site for genuine regional institution building, the United States is “using it as a platform for strengthening its own alliance posture.”²³⁶

The North Korean Challenge and Regional Order

More broadly, regional experts suggest that the fundamental question in addressing the North Korean challenge is how to perceive US-China relations in the region.²³⁷ Many Chinese analysts express their concern about “the uncertainties in United State’s unilateral attempt to remold the world and its impact on the Sino-American relationship.”²³⁸ Among other questions, the Chinese ask about U.S.

²³² Interview 08-05, Beijing, April 20, 2005.

²³³ Xun Sun, “Lun yirake zhanzheng dui guoji hekuosan jizhi de yingxiang [The Analysis of the Impact of the Second Iraqi War on International Nonproliferation Mechanism],” *Guoji Luntan [International Forum]*, September 2003, Vol. 5, No. 5, pp. 9-15; Interview 08-05, April 20, 2005, Beijing, China.

²³⁴ Piao, “The Six-Party Talks Process & the Role of China and Japan.”

²³⁵ Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 29(1), Winter 2005-06, p. 158.

²³⁶ Interview 07-05, Beijing, April 18, 2005.

²³⁷ Interview 41-05, Seoul, August 5, 2005.

²³⁸ Yong Deng, “Better Than Power: “International Status” in Chinese Foreign Policy,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), pp. 61-62.

hegemony, power politics, and unilateral behavior in international relations.²³⁹

Focusing on different perceptions of the North Korean challenge, Liu Ming maintains that “China values the stability of the Korean Peninsula with lesser preconditions, while the United States may become more willing to intervene directly to alter the status quo.”²⁴⁰ This is problematic for the Chinese given China’s “deep-seated skepticism about the United States’ strategic designs in the region.”²⁴¹ Some even suggest that it would be easier for the Bush administration to use the North Korean threat than the politically difficult China threat.²⁴² Similarly Chinese analysts often link the Bush Doctrine to “the neoconservative agenda of building the “new empire,” aimed at both terrorism and the rise of China.”²⁴³

Perhaps sensing the skewed US threat perception in Bush’s axis of evil speech, the Chinese government immediately issued a warning in a Foreign Ministry statement: “consequences will be very serious if [the United States] proceeds with this kind of logic.”²⁴⁴ As the crisis worsened, even high-ranking officials directly challenged the U.S. approach. In November 2004, for instance, the *China Daily* carried a controversial article by Chen Qichen, a highly influential former Chinese foreign minister, entitled “U.S. strategy to be banned.” In it, Chen offered a harsh rebuke of the Bush Doctrine: “The philosophy of the ‘Bush Doctrine’ is, in essence,

²³⁹ Chu Shulong, “China’s Perspectives on the Regional and World Order Since 9/11,” in Han Sung-Ju ed., *Coping with 9-11: Asian Perspectives on Global and Regional Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2003), p. 31.

²⁴⁰ Liu Ming, “Opportunities and Challenges for Sino-American Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula,” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, Spring 2004, p. 138.

²⁴¹ Howard W. French, “Doubting U.S., China Is Wary of Korea Role,” *New York Times*, February 19, 2005.

²⁴² Interview 35-05, Seoul, August 3, 2005.

²⁴³ Jing-dong Yuan, “Chinese Perspectives and Responses to the Bush Doctrine,” in Mel Gurtov and Peter Van Ness, eds., *Confronting the Bush Doctrine: Critical Views from the Asia-Pacific* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 112.

²⁴⁴ Kong Quan, Foreign Ministry Briefing, Beijing, China, February 5, 2002, cited in Anne Wu, “What China Whispers to North Korea,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(2), Spring 2005, p. 40.

force. It advocates the United States should rule over the whole world with overwhelming force, military force in particular.”²⁴⁵

This is where the Global Posture Review (GPR) by the Bush administration comes in. Under the review, Japan is expected to play a greater regional role and to be “further integrated into the U.S. global strategy,” transforming the nature of a U.S.-Japan alliance that had functioned mostly as a bilateral regional alliance.²⁴⁶ However, until the recent change of heart in the Bush administration over North Korea, Japan’s fear of entrapment in a U.S. military campaign seems to be far greater than its fear of abandonment.²⁴⁷ Pointing to a lack of public discussion on the implications of such a shift, a Japanese editorial called for “cautious and prudent behavior” in order to “reduce possible tensions and to foster mutual trust with neighbors.”²⁴⁸ Given Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s close friendship with President Bush, a group of Japanese experts suggested that Koizumi might be “the best and only person who can persuade President Bush to have serious negotiations with the North Koreans.”²⁴⁹ However, if Japan simply follows the Bush administration’s approach, another Japanese expert points out, Japan’s “channels for cooperation with South Korea and China will be narrowed.”²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Harvey Stockwin, “The Qian Qichen Op-ed: Official Discontent or Just one Man’s Opinion?” China Brief, Volume 4, Issue 24, Jamestown Foundation, December 07, 2004.

²⁴⁶ “Committing to U.S. strategy,” *Japan Times*, May 5, 2006.

²⁴⁷ Daniel M. Kliman, *Japan’s Security Strategy in the Post-9/11 World: Embracing a New Realpolitik* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), p. 14.

²⁴⁸ “Committing to U.S. strategy.”

²⁴⁹ “Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Problem: A Regional Approach and the Role of Japan,” *JIIA Policy Report*, Project for Northeast Asian Security, The Japan Institute of International Affairs, July 2005, p. ix.

²⁵⁰ Mizushima Asaho, “A New Security Framework for Northeast Asia,” *Japan Focus*, 2004, <http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=048>.

2-5. Conclusion

The response of East Asian countries to the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea indicates that East Asian countries do not share the Bush administration's understanding of the North Korean threat and, thus, have sought to weaken the US approach in various dimensions. In contrast to the U.S. discourse about the urgent nature of the North Korean challenge, the regional sense of urgency derives not from North Korean nuclear ambitions but from the global context where the focus on nonproliferation is being overshadowed by the counterproliferation drive of preemption and regime change.

As the outbreak of the second North Korean nuclear crisis coincided with a radical shift in global proliferation efforts, the U.S.-North Korean action-reaction dynamics reached a volatile point where East Asian countries, the bystanders in the first crisis, decided to actively take part in the six party process. Such activism stems from a shared regional view that regional stability rests more on a managed coexistence with their cumbersome neighbor than on coercion and preemption aimed at regime change in the North.

A comparison between the first and second North Korean nuclear crises illustrates this point. Absent the global rogue/counterproliferation frame, the first North Korean nuclear crisis coincided with a relatively small gap between the U.S. and regional understanding of the North Korean issue. Under these circumstances, regional actors felt no particular need to get involved in resolving the crisis, except by endorsing the Clinton administration's position and offering support for the United States along the way. With the new global narrative about counterproliferation and regime change fully at work, the second crisis highlighted the gap between global and regional understanding of the North Korean challenge, prompting the regional actors

to resist the U.S. counterproliferation drive and its application to the North Korean case.

In the context of seeking effective ways to deal with rogue regimes, Nicholas Kristof contrasts “engagement and deal-making” during the Clinton presidency with “confrontation and isolation” by the Bush administration. While Clinton’s approach stopped North Korea from producing “a single ounce of plutonium during his eight years in office,” he judges, North Korea will be able to amass “enough plutonium for about 10 weapons” in Bush’s presidency.²⁵¹ The nuclear dimension, however, is hardly the only area where the Bush administration failed miserably. With its exclusive focus on proliferation and regime change, the Bush administration found few supporters in East Asia. At a deeper level, the regional resistance stems from the Bush administration’s failure to grasp the East Asian understanding of what North Korea represents. Examining how the meanings of North Korea are linked to the regional strategies of China, Japan, and South Korea is the subject of the next chapter.

²⁵¹ Nicholas D. Kristof, “Talking to Evil,” *New York Times*, August 13, 2006.

CHAPTER THREE:
The North Korean Challenge and
Regional Role Conceptions in East Asia

3-1. Introduction

While the global frame of the North Korean challenge highlights the urgency and the unconventional nature of the North Korean threat in the post-9/11 context, the regional view in East Asia remains focused on the traditional dimension of managing regional strategic relationship in the post-Cold War context. This chapter probes deeper into the regional understanding of the North Korean challenge. In so doing, the chapter shows that despite their disparate, idiosyncratic bilateral issues with North Korea, East Asian countries converge on the importance of maintaining the current regime in the North and have been engaging it in hopes of enhancing their regional role and status and projecting new regional visions.

Despite the U.S.-led counterproliferation campaign and the U.S. call for putting concerted pressure on North Korea at the Six Party talks, East Asian countries were united in their opposition to the Bush Doctrine and in their efforts to redefine their relationship with their troublesome neighbor. Such efforts to enhance their regional roles (i.e., internally-shaped roles), however, have to be made in the broader context of U.S. power and influence in the region (i.e., U.S.-directed regional roles). If East Asian countries were to focus only on the U.S.-directed roles, they would side with the United States at the Six Party talks. For East Asian countries, however, North Korea is not just a *short-term* proliferation question. It is linked to their *long-term* strategic priorities and regional visions.

Hence, instead of unproblematically accepting the externally-shaped roles, they view the North Korean challenge as a unique opportunity to enhance their

regional status and overcome the problem of strategic dependence on the United States. In all three countries, political leaders sought to redefine their relationship with North Korea and link it to greater regional roles and broader regional visions. Specifically, from the expansion of the Kaesung industrial zone in North Korea to the second inter-Korean summit in October 2007, the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun governments in Seoul have been persistent in seeking reconciliation with North Korea. China has also enhanced its strategic and economic ties with North Korea, while at the same time skillfully playing a mediating role between that nation and the United States. Finally, during his tenure, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi not only visited Pyongyang twice but also maintained his willingness to normalize Japan's troubled relationship with North Korea.²⁵²

As the crisis reached a stalemate in late 2004, the U.S. approach and rogue rhetoric also served to empower domestic political groups that raised questions about the ruling government's regional visions anchored to the North Korean question. While similar tensions emerged between North Korea engagers and North Korea bashers in each East Asian country, the impact of domestic contestation was most pronounced in Japan. Exploiting the public uproar against North Korea concerning the abduction issue, the neo-conservatives made inroads into the national political scene. The ensuing domestic contestation reshaped domestic coalition dynamics in Japan where an alternative regional vision gained wide currency, making the earlier regional convergence on North Korea difficult to sustain.

The chapter is organized in the following manner. The next section discusses the main driver behind the search for new regional roles in East Asia and examines the nature of regional role conceptions and domestic contestation on the North Korean

²⁵² In a news conference in July 2005, Prime Minister Koizumi reiterated his hope of finalizing diplomatic normalization with North Korea within his term as prime minister. *Joongang Ilbo*, July 19, 2005.

question. The following three sections take a closer look at the link between regional role conceptions and North Korea in each of the three East Asian countries in turn. Here, I devote particular attention to the impact of the North Korea factor on the way East Asian countries perceive and articulate their regional roles and visions. The chapter ends with a brief section summarizing the findings.

3-2. The Origins and the Nature of Regional Role Conceptions

Countries in East Asia share dissatisfaction with the regional system rooted in their strategic dependence on the United States during and after the Cold War period and, now, seek greater regional roles. While the demise of the Cold War in Europe brought about a dramatic makeover of a regional structure that now encompasses countries in Eastern Europe, similar changes in the regional strategic landscape in East Asia have not occurred. Instead, the region has seen a series of crises, such as the first North Korean nuclear crisis of 1993-94 and the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-1996. Despite initial concerns about the gradual withdrawal of the United States from the region, both crises were managed mainly by the United States. By the mid-1990s, all the regional talks about an impending shift in the regional order ended as the U.S. committed to the maintenance of 100,000 troops in the region and the strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance. As a result, post-Cold War East Asia has remained virtually the same as before, with the U.S.-centered hub-and-spokes system of alliance largely intact.

The continuation of the U.S.-centered regional order, however, did not prevent East Asian countries from seeking new regional roles and regional security visions. Indeed, incessant calls for a regional security framework in the past decade reflects a regional yearning to go beyond the Cold War-based regional security structure in which their roles had been marginal at best. More relevant, for the purposes of our

discussion, is the link between regional role conceptions and the North Korea factor. Despite their respective strategic concerns vis-à-vis North Korea and their strategic relationship with the United States, China, Japan and South Korea have all sought to redefine their relations with North Korea with the goal of enhancing their regional status.

More specifically, Japan, the world's second largest economy, is a defeated nation which is permanently denied the right to use the military in external affairs. The postwar legacy still continues in the form of the pacifist constitution which limits Japan's armed forces to a purely self-defense posture, thereby preventing it from assuming global and regional roles commensurate with its economic prowess. Its past roles as a colonizer in Korea and an invader in China make its regional status even more problematic. South Korea, the eleventh largest economy in the world and a global leader in information technology, is also a long-time client of an alliance that requires that its wartime operational control be surrendered to a U.S. commander. China, one of the world's fastest growing economies and a member of the UN Security Council and the nuclear club, is a divided socialist nation in which the ruling Communist Party's political legitimacy hinges critically on economic "catch-up" with the West and improving regional and international status. In short, all the East Asian countries have been eager to play greater and more assertive regional roles and, in the process, to expand their diplomatic space in the region.

Each effort to redefine and expand regional roles involves an effort to readjust troubled relations with North Korea. For the East Asian countries, that relationship is of great significance precisely because a new relationship with the North holds out the promise of enhanced diplomatic influence and regional status. Despite years of ups and downs, Japan's efforts to normalize its diplomatic relationship with North Korea have been persistent since the first round of the normalization talks began in 1992.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's normalization efforts and the Pyongyang Declaration in 2002 are only the latest examples of Japan's regional strategy that includes North Korea as a key part of Japan's regional vision. South Korea's engagement policy toward North Korea, known as the sunshine policy, is not just about promoting inter-Korean reconciliation but also about positioning the Korean Peninsula at the center of East Asian economic and political integration.²⁵³ While showing communist solidarity is no longer a strategic necessity for China's fourth generation leaders, China's relationship with North Korea has the potential for enhancing China's influence on the Korean Peninsula, "a geostrategic focal point of East Asia."²⁵⁴

While attempts were made in earlier periods, the current regional pursuit of engagement with North Korea began in earnest in 1998. With the adoption of the sunshine policy of engagement toward North Korea, the South Korean government set in motion a process of regional initiatives converging on the Korean Peninsula. With its new diplomatic campaign toward the North, the Kim Dae Jung government hoped to play a leading role on the regional scene. Concerned about the emergence of a regional order dictated by the United States and its alliances, the Chinese have also been intent on reshaping the regional order and expanding its own role in the process.²⁵⁵ The Chinese understanding is that should it fail to markedly enhancing its regional influence on the Korean Peninsula, the prospects of forging a new regional

²⁵³ Interview with a South Korean security expert of a Unification Ministry-affiliated research institute, Interview 35-05, Seoul, August 3, 2005.

²⁵⁴ Interview with a senior Chinese regional security expert at Peking University, Interview 16-05, Beijing, April 30, 2005.

²⁵⁵ Heungho Moon, "Dongbuka dajaanbo hyupryukgwa Joonggukui yokhwal [Northeast Asian multilateral Cooperation and China's Role]," in Hyunik Hong and Daewoo Lee eds., *Dongbuka Dajaanbo Hyupryukgwa Joobyunsagan [Northeast Asian Multilateral Cooperation and the Neighboring Four Powers]* (Seoul: Sejong Institute, 2001), p. 101.

order are slim.²⁵⁶ Its active mediating role in the Six Party processes is emblematic of larger efforts at enhancing its regional influence and status.

Japan's positive response to the sunshine policy was also prompt and consistent. In his summit with then South Korean President Kim Dae Jung in 1998, then Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi suggested that Japan and Russia participate in "a six-party Northeast Asian security forum" which would address the issue of Korean Peninsula stability.²⁵⁷ Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, Obuchi's successor, also exchanged his views on North Korea with the South Korean President Kim Dae Jung and updated him on the status of the Japan-DPRK normalization talks,²⁵⁸ while his foreign minister expressed Japan's support for the sunshine policy.²⁵⁹ Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's 2002 visit to Pyongyang also came with the realization that Japan was "left on the periphery" of the regional scene in the midst of the inter-Korean summit and Kim Jong Il's visit to Beijing right before the Korean summit.²⁶⁰ Apart from bilateral issues with North Korea such as resolution of the colonial past and the abduction issue, Japan has broader "regional aspirations" concerning North Korea, "aiming to shape the future of the Korean peninsula, to expand Japan's regional security role, and to channel the rise of China as a regional power."²⁶¹

Despite the region-wide search for new regional roles, there is also no denying that the regional countries still play their roles under the influence of the United States.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 117.

²⁵⁷ Youngsun Song, "Dajaanbo hyupruke daehan Ilbonui sigakgwa jeonmang [Japan's view of Multilateral Security Cooperation and Its Prospect], in Hyunik Hong and Daewoo Lee eds., *Dongbuka Dajaanbo Hyupryukgwa Joobyunsagan [Northeast Asian Multilateral Cooperation and the Neighboring Four Powers]* (Seoul: Sejong Institute, 2001), p. 85.

²⁵⁸ Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's policy toward North Korea," in Tsuneo Akaha, ed., *The Future of North Korea* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 84.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 82.

²⁶⁰ Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's Multilevel Approach toward the Korean Peninsula After the Cold War," in Charles K. Armstrong, Gilbert Rozman, Samuel S. Kim, and Stephen Kotkin, eds., *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006), p. 191.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 188.

This is why the regional actors need to balance externally and internally shaped regional roles. Interestingly, East Asian countries' efforts to ensure role congruence often take the form of double-talk. In a September 2003 speech at the UN General Assembly, for instance, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi publicly called for the dismantling of North Korean nuclear programs and a speedy resolution of the abduction issue before Japan could proceed with the normalization of its diplomatic relations with North Korea. However, a few months later, a four-member Japanese official delegation made a secret trip to Pyongyang for negotiations. Similarly, when South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon made a speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2004, he both called for North Korea to immediately forgo all nuclear programs and declared that bilateral exchanges and cooperation between the two Koreas had reached "a point from which there is no turning back."²⁶²

More broadly, East Asian nations search for greater regional roles in part because they need to escape from their dependence on the United States.²⁶³ For reasons of security and economic development, Japan and South Korea have been dependent on alliance relationship with the United States. However, as a former Japanese ambassador and high-ranking foreign ministry official puts it, the United States has "its own parochial national interests," which may not always be in tune with those of its regional allies.²⁶⁴ China has also relied on friendly ties with the United States for continued economic growth and the maintenance of regional stability. What comes with this sense of dependency is a persistent feeling of compromised regional status and a lack of autonomy in foreign policy making. It is the imperative of

²⁶² The text of the statement made by South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon at the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 24, 2004, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Korea, p. 4.

²⁶³ Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 370.

²⁶⁴ Interview 01-04, Tokyo, September 30, 2004; also Interview 01-05, Tokyo, February 3, 2005; Interview 34-05, Tokyo, July 27, 2005.

overcoming strategic dependency and enhancing their own regional status that has driven East Asian understandings of, and policy behavior toward, North Korea. The following sections explore each country case in greater detail.

3-3. South Korea

The Search for New Regional Roles

As the Cold War era was drawing to an end, the South Korean government for the first time in its modern history set out an independent regional policy initiative. In the early 1990s, the Roh Tae Woo government pursued a foreign policy initiative called “*Nordpolitik*,” seeking diplomatic rapprochement with the Soviet Union and China.²⁶⁵ Although the diplomatic charm offensive was aimed mainly at the two Communist neighbors, the key priority was “finding an opening with North Korea.”²⁶⁶ In late 1991, the two Koreas signed the “Basic Agreement, which includes a nonaggression pact and allows for exchange programs.”²⁶⁷ Although the diplomatic initiative went no further in the aftermath of the first North Korean nuclear crisis, the whole process demonstrated South Korea’s willingness to play a larger regional role by taking an initiative vis-à-vis North Korea.

The first serious opportunity for South Korea to play such a regional role came in 1996 when President Clinton and South Korean President Kim Youngsam agreed to hold a “four party meeting,” involving the two Koreas, the United States, and China. A joint statement from the meeting stated, “South and North Korea should take the

²⁶⁵ Yongchul Ha et. al., *Bukbang Jeongchaek [Nordpolitik]* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2003); Tsuneo Akaha, “Conclusion: Nationalism Versus Regionalism in Northeast Asia,” in Tsuneo Akaha ed., *Politics and Economics in Northeast Asia: Nationalism and Regionalism in Contention* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) p. 372.

²⁶⁶ Akaha, *Ibid.*, p. 372; Moonseok Ahn, *Bukhani Pilyohan Miguk, Miguki Pilyohan Bukhan [A United States that needs North Korea, A North Korea that needs the United States]* (Seoul, Korea: Park Young-Yul Publishing House, 2006), pp. 145-146.

²⁶⁷ Anthony Spaeth, “The American Presence: How long can the U.S. stay?” *Time*, June 12, 2000, Vol. 156., No. 23.

lead in a renewed search for a permanent peace agreement.”²⁶⁸ For this new regional plan to succeed, South Korea had to persuade neighboring countries to join the regional exercise. This strategic consideration facilitated a bold initiative to improve relations with Japan and China.²⁶⁹ Former South Korean Foreign Minister Hong Soonyoung implied this logic when he declared that South Korea’s engagement policy was “not just aimed at North Korea.”²⁷⁰

The South Koreans also hoped to link inter-Korean engagement to a larger regional framework to ensure political and even financial support for a gradual reunification on the Korean Peninsula.²⁷¹ In this regard, the South Koreans proposed holding a summit for the two Koreas and four regional powers “to focus international attention on Korea and to jump-start the Korean peace process.”²⁷² They envisioned the summit not only as “a breakthrough in the Korean peace process,” but also as a platform for a broader regional security framework.²⁷³ Given that previous regional tragedies such as Japan’s colonization and the Korean War originated in the Korean Peninsula, a South Korean scholar writes, it would be only natural that the peninsula should serve as a platform for rebuilding a new regional order.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁸ Eric V. Larson, Norman D. Levin with Seonhae Baik, Bogdan Savych, *Ambivalent Allies?: A Study of South Korean Attitudes Toward the U.S.* (Santa Monica, CA: the Rand Corporation, 2004), p. 24.

²⁶⁹ Cheol Hee Park, “Japanese Strategic Thinking toward Korea,” in Gilbert Rozman, Kazuhiko Togo, and Joseph P. Ferguson, eds., *Japanese Strategic Thought toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 190.

²⁷⁰ Hong Soon-Young, “21segi tongсанjilseowa wooriui tongsangwoigyojeongchaek banghayng [The 21st Century Trade Order and Our Trade and Foreign Policy Prospects],” Speech at the Korean Trade Association, August 27, 1999, p. 143.

²⁷¹ John Feffer, “Grave Threats and Grand Bargains: The United States and Regional Order in Northeast Asia,” in John Feffer, ed., *The Future of US-Korean Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 194.

²⁷² Byung-joon Ahn, “The Impact of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines,” Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, *IGCC Policy Papers*, 1998, p. 13.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Younghee Lee, “Dongbuka jiyokui pyonghwa jilseo guchukul wihan jeon [A contribution toward the Formation of New International Order in Northeast Asia],” in *Bansegui Shinhwa* [A Myth of the Past Half-Century], (Seoul: Samin, 1999), pp. 245-46.

The Sunshine Policy, the Hub of East Asia, and North Korea

Based on this long-standing regional vision, the Kim Dae Jung government proposed the sunshine policy of engagement toward North Korea. While seeking peaceful coexistence for the two Koreas in the short term, the central tenet of the sunshine policy was to gradually transform “the reclusive regime in North Korea into a cooperative partner in peace and prosperity.”²⁷⁵ The Kim Dae Jung government linked the prospect of regime survival in the North and the reduction of regional tensions to North Korea’s integration into the region.²⁷⁶ In the process, South Korea hoped to change both inter-Korean relations and regional security dynamics. Breaking away from the position of his predecessor, Kim Young Sam, who was opposed to the idea of improving U.S.-North Korean ties ahead of inter-Korean relations, the Kim Dae Jung government realized that better North Korean-U.S. relations were indeed conducive to enhanced inter-Korean relations. Hence, President Kim Dae Jung went extra miles to persuade the United States to improve relationship with North Korea.

South Korea’s efforts during the Perry Process illustrate this point. Despite a crisis situation in the wake of North Korea’s 1998 missile launch and suspicions about secret nuclear facilities in North Korea, the Kim Dae Jung government persuaded the United States to reach a negotiated deal with North Korea,²⁷⁷ while frequently sending officials to Washington to discuss the North Korean situation. Then Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto repeatedly expressed their support for the sunshine policy, which further strengthened South Korea’s efforts

²⁷⁵ Hong Soon-Young, “Changing Dynamics in Northeast Asia and the Republic of Korea’s Engagement Policy toward North Korea,” speech at the 27th Williamsburg Conference, Cheju, May 7, 1999 in *Selected Speeches and Strategies by Mr. Hong Soon-Young, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, August 1998-December 1999*, (Seoul: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1999), p. 81.

²⁷⁶ Scott Snyder, “South Korea’s Squeeze Play,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(4), Autumn 2005, p. 102.

²⁷⁷ Dongman Seo, “*Nambukjungsanhoidamgwa gukkehuyupryuk [Inter-Korean Summit and International Cooperation]*,” in *Jungsanhoidam yihoo Nambukgwangye gaesonjollyak [Post-2000 Summit Strategy for Improving Inter-Korean Relations]*, The Sejong Institute, (Seoul: Sejong Institute, 2000), p. 40.

to change the U.S. policy toward North Korea. In this way, one South Korean expert observes, the sunshine policy effectively regionalized the North Korean issue, which had initially arisen in a global frame.²⁷⁸

The engagement policy toward North Korea continued with the “Peace and Prosperity policy” of the Roh Moo-Hyun administration. While seeking its own reconciliation with the North, the Roh government actively encouraged other regional countries to engage North Korea. A senior official of South Korea’s Ministry of National Unification explained the rationale behind such a regional drive: depending on the way the North Korean situation is settled, he predicted, “China-Japan relations may change, as well as regional dynamics.”²⁷⁹ The South Korean government approved and encouraged Japan’s efforts to normalize diplomatic relations with North Korea as a useful way to dampen tension between North Korea and the United States.²⁸⁰ At the same time, the South Korean government made a series of efforts to improve its own ties with the North, including a 2004 decision to make the minister of national unification the head of South Korea’s National Security Council.²⁸¹

South Korea’s regional drive aimed at North Korea also reflected and was reinforced by the general mood among the South Korean public, which has been moving in favor of inter-Korean relations. Against this backdrop, the two Koreas have engaged in the joint operation of an industrial park in the North Korean border city of Kaesong, which has been characterized by the governments “as an experiment with market reforms.”²⁸² As of this writing, there are 150 companies in operation in the

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁷⁹ Interview 36-05, Seoul, August 3, 2005.

²⁸⁰ Choong Nam Kim, “The Sunshine Policy and Its Impact on South Korea’s Relations with Major Powers,” *Korea Observer*, 35(4), Winter 2004, p. 608.

²⁸¹ Government Information Agency, Seoul, Korea, available at

http://www.allim.go.kr/jsp/dataroom/dataroom_news_view.jsp?id=65055344.

²⁸² Anthony Faiola and Joohee Cho, “Perils of Investing in N. Korea Become Clear to a Pioneer,” *Washington Post*, November 24, 2005.

complex.²⁸³ Encouraged by a series of exchanges with North Korea, the majority of South Koreans support the reconciliation effort. Now more than at any time since the end of the Korean War, there is a general consensus among the South Korean public that coexistence with North Korea accompanied by gradual change of the North aimed at unification is the only way to go.²⁸⁴

The spread of inter-Korean nationalism (*minjok gongjo*) has in turn affected South Korea's regional policy and alliance relationship with the United States. Those who support the government position hold that North Korea is "part of the Korean ethnic community," and thus "question the role of the United States and whether its policies are fully compatible with South Korea's national interests."²⁸⁵ Many South Koreans also maintain that inter-Korean relations and the future of the Korean peninsula should be controlled by Koreans themselves, including the North Koreans.²⁸⁶ This "pan-Korean nationalism" was increasingly on a collision course with the Bush administration's hard line approach toward the North.²⁸⁷ A September 2003 poll in South Korea shows that 35.4 percent of South Koreans in their 20s chose the U.S. as the least favored country while only 4.1 percent chose North Korea. Overall, over 40 percent of Koreans in their 20s thought that "inter-Korean cooperation should take precedence over South Korea's cooperation with the United States."²⁸⁸ Signs of South Korea's changing view of North Korea are also evident in another poll conducted by a South Korean newspaper in May 2005. Asked which side they would support in case of a unilateral U.S. attack on North Korea, only 31 percent

²⁸³ See the official South Korean website of the Kaesung Industrial Complex, <http://gaeseong.lplus.or.kr/sales/sub4.php>.

²⁸⁴ Interview 37-05, Seoul, August 4, 2005.

²⁸⁵ Gi-Wook Shin and Paul Y. Chang, "The Politics of Nationalism in U.S.-Korean Relations," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2004, p. 139.

²⁸⁶ Sook-Jong Lee, "Allying with the United States: Changing South Korean Attitudes," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, XVII/1 (Spring 2005), p. 94.

²⁸⁷ Jiyul Kim, "Pan-Korean Nationalism, Anti-Great Power-ism and U.S.-South Korean Relations," *Japan Focus*, December 13, 2005.

²⁸⁸ Larson and Levin, *Ambivalent Allies?* p. 97.

of the respondents said they would support their ally, the U.S., while 47 percent say they would support North Korea.²⁸⁹

Of course, such public sentiments are subject to change. In fact, due in large part to North Korea's missile launches and the nuclear test in 2006, recent surveys show a change in South Korea's threat perception. According to a recent survey, South Koreans' perception of a possible North Korean attack has increased from 43 percent in 2005 to 60 percent in 2007. At the same time, however, 78.4 percent of the respondents still maintain generally positive views toward North Korea (i.e., 56.6 percent viewing North Korea as a partner for cooperation and 21.8 percent as a recipient of South Korean assistance).²⁹⁰ Another recent survey on North Korea shows that the majority of respondents (69.9%) support the continuation of the sunshine policy, while 80.7 percent stress the importance of national unification.²⁹¹

Given this nationwide support for the engagement policy toward the North, it is not surprising that U.S. policy toward North Korea was seen as "driving North Korea into a corner, risking provocation and unnecessary harm to the policy of inter-Korean reconciliation."²⁹² A former South Korean minister of unification even let it be known that the United States has found fault with North Korea over the nuclear issue whenever reconciliation moods surfaced on the Korean Peninsula.²⁹³ As a consequence, there has been "a shift in the popular image of the U.S. from a protector of South Korea's security to a potential impediment to inter-Korean reconciliation."²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ *Munwha Ilbo*, May 12, 2005.

²⁹⁰ *Yonhap News*, October 10, 2007.

²⁹¹ The National Unification Advisory Council, Seoul, Korea. The survey results are available at its website, http://www.nuac.go.kr/actions/BbsDataAction?cmd=view&menuid=G060103&bbs_id=G060103&bbs_idx=538297&_template=01.

²⁹² Kim, "The Sunshine Policy," p. 596.

²⁹³ Interview with former Unification Minister Jung Se Hyun, *Shindonga*, March 2005.

²⁹⁴ Larson and Levin, *Ambivalent Allies?*, p. 35.

The resulting gap between the U.S. and South Korean approaches toward the North also made coordination between the two allied nations all the more difficult.

Echoing South Korea's sense of strategic dependency, inter-Korean nationalism (*minjok gongjo*)²⁹⁵ is also tied to the "anti-great power-ism" which denotes "the desire of Koreans to escape from the sort of Great Power exploitation and victimization" in its modern history.²⁹⁶ The majority of the South Korean public, mostly post-Korean War generations, is sympathetic to this interpretation of South Korea's history. From this vantage point, the US approach toward the North is viewed as "hostile, and unaccommodating to South Korea's interests."²⁹⁷ Instead, the South Koreans are eager to realize their vision of "a Korea that is master of its own fate and destiny," a vision premised on the gradual unification of the two Koreas.²⁹⁸ The salience of inter-Korean nationalism within South Korean society put the South Korean government in a difficult position in which it needed to strike a balance between inter-Korean relations and cooperation with its long-time ally, the United States.²⁹⁹

The Tension between Inter-Korean Relations and Alliance Ties with the United States

As the crisis reached a stalemate, increasing tension between South Korea's different regional roles gradually led to larger domestic contestation about South Korea's regional security priorities. At a deeper level, South Korea's domestic debate revolves around the two faces of the North Korean challenge: as the *raison d'être* of the U.S.-South Korean alliance and as the ultimate partner for inter-Korean

²⁹⁵ Others instead use different terms, such as "pan-Korean nationalism," to denote essentially the same meaning of inter-Korean nationalism, see Jiyul Kim, *Japan Focus*, 2005.

²⁹⁶ Kim, "Pan-Korean Nationalism."

²⁹⁷ Kang Choi, "A View on America's Role in Asia and the Future of the ROK-U.S. Alliance," in *The Newly Emerging Asian Order and the Korean Peninsula*, Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies, Vol. 15, 2005, Korea Economic Institute, Washington, D.C., p. 225.

²⁹⁸ Kim, "Pan-Korean Nationalism."

²⁹⁹ Interview 22-05, Seoul, May 12, 2005; Interview 41-05, Seoul, August 5, 2005.

reconciliation and unification.³⁰⁰ As a result, the main content of the South Korean domestic debate has been whether South Korea should focus more on strategic ties with the U.S. (*hanmi gongjo*), as proposed by conservatives, or on inter-Korean reconciliation (*minjok gongjo*), as maintained by liberals. A South Korean expert at the government-affiliated Korean Institute for National Unification put the South Korean debate in the context of a domestic political battle between liberals and conservatives over the issues of national identity and dominance in domestic politics.³⁰¹

As the Roh government's engagement policy made little progress in the face of the standoff between the United States and North Korea, South Korean conservatives began to challenge the government position. While sympathetic to inter-Korean nationalism, the conservative groups, including the Grand National Party, generally stresses the importance of maintaining a strong alliance relationship with the United States. From their viewpoint, South Korea's policy of engagement with the North is a risky strategy, "endangering both U.S.-[South Korean] relations and South Korean security."³⁰² For example, one expert at the Foreign Ministry-affiliated Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security observes that while other countries take into account broader regional issues, South Korea remains myopic in its exclusive focus on inter-Korean relations. He even wondered if South Korea would be able to catch up with the changing nature of U.S. alliances in a new global strategic context.³⁰³

However, owing in large part to broadening popular support for the engagement policy and widespread opposition to the Bush administration's hard line approach, the conservative challenge failed to alter the government position. Instead,

³⁰⁰ Interview 22-05, Seoul, May 12, 2005; Interview 24-05, Seoul, May 13, 2005; Interview 25-05, Seoul, May 13, 2005.

³⁰¹ Interview 21-05, Seoul, May 11, 2005.

³⁰² Larson and Levin, *Ambivalent Allies?* p. 34.

³⁰³ Interview 24-05, Seoul, May 13, 2005.

President Roh forged ahead to propose South Korea's balancer/mediator role (*gyunhyungja-ron*) in the region, an attempt to pursue "a more independent foreign policy that would avoid alignment with the United States in containing China or North Korea."³⁰⁴ In this regional vision, North Korea amounts to a key anchor for South Korea's "assertive and constructive role for Korea throughout Asia."³⁰⁵ It was based on this strategic assumption that President Roh raised questions about Washington's hard line approach toward North Korea. Instead, President Roh continued to maintain that he was willing to offer more concessions to North Korea to achieve reconciliation with the North.³⁰⁶

Lee Jong Seok, then the head of South Korea's National Security Council and national unification minister, portrayed President Roh's renewed overture toward North Korea as showing "his determination that our government must play a more active role to break the current stalemate."³⁰⁷ Such efforts finally came to fruition in 2007 as the Bush administration changed its approach toward North Korea and the second inter-Korean summit took place in October 2007. While initially denouncing prior North Korea policy as "unconditional support" that failed to secure reciprocity from the North, the new Lee Myongbak government has also backtracked from his earlier stance on North Korea. Changing its previous position, the conservative government recently announced that it would be willing to provide 50,000 tons of corn.³⁰⁸ Its unification minister, Kim Hajoong, also attended a ceremony

³⁰⁴ Mel Gurtov, "The Bush Doctrine in Asia," in David P. Forsythe, Patrice C. McMahon, and Andrew Wedeman, eds., *American Foreign Policy in a Globalized World* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 297.

³⁰⁵ Emanuel Pastreich, "The Balancer: Roh Moo-hyun's Vision of Korean Politics and the Future of Northeast Asia," *Japan Focus*, August 1, 2005.

³⁰⁶ *Yonhap News*, May 10, 2006.

³⁰⁷ Sang-Hun Choe, "South Korea Proposes Meeting With North Korea," *New York Times*, May 11, 2006.

³⁰⁸ *Donga Ilbo*, June 4, 2008.

commemorating the anniversary of the first inter-Korean summit, while stressing the Lee government's emphasis on the Kaesong industrial complex in North Korea.³⁰⁹

3-4. China

China's Search for Greater Regional Roles

Like South Korea, China began its quest for greater regional roles in 1989, when China began to focus on surrounding area (*zhoubian*) diplomacy as a coherent regional strategy.³¹⁰ A key driver behind the strategic shift was the need to “project China’s national identity as “an up-and-coming superpower in the Asia-Pacific region so as to make up for the domestic legitimization and security deficits.”³¹¹ Unlike revolutionary nationalism in the past, Chinese nationalism has recently become “moderate and conservative, placing a premium on stability and a peaceful international context.”³¹² With this new strategic focus and foreign policy outlook, Chinese leaders hoped to rejuvenate China’s image from “a revolutionary country that rejected the existing international regime to a responsible power within the system.”³¹³ As a result, there has been “a shift of the gravity of its diplomacy from the Third World to major powers.”³¹⁴

³⁰⁹ Chosun Ilbo, June 4, 2008.

³¹⁰ Russel Ong, *China's Security Interests in the Post-Cold War Era* (London, UK: Curzon Press, 2002), p. 3.

³¹¹ Samuel S. Kim, “The Making of China’s Korean Policy in the Era of Reform,” in David Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 408.

³¹² Chen Zhimin, “Nationalism, Internationalism, and Chinese Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14(42), February 2005, p. 47.

³¹³ Feng Ni, “The Shaping of China’s Foreign Policy,” in Ryosei Kokubun and Jisi Wang, eds., *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004), p. 144. Early signs of such shift emerged in the early 1990s when China’s previous emphasis on a Third World identity needed to be toned down. For an interesting discussion of China’s search for its national identity, see Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, eds., *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

³¹⁴ Jiangwei Wang, “Adjusting to a “Strong-Strong Relationship”: China’s Calculus of Japan’s Asian Policy,” in Takashi Inoguchi ed., *Japan's Asian Policy: Revival and Response* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 109.

In this sense, China's constructive role at the Six Party talks is also part of larger efforts to demonstrate "how important China is in international affairs."³¹⁵ For the current fourth generation leadership led by President Hu Jintao, the adoption of China's "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*) strategy is not only an effective means to alleviate the "China threat" thesis but also a strong signal to the world that China is willing to play a constructive role in the international system.³¹⁶ In fact, the Chinese began to highlight China's active mediating role in the wake of the second North Korean nuclear crisis as a prime example of China's embrace of constructive international roles.³¹⁷

At a deeper level, however, the change in strategic and foreign policy direction is rooted in China's need to address its "dual national identity": the image of a great nation in both historical (due to its long history and rich cultural traditions) and contemporary senses (given its nuclear power status and its veto power at the United Nation Security Council) on the one hand, and the image of a developing socialist nation that still lags far behind the level of the West on the other.³¹⁸ The problem of the dual national image is further compounded by the U.S. support of Taiwan, a quintessential symbol of a divided nation. Despite Chinese leaders' initial expectations for the emergence of a multipolar system in the post-Cold War era, by the mid-1990s it became abundantly clear to the Chinese leadership that a prolonged American unipolarity would be the order of the day, and China should readjust to this new

³¹⁵ "China's diplomacy enters golden age: senior diplomat," *People's Daily*, September 11, 2005.

³¹⁶ Avery Goldstein points out China's strong support for the international nonproliferation regime as one such effort on display. See his *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 121.

³¹⁷ Evan Medeiros, "Agents of Influence: Assessing the Role of Chinese Foreign Policy Research Organizations after the 16th Party Congress," in Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel, eds., *Civil-Military Change in China: Elites, Institutes, and Ideas after the 16th Party Congress*, Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, September 2004, p. 297.

³¹⁸ Xinbo Wu, "Four Contradictions Constraining China's Foreign Policy Behavior," *Journal of Contemporary China* (2001), 10(27), p. 293.

strategic reality by actively pursuing multilateral diplomacy in the region and beyond.³¹⁹

Given “China’s outlier status vis-à-vis the U.S.-centered great power group,” especially in the wake of the Tiananmen incident, a stable relationship with the United States has become even more important.³²⁰ Hence, no serious Chinese analyst denies the fact that the United States is the most important country for China’s modernization.³²¹ Despite concerns about China’s new strategy of “peaceful rise (*heping jueqi*),” the rationale behind the strategy is to “enhance cooperation and minimize conflicts with the US.”³²² At the same time, however, many Chinese suspect that the hard line U.S. approach to China is an attempt to “prevent it from achieving great-power status.”³²³ In this view, instead of cooperating with the United States, China should strive to encourage multipolarization primarily as a counterweight to U.S. hegemony.

The competing interpretations of China’s proper regional strategies reflect a strategic dilemma for China: how to navigate between cooperating with the United States and guarding against U.S. interference with China’s core national interests. In other words, Chinese foreign policy orientation is essentially a balancing act between the conflicting demands of integrating with the international system and unifying the divided nation.³²⁴ Although China’s rapid economic growth has thus far satisfied the

³¹⁹ Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 26, p. 118.

³²⁰ Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, “Introduction,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 10.

³²¹ Jin Canrong, “The US Global Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era and Its Implications for China–United States Relations: a Chinese perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary China* (2001), 10(27), p. 315.

³²² Jia Qingguo, “Learning to Live with the Hegemon: evolution of China’s policy toward the US since the end of the Cold War,” *Journal of Contemporary China* (2005), 14(44), August, p. 407.

³²³ Suisheng Zhao, “China’s Pragmatic Nationalism: Is It Manageable?” *The Washington Quarterly*, 29(1), Winter 2005–06, p. 136.

³²⁴ Allen Carlson, *Unifying China and Integrating with the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 248.

needs of both modernization and integration with the world, an understanding of how best to maintain national unity and territorial integrity has remained elusive, especially in the context of Taiwan's move toward *de jure* independence. The situation is complicated all the more by the double reality that the United States, while publicly acknowledging a "one China" policy, is still bound by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act to intervene in a Taiwan contingency. Given the rising nationalistic sentiment among the Chinese public, particularly on the issues of Taiwan and Japan, Chinese leaders need to be as assertive in their foreign policy as possible without disrupting their modernization drive or endangering regional stability.³²⁵

Cooperative Security, the New Security Concept (NSC) and North Korea

It is against this strategic backdrop that China has been seeking greater regional roles and a new regional vision. More specifically, China has sought to enhance its regional influence under the rubric of "cooperative security," a broad diplomatic initiative proposed as a "counterweight to traditional military alliances and other forms of the "Cold War mentality."³²⁶ Specifically, since the late 1990s, the Chinese government has set out a new foreign policy vision premised on "the new concept of security."³²⁷ Officially introduced at the 1997 ASEAN Regional Forum, the new security concept (NSC) was offered as "an alternative vision of how nations should pursue national security in the post-Cold War world order."³²⁸ While stressing the importance of "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, it also called

³²⁵ Quansheng Zhao, "China and Major Power Relations in East Asia," *Journal of Contemporary China* (2001), 10(29), p. 668.

³²⁶ Yong Deng, "Better Than Power: "International Status" in Chinese Foreign Policy," in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 65.

³²⁷ "China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, July 31, 2002.

³²⁸ David M. Finkelstein, "China's "New Concept of Security," in Stephen J. Flanagan and Michael E. Marti, eds., *The People's Liberation Army and China in Transition* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2003), pp. 197-198.

for “safeguarding the global and regional strategic balance and stability” and upholding “the principle of non-interference in each other’s internal affairs.”³²⁹ The NSC also reflected Beijing’s desire to circumvent Washington’s well-established alliance networks in East Asia by associating those structures with a “Cold War mentality” (*lengzhan siwei*) ill-suited to the contemporary period.³³⁰ More importantly, the NSC regarded the Asia-Pacific region as “China’s geopolitical priority and expressed China’s support for more actively pursuing its national interests through multilateral international organizations.”³³¹

Within this broader strategic formulation, the Korean Peninsula has a particular meaning for the Chinese: the “core problem” (*hexin wenti*) of Northeast Asia.³³² Throughout history, the Korean Peninsula has been the site of various events that altered China’s national fate. During the Pacific War, Japanese troops used the Korean Peninsula as a launch pad for attacks into the Chinese territory.³³³ More importantly, the peninsula is inescapably tied to painful historical memories such as the Sino-Japanese war over Korea in 1894, which led to the cession of Taiwan, and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, which deprived the Chinese of an opportunity to regain control over Taiwan, resulting in national disunity ever since.³³⁴

³²⁹ Sha Zukang, “Some Thoughts on Establishing A New Regional Security Order,” Statement by Ambassador Sha Zukang at the East-West Center’s Senior Policy Seminar, August 7, 2000, Honolulu, Hawaii, [<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/jks/cjkk/2622/t15411.htm>].

³³⁰ Thomas G. Moore, “Chinese Foreign Policy in the Age of Globalization,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 138.

³³¹ Shale Horowitz and Min Ye, “China’s Grand Strategy, the Korean Nuclear Crisis, and the Six-Party Talks,” Paper presented at the International Studies Association annual meeting, Chicago, IL, March 2007, p. 7.

³³² Samuel S. Kim, “The Making of China’s Korean Policy in the Era of Reform,” in David Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 372.

³³³ Russell Ong, *China’s Security Interests in the Post-Cold War Era* (London, UK: Curzon Press, 2002), p. 53.

³³⁴ Jisi Wang, “China’s Changing Role in Asia,” in Ryosei Kokubun and Jisi Wang, eds., *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004), p. 9.

As a consequence, the Korean Peninsula was, and remains, China's primary arena for achieving expanded regional roles.³³⁵ In this vein, Beijing's desire to increase influence on the Korean Peninsula can be seen as "the starting point for a return to Pax Sinica in the region,"³³⁶ or, as one Chinese policy advisor put it, "a 'test stone' for rising China."³³⁷ Another Chinese analyst even suggested that it is on the peninsula that Beijing's chances of becoming a major global power and a regional "hegemon" will be tested.³³⁸ More broadly, political dynamics surrounding the Korean peninsula and regional responses will help redefine Sino-American relations as well as "the security architecture" of the region in the 21st century.³³⁹ Hence, China's active role during the second North Korean crisis can be understood in this broader context of changing strategic calculation in China. From the outset, China's response to the second nuclear crisis was very different from its lukewarm attitude during the first crisis. As the second crisis escalated in March 2003, the Chinese government established a Small Leadership Group on the North Korean Problem (*chaoxian wenti lingdao xiaozu*) headed by President Hu Jintao himself.³⁴⁰

North Korea: Liability versus Buffer

As the second crisis intensified, however, a group of Chinese called "the liability school" began to highlight the negative side of the crisis. From their perspective, as China pursues continued economic development and seeks regional

³³⁵ Samuel S. Kim, "China and the future of the Korean Peninsula," Tsuneo Akaha, ed., *The Future of North Korea* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 113.

³³⁶ Kay Meller and Markus Tidten, "North Korea and the Bomb: Radicalization in Isolation," *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 45, no. 1 (1994), p. 108, cited in Ong, *China's Security Interests in the Post-Cold War Era*, p. 69.

³³⁷ Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 123.

³³⁸ Xiaoxing Yi, "A Neutralized Korea? The North-South Rapprochement and China's Korea Policy," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XII, No. 2, Winter 2000, p. 79.

³³⁹ Avery Goldstein, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations and the Korean Peninsula," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2002, p. 126.

³⁴⁰ Jae Ho Chung, "China's Korea Policy Under the New Leadership: Stealth Changes in the Making?" *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Spring/Summer 2004, p. 9; Samuel S. Kim, "China's New Role in the Nuclear Confrontation," *Asian Perspective*, 2004, Vol. 28, No. 4, p. 151.

stability, North Korean provocations on its border increasingly become a burden to both China's regional strategy of cooperative security and its relations with the United States.³⁴¹ The longer the current stalemate in the Six-Party Talks continues, so the reasoning goes, the more China will lose, especially in the context of a worsening relationship with the United States.³⁴² In retrospect, early signs of the liability school came even before the outbreak of the current crisis. Speaking in 1997, then Premier Li Peng reportedly told a group of Americans, "North Korea is neither an ally of the PRC nor an enemy, but merely a neighboring country."³⁴³ What is new in the latest manifestation of China's worry about North Korea, however, is the direct link made between North Korea's provocations and China's relations with the United States.

Recognizing China's limited options in an era of American hegemony, for instance, a prominent Chinese security expert and frequent foreign policy commentators at People's University pointed out that cooperation with the United States on the North Korean crisis was in China's national interest and even suggested "a policy of bandwagon, which means that China should accept and participate in the U.S.-led global regimes."³⁴⁴ Similarly, pointing to the new global situation facing China, another expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences called for deleting the military alliance clause (*junsi dongmeng*) in China's half-century-long bilateral treaty with North Korea.³⁴⁵ In a controversial article published in 2004, a Chinese expert at the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences even went so far as to openly

³⁴¹ Interview 09-04, Beijing, November 22, 2004; Interview 11-04, Beijing, November 23, 2004; Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005; Interview 23-05, Seoul, May 12, 2005.

³⁴² Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005; Interview 38-05, Seoul, August 4, 2005.

³⁴³ Andrew Scobell, "China and North Korea: From Comrades-in-Arms to Allies at Arm's Length," The Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, March 2004, pp. 19-20.

³⁴⁴ Shi Yinhong's view was cited in Baohui Zhang, "American Hegemony and China's U.S. Policy," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 28, 3, 2004, p. 101.

³⁴⁵ Shen Jiru, "Wei hu dongbei ya anchuan-de dangwu deji—Zhizhi chao hewenti shangde weixian boyi [An Urgent Matter in order to Maintain Security in Northeast Asia—How to Stop the Dangerous Games in the North Korean Nuclear Crisis]," *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], September 14, 2003, pp. 57-58.

criticize Kim Jong Il's domestic policy and nuclear ambitions and described North Korea as a key obstacle to Sino-American ties, resulting in a temporary suspension of publication of the journal *Strategy and Management [Zhanrue yu Guanli]*.³⁴⁶ Zhang Liangui of the Central Party School said even more bluntly, "North Korea is China's biggest foreign policy failure of the past 50 years."³⁴⁷

The Chinese tendency to view the North Korean question through the prism of the US-China relationship³⁴⁸ is also found in the difference in approach toward North Korea between the International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (*Zhonglianbu*) and the Chinese Foreign Ministry. A senior Chinese arms control expert noted that while *Zhonglianbu* promotes various exchanges with its North Korean counterpart, the Foreign Ministry tends to be "more sympathetic" to the global frame pushed by the United States.³⁴⁹ After the North Korean nuclear test, for instance, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao made a rare rebuke of North Korea, saying, "the test was carried out "flagrantly" and "will undoubtedly exert a negative impact on our relations."³⁵⁰

Interestingly, however, the Chinese coverage of Liu's remark on the same day in *China Daily*, a Communist Party-controlled, state-run English newspaper, was different in tone. With the headline of "Developing friendly ties with DPRK unchanged," the report quoted Liu as saying that "China will continue to develop good-neighborly and friendly cooperation with the DPRK and this policy is unshakable."³⁵¹ This episode illustrates both the marginal status of the liability camp in China and the continuing significance of North Korea in China's regional strategy.

³⁴⁶ *Joongang Ilbo*, August 20, 2004.

³⁴⁷ Audra Ang, "Experts: China is weighing stronger measures against North Korea," *Associated Press*, October 21, 2006.

³⁴⁸ Interview 13-04, Beijing, November 24, 2004.

³⁴⁹ Interview 15-05, Beijing, April 29, 2005.

³⁵⁰ Calum MacLeod, "China supports punitive actions against North Korea," *USA Today*, October 10, 2006.

³⁵¹ "Developing friendly ties with DPRK 'unchanged,'" *China Daily*, October 10, 2006.

In fact, the majority of Chinese experts subscribe to the so-called “buffer zone” school,³⁵² which values the strategic importance of North Korea in China’s regional vision.³⁵³

For both the “liability” and the “buffer zone” camps, the first and foremost priority for China is maintaining regional stability.³⁵⁴ The main difference, however, lies in the connection between the North Korean crisis and regional instability. While the liability camp tends to emphasize the danger of North Korean provocations to regional stability, the buffer zone camp views the crisis as largely manageable and maintains that China can benefit from properly managing the crisis.³⁵⁵ What is more alarming, from the perspective of the buffer zone camp, is the U.S. approach aimed at regime change and preemption.³⁵⁶

More broadly, many Chinese maintain that North Korea can be a base on which China rebuilds a regional security structure.³⁵⁷ In fact, back in 2003 when the Six-Party mechanism was established as the first multilateral security framework including all the major powers in the region, the Chinese hoped that the framework could develop into a permanent multilateral security framework.³⁵⁸ In doing so, they hope to go beyond the Washington-centered hub-and-spokes system centered on the U.S. alliances with Japan and South Korea.³⁵⁹ For instance, in the same volume of the journal that published the article on deleting the military alliance clause, another

³⁵² Interview 38-5, Seoul, August 4, 2005.

³⁵³ For a useful summary of the liability and buffer zone camps, see You Ji, “Understanding China’s North Korea Policy,” *China Brief*, The Jamestown Foundation, Vol. IV, No. 5, March 3, 2004, pp. 1-3.

³⁵⁴ Interview 04-04, Beijing, November 10, 2004; Interview 07-04, Beijing, November 16, 2004; Interview 10-04, Beijing, November 22, 2004; Interview 07-05, Beijing, April 18, 2005.

³⁵⁵ Interview 04-04, Beijing, November 10, 2004; Interview 07-04, Beijing, November 16, 2004; Interview 10-04, Beijing, November 22, 2004; Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005.

³⁵⁶ Interview 08-05, Beijing, April 20, 2005; Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005.

³⁵⁷ Interview 13-04, Beijing, November 24, 2004.

³⁵⁸ Interview 02-04, Beijing, November 3, 2004; Interview 07-04, Beijing, November 16, 2004; Interview 11-04, Beijing, November 23, 2004; Interview 13-04, Beijing, November 24, 2004; Interview 14-05, Beijing, April 28, 2005.

³⁵⁹ Interview 05-04, Beijing, November 11, 2004; Interview 07-04, Beijing, November 16, 2004; Interview 13-04, Beijing, November 24, 2004; Interview 08-05, Beijing, April 20, 2005.

Chinese expert stressed the need to help North Korea to move out of the Cold War structure.³⁶⁰ Considering the historical and practical complexities of the North Korean problem, the author contends, it would be crucial for regional countries to build a web of multilateral security systems that includes a U.S.-North Korea channel, the four party system of U.S., China, and the two Koreas for transforming the armistice into a permanent peace mechanism, and a six party system with Japan and Russia for establishing a nuclear-free Northeast Asia.³⁶¹

As the nuclear crisis endured in the face of the standoff between North Korea and the United States, the Chinese began to question the regional role of the United States. Traditionally, the majority view in China was that China has benefited from the U.S.'s balancer role in the region, especially between China and Japan, where it has prevented the latter from becoming more militaristic.³⁶² With its uncompromising approach to North Korea, however, the United States was seen in China as using the North Korea crisis to strengthen its alliance posture (e.g., building a missile defense system with Japan and expanding the regional scope of the U.S.-Japan alliance).³⁶³ While the Chinese acknowledged the U.S. need to seek alliance support in the war on terror, they increasingly view the ongoing restructuring of U.S. military alliance, centered on Japan's expanded cooperation with the United States as a means to "guard against" and "pin down" China.³⁶⁴ With that, the debate came full circle: those who pointed out the burden of the North Korean problems have been largely sidelined, and

³⁶⁰ Xu Weidi, "Chaoxianbandu weijide huajie yu bandu zouchu lengzhan" [Resolving the Korean Peninsula Nuclear Crisis and Moving the Korean Peninsula out of the Cold War], *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics], September 14, 2003, pp. 59-64.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³⁶² Yu Bin, "Containment by Stealth: Chinese Views of and Policies toward America's Alliances with Japan and Korea after the Cold War," Asia Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, September 1999, p. 14.

³⁶³ Xinfeng Jiang, "US-Japan military alliance reflects Cold War mentality," *People's Daily*, November 5, 2005; Interview 09-04, Beijing, November 22, 2004; Interview 11-04, Beijing, November 23, 2004; Interview 07-05, Beijing, April 18, 2005.

³⁶⁴ Yu Wanli, "Washington's East Asia policy needs adjustment, Comment," *People's Daily*, November 28, 2005; Minxin Pei, "A Fresh Approach on China," *International Herald Tribune*, September 9, 2005.

a *People's Daily* column even warns against “sacrificing relations with other countries for the sake of stable Sino-U.S. ties.”³⁶⁵

3-5. Japan

The Search for Greater Regional Roles

Japan's post-World War Two security strategy has centered on two pillars: The U.S.-Japan alliance and the Peace Constitution. What is striking about this security mechanism is the asymmetric nature of alliance commitments, where Japan's commitment to its share of the collective defense is abrogated to maintain the war-renouncing constitution. As a result, there has been an inevitable discrepancy between Japan's desire for more active, greater roles in regional and global affairs and the legal constraints of Article 9 of the peace constitution, which prevents Japan from playing such roles. Moreover, Japan's status as an economic powerhouse is often “contrasted with its low visibility in global military and political affairs,” prompting a debate about its proper role in the changing global and regional context.³⁶⁶ Consequently, the central focus of the domestic security debate in Japan has been how to adjust the abnormal state of its security posture to respond to the post-Cold War strategic context.

More specifically, the debate has revolved around the goal of “establishing [Japan's] own identity” in the region and beyond and the types of roles Japan should play in the post-Cold War era.³⁶⁷ Japanese conservatives, on the one hand, have pushed for becoming “an independent state with a monopoly of force,” thereby

³⁶⁵ “China's diplomacy: pursuing balance to reach harmony,” *People's Daily*, December 27, 2005.

³⁶⁶ Gilbert Rozman, “Japanese Views of the Great Powers in the New World Order,” in David Jacobson, ed., *Old Nations, New World: Conceptions of World Order* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p. 17.

³⁶⁷ *Diplomatic Bluebook 1991: Japan's Diplomatic Activities*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 24, cited in Togo, p. 307.

restoring “lost or suppressed identity.”³⁶⁸ For Japanese moderates, on the other hand, Japan’s move toward the “normal state” is considered problematic in the region because its neighbors harbor suspicions of Japan due to its past and uncertain future roles in the region. Hence, while the conservatives tend to brush aside the regional concern about Japan’s move toward a “normal” state, many others, most notably regionalists and pacifists, have been reluctant to alter Japan’s defense posture in haste. The central task for Japan is then how to improve its regional roles and national status without provoking its neighbors. In short, the debate on Japan’s regional roles has been about navigating between becoming a “normal” state with strengthened alliance ties with the U.S. and becoming an autonomous East Asian player within an integrated regional security framework.

The first signs of Japan’s search for regional and international roles surfaced in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. In the new strategic context, Japanese elites began to reconsider the rationale for maintaining security ties with the United States.³⁶⁹ Finding a new security role in the region gained added urgency in the wake of the “checkbook diplomacy” during the First Gulf War, when the Japanese government, constrained by its constitution, was criticized for providing only financial support.³⁷⁰ In the first post-cold war challenge, Japan’s support was viewed as “too little and too late” and widely considered a “defeat for Japan,”³⁷¹ provoking “a sense of national humiliation.”³⁷²

³⁶⁸ Haruko Satoh, “The Odd Couple: Japan and China—The Politics of History and Identity,” *JIIA Commentary*, No. 4, *The Japan Institute of International Affairs*, August 4, 2006, p. 6.

³⁶⁹ Wolf Mendl, *Japan’s Asia Policy: Regional Security and Global Interests* (London, UK: Routledge, 1995), p. 47.

³⁷⁰ See, for example, Kevin J. Cooney, *Japan’s Foreign Policy Maturation: A Quest for Normalcy* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Susanne Klien, *Rethinking Japan’s Identity and International Role: An Intercultural Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 169; Interview 01-05, Tokyo, February 3, 2005; Interview 31-05, Tokyo, July 21, 2005; Interview 33-05, Tokyo, July 27, 2005.

³⁷¹ Kazuhiko Togo, *Japan’s Foreign Policy 1945-2003: The Quest for a Proactive Policy* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), p. 412.

³⁷² Klien, *Rethinking Japan’s Identity and International Role*, p. 169.

After years of searching a new strategic vision, a special advisory committee commissioned by the prime ministerial office prepared a strategic report concerning Japan's post-Cold War security blueprints. The committee released its final report in August 1994 under the title of "The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan: The Outlook for the 21st Century."³⁷³ Citing the uncertain post-Cold War security context, the report, more commonly known as the "Higuchi report," called for utilizing not only the U.S.-Japan alliance but also other mechanisms such as the United Nations and various regional frameworks for security cooperation, envisaging "a two-pronged approach on multilateral security frameworks and the U.S.-Japanese bilateral alliance at the same time."³⁷⁴ The report marked a strategic shift from a "cold war defense strategy," locating the alliance within the broader framework of a multilateral regional security structure.³⁷⁵

The efforts at diversifying Japan's security mechanism and Japan's search for a new regional role, however, appeared to be losing momentum in the mid-1990s as the U.S.-Japan alliance was bolstered with the passage of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines. In February 1995, the U.S. Department of Defense released the East Asian Strategy Report (EASR), widely known as "Nye Initiative," reaffirming the maintenance of U.S. troops in East Asia and bolstering U.S.-Japan security cooperation.³⁷⁶ In the following year, the Clinton administration and the Hashimoto government announced the revised U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines.³⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Japan's balancing act between the U.S.-Japan alliance and regional

³⁷³ Akio Watanabe, "Has Japan Crossed the Rubicon? Defense Policy since the Higuchi Report," *Japan Review of International Affairs*, 17(4), Winter 2003, pp. 238-254.

³⁷⁴ Klien, *Rethinking Japan's Identity*, p. 168; *Ibid.*, pp. 239-41.

³⁷⁵ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "Japan's Strategic Thinking toward Asia in the first half of the 1990s," in Gilbert Rozman, Kazuhiko Togo, and Joseph P. Ferguson, eds., *Japanese Strategic Thought toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) p. 72.

³⁷⁶ *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, U.S. Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., February 1995.

³⁷⁷ "Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security—Alliance for the 21st Century," appended to Mike M. Mochizuki ed., *Toward a True Alliance* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

security frameworks continued, and the Japanese increasingly believed that Japan should strive to establish a multilateral security framework in East Asia.³⁷⁸ These “regionalists” were concerned about Japan’s strategic dependence on the U.S. and hoped that regional economic integration would facilitate a regional security framework to supplement the U.S.-Japan alliance.³⁷⁹

Re-entering Asia, Normalization, and North Korea

The regional initiatives in the early years of the post-Cold War period, however, lacked an overarching strategic vision of the regional order (e.g., a continuation of alliance-centered balancing, forging a multilateral regional mechanism) and discussion of Japan’s role within the regional order.³⁸⁰ Japan was caught between the conflicting expectations of the U.S., pushing for a larger Japanese military role, and regional actors concerned about Japan’s future regional roles.³⁸¹ Its identity as an Asian nation called for an identity as an autonomous regional player, while the United States asked Japan to take a proactive role as a major partner in global security issues.³⁸² Over time, however, Japanese have increasingly called for improved ties with regional neighbors and a search for regional cooperation.³⁸³ In fact, a senior analyst at the Defense Agency-affiliated National Institute of Defense Studies observed that by early 2004 the majority view was that it was problematic for Japan to

³⁷⁸ Takahara Akio, “Japan’s Political Response to the Rise of China,” in Ryosei Kokubun and Jisi Wang, eds., *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004), p. 169.

³⁷⁹ Tsuneo Akaha, “U.S.-Japan Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Ambiguous Adjustment to a Changing Strategic Environment,” in Takashi Inoguchi ed., *Japan’s Asian Policy: Revival and Response* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 181.

³⁸⁰ Hasegawa, “Japan’s Strategic Thinking toward Asia in the first half of the 1990s,” p. 58.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

³⁸² Alex Macleod, “Japan: A Great Power Despite Itself,” Philippe G. Le Prestre, ed., *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era: Foreign Policies in Transition* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), p. 108.

³⁸³ Takeshi Igarashi and Watanabe Akio, “Beyond the Defense Guidelines,” *Japan Echo* 24(5), December 1997. [translated from “Gaidorain minaoshi wa kenpō o koeru ka,” *Ushio*, Sept 1997], p. 36.

“rely solely on the United States” and, therefore, many Japanese elites endorsed efforts toward regional cooperation with Japan’s neighbors.³⁸⁴

Government officials began to echo such views. For instance, Ichita Yamamoto, Parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister, observed in 2000 that while the alliance with the U.S. was important, it has also restricted Japan’s efforts toward multipolar diplomacy: “Now, Japan’s homework is to find ways to pursue its own diplomacy without hurting its ties with the U.S.”³⁸⁵ One Japanese expert even proposed redesigning Japan’s U.S. alliance-based foreign policy from the perspective of a “middle-power” regional actor.³⁸⁶ Sakakibara Eisuke, the influential former finance minister widely known as Mr. Yen, seemed to agree when he said that “standing on its own feet while maintaining an alliance is not incompatible.” Hence, he called for closer ties with Asia without harming U.S. alliance relationship.³⁸⁷

Japan’s persistent efforts to normalize its diplomatic relations with North Korea are part of the search for independent regional roles. For reasons of history and geographical proximity, Japan’s regional strategy has also centered on the Korean Peninsula. Yamagata Aritomo, the grand old man of the Meiji government, once famously declared, “The Korean Peninsula is a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan.”³⁸⁸ Throughout history, the peninsula represented “the gateway” to Asia, and a century after its period of ill-fated regional dominance, the Japanese are seeking “to secure a new, if different, foothold there in order to solidify a longstanding role in the

³⁸⁴ Interview 28-05, Tokyo, July 8, 2005.

³⁸⁵ Toshi Maeda, “Japan needs juggling act to secure future in Asia,” *Japan Times*, March 6, 2000.

³⁸⁶ Yoshihide Soeya, “Diplomacy should go beyond alliance with U.S.,” *Asahi Shimbun*, July 2, 2003.

³⁸⁷ “The U.S.-Japan Partnership and the Future of an Asian Regional Union,” Sakakibara Eisuke interviewed by Hara Manabu, *Asahi Shimbun*, September 6, 2004.

³⁸⁸ Koji Murata, “Japanese Domestic Politics and the U.S.-Japan-ROK Security Relations,” pp. 140-149, in Tae-Hyo Kim and Brad Glosserman, eds., *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan relations: Balancing Values and Interests* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2004), p. 140.

emergent Northeast Asian regionalism.”³⁸⁹ Given the strategic importance of the Korean Peninsula, Japan was determined not to foreclose the possibility of forging relationship with North Korea, consistently refusing to accept the South Korean demand that it recognize South Korea as the only legitimate government for the entire Peninsula.³⁹⁰

Japan’s first initiative toward North Korea came from Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita in his statement made at the Diet in 1989. In his statement, Takeshita expressed “deep remorse and apology (*ikan*) to all people in this area” for Japan’s colonial rule. Given Japan’s unspoken tradition of offering formal apologies only to South Korea, not to the North, such a move signaled that he was not only addressing both South and North Korea but was specifically interested in enhancing Japan’s relations with North Korea.³⁹¹ In 1990, then Liberal Democratic Party heavy weight Shin Kanemaru made a visit to Pyongyang, beginning a long process of pursuing normalization with North Korea.³⁹² Eight rounds of normalization talks were held between January 1991 and February 1992, only to be stalled in 1993 amid the first North Korean nuclear crisis. The normalization effort, however, was quickly resumed after the signing of the Agreed Framework, which defused the first crisis. In March 1995, a delegation led by a key LDP leader Michio Watanabe visited Pyongyang and agreed that “there wasn’t any precondition to resume the negotiations for the normalization of the relationship.”³⁹³

³⁸⁹ Tsuneo Akaha, “Japan’s Multilevel Approach toward the Korean Peninsula After the Cold War,” in Charles K. Armstrong, Gilbert Rozman, Samuel S. Kim, and Stephen Kotkin, eds., *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006), p. 184.

³⁹⁰ Brian Bridges, *Japan and Korea in the 1990s: From Antagonism to Adjustment* (Hants, England: Edward Elgar, 1993), pp. 10-11.

³⁹¹ Togo, *Japan’s Foreign Policy 1945-2003*, p. 184.

³⁹² For an overview of Japan’s efforts to normalize its ties with North Korea, see Cheol Hee Park, “ROK, US, Japan’s Policy Toward North Korea and the Prospect for the Japan-North Korea Relations,” *Policy Research Series*, Institute for Foreign Affairs and National Security, July 2003 and Hong Nack Kim, “Japanese-Korean Relations in the 1990s,” *Occasional Paper*, No. 59, Asia Program, The Woodrow Wilson Center; Interview 29-05, Tokyo, July 14, 2005.

³⁹³ Togo, *Japan’s Foreign Policy 1945-2003*, p. 186.

Japan took a more direct role as a player in Korean peninsula affairs via its vital financial backing for the KEDO framework and enhanced status in trilateral consultations.³⁹⁴ In 1998, Japan also proposed a six-party security forum consisting of the two Koreas, Japan, and China, Russia, and the United States.³⁹⁵ As one senior foreign ministry official argued, “Japan must have its own place for negotiating with North Korea” and must “engage actively in the problems of the Korean Peninsula.”³⁹⁶ Even after the 1998 Taepodong missile launch, Japanese attempts at normalization continued when Prime Minister Obuchi announced his determination to reopen diplomacy with the North in his January 1999 speech at the Japanese Diet.

In December 1999, as the Perry Process reduced tensions, former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama led a sixteen-member multi-party Diet delegation to Pyongyang to lay the groundwork for the ninth through 11th rounds of normalization talks in 2000.³⁹⁷ Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori also showed a similar determination. While stressing the importance of the U.S. ties, he said it is “vital that we make even further diplomatic efforts toward the realization of peace in Asia, centered particularly in Northeast Asia.”³⁹⁸ He linked his plea for pursuing a “rebirth of foreign policy” to the situation on the Korean Peninsula: given “the historical North-South Summit, I will channel all my efforts into achieving the advent of a new era in Northeast Asia. I will continue to make the maximum endeavor towards the resolution of pending issues, including the normalization of relations with North Korea.”³⁹⁹

³⁹⁴ Christopher Hughes, “Japan’s “Strategy-less” North Korea Strategy: Shifting Policies of Dialogue and Deterrence and Implications for Japan-U.S.-South Korea Security Cooperation,” *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XII, No. 2, Winter 2000, pp. 167-68.

³⁹⁵ C.S. Eliot Kang, “Japan in Inter-Korean Relations,” in Samuel S. Kim, ed. *Inter-Korean Relations: Problems and Prospects* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p. 102.

³⁹⁶ Michael J. Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 122-23.

³⁹⁷ Togo, *Japan’s Foreign Policy 1945-2003*, p.188; Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism*, p. 129.

³⁹⁸ Prime Minister Yoshihiro Mori’s speech, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 7, 2000.

³⁹⁹ Prime Minister Yoshihiro Mori’s speech, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 28, 2000.

Despite repeated interruptions in the face of various regional contingencies in the 1990s, the fact that successive Japanese governments have persistently sought diplomatic normalization with North Korea is a testimony to Japan's eagerness to alter that troubled relationship. A former Japanese diplomat even locates Japan-North Korea relations in the historical context of the Japanese colonization of the Korean Peninsula. To fully "overcome this past,"⁴⁰⁰ he argues, normalization and diplomatic relationships with the North must be established.⁴⁰¹ Not only is North Korea the last chapter of Japan's postwar settlement since World War II,⁴⁰² it has the potential to serve as a useful channel to enhance Japan's regional status amid regional controversy over the history issue.⁴⁰³

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's drive to normalize Japan's diplomatic ties with North Korea was one effort to improve Japan's regional status.⁴⁰⁴ A senior analyst at the National Institute of Defense Studies notes that Koizumi's 2002 visit to Pyongyang and his second visit in May 2004 came from the assumption that Japan should play a greater role in the region.⁴⁰⁵ In addition to the issue of resolving the history issue once and for all, Koizumi maintained that the normalization would strengthen Japan's geopolitical status and give it "greater diplomatic leverage" in the region.⁴⁰⁶ While dealing with the issue of abducted Japanese, Koizumi "sought to establish Japan as a major actor in the jockeying over North Korea's evolution."⁴⁰⁷ An

⁴⁰⁰ While there exist various disputes over the scope and validity of Japan's reparation made largely through economic assistance to the military government in South Korea, the Japanese government addressed this issue of the past with the South Korean government in 1965 when the two countries normalized their diplomatic relations.

⁴⁰¹ Togo, *Japan's Foreign Policy 1945-2003*, p. 424.

⁴⁰² Interview 27-05, Tokyo, June 27, 2005; Masao Okonogi, "Dealing with the Threat of a Korean Crisis," *Japan Review of International Affairs*, 17(2), Summer 2003, p. 74.

⁴⁰³ Interview 02-05, Tokyo, February 10, 2005; "Editorial: One Year after the Pyongyang Summit," *Japan Times*, September 18, 2003.

⁴⁰⁴ Interview 05-05, Tokyo, March 23, 2005; Interview 28-05, Tokyo, July 8, 2005; Interview 29-05, Tokyo, July 14, 2005; Interview 33-05, Tokyo, July 27, 2005.

⁴⁰⁵ Interview 28-05, Tokyo, July 8, 2005.

⁴⁰⁶ Togo, *Japan's Foreign Policy 1945-2003*, pp. 424, 189.

⁴⁰⁷ Gilbert Rozman, "The Geopolitics of the Korean Nuclear Crisis," *Strategic Asia 2003-04*, p. 256.

expert at the Japan Institute of International Affairs believes that Koizumi's normalization drive came even at the risk of cooperation with the United States.⁴⁰⁸

Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang in 2002 was particularly remarkable given the fact that Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials had been "quietly exploring [the possibility of a visit] for more than nine months without telling the United States." Even after U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage revealed Washington's suspicions about a secret North Korean uranium program, Koizumi did not cancel the trip.⁴⁰⁹ More striking, in the 2002 visit was that a key role was played by a foreign ministry official--Tanaka Hitoshi, Director General of the Asian and Oceanian Bureau--rather than by influential political figures.⁴¹⁰ As the public mood turned negative on North Korea due, in large part, to the 1997 revelation of the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korean agents and the 1998 Taepo-dong launch, secrecy was a key to success in realizing a summit in Pyongyang. Tanaka limited updates on the preparations to a handful of government figures, including Koizumi and Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda Yasuo, and bypassed the usual chain of command, including then Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, who was known for his hawkish attitude toward North Korea.⁴¹¹ Coming on the heels of the 2000 summit between the two Koreas, the Koizumi trip furthered "a regional momentum toward engagement that was very difficult for even hawks in the Bush administration to oppose for the time being."⁴¹² Even as the second North Korean nuclear crisis broke out, Koizumi's normalization drive did not falter.

⁴⁰⁸ Interview 02-05, Tokyo, February 10, 2005.

⁴⁰⁹ Selig S. Harrison, "Did North Korea Cheat?" *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2005.

⁴¹⁰ Park, "ROK, US, Japan's Policy Toward North Korea," p. 14 and Shinju Fujihara, "From Shenyang to Pyongyang: Japan's Diplomatic Trials in Northeast Asia," *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, Vol. VI, No. 4, p. 31.

⁴¹¹ Fujihara, *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴¹² Victor Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations: Mr. Koizumi Goes to Pyongyang," *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 4, No. 3, October 2002, Pacific Forum, Center for Strategic and International Studies, pp. 103-112.

Overall, Japan's role in the Second Crisis was a far cry from the part in played during the first North Korean crisis. Moving away from passivity, Japan took a more proactive approach in the wake of the second crisis.⁴¹³ This shift in Japan's role is rooted in the view that through its participation in the Six Party processes "Japan might be able to strengthen her relations with each of the member countries," paving the way for Japan's "new strategic position in the region for many years to come."⁴¹⁴ Observing that the outcome of the Korean situation has "the potential to reshape the regional order," Kenneth Pyle predicted that Japan's role in the process may be decisive in "an enduring settlement on the peninsula and achieving a stable new order in Northeast Asia."⁴¹⁵ Keizo Nabeshima also calls for the remedying the "abnormal" relations with North Korea with "a sense of mission, a determination to build a new order in Asia and a political capacity to conduct diplomacy under a long-term strategy."⁴¹⁶ Through its approach toward North Korea, the Japanese government aimed at "establishing Japan's regional policy, particularly centered on the Korean Peninsula."⁴¹⁷

The Japanese public in turn assessed Koizumi's efforts and the two summits with Kim Jong Il positively. In the immediate aftermath of Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang in 2002, despite Kim Jong Il's unexpected admission of the abductions of Japanese by North Korean agents during the 1970s, the Japanese public in general responded positively to Koizumi's visit. Koizumi's job rating saw a dramatic increase from 45.7 percent in August to 66.1 percent in September 2002,⁴¹⁸ attesting to

⁴¹³ Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Problem: A Regional Approach and the Role of Japan," *JIIA Policy Report*, Project for Northeast Asian Security, The Japan Institute of International Affairs, July 2005, p. vi.

⁴¹⁴ Togo, *Japan's Foreign Policy 1945-2003*, p. 418.

⁴¹⁵ Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), pp. 341, 344.

⁴¹⁶ Keizo Nabeshima, "A return to Northern basics," *Japan Times*, January 24, 2005.

⁴¹⁷ Interview 29-05, Tokyo, July 14, 2005.

⁴¹⁸ Murata, "Japanese Domestic Politics and the U.S.-Japan-ROK Security Relations," p. 147.

Japanese support for normalization with the North. The visit also represented “a different direction for Japanese foreign policy than that preferred by the Bush administration.”⁴¹⁹

Most Japanese experts have praised the normalization effort as a regional roadmap in the right direction.⁴²⁰ Masao Okonogi, a noted Korea specialist in Japan, portrayed Koizumi’s trip to Pyongyang as a bold step that “skillfully blended two stances, one of cooperating with Washington and the other of acting independently of it.”⁴²¹ Makoto Taniguchi, a former Japanese ambassador and high-ranking foreign ministry official, agreed when he evaluated the summit as “the first positive, independent and multilateral diplomatic initiative to be taken in recent years.” He further predicted that in the long run, Japan’s initiative would result in “security benefits, not only to North-East Asia but to the world as a whole.”⁴²² The general tenor of Japanese views at the time was that Koizumi’s 2002 visit was a path breaking regional initiative, with the potential for “revolutionizing East Asian security dynamics,”⁴²³ comparable in significance to Nixon’s visit to China in 1972.⁴²⁴ Koizumi himself reiterated the importance of the normalization “for both countries, for the Korean Peninsula, for Asia and the world.”⁴²⁵

What is particularly significant is the link, made explicitly by some Japanese experts, between Japan’s normalization with the North and the formation of a regional security framework. In fact, in the Pyongyang Declaration signed between Koizumi

⁴¹⁹ Gilbert Rozman, “Japan’s North Korea Initiative and U.S.-Japanese Relations,” *Orbis*, Summer 2003, p. 537.

⁴²⁰ Interview 26-05, Tokyo, June 27, 2005.

⁴²¹ Masao Okonogi, “Dealing with the Threat of a Korean Crisis,” *Japan Review of International Affairs*, 17(2), Summer 2003, p. 75.

⁴²² Makoto Taniguchi, “Without an Independent and Multilateral Foreign Policy, There is No Future for Japan: Some Proposals for Japan’s Foreign Policy,” [Translated from the July 2002 issue of *Sekai* by Liao Fangfang].

⁴²³ Interview 34-05, Tokyo, July 27, 2005.

⁴²⁴ Rozman, “Japan’s North Korea Initiative and U.S.-Japanese Relations,” p. 536.

⁴²⁵ “Normalizing Pyongyang ties good for all but hurdles remain: Koizumi,” *Japan Times*, September 18, 2004.

and Kim Jong Il, the term “Northeast Asia” appeared for the first time since 1945 in a Japanese diplomatic document.⁴²⁶ This development was the embodiment of a recommendation by several Japanese experts to “take concrete steps to apply normalization principles to a broader, more multilateral framework”⁴²⁷ and to “create a ‘community of nations’ in the region,” on the basis of reconciliation between Japan and North Korea.⁴²⁸ In this vein, one prominent Japanese expert referred to the Japan-North Korean summit and the Pyongyang Declaration as “the first occasion for Japan to raise the banner of a new regionalism since the tragic years of the Great East Asian Co-prosperity during World War II.”⁴²⁹ Japanese regional neighbors in turn welcomed the Japanese government’s effort to find a turning point on North Korea.⁴³⁰ Regionalists soon formed the National Movement for Normalization of Japan-DPRK Relations (*Nitcho Kokko Sokushin Kokumin Kyokai*) headed by former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, with the following declaration:

Normalization of Japan-DPRK relations and economic assistance to the DPRK from Japan, linked with North-South cooperation in the Korean Peninsula, should build the basis for peace in Northeast Asia, and is in the interest of all the countries and people of our region.⁴³¹

⁴²⁶ Gavan McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 117.

⁴²⁷ Yoshihide Soeya, “Japanese Diplomacy and the North Korean Problem,” *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Spring 2003, 17(1), p. 61.

⁴²⁸ Ko Odagawa, “Japan-North Korea reconciliation needed for East Asian stability,” *Japan Quarterly*, Oct/Dec 2000, p. 15.

⁴²⁹ Wada Haruki, <http://www5d.biglobe.ne.jp/~tosikenn/kyokai1.html>, cited in Ryoji Nakagawa, “The Revival of “Northeast Asia” in Japan,” *Ritsumeikan International Affairs*, Vol. 3 (2005), p. 89.

⁴³⁰ Interview 07-05, Beijing, April 18, 2005; Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005.

⁴³¹ The National Movement for Normalization of Japan-DPRK Relations (*Nitcho Kokko Sokushin Kokumin Kyokai*), <http://www5d.biglobe.ne.jp/~tosikenn/kyokai1.html>, cited in Nakagawa, “The Revival of “Northeast Asia” in Japan,” p. 95.

The North Korean Threat and the Rise of Conservatives

As the crisis reached a stalemate, Koizumi's diplomatic initiative toward North Korea was increasingly hamstrung by growing anti-North Korea sentiments caused by Pyongyang's admission of its abduction of Japanese citizens.⁴³² After the normalization drive stalled in the face of anti-North Korean sentiments, "a new generation of revisionists" rose to power by "[utilizing] the changing regional dynamics."⁴³³ Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe led the conservative group. Since 2003, Abe has successfully capitalized on the abduction issue, first to secure an LDP victory in the parliamentary election in November 2003, and "in the process became a formidable political actor on the national stage."⁴³⁴ As conservative forces dominated the domestic political scene, North Korea engagers were increasingly marginalized.⁴³⁵

Against this backdrop, the North Korean threat has given the Japanese conservatives a focus on which to build.⁴³⁶ What followed was a surge of North Korea bashing throughout Japan and increasingly anti-North Korean media coverage in Japan.⁴³⁷ A senior Japanese defense analyst in a government-affiliated defense think tank even went so far as to say that North Korea single-handedly made Japan more realistic about national security.⁴³⁸ Japan's Self Defense Forces now structure their planning against the North Korean threat.⁴³⁹ A senior Japanese expert and policy advisor for the government also pointed out that without North Korean provocations it

⁴³² Hughes, *Adelphi Paper*, p. 44.

⁴³³ Richard Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 74.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁴³⁵ Interview 31-05, Tokyo, July 21, 2005.

⁴³⁶ Interview 27-05, Tokyo, June 27, 2005; Interview 31-05, Tokyo, July 21, 2005; Interview 34-05, Tokyo, July 27, 2005.

⁴³⁷ The Japanese media frenzy about the abduction issue is such that a noted Japanese scholar was banned from appearing on TV for more than a year after he had emphasized the security aspect of the North Korean issue over the abduction issue on a national TV debate. Interview 28-05, Tokyo, July 8, 2005.

⁴³⁸ Interview 28-05, Tokyo, July 8, 2005.

⁴³⁹ Interview 26-05, Tokyo, June 27, 2005.

would have been difficult for Japanese politicians to talk publicly about the Taiwan issue and the rise of China. According to him, discussions of all of these things became possible all because of North Korea.⁴⁴⁰

More broadly, the North Korean threat serves as “a convenient excuse to justify the abandonment of the Peace Constitution” and Japan’s move toward becoming a “normal” state.⁴⁴¹ Interestingly, the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea, the main organization addressing the abduction issue, expanded its role within Japanese society. As the abduction issue continues to occupy Japanese domestic debate, many of the association’s regional leaders have become active members of Nippon Kaigi, “Japan’s largest nationalist organization, which rejects postwar pacifism, embraces the imperial system and defends Japan’s past wars in Asia.”⁴⁴² Moreover, the abduction scandal gave the conservatives “a new opportunity to highlight how Japan has been ill-prepared” in security and to persuade the public about “the need for change.”⁴⁴³ One Japanese expert has linked the conservative efforts at North Korea bashing to a right-wing campaign to beef up Japan’s defense posture.⁴⁴⁴

Under this changing domestic political context, Shinzo Abe, having assumed the premiership, made a strong push for constitutional revision. In May 2007, the 60th anniversary of the Peace Constitution, Abe’s comments were markedly different from the 1997 statement by then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. While Hashimoto promised Japan would make “contributions to the peace and prosperity of the international community under the philosophy of the Constitution,” Abe proposed that “[a] bold review of Japan’s postwar regime and an in-depth discussion of the

⁴⁴⁰ Interview 26-05, Tokyo, June 27, 2005.

⁴⁴¹ Glynn Ford and So Young Kwon, “Pyongyang under EU’s wing,” *Japan Times*, March 17, 2005.

⁴⁴² Norimitsu Onishi, “Japan Rightists Fan Fury Over North Korea Abductions,” *New York Times*, December 17, 2006.

⁴⁴³ Interview 34-05, Tokyo, July 27, 2005.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview 31-05, Tokyo, July 21, 2005.

Constitution toward realizing a ‘new Japan’ would create a spirit for laying a new path to a new era.”⁴⁴⁵ Similarly, the long-time conservative goal of upgrading the Japan Defense Agency to a full-fledged defense department was finalized realized in January 2007.

Lost in the domestic whirlwind of North Korea bashing was Japan’s search for an independent regional role. In fact, the strategic focus has been shifted to the U.S.-Japan alliance. For instance, the 2005 *East Asian Strategic Review*, issued by Defense Agency’s National Institute for Defense Studies, characterizes Japan’s regional role as “the pivot of the United States’ alliances” so that the United States will be able to “deploy its forces in a “more agile and more flexible” manner.”⁴⁴⁶ After the 2006 North Korean nuclear test, the Abe government, bypassing a regional route, coordinated directly with the United States and other UN Security Council members to pass UNSC Resolution 1718, levying new sanctions on North Korea.⁴⁴⁷

Although the conservative dominance continued until the downfall of Abe in September 2007 amid a series of domestic political scandals, Japanese experts began to suggest that Japan’s preoccupation with the abduction issue was “counterproductive, arguing the Japanese public and government are allowing it to interfere with its broader diplomatic goals with respect to North Korea.”⁴⁴⁸ While the conservatives generally welcomed the move toward a global pact primarily because it would speed up the move toward a “normal” state, others expressed their concern by warning that Japan, under the new plan, “will be further integrated into the U.S. global strategy.”⁴⁴⁹ In fact, there have recently been signs of change in both Japanese politics

⁴⁴⁵ “Japan must change Constitution to change nation: Abe,” *Japan Times*, May 3, 2007.

⁴⁴⁶ *The New National Defense Program Guidelines: East Asian Strategic Review 2005* (Tokyo, Japan: The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2005), p. 36.

⁴⁴⁷ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, p. 172.

⁴⁴⁸ Reiji Yoshida, “North looks to divide Tokyo and Seoul over abduction issue,” *Japan Times*, July 1, 2006.

⁴⁴⁹ “Editorial: Committing to U.S. strategy,” *Japan Times*, May 5, 2006.

and the domestic security debate. For instance, Ichiro Ozawa, the head of the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), renewed emphasis on engaging Asia. In explaining his diplomatic vision, Ozawa even stresses the role of Japan as “the bridge between China and the United States.”⁴⁵⁰ Following in Koizumi’s footsteps regarding North Korea, the current Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda has also decided to “seek a resolution to the North’s nuclear programs, missile threats and the abductions in a ‘comprehensive’ manner.”⁴⁵¹ As positive developments emerged in the Six Party process, in June 2008 Japan resumed its negotiation with North Korea.⁴⁵²

3-6. Conclusion

What the preceding analysis reveals is the extent to which countries in East Asia view the North Korean challenge in a much broader sense than the nuclear issue. Far from eliciting a converging debate as to how to grapple with the nuclear challenge, the North Korean crisis has sparked a divergent and highly contested set of domestic debates concerning the North Korean challenge. The central focus of the domestic contestation over the North Korean question has been not its nuclear problem per se but the complex interaction between the externally-shaped and internally-shaped regional roles, which in turn influences each country’s respective responses to the U.S. approach toward North Korea.

In each of the country cases, the main focus of regional actors was anchored to North Korea, while they cautiously navigated between their respective relations with the United States and North Korea. Despite U.S. influence and pressure, countries in East Asia have consistently been seeking to alter the traditional relationship with

⁴⁵⁰ “Editorial: Ozawa’s visit to China,” *Asahi Shimbun*, July 6, 2006; “Editorial: Mr. Ozawa makes the right moves,” *Japan Times*, July 13, 2006.

⁴⁵¹ Kaho Shimizu, “Lee gives Japan hope for united front against North,” *Japan Times*, February 8, 2008.

⁴⁵² Blaine Harden, “N. Korea Agrees to Reexamine Abductions,” *Washington Post*, June 14, 2008.

North Korea with an eye toward greater regional status, which would help them go beyond the confines of dual national identity and strategic dependency. Throughout the process, the regional countries pursued a new regional vision that would supplement, if not supplant, the U.S.-centered regional order of the hub-and-spokes system.

To be sure, the emerging regional security order is far from clear, especially given the context of the still unfolding crisis and the Six Party process. However, by focusing only on the nuclear issues and, thus, neglecting the regional dynamics surrounding North Korea, the United States risks both overlooking a gradual shift in the regional security landscape and losing its traditional influence as a regional stabilizer in East Asia. In the following chapters, I investigate the broader implications for the regional order of the competing regional role conceptions surrounding North Korea. I do so by comparing alliance politics and regionalism during the 1998 Missile Crisis during the Clinton administration and the ongoing second North Korean nuclear crisis.

CHAPTER FOUR:

The Perry Process and the East Asian Security Order, 1998-2000

The beauty of the Perry process was that we formulated with South Korea and Japan a common strategy with an agreed set of goals, and then an allocation of responsibilities as to how we could achieve those goals through our individual dialogues or negotiating processes with North Korea. And that indeed is what we need now.

—Stephen Bosworth, former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea.⁴⁵³

4-1. Introduction

On August 31, 1998 North Korea reignited a full-blown regional crisis by test-launching an intermediate-level ballistic missile, which flew over Japanese territory and landed in the Pacific Ocean. The missile crisis set in motion a year-long process of comprehensive policy review and consultation, dubbed the Perry Process because it was led by former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry. In this chapter, I argue that compatibility between U.S.-directed and internally-shaped regional role conceptions was crucial to the success of the Perry Process. Unlike the first North Korean crisis, the 1998 missile crisis coincided with region-wide efforts to seek new regional roles through redefined ties with North Korea. Unlike the Bush administration's understanding and policy behavior vis-à-vis North Korea, the Clinton administration approached the North Korean question in a way that both reflected and reinforced such regional initiatives in East Asia. As a result, the Perry Process yielded a new, positive pattern of alliance coordination between the U.S. and its Asian allies, Japan and South

⁴⁵³ Interview: Stephen Bosworth, *Frontline*, The Public Broadcasting System, February 23, 2003, available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kim/interviews/bosworth.html>.

Korea, while helping facilitate a new regional pattern of cooperation and consultation among China, Japan, and South Korea.⁴⁵⁴

A mutually reinforcing mechanism between the Clinton administration's approach toward North Korea and the regional initiatives vis-à-vis North Korea reshaped the structure of the regional order into trilateral alliance cooperation and broadened regionalism. This regional order was also cooperative in nature, opening new avenues for regional rivals to work together. From a U.S. perspective, the Perry Process was also emblematic of positive multilateral initiatives that engage countries in East Asia to deal with "regional security affairs without undermining the hegemonic strategy."⁴⁵⁵ The Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) among the United States, Japan, and South Korea was a prime example of successful alliance cooperation. Cooperation among East Asian countries via a variety of multilateral regional venues also multiplied in scope and number. Regional frameworks such as the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) meetings demonstrated the viability of a broader, more open regional security mechanism, paving the way for the trilateral cooperation among China, Japan, and South Korea and the formation of a new regional forum called the East Asia Summit.

This chapter proceeds in the following manner. The first section provides the background and key features of the Perry Process. I pay particular attention to how external and internal regional role conceptions in East Asia became effectively congruent in this period. The following two sections, in turn, assess the impact of the Perry Process on the regional order by exploring alliance politics and regionalism in East Asia. I demonstrate patterns of alliance coordination by examining the workings

⁴⁵⁴ Arnold Kanter, "North Korea a problem to be managed, rather than solved," *Asia Times*, January 12, 2000.

⁴⁵⁵ Michael Mastanduno, "Incomplete Hegemony: The United States and Security Order in Asia," in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 151.

of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG). I then explore developments in regionalism by discussing several regional security frameworks and a region-wide search for a multi-layered regional order. The final section concludes with a summary of findings and a brief discussion of policy lessons.

4-2. Regional Role Conceptions and the Emergence of the Perry Process

The signing of the Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea in Geneva, Switzerland in October 1994 formally ended the first North Korean nuclear crisis. In its aftermath, various multilateral venues emerged to address the North Korean question. These included the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), a mechanism for the implementation of the Agreed Framework and the Four Party Talks to establish a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. Through the workings of these new multilateral frameworks, regional actors, who had remained largely passive bystanders during the first North Korean nuclear crisis, began to express willingness to play greater roles in regional security aspects.

In South Korea, the Kim Young Sam government was determined to play “a legitimate and equal role in any further discussions on the Korean questions and to find a way to resume direct official contact with North Korea.”⁴⁵⁶ In 1996, the South Korean government, in consultation with the Clinton administration, proposed a four party regional forum among the United States, the two Koreas, and China with a goal of turning the Korean Armistice into a permanent peace treaty consisting of all the signatories of the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War. Fresh from its own crisis

⁴⁵⁶ Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace: U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 2006), p. 188.

situation in the Taiwan Strait in 1995-1996,⁴⁵⁷ the Chinese, for their part, were eager to play a greater regional role by joining the four party talks.

In December 1997, after holding three preparatory meetings, the four countries held the first formal session of the Four Party Talks in Geneva. However, the talks were not smooth sailing, and North Korea repeated its usual demand for the United States to change its military posture in the region. Although the talks yielded several rounds of formal meetings⁴⁵⁸ and agreements on working groups to discuss specific issues, no tangible results ensued.⁴⁵⁹ Moreover, South Korean President Kim Young-sam was more concerned with taking a leading role in Korean Peninsula issues than with reaching out to North Korea with a broader regional role in mind.

As the Kim Dae-jung government assumed power in South Korea in 1998, the momentum slowly changed. The “sunshine” policy of engagement and reconciliation toward North Korea began in earnest a process of widening inter-Korean ties. Kim did so by linking inter-Korean relations to a broader regional framework and seeking a greater regional role for South Korea in that context. This is why President Kim showed a particular interest in expanding the Four Party talks into a larger regional framework. The Kim government’s proposal for a “Two Plus Four formula and the establishment of a Northeast Asian security cooperation regime” were designed

⁴⁵⁷ Warning against Taiwan’s growing independence movement led by then President Lee Deng-hui, the People’s Republic of China fired a series of missiles to the close vicinity of Taiwan, sparking the so-called Taiwan Strait Crisis. The Clinton administration dispatched two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait. On the Taiwan Strait Crisis, see James R. Lilley and Chuck Downs eds., *Crisis in the Taiwan Strait* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996); Robert Ross, “The 1996 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility and Use of Force,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall 2000), pp. 87-123; Denny Roy, “Tensions in the Taiwan Strait,” *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 76-96.

⁴⁵⁸ The sixth and final session of the Four Party Talks was held in Geneva, Switzerland in August 1999.

⁴⁵⁹ Tae-Hwan Kwak, “Inter-Korean Relations and Northeast Asian Security,” Christopher M. Dent and David W.F. Huang, eds., *Northeast Asian Regionalism: Learning from the European Experience* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), pp. 206-225.

specifically to shape the regional security environment in a way that would facilitate inter-Korean relations.⁴⁶⁰

More importantly, unlike his predecessors, President Kim did not insist on the traditional South Korean position of putting inter-Korean ties ahead of US-North Korean relations. Instead, he urged both the United States and Japan to speed up the process of normalization with North Korea.⁴⁶¹ In this sense, President Kim's sunshine policy marked "a radical departure from previous policies toward North Korea," demonstrating that South Korea's foreign policy can be "proactive and assertive rather than reactive and defensive."⁴⁶²

Such South Korean efforts could not have been more timely, as both the United States and other regional countries expressed growing interest in new regional frameworks. From the vantage point of U.S. policy makers, such regional frameworks could serve to reduce Chinese uncertainty about the future role of the U.S.-Japan alliance.⁴⁶³ The Chinese, for their part, began to assess multilateral regional frameworks positively and utilize such regional venues in part in hopes of dampening fears of the "China threat," which was voiced around the region and beyond after that nation's remarkable economic growth and military modernization.⁴⁶⁴

China's interest in regional security frameworks stems from its desire to play a greater regional role. Breaking away from its previous passivity in regional diplomacy, China began to take a more active role in a broad array of regional affairs. Determined to play a new regional role as "a more responsible and cooperative player," the

⁴⁶⁰ Chung-in Moon, "Understanding the DJ Doctrine: The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Peninsula," in Chung-in Moon and David I. Steinberg, eds, *Kim Dae-jung Government and Sunshine Policy: Promises and Challenges* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999), p. 41.

⁴⁶¹ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 194.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴⁶³ Kurt M. Campbell, "Energizing the U.S.-Japan Security Partnership," *The Washington Quarterly*, 23(4) Autumn 2000, p. 130.

⁴⁶⁴ Oknim Chung, "Solving the Security Puzzle in Northeast Asia: A Multilateral Security Regime," *Korea and World Affairs*, Fall 2000, p. 402.

Chinese embraced various multilateral venues in a more systematic manner, including those designed to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue.⁴⁶⁵ China's active participation in the Four Party Talks in the late 1990s was a key example of such efforts.

As in the Chinese case, Japan's pursuit of a greater regional role in multilateral frameworks began with an instrumental reason in mind: In this case, the purpose was to mollify regional concerns rooted in Japan's role as a colonizer and invader in the early 20th century. In fact, due to regional suspicions of Japan's renewed militarism, some scholars have proposed the U.S.-Britain or U.S.-German model as future scenarios for the U.S.-Japan alliance. According to John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, Germany is a model for playing an active regional role, while simultaneously being bound to various regional multilateral frameworks, "thereby providing stabilizing reassurances to neighboring countries."⁴⁶⁶ Another regional expert maintains that rather than relying solely on the United States, Japan should consider the roles of Britain and Germany in Europe, the former as a model for effectively balancing strategic ties with the United States and its regional role in Europe and the latter as a model for redeeming its past with its neighbors.⁴⁶⁷ In this vein, one Japanese expert pointed to the Japanese contribution to the KEDO and its participation in regional institutions including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as examples of Japan playing a role as a "global civilian power" as an evolution of its constructive regional roles.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁵ Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 118.

⁴⁶⁶ G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, "Introduction," in G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi eds. *Reinventing the Alliance: U.S.-Japan Security Partnership in an Era of Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 3.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview 05-05, Tokyo, March 23, 2005.

⁴⁶⁸ Akiko Fukushima, *Japanese Foreign Policy: The Emerging Logic of Multilateralism* (London: MacMillan, 1999), p. 178.

However, the main driver behind Japan's interest in regional frameworks was a desire to expand its regional role by normalizing ties with North Korea and gaining diplomatic leverage on the Korean Peninsula. Despite a widely-accepted scholarly view of Japan as a "reactive" state,⁴⁶⁹ Japanese search for greater regional roles took great strides in the late 1990s. Instead of remaining a passive participant in alliance-based regional venues, the Japanese became more proactive and assertive in their regional initiatives. In addition to alliance-based institutions, such as the KEDO, the TCOG and the Japan-U.S. security treaty, Japan promoted the idea of a Six-Party forum, involving the United States, China, and Japan and Russia, on the assumption "that resolving the North Korean problem must be approached in a broader framework."⁴⁷⁰ In August 1997, the Japanese government resumed meeting with the North Koreans to prepare for the long-mothballed negotiations over diplomatic normalization.⁴⁷¹ Later in November 1997, a Japanese Diet delegation, representing the ruling coalition parties, Liberal Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party, and Sakigake, and headed by a high-ranking LDP official and future Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, visited Pyongyang. In December the same year, then Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi expressed his enthusiasm toward the regional initiative by declaring that "negotiations for diplomatic normalization will be reopened as soon as possible."⁴⁷²

Against this backdrop of a region-wide yearning for greater regional roles and East Asian countries' efforts to redefine their relations with North Korea, in mid-1998

⁴⁶⁹ Kent E. Calder, "Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation: Examining the Reactive State," *World Politics* 40(4), July 1988, pp. 517-41; Edward J. Lincoln, *Japan's New Global Role* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1993). For an alternative view, see Susan Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy and the Politics of Burden Sharing," in Gerald L. Curtis, ed. *Japan's Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Coping with Change* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993).

⁴⁷⁰ Takashi Inoguchi, "Adjusting America's Two Alliances in East Asia: A Japanese View," Working Paper, Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, July 1999, p. 13.

⁴⁷¹ The negotiation for diplomatic normalization began in the early 1990s but the talks were stalled amid the mounting tension on the Korean Peninsula during the first North Korean nuclear crisis. The resumption of the negotiation took place in Beijing in August 1997.

⁴⁷² Masao Okonogi, "Japan's North Korea Policy: The Long Swing between Dialogue and Deterrence," Paper presented at the conference North Korea Policy After The Perry Report: A Trilateral (Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States) Workshop, March 3-4, 2000, p. 2.

the situation surrounding the Korean Peninsula was moving toward a new crisis provoked by North Korea's launch of Taepo-dong missile. As the crisis forced the Clinton administration to make adjustments in its policy toward North Korea, East Asian countries' pursuit of greater regional roles seemed in danger of being put on hold. However, rather than forcing its own view of the situation and policy stance, however, the Clinton administration from the start sought to coordinate closely with its regional counterparts in dealing with the mounting crisis. The Clinton administration's close consultation with regional countries not only ensured that the U.S. approach was in accord with that of East Asian countries but also allowed the regional countries to continue with their respective initiatives toward North Korea. The positive developments in turn helped improve the regional order, both in alliance mechanism and regionalism.

The North Korean Missile Crisis and the Perry Process

In the second term of the Clinton administration, the Republican-dominated U.S. Congress voiced increasing concerns about North Korea and the validity of the Geneva Accord that resolved the first North Korean nuclear crisis. As the implementation of the Agreed Framework did not proceed as scheduled, the North Koreans also began to question U.S. intentions and decided to ratchet up pressure on the United States to lift all the sanctions levied against them.⁴⁷³ Against this backdrop, in July 1998, a congressionally mandated commission headed by Donald Rumsfeld issued a bipartisan report warning of growing missile threats from rogue states, including North Korea.⁴⁷⁴ A month later in August 1998, a front-page New York

⁴⁷³ Paik Haksoon, "Bukmigwangye gaesun-gwa dongbuka pyonghwa: Perry bogoseo goosangul jungsimuiro [The Improvement in U.S.-North Korean relations and Peace in Northeast Asia: With Special Reference to the Vision in the Perry Report], Baik Jongchun and Jin Changsoo, ed., *Promoting Peace in Northeast Asia and North Korea in the 21st Century*, (Seoul: Sejong Institute, 2000), p. 62.

⁴⁷⁴ Executive Summary of the Report of the Commissions to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, July 15, 1998, available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/bm-threat.htm>.

Times article also ran a story about a suspected secret underground nuclear facility near Kumchangri, North Korea.⁴⁷⁵ Amid increasing U.S. suspicions about North Korea's intentions, North Korea heightened the tension level further by test-launching the Taeopo-dong missile on August 31, 1998.

The combination of North Korea's long-range ballistic missiles and its potential to produce nuclear bombs immediately conjured up an image of impending danger from the Korean Peninsula.⁴⁷⁶ It is under these circumstances that the U.S. Congress called for a comprehensive review of U.S. policy toward North Korea.⁴⁷⁷ In October 1998, the U.S. Congress issued "a new provision in the "Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Act" (Public Law 105-277), " which mandated that "not later than January 1, 1999, the President shall name a North Korea Policy Coordinator, who shall conduct a full and complete interagency review of US policy toward North Korea, shall provide policy direction for negotiations with North Korea related to nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and other security related issues, and shall also provide leadership for US participation in KEDO."⁴⁷⁸

In response, the Clinton administration appointed former defense secretary William Perry as North Korea Policy Coordinator. In October 1998, the United States and North Korea started negotiations, formally setting in motion a yearlong process. After a series of meetings,⁴⁷⁹ North Korea, in May 1999, agreed to allow an on-site inspection of the suspected nuclear site by the United States. Upon confirming that the suspected site was not nuclear-related, the Clinton administration continued

⁴⁷⁵ David E. Sanger, "North Korea Site An A-Bomb Plant, US Agencies Say," *New York Times*, August 17, 1998, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁶ Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary* (New York: Miramax Books, 2003), p. 458.

⁴⁷⁷ Chung-in Moon and Juchan Kim, "The Perry Report and the Future of the Comprehensive Approach: A South Korean Perspective, in Chung-in Moon, Masao Okonogi, and Mitchell Reiss, eds., *The Perry Report, the Missile Quagmire, and the North Korean Question: The Quest of New Alternatives* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2000), p. 117.

⁴⁷⁸ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 195.

⁴⁷⁹ While participating in the Four Party Talks in January and April 1999, the United States and North Korea held separate bilateral meetings in January and March 1999.

negotiations over North Korea's missile issue. On May 25, 1999, William Perry himself visited Pyongyang. After several months of negotiations with North Korea and extensive consultations with regional countries, in September 1999 the United States and North Korea signed the Berlin Agreement. With the signing of the agreement, North Korea announced that as long as talks between the United States and North Korea continued, it would put a moratorium on missile testing. In return, the Clinton administration lifted some of the economic sanctions levied against North Korea.

Role Congruence during the Perry Process

According to Ambassador Wendy Sherman, who was Perry's advisor and later successor as U.S. policy coordinator on North Korea, Perry initially thought that he would spend only two or three months working on the review. Instead, he ended up spending nearly a year to engage in "a very wide range of consultations with Congress, experts on all sides, allies, almost everyone in government, other interested parties."⁴⁸⁰ More importantly, his team made numerous trips to Seoul, Tokyo, and Beijing for coordination and consultation, not to mention his Pyongyang visit in May 1999.⁴⁸¹ Stanley Roth, then Assistant Secretary of State For East Asian and Pacific Affairs, attributed the success of the Perry process to "repeated consultations with the Japanese and Korean governments." Perry's recommendations were crucial precisely because "they reflect the thinking of leaders in Tokyo and Seoul as well as Washington."⁴⁸²

For instance, in a ten-month period following the nomination of Perry as U.S. North Korean policy coordinator, Lim Dongwon, South Korean President Kim Dae

⁴⁸⁰ Remarks by Wendy R. Sherman, "Past Progress and Next Steps With North Korea," United States Institute of Peace, March 6, 2001.

⁴⁸¹ Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *Going Critical*, p. 376.

⁴⁸² Stanley O. Roth, "The United States and Japan—Partnership and Challenges in a New Millennium," Speech to the Japan Society, December 8, 1999.

Jung's special adviser and later unification minister, met Perry eight times for policy consultation.⁴⁸³ Through these meetings, the South Korean government proposed to Perry a package deal with North Korea, linking North Korea's dismantling of WMD programs to economic assistance, which eventually became the mainstay of the 1999 Perry Report.⁴⁸⁴ The U.S. endorsement of South Korea's engagement policy toward North Korea and Perry's efforts to "synchronize U.S. policy with that of South Korea" promoted "a sense of compatibility" in the policies of the two countries.⁴⁸⁵ As Perry himself later recalled, such close consultation among allies, including six tripartite meetings, contributed significantly to the success of the Perry Process. He not only discussed the recommendations in his final report with President Clinton, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, and Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, but also briefed the Chinese and the Russians and sought their support as well.⁴⁸⁶

On September 15, 1999, William Perry submitted a completed report to President Clinton and the U.S. Congress. In contrast to the Bush administration's view of the North Korean regime as an irrational and unpredictable rogue state, the central premise of the Perry Report was that deterrence against North Korea was working and, therefore, the United States "must deal with the DPRK regime as it is, not as [the U.S.] would wish it to be."⁴⁸⁷ In essence, the report recommended a two-path strategy. First, if North Korea is "willing to forgo its long-range missile program as well as its nuclear weapons program, [the United States] should be willing to move step-by-step on a path to a comprehensive normalization of relations, including the establishment of a

⁴⁸³ Moonseok Ahn, *Bukhani Pilyohan Miguk, Miguki Pilyohan Bukhan [A United States that needs North Korea, A North Korea that needs the United States]* (Seoul, Korea: Park Young-Yul Publishing House, 2006), p. 52.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 119, 121.

⁴⁸⁵ Eric V. Larson, Norman D. Levin with Seonhae Baik, Bogdan Savych, *Ambivalent Allies?: A Study of South Korean Attitudes Toward the U.S.* (Santa Monica, CA: the Rand Corporation, 2004), p. 27.

⁴⁸⁶ William J. Perry, "Security and Stability in the Asia-Pacific Region," *PacNet*, Number 19, Pacific Forum CSIS, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 12, 2000.

⁴⁸⁷ William J. Perry, *The Unclassified Report on North Korea*, Testimony before Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 12, 1999.

permanent peace.” But, if not, “[the United States] must take actions to contain that threat.”⁴⁸⁸ In an attempt not to provoke North Korea, the unclassified version of the Perry Report did not specify the type of measures the United States and its allies would take in the second scenario.⁴⁸⁹ Afterwards, the Clinton administration pursued a comprehensive engagement policy toward North Korea.

As the relationship between the United States and North Korea took a positive turn, regional countries were able to continue their initiatives toward North Korea. Shortly after the publication of the Perry Report, China did not waste time in repairing its somewhat estranged relationship with North Korea. China’s Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan’s “good will” visit to Pyongyang in October 1999 was the first high-ranking official visit since 1996.⁴⁹⁰ In a new sign of improvement in inter-Korean ties, in South Korea a government-sanctioned tour to North Korea’s Mount Keumkang began to expand. President Kim Dae-jung viewed the Perry Report and the Clinton administration’s approach toward North Korea “as vindicating his efforts to dismantle a decades-long threat-driven policy on the peninsula.”⁴⁹¹

As the U.S. and South Korea sought their own paths to enhanced relations with North Korea during this period, there was an implicit understanding among the ruling Liberal Democratic Party leadership that Japan could not afford to be sidelined in the regional pursuit of political reconciliations with the North.⁴⁹² In December 1999, a parliamentary delegation led by former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama made a three-day visit to North Korea. During this visit, both sides agreed to resume talks for

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 198.

⁴⁹⁰ “Bilateral Relations,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, China, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjz/zjg/yzs/gjlb/2701/default.htm>

⁴⁹¹ Jonathan D. Pollack, “The United States, North Korea, and the End of the Agreed Framework,” *Naval War College Review*, 2003, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁹² Jin Chang Su, “Bukil Kookgyo Jeongsanghwai Ilbon Kooknae Jeongchijeok Jeyak [Domestic Constraints on the Japan-North Korean Diplomatic Normalization]” (Seoul: Sejong Institution, 2000), p. 163.

diplomatic normalization that had been stalled since 1992. Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi was also eager to forge ahead with normalization efforts. Working closely with Hiromu Nonaka, deputy secretary general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) with broad connections with the North Koreans, Prime Minister Obuchi sought a breakthrough with the North Koreans.⁴⁹³ Trilateral coordination with the United States and South Korea, in turn, enabled Japan to play a greater role in Korean Peninsula issues.⁴⁹⁴ Instead of blocking Japan's proactive approach toward North Korea, both the United States and South Korea welcomed the Murayama mission.⁴⁹⁵ In short, trilateral coordination ensured role congruence, which in turn resulted in enhanced alliance cooperation and support for the 1999 Berlin Agreement. In the process, there existed "a great deal of optimism when Japan, in consultation with South Korea and the United States, reenergized its normalization diplomacy toward North Korea in 2000."⁴⁹⁶

It was in this favorable regional atmosphere that the historic inter-Korean summit took place in Pyongyang in June 2000. However, the focus of the summit was not just on inter-Korean relations but also on the region.⁴⁹⁷ From a South Korean perspective, permanent peace would require the end of the Cold War rivalry on the peninsula and a dramatic transformation of inter-Korean relations with a full endorsement by the great powers in the region. To that end, the Kim Dae-jung government strongly encouraged the United States and Japan to normalize their ties

⁴⁹³ "How Japan-North Korea relations unfold in the months ahead? Preliminary talks likely to occur by the end of the year toward holding diplomatic normalization negotiations" *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, p. S43, (Excerpts), December 13, 1999.

⁴⁹⁴ Christopher Hughes, "Japan's "Strategy-less" North Korea Strategy: Shifting Policies of Dialogue and Deterrence and Implications for Japan-U.S.-South Korea Security Cooperation," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XII, No. 2, Winter 2000, pp. 167-68.

⁴⁹⁵ Masao Okonogi, "Thoughts on North Korea," *Sankei Shimbun*, December 13, 1999, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁶ C.S. Eliot Kang, "Japan in Inter-Korean Relations," in Samuel S. Kim, ed. *Inter-Korean Relations: Problems and Prospects* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p. 103.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview 35-05, Seoul, August 3, 2005.

with the North.⁴⁹⁸ By making South Korea's external and internal regional role conceptions congruent, the Clinton administration, in turn, facilitated South Korea's expanded role in the region. Under this permissive regional context, President Kim was able to forge ahead with inter-Korean reconciliation.

As the two Kims shook hands smiling, the prolonged Cold War tension appeared to slowly dissipate on the Korean Peninsula. Regional leaders echoed the initial expectation of hope. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshino Mori, for instance, regarded the summit as an East Asian equivalent of "the fall of the Berlin Wall."⁴⁹⁹ Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs called it "a major event of historic significance."⁵⁰⁰ U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was equally optimistic when she said, "The United States strongly supports South Korea's policy of engagement, and we will do all we can to encourage further reconciliation . . . so the full promise of the summit can be achieved."⁵⁰¹ The United States, the guarantor of Cold War peace in the region, was finally approaching a major turning point in its relationship with a long-time enemy against which it fought the very first war of the Cold War era.

US-North Korean Reconciliation and the End of the Perry Process

In July 2000, only a month after the inter-Korean summit, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and North Korean Foreign Minister Baek Namsoon had their first high-level meeting between the two countries at the annual ASEAN Research

⁴⁹⁸ Speaking a few months prior to the 2000 inter-Korean summit, then U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Stephen Bosworth understood South Korea's efforts to encourage U.S.'s and Japan's diplomatic normalization with North Korea in the broader context of ending "the Cold War structures on the Korean Peninsula." See his interview in Linda D. Kozaryn, "Top U.S. Official Updates Korea Situation," *American Forces Press Service*, March 21, 2000.

⁴⁹⁹ David E. Sanger, "The Korean Breakthrough—News Analysis: Divining the Big Event: A Ray of Hope, at Least," *New York Times*, June 15, 2000.

⁵⁰⁰ Jim Lobe, "World Smiles, Pentagon Uneasy at Korea Breakthrough," *IPS*, June 16, 2000.

⁵⁰¹ John Lancaster, "Albright Reiterates Need for 'Stability'; U.S. Presence Fixed On Korean Peninsula," *Washington Post*, June 24, 2000.

Forum (ARF) meeting in Bangkok. In return for Perry's 1999 visit to Pyongyang, they discussed the possibility of a Washington visit by a high-level North Korean envoy.⁵⁰² In October 2000, Kim Jong Il sent Vice Marshal Jo Myong Rok, the second man in charge of the North Korean military, as his special envoy to President Clinton. During his visit to Washington, Vice Marshall Jo singled out the Perry Process as "important contributions" and spoke highly of the recommendations made by the Perry Report.⁵⁰³ Both sides also issued the U.S.-DPRK Joint Communiqué. As shown in Table 4-1, the Joint Communiqué not only addressed specific U.S. concerns about North Korea's WMD capability but also covered inter-Korean and regional dimensions.⁵⁰⁴

In his meeting with President Clinton, Vice Marshall Jo invited the President to visit Pyongyang. Jo even went so far as to say that through the visit by President Clinton, "[the United States and North Korea] will be able to find the solution to all problems." In return, President Clinton asked Secretary Albright to "go first to prepare the ground."⁵⁰⁵ Before her visit to Pyongyang, Albright consulted South Korean President Kim Dae-jung who strongly endorsed the visit. Secretary Albright made her official visit to Pyongyang in October 23-24, 2000. She was, and remains, the highest U.S. official to visit the North in the history of U.S.-North Korean relations. In Pyongyang, while not scheduled in preparatory meetings for the trip, Kim Jong Il himself joined Albright in a series of meetings and events that lasted more than six hours. Secretary Albright characterized her meetings with Kim Jong Il as "serious, constructive, and in-depth."⁵⁰⁶ As quoted below, Albright's speech in a reception hosted by Kim Jong Il was upbeat and promising.

⁵⁰² Albright, *Madam Secretary*, p. 459.

⁵⁰³ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 204.

⁵⁰⁴ "U.S.-D.P.R.K. Joint Communiqué," U.S. Department of State, October 12, 2000.

⁵⁰⁵ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, p. 459.

⁵⁰⁶ Alex Wagner, "Albright Visits North Korea; Progress Made on Missile Front," *Arms Control Today*, September 1999, Volume 30, Number 7.

Mr. Chairman, the process in which we are now engaged . . . *can lead to reconciliation and reunification of the Peninsula and to more normal and prosperous relations* between your government and others in the region and the world.

We each must strive to open new avenues of communication, commerce and contacts. *We must each do our part if the Cold War is truly to end and along with it the divisions* that have caused such suffering to the people of Korea. (Emphasis added)⁵⁰⁷

Through the Perry Process, North Korea finally showed willingness to get out of its siege mentality. Sensing Kim Jong Il's determination to make a deal with the United States, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung strongly urged President Clinton to visit Pyongyang.⁵⁰⁸ According to Albright, the Clinton administration at the time was "reasonably confident that North Korea would agree to a deal ending the potential threat posed to [the United States] by long-range missiles and nuclear arms."⁵⁰⁹ William Perry himself later revealed that based on his judgment "the United States was within a few months of getting the desired agreement from North Korea."⁵¹⁰ Yet the White House could not make a final decision due in large part to "the scheduling chaos" caused by ongoing negotiations in the Middle East.⁵¹¹ The unforeseen and prolonged controversy over the result of the 2000 U.S. presidential election at the time did not help either. President Clinton himself lamented his decision not to visit

⁵⁰⁷ "Toast by Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright At Dinner Hosted by Chairman Kim Jong Il," U.S. Department of State, Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, October 23, 2000.

⁵⁰⁸ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, p. 469.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 469

⁵¹⁰ William J. Perry, "Proliferation on the Peninsula: Five North Korean Nuclear Crises," in *Confronting the Specter of Nuclear Terrorism, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 607, September 2006, p. 83.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

Pyongyang: “I hated to give up on ending the North Korean missile program but I simply couldn’t risk being halfway around the world when we were so close to peace in the Middle East.”⁵¹² President Clinton later said to William Perry that “it was his “biggest regret” that he did not visit North Korea.”⁵¹³

Table 4-1. The U.S.-DPRK Joint Communiqué (excerpt)

Dimension	Content
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have decided to take steps to fundamentally improve their bilateral relations <i>in the interests of enhancing peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region.</i>” • “the two sides agreed there are a variety of available means, including <i>Four Party talks</i>, to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula and <i>formally end the Korean War by replacing the 1953 Armistice Agreement with permanent peace arrangements.</i>”
US-North Korean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the two sides stated that <i>neither government would have hostile intent toward the other</i> and confirmed the commitment of both governments to make every effort in the future to <i>build a new relationship free from past enmity.</i>” • “the two sides reaffirmed that their relations should be based on the principles of <i>respect for each other’s sovereignty and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs</i>, and noted the value of regular diplomatic contacts”
Inter-Korean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Special Envoy Jo Myong Rok <i>explained to the US side developments in the inter-Korean dialogue</i> in recent months, including the results of the historic North-South summit. • “The U.S. side expressed its firm commitment to <i>assist</i> in all appropriate ways the continued progress and success of ongoing <i>North-South dialogue</i> and initiatives for reconciliation and greater cooperation, including increased security dialogue.”
WMD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the D.P.R.K. informed the U.S. that <i>it will not launch long-range missiles of any kind</i> while talks on the missile issue continue.” • “the US and the D.P.R.K. strongly affirmed its importance to achieving peace and security on a <i>nuclear weapons free Korean Peninsula.</i>”

⁵¹² Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Random House, 2004), p. 938.

⁵¹³ William Perry’s speech at the Asia Society, San Francisco, June 16, 2004, cited in Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 207.

4-3. Alliance Politics during the Perry Process

While the Perry Process could not bring a permanent solution to the tension on the Korean Peninsula, it elevated alliance coordination to a new high, opening up a new pattern of trilateral cooperation among the U.S. allies. The consultation process not only institutionalized a new alliance coordination mechanism but also strengthened existing ones such as the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), a key regional mechanism for addressing the North Korean issue prior to the Perry Process. In exchange for North Korea's forgoing of nuclear programs, the United States promised in the 1994 Agreed Framework an annual provision of 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil and the building of two light water reactors, which cannot be used for producing nuclear weapons. Launched in 1995, KEDO was an institutional mechanism to execute the provisions. Along with the U.S., and its East Asian allies, Japan and South Korea, even European countries joined the organization. By 2002, KEDO's membership had expanded to thirteen countries, with sixteen countries making financial contributions to the implementation project.⁵¹⁴

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)

As an issue-specific, ad hoc multilateral framework, KEDO became a main venue for alliance coordination on the North Korean issue. One scholar even considered KEDO to be “the most important multilateral security institution” in the region.⁵¹⁵ Its importance, however, rests not just with its stated goal of implementing the Agreed Framework. It soon played a larger role in alliance politics by serving as “an important mechanism to give South Korea and Japan a ‘seat at the table’ in dealing with a critical regional security issue” and offering a regional forum for

⁵¹⁴ Andrew Mack, “The United States and the Asia-Pacific: Bilateralism Plus “Multilateralism a la Carte,” in David M. Malone and Yuen Foong Khong, eds., *Unilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: International Perspective* (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), p. 394.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

trilateral cooperation among U.S. allies.⁵¹⁶ As the Japanese deputy director to KEDO observed, the organization was not only crucial to stopping North Korea's nuclear programs but also served "as a model for U.S.-ROK-Japan cooperation."⁵¹⁷

Such practices in alliance cooperation proved to be very useful during the Perry Process. It was under this institutional foundation that the United States and South Korea were able to maintain trilateral cooperation after the Taepodong launch by North Korea. Flying directly over the Japanese archipelago, North Korea's missiles caused outrage among the Japanese public. Many Japanese experts agree that the launch made the strongest impact on the Japanese perception of security in the postwar period. One former Japanese diplomat even compared the missile launch to a hypothetical Cuban missile launch over Florida.⁵¹⁸ After the launch, the Japanese government initially threatened to suspend its commitment to KEDO. A withdrawal of the up to \$1 billion Japanese contribution to KEDO would have both risked the collapse of the multi-year project and undermined the engagement policies pursued by the Clinton administration and the South Korean government.⁵¹⁹ It was the Perry Process that helped Japan to return to KEDO and narrowed the perception gap between the United States and South Korea on the one hand and Japan on the other.⁵²⁰

While the Perry Process achieved its immediate goal of resolving suspicion concerning North Korea's nuclear facilities and stopping North Korea's missile launches, its greater benefit was broader and longer-term. This was evident in the agreement to replace the Armistice Treaty in the U.S.-North Korean joint

⁵¹⁶ Toby Dalton and Scott Snyder, "Ties that Bind? Culture, Values, and Ideation," in Tae-Kyo Kim and Brad Glosserman, eds., *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Balancing Values and Interests* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2004), pp. 122-23.

⁵¹⁷ Michael Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 122.

⁵¹⁸ Interview 01-04, Tokyo, October 2005

⁵¹⁹ Hughes, "Japan's "Strategy-less" North Korea Strategy," p. 171.

⁵²⁰ C.S. Eliot Kang and Yoshinori Kaseda, "Korea and the Dynamics of Japan's Post-Cold War Security Policy," *World Affairs*, Fall 2001, Vol. 164, No. 2, p. 54.

communiqué. While previous U.S. policies were geared toward short-term goals such as resolving the nuclear and missile issues, the Perry Process expanded Korean peninsula issues to include a larger and long-term goal of achieving a permanent peace regime in the region.⁵²¹ From a South Korean perspective, the key to such alliance cooperation lay in the fact that the Perry Report fit nicely with “the operating principles of the Sunshine policy.”⁵²² Around the inter-Korean summit in 2000, South Korean Minister of Unification Park Jae Kyu frequently met U.S. Ambassador Thomas Hubbard to review the progress of inter-Korean contacts and negotiations. After the summit, President Kim also dispatched his senior secretary for foreign affairs and national security to brief President Clinton on the summit. In this way, the inter-Korean summit meeting also “justified and buttressed Clinton’s own engagement policy toward North Korea.”⁵²³

As one senior South Korean official at the Ministry of Unification recalled, there existed “a virtuous circle or a mutually reinforcing dynamic between inter-Korean ties and US-Korean alliance ties, and the Perry report was the best illustration of such a link.”⁵²⁴ One long-time watcher of U.S.-Korean relations also notes that the Clinton administration’s support for the sunshine policy and the inter-Korean summit were such that it opened “the best period in U.S.-South Korean relations.”⁵²⁵ The enhanced alliance coordination between the United States and South Korea led to the establishment of a broader, trilateral institutional mechanism for alliance coordination that included Japan.

⁵²¹ Paik, “Bukmigwangye gaesun-gwa dongbuka pyonghwa,” p. 79.

⁵²² Moon and Kim, “The Perry Report and the Future of the Comprehensive Approach,” p. 123.

⁵²³ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 202.

⁵²⁴ Interview 36-05, Seoul, South Korea, August 3, 2005.

⁵²⁵ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, pp. 4-5.

The Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG)

For alliance coordination, Japan's ultimately abandoned decision to withdraw from KEDO was a blessing in disguise. Japan's threat compelled the United States and South Korea to conclude that to deal effectively with North Korea a high-level trilateral coordinating mechanism was necessary.⁵²⁶ In April 1999, the United States, Japan, and South Korea established the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) for the specific purpose of discussing and coordinating the implementation strategy of the Perry Process among the three Asian allies.

As a regular consultation mechanism among allies, the TCOG was further institutionalized in several ways. First, it held numerous meetings by senior-level government officials to coordinate their specific policies on North Korea. At the ministerial-level, foreign ministers of the three allies also held separate meetings on the North Korean question and other regional security issues. Finally, Presidents Clinton, Kim Dae-jung, and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi held a trilateral summit meeting in September in Auckland, New Zealand in 1999.⁵²⁷ Rather than merely reflecting a particular U.S. policy on North Korea, the Perry report grew out of the burgeoning institutional mechanisms and practices of trilateral coordination.⁵²⁸ As a result, the institutionalization of the TCOG was remarkably swift. In the first eighteen months after its establishment, the group held fourteen meetings.⁵²⁹ Through the process, the TCOG significantly improved alliance coordination.

Aside from policy coordination among U.S. allies, the TCOG promoted alliance cooperation in a way that went beyond the traditional pattern of parallel bilateral channels between the U.S.-Japan and the U.S.-South Korean alliances, with

⁵²⁶ Kang, "Japan in Inter-Korean Relations," p. 103.

⁵²⁷ Moon and Kim, "The Perry Report and the Future of the Comprehensive Approach," p. 117.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., p. 117.

⁵²⁹ James Schoff, "Building on the TCOG: Enhancing Trilateral Policy Coordination Among the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea," April 14, 2004, The Center for Global Partnership, available at <http://www.cgp.org/index.php?option=article&task=default&articleid=218>.

the United States serving as the hub. As one Japanese expert assessed it, the trilateral cooperation on the North Korean question at the time was “the most commendable achievement” precisely because traditionally the long-held enmity between Japan and South Korea prevented such a close working relationship among the three allies.⁵³⁰ Due in large part to persistent anti-Japanese sentiments, South Korean leaders had traditionally kept a certain distance from Japan throughout the Cold War period. Hence, cooperation between the two U.S. allies had been lukewarm at best, leaving the U.S. to deal bilaterally with each alliance partner, rather than seeking a NATO-like region-wide alliance mechanism covering all three.

During this period, however, South Korea’s bilateral ties with Japan were improving rapidly, as evidenced in President Kim’s decision to allow the imports of previously restricted Japanese cultural products to South Korea.⁵³¹ At the 1998 summit between Prime Minister Obuchi and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, the two leaders announced the “Japan-Republic of Korea Partnership Toward the 21st Century Declaration.” The declaration aimed to “formalize security consultative meetings, acknowledge greater defense-official exchanges, and sanction bilateral security dialogues expressly, as a way to create a more stable security relationship.”⁵³² As the Perry Process yielded positive outcomes in October 1999, Japan and South Korea agreed to have a regular dialogue on regional security at their ministerial talks.⁵³³ In his April 2000 summit in Tokyo, President Kim conveyed to Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Mori that cooperation with Japan was conducive to peace on the Korean Peninsula and expressed his strong support for Japan’s normalization efforts with

⁵³⁰ Yutaka Kawashima, *Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p. 80.

⁵³¹ Gilbert Rozman and Shin-wa Lee, “Unraveling the Japan-South Korea “Virtual Alliance”,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. XLVI, No. 5, September/October 2006, p. 762.

⁵³² Jason Manosevitz, “Japan and South Korea: Security Relations Reach Adolescence,” *Asian Survey*, Nov. XLIII, No. 5, September/October 2003, pp. 807-09.

⁵³³ “Korea, Japan to Agree on Regional Body on Security at Ministerial Talks,” *The Korea Herald*, October 22, 1999, cited in Chung, “Solving the Security Puzzle in Northeast Asia,” p. 405.

North Korea.⁵³⁴ The TCOG heralded a new pattern of alliance cooperation by enabling “the extension and deepening of security dialogue beyond the relatively narrow purview of the respective bilateral alliance networks.” In this way, some expected that the TCOG would serve as a mechanism to “[transform] the current system of bilateral arrangements into a more open web of security relations.”⁵³⁵

Overall, trilateral alliance cooperation during the Perry Process “harmonized the U.S.’s proliferation concern, South Korea’s sunshine policy and Japan’s wary stance toward North Korea”⁵³⁶ in a synergistic way. For the first time since the formation of U.S. alliance system, the Perry Process enabled Japan and South Korea to play “an enhanced role as security contributors, rather than security consumers, under the respective bilateral alliances.”⁵³⁷ While jointly helping defuse the crisis on the peninsula, the Perry Process opened room for alliance members to pursue their own regional roles. Through the process of close coordination, South Korea’s efforts toward inter-Korean reconciliation came to fruition in the form of the first inter-Korean summit in 2000, while Japan restarted its own initiative to normalize its diplomatic ties with North Korea. The compatibility between the U.S. approach toward North Korea and the regional initiatives in turn contributed significantly to alliance coordination during the Perry Process.

4-4. East Asian Regionalism during the Perry Process

Along with alliance cooperation in the region, the Clinton administration’s approach toward the North Korean issue facilitated greater regional cooperation. Compared to Europe, regionalism in East Asia has traditionally been characterized as

⁵³⁴ Press Conference by the Press Secretary, April 7, 2000, Tokyo, Japan. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/2000/4/407.html>.

⁵³⁵ Dalton and Snyder, “Ties that Bind?” p. 125.

⁵³⁶ Kang and Kaseda, “Korea and the Dynamics of Japan’s Post-Cold War Security Policy,” p. 55.

⁵³⁷ Dalton and Snyder, “Ties that Bind?” p. 124.

underinstitutionalized and underperforming.⁵³⁸ Asia's open regionalism in the economic realm was also widely attributed to the prevalent role of the United States in the region.⁵³⁹ During the Perry Process, however, a new pattern of expanded regionalism emerged in security aspects as well. As the Perry Process ensured regional consultation and promoted regional attempts to engage North Korea, externally-shaped regional roles, as U.S. allies or partners, for instance, did not conflict with internally-shaped role conceptions as major regional players sought to redefine their relationship with North Korea. In other words, a region-wide pursuit of greater regional roles in multilateral regional settings coexisted comfortably with the renewed U.S. attention to East Asia in general and the North Korean question in particular. As a result, unlike earlier calls for exclusive Asian regionalism such as the East Asian Economic Caucus,⁵⁴⁰ regionalism in this period took a more expansive form, simultaneously benefiting alliance coordination and broader regional cooperation among East Asian countries.

⁵³⁸ On East Asian regionalism, see Gilbert Rozman, "A Regional Approach in Northeast Asia," *Orbis*, Winter 1995, pp. 65-80; Sharine Narine, "ASEAN and ARF," *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 10, October 1997, pp. 961-978; Amitav Acharya, "Ideas, Identity, and Institution-building: From the 'ASEAN Way' to the 'Asia-Pacific Way'?" *The Pacific Review*, 10(3), 1997, pp. 319-346; Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shirashi, eds., *Network Power: Japan and Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Peter J. Katzenstein, "Regionalism and Asia," *New Political Economy*, 5(3), 2000, pp. 353-368; Peter Katzenstein, Natasha Hamilton-Hart, Kozo Kato and Ming Yue, *Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2000); Stuart Harris, "Asian multilateral institutions and their response to the Asian economic crisis: the regional and global implications," *The Pacific Review*, 13(3), 2000, pp. 495-516; Sheldon W. Simon, "Evaluating Track II approaches to security diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific: the CSCAP experience," *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2002, pp. 143-173; Richard Stubbs, "ASEAN Plus Three: Emerging East Asian Regionalism?", *Asian Survey*, 42 (3), 2002, pp. 440-455; Barry Buzan, "Security architecture in Asia: the interplay of regional and global levels," *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2003, pp. 167-200; Gerald L. Curtis, "East Asia, Regionalism, and U.S. National Interests: How Much Change?," *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 26, 2004, pp. 199-208; Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia's Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁵³⁹ Peter Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, *Network Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

⁵⁴⁰ The initiative, proposed in 1990 by then Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed, called for an exclusive East Asian free trade zone among the ASEAN members, China, Japan, and South Korea. The proposal eventually failed to materialize due in larger part to U.S. opposition.

The ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and Other Regional Frameworks

More specifically, in November 1998, at the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) summit in Vietnam, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung proposed a plan to establish the East Asian Vision Group (EAVG) to facilitate regionalism in economic and security aspects. A year later in October 1999 in Seoul, China, Japan, and South Korea, along with members of the Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN), formally launched EAVG. It was through EAVG that the idea of the East Asia Summit was first developed and extended.⁵⁴¹ The group held five meetings between 1999 and 2001 and delivered its report to the 2001 ASEAN Plus Three (APT) meeting in Brunei. The Report “envisions East Asia moving from a region of nations to a bona fide regional community where collective efforts are made for peace, prosperity and progress.”⁵⁴² As an institutional mechanism, the report also recommended the development of the annual summit of ASEAN Plus Three (APT) into the East Asian Summit and the establishment of an East Asian Forum, including Track I and II mechanisms, with the goal of providing an institutional channel for broad exchanges and cooperation.⁵⁴³

Coupled with South Korea’s efforts for EAVG activities, the 2000 inter-Korean summit facilitated regional cooperation in a more systematic fashion. At the November 2000 APT meeting in Singapore, for instance, leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea “agreed to make 2002 the year of people’s exchanges and to hold annual trilateral summits.”⁵⁴⁴ Along with its normalization efforts, in July 2000, Japan added a regional dimension to inter-Korean relations by persuading ASEAN members to invite North Korea into the activities of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴¹ Kim Dae-jung, “Regionalism in the Age of Asia,” *Global Asia*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2006, p.11.

⁵⁴² *Toward an East Asian Community: Region of Peace, Prosperity, and Progress*, The East Asian Vision Group Report, 2001, p. 2.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁴⁴ Rozman, *Northeast Asia’s Stunted Regionalism*, p. 286.

⁵⁴⁵ Kang, “Japan in Inter-Korean Relations,” p. 110.

During these positive regional developments, the United States and China were able to adopt “reinforcing policies in support of further Korean cooperation.”⁵⁴⁶ The transformation of inter-Korean relations also provided an opening for a new regional security structure in which U.S. alliances continued to flourish, “but in a way that China can live with.”⁵⁴⁷

This regional trend was particularly beneficial for the Chinese leadership, given the widely-shared view in Beijing that China’s regional status was contingent on the state of Sino-American relations and that the key factor behind the relationship is the “compatibility of strategic interests with” the United States.⁵⁴⁸ If the United States prevailed in a military contingency on the Korean Peninsula with China on the sidelines, it would expose “China’s inability to parry U.S. post-cold war international dominance even in Beijing’s own front yard.”⁵⁴⁹ Similarly, China’s regional influence would be seriously tested if the United States transformed its relations with North Korea without China’s active participation in the process. In this context, the Perry Process served as a useful channel for the Chinese to coordinate their approach with the United States on North Korea. As one U.S. Asia expert noted at the time, it was remarkable that the Chinese government was able to maintain “working level U.S.-PRC consultations” amid rising tensions between the United States and China and the widespread anti-American sentiments among the Chinese public in the wake of the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade⁵⁵⁰ and the publication of the Cox Report accusing China of espionage on military technologies in 1999.

⁵⁴⁶ David Shambaugh, “Facing reality in China policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2001, 80(1), pp. 52-53.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁵⁴⁸ Yong Deng, “Better Than Power: “International Status” in Chinese Foreign Policy,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 60.

⁵⁴⁹ Avery Goldstein, “The Future of U.S.-China Relations and the Korean Peninsula,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2002, p. 121.

⁵⁵⁰ Scott Snyder, Testimony Before the House Committee on International Relations Hearing on North Korea: Leveraging Uncertainty? March 16, 2000.

The compatibility between the U.S. and China on the question of North Korea led to China's reevaluation of the regional security environment. In his August 2000 speech, China's U.N. ambassador, Sha Zhu Kang, observed, "The overall situation in the Asia-Pacific region is moving towards relaxation. [North Korea] is improving its relations with the United States, Japan and other Western countries. It remains the main trend in the region to enhance dialogue and mutual understanding, build confidence and to solve problems through consultation."⁵⁵¹ In his 2000 visit to Japan, Prime Minister Zhu Rongji changed China's traditional position and agreed to have a friendly exchange of naval vessels between the Chinese People Liberation Army and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Forces.⁵⁵² Speaking in 2001, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan also declared that the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which includes not only East Asian countries but also the United States, was "the most important venue in the Asia Pacific region for the discussion of regional security issues."

With growing confidence in their regional role, Chinese leaders began to offer various proposals for regional framework at the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) meetings. At the 2000 APT meetings in Singapore, Chinese premier Zhu Rongji suggested that the ASEAN Plus Three be turned into a key channel of East Asia regional cooperation, and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and South Korean President Kim Dae Jung agreed to enhance trilateral cooperation on a variety of issues.⁵⁵³ From that point on, the leaders of China, Japan, and South Korea have met separately at the APT annual meetings, setting a new pattern of trilateral regional consultation. The Japanese also

⁵⁵¹ Sha Zukang, "Some Thoughts on Establishing A New Regional Security Order," Statement by Ambassador Sha Zukang at the East-West Center's Senior Policy Seminar, August 7, 2000, Honolulu, Hawaii, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjzb/zzjg/jks/cjkk/2622/t15411.htm>.

⁵⁵² Akio Takahara, "Japan's Political Response to the Rise of China," in Ryosei Kokubun and Jisi Wang, eds., *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004), p. 169.

⁵⁵³ Jae-Seung Lee, "ASEAN Plus Three and East Asian Cooperation," *IFANS Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, December 2003; Victor Cha, "Ending 2000 with a Whimper, Not a Bang," *Comparative Connections*, 4th Quarter, 2000, Japan-Korea Relations.

grew more confident in its regional role and participated more actively in multilateral regional frameworks.

As regional cooperation deepened, North Korean diplomats were also very actively engaging that country's neighbors in East Asia. According to South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) report, in 1999 North Korean officials made 222 overseas visits, a sharp increase from 99 visits in 1997, including several high profile visits to Beijing. In June 1999, for instance, a delegation headed by North Korea's nominal head of state Kim Young Nam made an official visit to China, the first of this kind since Kim Jong Il's rise to power in 1994.⁵⁵⁴ During this visit, Chinese President Jiang Zemin reportedly extended "China's blessing to [North Korea] to improve relations with the United States, Japan and the European Union (EU)," which the North Koreans pursued through multiple dialogues with those countries.⁵⁵⁵ In May 2000, a month before the inter-Korean summit, Kim Jong Il himself made his first visit to Beijing since the end of the Cold War. This trip rebuilt China's estranged relations with North Korea during the early 1990s, after China opened diplomatic relationship with South Korea.

Broadening Regionalism and a Multi-layered Regional Order

What was significant during this period was that a region-wide search for greater regional roles was in line with the U.S. willingness to utilize multilateral security dialogues. Given U.S. power and influence in the region, this regional pursuit did not represent a wholesale dismantling of the traditional U.S.-centered hub-and-spokes regional security structure. As the three East Asian countries expressed greater interest in broadened regionalism, the United States also showed a growing acceptance

⁵⁵⁴ Noriyuki Suzuki, "North Korea Under Kim Jong Il," Paper presented at the conference North Korea Policy After The Perry Report: A Trilateral (Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States) Workshop, March 3-4, 2000.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

of East Asian regionalism and efforts to expand the bilateral alliance mechanism into broader multilateral regional frameworks. For instance, Kurt Campbell, then deputy assistant secretary of defense in the Clinton administration, promoted the concept of “mini-lateralism,” issue-specific, ad-hoc small multilateral security mechanisms (e.g., KEDO and the TCOG), as a steppingstone toward a more institutionalized multilateralism.⁵⁵⁶

U.S. interest in multilateral regional frameworks permitted the regional countries to go beyond the traditional bilateral focus anchored to alliance ties or special partnerships with the United States. As a result, the regional countries envisioned a broadened, multi-layered regional order encompassing both existing institutional arrangements and new ones. In Japan, the multi-tiered regional order had four components. While the core of the order remained the U.S.-Japan alliance, other arrangements expanded outward to include case-by-case, ad hoc groupings for specific regional issues such as KEDO and the TCOG (second tier), broader regional frameworks for security dialogue (third tier), and similar frameworks for non-security issues such as economic cooperation (fourth tier).⁵⁵⁷ A Japanese ministry of foreign affairs official characterized the concept of multi-layered order as “something beyond the hitherto hub-and-spoke,” and later, Japan’s 2002 *Diplomatic Bluebook* specifically referred to the “promotion of multi-layered regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific” as a major agenda for Japanese foreign policy.⁵⁵⁸

While differing on specifics, the Chinese were also thinking about a new regional security architecture that had several dimensions. Guarding against the strengthened U.S.-Japan alliance, the Chinese government called for a new security arrangement based on several pillars, which included “a concert of major powers” in

⁵⁵⁶ Chung, “Solving the Security Puzzle in Northeast Asia,” p. 401.

⁵⁵⁷ Kuniko Ashizawa, “Japan’s approach toward Asian regional security: from ‘hub-and-spoke’ bilateralism to ‘multi-tiered,’” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2003, p. 364.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

the region (e.g., the United States, China, Japan, and Russia), “ad hoc coalitions on specific issues” (e.g., the North Korean nuclear issue), “existing security alliances,” (e.g., U.S. regional alliances), and “regional or subregional mechanisms” (e.g., the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Plus Three (APT)).⁵⁵⁹ From a Chinese perspective, as long as the U.S. alliance system focused more on engagement than on containment vis-à-vis China, Beijing would be willing to “live with it and even work with it on certain issues of common interest” such as peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.⁵⁶⁰ Similarly in South Korea, scholars observed that “a multilayered, multi-dimensional forum of bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral, and multilateral security dialogues” would play a useful supplementary role for the traditional bilateral security structure.⁵⁶¹

All in all, a new pattern of expanded regionalism grew out of the Perry Process in the form of broadened regional security frameworks and the gradual embrace of a multi-layered regional order. This outcome was possible because the Clinton administration’s approach during the Perry Process did not force regional actors to choose between U.S.-centered roles and internally-shaped roles. Instead, both external and internal regional roles were made largely congruent and mutually reinforcing. This was particularly beneficial for the Japanese who were keen on maintaining the combination of U.S.-Japan relations on the one hand and regional cooperation on the other.⁵⁶² The Perry Process enabled and promoted Japan’s dual role as alliance partner and regional player active in various multilateral regional venues.

In South Korea, the Kim Dae-jung government was able to actively reach out to its neighbors. Along with South Korea’s aforementioned diplomatic overture to

⁵⁵⁹ Wu Xinbo, “The End of the Silver Lining: A Chinese View of the U.S.-Japanese Alliance,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 29(1), Winter 2005-06, pp. 126-127.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁵⁶¹ Chung, “Solving the Security Puzzle in Northeast Asia,” p. 410.

⁵⁶² Interview 04-05, Tokyo, March 22, 2005.

Japan, in July 1999, for instance, South Korean Defense Minister Cho Sung-tae visited Beijing for the first time as South Korean defense chief and launched the first defense ministerial meeting with his Chinese counterpart. In January 2000, Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian made a return visit to Seoul, a symbolically significant chain of events given that China not only fought the Korean War against South Korea but still remains the only military ally of North Korea.⁵⁶³ All along, however, South Korea's alliance ties with the United States remained strong.

For the Chinese as well, the Perry Process was conducive to a greater regional role, while at the same time helping it to improve its ties with the United States. Although emphasizing multipolarity to overcome the U.S.-centered order, the real focus for the Chinese was on “a strategic partnership or condominium with the United States in which it is one of two co-managers of Asian security.”⁵⁶⁴ Chinese experts have generally confirmed this view with their hope for the United States to actively participate in regional frameworks.⁵⁶⁵ In this regard, the Perry Process closely approximated their preferred regional roadmap, with a greater potential for promoting regional cooperation and enhancing regional stability. Echoing China's expectations, William Perry, in his collaborative work with Ashton Carter, calls for cooperative relations between the U.S. and China based on what they term “preventive defense.” Contrary to a containment policy, which would prevent China from playing a greater role on the global scene, in this view, preventive defense “encourages Chinese participation and influence,” in a region where Sino-U.S. cooperation on the Korean

⁵⁶³ As of this writing, there have thus far been five such defense ministerial talks between China and South Korea. For details, see “South Korean-Chinese Defense Cooperation,” National Archives Portal Services, Seoul, South Korea. Available at [<http://contents.archives.go.kr/next/content/listSubjectDescription.do;jsessionid=F2C535ECCE29E0CD113FDCCE476FB3?id=003036>]

⁵⁶⁴ Muthiah Alagappa, “The Study of International Order: An Analytical Framework,” Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 76.

⁵⁶⁵ Interview 12-04, Beijing, November 24, 2004.

issue can serve as a model for cooperation on broader East Asian security issues in the future.⁵⁶⁶

4-5. Conclusion

As the East Asian countries sought to enhance their regional roles by changing their terms of engagement with North Korea, the renewed crisis on the Korean Peninsula in 1998 was particularly alarming. Mounting tension from North Korea had serious implications for neighbors who prized regional stability. On the surface, the growing threat from North Korea and its regional consequences seemed to preoccupy the minds of regional leaders. In the midst of a nation-wide crisis after the 1997 financial crisis, the Kim Dae-jung government in Seoul was deeply concerned about the emerging crisis on its borders. The same was true for Beijing's third generation leaders, who above all needed a stable regional environment conducive to its economic growth. In fact, this is why, after the first North Korean nuclear crisis, the Chinese deemed the U.S.-led Agreed Framework "essential to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and therefore vital to China's national security interests."⁵⁶⁷ However, the 1998 missile crisis had the biggest impact on Japan, intensifying a heightened sense of threat from North Korea.

If increased threat perception vis-à-vis North Korea was the sole determinant of regional behavior, we would expect the rise of alliance and/or regional mechanisms tailored specifically to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula. Until the perceived threat from North Korea subsided, region-wide efforts to enhance regional roles by engaging North Korea would be put on hold. Despite an increase in the perceived

⁵⁶⁶ Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), pp. 118, 120.

⁵⁶⁷ Samuel S. Kim, "The Making of China's Korean Policy in the Era of Reform," in David Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 394.

threat and the domestic uproar against North Korea, however, the Japanese government soon resumed contacts with North Korea for negotiations. Even before the North Koreans announced their decision on the missile moratorium, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi reaffirmed his willingness to improve ties with North Korea.⁵⁶⁸ Rather than building an ad hoc regional framework to address the North Korean threat, regional countries called for broader regional frameworks that would include North Korea. Throughout the 1998 missile crisis, China's participation in the Four Party Talks continued because of its desire "to play a positive and even-handed role in diplomatic activities relevant to the Korean Peninsula."⁵⁶⁹ South Korea's engagement policy toward North Korea persisted.

As evidenced in this chapter, regional initiatives toward North Korea continued and made progress due in no small measure to constructive U.S. leadership under the Perry Process, which enabled the regional countries to pursue their internally-shaped regional roles without damaging externally-shaped regional roles. As the Perry Process ensured congruence between external and internal role conceptions, alliance ties expanded and regional cooperation proliferated. This regional development in turn reinforced the regional efforts to engage North Korea. The virtuous circle between the U.S. and regional approaches not only helped to reduce the tension on the Korean Peninsula but also shaped a cooperative regional order in East Asia.

Ezra Vogel, a long-time watcher of Asian politics, names KEDO and the Perry Process models for regional cooperation. He singles out the Perry Process as an epitome of "what [the U.S.] can do when [the U.S. administration has] high high-level leadership that goes about Asian policy on a very systematic basis."⁵⁷⁰ In his analysis of North Korean behavior, Victor Cha also points to the Perry Process as a successful

⁵⁶⁸ Jin, "Bukil Kookgyo Jeongsanghwau Ilbon Kooknae Jeongchijeok Jeyak," p. 162.

⁵⁶⁹ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 195.

⁵⁷⁰ Ezra F. Vogel, "Globalization of East Asia: Touring the Horizon," *Modern Asia Series*, Spring 2000, Harvard University Asia Center, May 5, 2000.

example of getting “North Korea out of the domain of losses and into a situation where it had a stake in the status quo.”⁵⁷¹ Instead of boxing North Korea into corner through coercive rhetoric and hostile policies, the Perry recommendations offered North Korea an incentive to work with the United States and eventually helped the North to agree on the Joint Communiqué between the United States and North Korea and a missile moratorium. However, a larger benefit from the Perry Process was its contribution to the regional order. The United States began the process by regionalizing the North Korean question through alliance coordination at the TCOG on the one hand and consultation with regional actors including China on the other.

Writing in the wake of the inter-Korean summit, Kent Calder predicted that the combination of broader regional cooperation on the Korean Peninsula and the formalized trilateral alliance coordination via the Perry process would serve as “an institutional basis for the new geopolitics.”⁵⁷² Moreover, the fact that China had been supportive of trilateral coordination on North Korea represented a new development in the region, with implications for the regional security order centered mainly on U.S. alliances.⁵⁷³ One regional expert even predicted at the time that it would be virtually impossible for the new U.S. administration to go against the wishes of the regional countries as long as the U.S. hoped to maintain regional leadership and influence.⁵⁷⁴ William Perry himself maintained that the approach recommended in his report “must be sustained into the future, beyond the term of this Administration.”⁵⁷⁵

Unfortunately, his recommendation was not realized. In 1999, expressing concerns about tough measures by a Republican administration, a North Korean

⁵⁷¹ Victor Cha, “Why We Must Pursue “Hawk Engagement,” in Victor Cha and David Kang, *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 69-70.

⁵⁷² Kent E. Calder, “The New face of Northeast Asia,” *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2001; 80 (1), p. 122.

⁵⁷³ Paik, “Bukmigwangye gaesun-gwa dongbuka pyonghwa,” p. 105.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵⁷⁵ Perry, *The Unclassified Report on North Korea*.

Foreign Ministry spokesman lamented the situation where North Korea was about to “make a momentous decision on its missile program when the present U.S. administration has only one year left.”⁵⁷⁶ With George W. Bush in the Oval Office, the North Korean concern proved to be prescient and things changed dramatically. Bush’s unstated policy of “anything but Clinton’s” on North Korea stalled the regional momentum and upset South Korean President Kim Dae-jung who had helped open the way for the process of regional coordination and consultation as part of his sunshine policy. His 2001 summit with President Bush was regarded in South Korea as a diplomatic disaster, portending a difficult period ahead between the two allies.

At a private meeting with Secretary Albright in November 2002, when the second North Korean crisis began to intensify on the Korean peninsula, President Kim Dae-jung expressed to Albright his frustration indirectly: “We had our best chance for a breakthrough in the last days of your administration. You understood the situation here and how much was at stake. You devoted your full energy. I will always be grateful to you and President Clinton for the support you gave.”⁵⁷⁷ In her own interview, Albright also bemoaned the consequences of the Bush policy toward North Korea:

Just imagine what would have happened if the Bush administration had picked up the hand of cards that we left on the table six year ago. In these six years, the North Koreans have been able to develop enough material to have eight to ten nuclear weapons whereas when we left it was one or two.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Suzuki, “North Korea Under Kim Jong Il.”

⁵⁷⁷ Albright, *Madam Secretary*, p. 472.

⁵⁷⁸ Charlie Rose, Interview with Madeleine Albright, March 27, 2007.

This is a particularly unfortunate development, given recent reports about the possibility of intelligence hype on North Korea's enriched uranium program,⁵⁷⁹ which sparked the second crisis. A more ominous consequence of the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea, however, is regional: a worsened regional order and weakened U.S. influence in East Asia. The next chapter examines the nature of the East Asian order during the Bush presidency.

⁵⁷⁹ David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, "U.S. Concedes Uncertainty on North Korean Uranium Effort," *New York Times*, March 1, 2007.

CHAPTER FIVE:

The Bush Doctrine and the East Asian Security Order, 2001-2006

5-1. Introduction

With its doctrine of preemption and regime change applied to the ongoing War in Iraq, the Bush administration has transformed the regional security structure in the Middle East, including a dramatic change in the balance of power between Arab countries and Iran on the one hand and between the Sunnis and the Shiites on the other. While not to an equal extent, that doctrine has reshaped the regional order in East Asia as well. In predicting the regional impact of the Bush Doctrine in East Asia, Michael Mastanduno observed that the U.S. global strategy, coupled with “other developments,” may result in “the transformation of the East Asian security architecture” underpinning regional stability throughout and in the aftermath of the Cold War era.⁵⁸⁰ As Jonathan Pollack writes, the dramatic change in U.S. policy toward North Korea had “larger policy consequences that have redefined the East Asian political and security landscape.”⁵⁸¹

Exploring how the Bush administration’s approach has transformed the East Asian order is the main objective of this chapter. As with Chapter Four, I do so by looking closely at two regional dimensions: alliance politics and regionalism. Compared to the Clinton administration during the Perry Process, the Bush administration has shown little respect for a region-wide yearning for expanding regional roles by redefining relations with North Korea. The global priority of countering proliferation was implemented without due consideration of such role

⁵⁸⁰ Michael Mastanduno, “Hegemonic order, September 11, and the consequences of the Bush revolution,” in Mark Beeson, ed., *Bush and Asia: America’s evolving relations with East Asia* (Routledge: London and New York, 2005), p. 25.

⁵⁸¹ Jonathan D. Pollack, “The United States, North Korea, and the End of the Agreed Framework,” *Naval War College Review*, 2003, p. 28.

conceptions. As a result, there existed no mutually reinforcing mechanism between externally-shaped and internally-shaped regional roles. The hard line U.S. approach during this period also affected domestic debates about proper regional roles in each country, especially in Japan where the emergence of revisionists served to worsen the regional environment. By intensifying role conflict and helping domestic groups “re-nationalize” the North Korean challenge, the Bush administration transformed the regional order in two ways: a narrowed, exclusive alliance structure and weakened regionalism.

The chapter proceeds in the following way. The next section examines how the Bush administration’s approach toward North Korea has interacted with regional role conceptions in China, Japan, and South Korea to intensify role conflict. The subsequent two sections explore the impact of the role conflict prompted by the Bush Doctrine on alliance politics and regionalism in East Asia. In brief, during the second North Korean nuclear crisis, America’s alliance mechanisms in East Asia have been strained, as the United States and South Korea struggled over the North Korean question and South Korea’s relations with China markedly improved. As a consequence, the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) among the United States, Japan, and South Korea ceased to function and disappeared altogether. The presence of role conflict also made regional cooperation among East Asian countries more difficult. As different domestic groups tried to “re-nationalize” the North Korean issue, the initially cooperative regionalism was difficult to sustain. The final section concludes with a brief summary of findings.

5-2. Regional Role Conceptions during the Bush Presidency

The prolonged controversy of and the ultimate victory of George W. Bush in the 2000 presidential election dashed the last hope of President Clinton’s Pyongyang

visit. With his well-known objection to the Clinton administration's foreign policy agenda,⁵⁸² President Bush was in no mood to continue the momentum toward U.S.-North Korean reconciliation. Sensing a wind of change in the U.S. approach toward North Korea, South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung wasted little time in his efforts to persuade his U.S. counterpart to endorse the sunshine policy of engagement and continue regional reconciliation. In March 2001, President Kim became the first Asian leader to meet President Bush when he made a hurried visit to Washington.⁵⁸³ President Kim's personal plea for a speedy U.S.-North Korean deal, however, failed to change Bush's thinking, and he expressed deep skepticism toward Kim Jong Il and strong reservations about negotiation with North Korea.

The Bush administration's dramatic about-face on North Korea is vividly captured in a rare diplomatic flip-flop involving U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. As President Kim was arriving in Washington for the summit, Powell initially expressed his willingness to "pick up where President Clinton and administration left off" on the North Korean question. As soon as Powell's view was reported in the news media, conservative members of the Bush administration, most notably Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, immediately took issue with Powell's assessment and forced Powell to correct his earlier remark with the following statement:

we are undertaking a full review of our relationship with North Korea, coming up with policies that build on the past, coming up with policies unique to the administration, the other things we want to see put on the table . . .

⁵⁸² The most notable examples of the reversal of policy during the Bush presidency include the Kyoto protocol, the International Criminal Court, and the ABM Treaty. As argued in Chapter Two, a policy shift from nonproliferation to counterproliferation is another example.

⁵⁸³ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 212.

[Despite the expectation that] imminent negotiations are about to begin, that is not the case.⁵⁸⁴

With this public rejection of early dialogue with North Korea, President Kim's attempts at persuading President Bush to join the regional drive to engage North Korea failed, in what the South Korean media called "a diplomatic disaster."

Even prior to the second North Korean nuclear crisis, the Bush administration's policy toward North Korea was on a collision course with the regional current surrounding the Korean Peninsula. A few months after the summit between South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung and President Bush, a much-anticipated U.S. policy review, issued in June 2001, set the tone for a difficult time ahead. It laid out a set of new conditions for political reconciliation between the United States and North Korea. While the Clinton administration's policy on North Korea complemented and reinforced South Korea's sunshine policy of engagement, the Bush administration's policy review was "the anti-thesis of the Clinton policy," creating friction between the two allies.⁵⁸⁵ While the review stressed the importance of close cooperation with South Korea and Japan, references to the Perry Report or the U.S.-North Korea Joint Communiqué were nowhere to be found.⁵⁸⁶ Then in his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush went further and included North Korea in the "axis of evil," effectively sealing off any road to reconciliation between the United States and North Korea.

The speech stirred up anger among South Koreans. They viewed it as a U.S. tactic of "dragging them into unnecessary conflict with Pyongyang and sabotaging

⁵⁸⁴ Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), p. 325.

⁵⁸⁵ Hideya Kurata, "North Korea's Renewed Nuclear Challenge," *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Summer 2003, pp. 91-92.

⁵⁸⁶ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 216.

President Kim Dae-jung's efforts to engage Pyongyang."⁵⁸⁷ South Korea's ambassador to the United States, Yang Sung Chul, publicly questioned the validity of the speech in an interview: "as a result of the persistent pursuit of the sunshine policy, the tension level on the Korean Peninsula is at an all time low." Referring to President Bush's scheduled visit to Seoul in February 2002, he further demanded, "we expect he will clear up this lack of clarity on the issue."⁵⁸⁸ Reactions from the South Korean public were equally negative. A Gallup poll surveyed in February 2002 revealed that in a radical shift from previous surveys, only one-third of respondents expressed favorable views of the United States, while 60 percent of respondents viewed the United States unfavorably. Moreover, 62 percent deemed the axis of evil speech "an excessive statement to escalate tensions in the Korean peninsula."⁵⁸⁹

In Japan, even as Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's support for the U.S. in Afghanistan and Iraq dramatically enhanced Japan's alliance ties with the United States, others called for an "Asian diplomacy as a base and South Korea as the entry point."⁵⁹⁰ Given South Korea's reconciliation policy toward North Korea and its calls for others to follow suit, Japan's own efforts to engage North Korea were thought to have the potential to elevate Japan's regional status. In this regard, Koizumi's plan of direct diplomatic negotiations with North Korea was widely perceived as "a break out from the old security arrangement" with the United States.⁵⁹¹

Even after U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly briefed South Korea and Japan about North Korea's alleged enriched uranium program, the two

⁵⁸⁷ Dalton and Snyder, "Ties that Bind?" p. 126.

⁵⁸⁸ David E. Sanger, "A Nation Challenged: The Rogue List: Bush Aides Say Tough Tone Put Foes on Notice," *New York Times*, January 31, 2002.

⁵⁸⁹ Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 176.

⁵⁹⁰ Gilbert Rozman, "Regionalism in Northeast Asia," in Charles K. Armstrong, Gilbert Rozman, Samuel S. Kim, and Stephen Kotkin, eds., *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006), p. 163.

⁵⁹¹ Reiko Take, "Searching for Autonomy? Koizumi's 2002 Visit to North Korea," paper presented at the 46th International Studies Association Annual Convention, March 2005, Hawaii, p. 14.

governments did not slow down their efforts to engage North Korea. While the Kim Dae-Jung government in South Korea proceeded with its planned ministerial talks with the North, the Koizumi government in Japan forged ahead with a resumption of normalization talks.⁵⁹² Taken aback by the Japan-North Korean summit, the Bush administration proceeded with the much-delayed official visit to North Korea by an official delegation led by Kelly less than a month later. Instead of discussing issues of political reconciliation and exchanges, however, Kelly, under the instruction of hawkish officials in Washington, confronted his North Korean counterpart with the accusation that North Korea was pursuing an enriched uranium program. The first official meeting between Bush administration officials and their North Korean counterparts was turned into a cause of rapidly developing tension between the United States and North Korea. After a few weeks of delay, the revelation of North Korea's violation of the Agreed Framework was made public in November 2002, putting the Korean Peninsula at the center of another nuclear crisis.

By the end of 2002, the crisis intensified in a dangerous action-reaction dynamic between the United States and North Korea. In November 2002, the Bush administration suspended delivery of heavy fuel oil to North Korea and soon effectively ended the implementation of the Agreed Framework. Undeterred, the North Koreans opted to worsen the situation by expelling U.N. inspectors from North Korea and resuming the processing of spent fuel rods. As the year 2003 dawned, the situation became even tenser. In April 2003, North Korea became the first country ever to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). While launching the War in Iraq in March 2003, the Bush administration also dispatched military reinforcements to the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula and made it clear that the

⁵⁹² Sigal, *Global Asia*, p. 53.

United States, if necessary, would be willing to deal simultaneously with two different regional contingencies.

The Bush Doctrine and Role Conflict in East Asia

Given the region-wide yearning for greater regional roles and the salience of North Korea in each nation's regional vision, the Bush administration's approach in the wake of the second crisis was problematic for the regional actors. Faced with the possibility of a military confrontation between the United States and North Korea, countries in East Asia quickly moved to dampen the mounting tension on the Korean Peninsula. After hosting the unsuccessful three party talks in April 2003, the Chinese government engaged in an unprecedented level of shuttle diplomacy across the region and played a vital role in realizing the Six Party talks, participated in by all the regional players. Long aspiring to join such a regional mechanism on the Korean Peninsula, Japan soon became an active participant and "worked with South Korea to nudge the Bush administration towards negotiations with North Korea."⁵⁹³ As discussed later in the chapter, the common understanding of North Korea as a regional platform and the collective regional response to the Bush administration initially helped facilitate regionalism.

The regional efforts failed to cohere, however, as the Bush administration's approach affected East Asian domestic politics. Despite the regional call for greater flexibility toward North Korea, the United States continued to insist on the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantling (CVID) of North Korea's nuclear programs prior to any discussion on various bilateral issues between the United States and North Korea. The inflexible U.S. position prompted an equally hostile reaction from North Korea, with the Six Party processes arriving at stalemate by the end of 2004.

⁵⁹³ Hughes, Adelphi Paper, p. 43.

One of the most decisive and immediate consequences of the unfolding crisis and the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea was a loss of the regional momentum generated since the Perry Process. As the Bush administration moved to turn the Six Party Talks into a unified front against North Korea, efforts to enhance internally-shaped regional roles such as Koizumi's normalization drive and South Korea's engagement policy could not continue. The situation seriously undermined South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun's plan to expand Kim Dae-Jung's sunshine policy and turn South Korea into a "hub" of regional cooperation in East Asia.⁵⁹⁴ To change the tide of the emerging crisis on its borders, the South Korean government proposed a gradual and reciprocal approach aimed at achieving North Korea's denuclearization in exchange for security assurances and economic assistance by the regional actors.⁵⁹⁵

As President Roh himself described them, South Korean efforts at crisis resolution were rooted in South Korea's broader regional vision of establishing "a Northeast Asian community through a new regional order of cooperation and integration that transcends old antagonisms and conflicts among countries in this region" and "[linking] the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue to the establishment of a peace regime" on the Korean Peninsula and regional cooperation.⁵⁹⁶ The South Korean regional vision, however, was difficult to realize in the face of President Bush's constant warnings about North Korea's nuclear ambitions and "prison camps the size of whole cities" in North Korea. Still, the Roh government continued with its joint industrial project with North Korea in the North Korean city of Kaesung. President Roh even made an analogy between South Korea's policy toward North Korea and Abraham Lincoln's policy on slavery by suggesting that Lincoln was

⁵⁹⁴ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 242.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 240.

⁵⁹⁶ Roh Moo-hyun, "History, Nationalism and Community," *Global Asia*, Vol. 2, No. 1, April 2007.

“slow in liberating the slaves” because he put the unity of the nation ahead of all other priorities.⁵⁹⁷

Along with the call for national unity, the Roh government also sought “to move the center stage of Korean diplomacy to Northeast Asia”⁵⁹⁸ and, in the process, to redefine South Korea’s role in the region. On the day of his inauguration, President Roh met with Secretary of State Powell to make a strong plea for a multilateral approach on the North Korean issue. Roh also urged Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi to continue his efforts to normalize diplomatic relations with North Korea, while encouraging China’s constructive role at the UN Security Council over the North Korean issue.⁵⁹⁹ However, the Bush administration was determined to push for U.S.-directed regional roles for East Asian countries, calling for concerted pressures to isolate North Korea. This put an added difficulty on the South Koreans already torn between “the nationalistic bond between the two Koreas and the alliance security bond between the United States and South Korea.”⁶⁰⁰

The Bush administration’s push for U.S.-directed roles was more blunt in Japan. US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, in his meeting with then Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Abe Shinzo, declared, “the Japanese-American alliance is going after North Korea.”⁶⁰¹ The U.S. framing of Japan as a regional ally jointly targeting North Korea put the Japanese in a difficult position since they wanted to maintain a degree of autonomy in their alliance relationship and

⁵⁹⁷ David E. Sanger, “U.S. and Seoul Share a Goal but Not a Strategy on North Korea,” *New York Times*, November 17, 2005.

⁵⁹⁸ Jongryn Mo, “What Does South Korea Want?” *Policy Review*, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, April/May, 2007.

⁵⁹⁹ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 228.

⁶⁰⁰ J. J. Suh, “Bound to Last? The U.S.-Korea Alliance and Analytical Eclecticism,” in J.J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein and Allen Carlson, eds., *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 169.

⁶⁰¹ Richard Armitage Interview, *Bungei shunju*, July 2004, cited in Ito Narihiko, “Toward an independent Japanese Relationship With the United States,” *Japan Focus*, <http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=175>.

wished not to be held hostage to U.S. global strategy.⁶⁰² Morimoto Satoshi, a Japanese adviser to the government on foreign policy and security affairs, described Japan's dilemma in the following observation:

[There is] the clear emergence of the United States' unilateralism as the sole superpower and the increasing domination and hegemony in its interaction with other countries . . . We are faced with a difficult challenge: to incorporate U.S. unilateralism into broader trends of multilateralism and regionalism, and persuade it to act in harmony with them.⁶⁰³

Another Japanese expert even went so far as to state that the Bush administration was "able to halt the normalization negotiations between Japan and [North Korea] and restore US dominance in the resolution of issues on the Korean Peninsula."⁶⁰⁴ At the outset of the second crisis, Japan's concern stemmed in part from the fear that "a closer alliance relationship would draw them, as the junior partner, into supporting a U.S. agenda that would deprive them of their autonomous approach and complicate the independent pursuit of their own interests, particularly in Asia."⁶⁰⁵ Instead of following the Bush administration's approach of refusing to deal with North Korea, another Japanese expert has argued for "preserving a framework for normalization talks and spearheading a breakthrough in Northeast Asian politics."⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰² Kenneth B. Pyle, "Abe Shinzo and Japan's Change of Course," *NBR ANALYSIS*, Vol. 17, No. 4, The National Bureau of Asian Research, October 2006, p. 23.

⁶⁰³ *Gaiko Forum* 2, No.1 (Winter 2002), pp. 29-30, cited in Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), p. 352.

⁶⁰⁴ Jitsuro Terashima in Kiichi Fujiwara, Keiko Sakai, Jitsuro Terashima, "What will Result from an Attack on Iraq?" *Japan Echo*, vol. 30, no. 2, April 2003, pp. 10-16, cited in Reiko Take, "Searching for Autonomy? Koizumi's 2002 Visit to North Korea," paper presented at the annual convention of the International Studies Association, March 2005, pp. 19-20.

⁶⁰⁵ Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), p. 352.

⁶⁰⁶ Yoshihide Soeya, "Japanese Diplomacy and the North Korean Problem," *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Spring 2003, 17(1), pp. 53-61.

In China, the Bush administration's counterproliferation policy and its approach toward North Korea was viewed as part of a hegemonic strategy of using "military power to impose U.S. interests."⁶⁰⁷ The Bush administration's inflexible position toward North Korea and calls for forging an anti-rogue coalition were also problematic for the Chinese, since the Six Party talks could serve as "a regional framework to prevent China and others from challenging US hegemony."⁶⁰⁸ Although the immediate post-9/11 period witnessed better Sino-US relations, especially over cooperation in fighting terrorism, the Chinese did not conceal their concerns about the United States. For instance, Chu Shulong, a senior Chinese expert known for his relatively moderate view of U.S.-China relations, points to Chinese worries over a wide range of U.S. global and regional policies: among others, U.S. hegemony and unilateral behavior, U.S. policy toward North Korea, a leaked US *Nuclear Posture Review* which named China and North Korea, along with five other countries, as potential targets against which the United States may use nuclear weapons.⁶⁰⁹ As such, from a Chinese perspective, the Bush administration's call for China to play the role of a responsible stakeholder in dealing with North Korea was difficult to accept.

Over time, China's search for a greater regional role turned to efforts to forge a new regional order, one that differs from what the Bush administration had in mind with the adoption of the Bush Doctrine. In a marked departure from Deng Xiaoping's motto of "*tao guang yang hui*" (hide its ambitions and disguise its claws), the Chinese began to openly seek the role of "a more substantial player in a region where the

⁶⁰⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston and Daniela Stockmann, "Chinese Attitudes toward the United States and Americans," in Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 192.

⁶⁰⁸ Yang Bo and Jiang Wai, "Dongbeiya anquan jizhi: xianshi yu qianjing [Northeast Asia Security Mechanisms: Reality and Prospects]," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Modern International Relations], Issue 4, 2004, pp. 47-8.

⁶⁰⁹ Chu Shulong, "China's Perspectives on the Regional and World Order Since 9/11," in Han Sung-Ju ed., *Coping with 9-11: Asian Perspectives on Global and Regional Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2003), pp. 31-32.

United States traditionally holds far more sway.”⁶¹⁰ In the face of a unilateral approach by the Bush administration, the Chinese also considered regionalism as a tool to counterbalance the United States, albeit in a way that is “a more-charming and less-threatening form of exercising China’s influence.”⁶¹¹ As one Chinese expert bluntly puts it, “increasing regionalism is an important way to restrain American hegemonism.”⁶¹²

This is an unexpected development because the Chinese, at the outset of the second crisis, were more interested in turning the Six Party Talks into a viable regional security mechanism. In fact, since the second round of the Six Party Talks in early 2004, the Chinese delegation at the talks have pushed for the construction of a permanent regional security mechanism.⁶¹³ More broadly, this effort was rooted in a region-wide assumption that integrating the U.S. alliances with a broader regional mechanism is critical to long-term regional stability. This is why Japan and South Korea have sought to balance alliance ties and participation in broader regional forums.⁶¹⁴ China, for its part, has been seeking a multi-tiered regional order, including a concert of major powers, ad hoc coalitions aimed at addressing specific concerns such as the Six Party processes over North Korea, existing security alliances, such as the U.S.-Japanese alliance, and regional security mechanisms.⁶¹⁵ To the extent that the U.S.-Japan alliance pursues a policy of engagement and supports regional integration,

⁶¹⁰ Joseph Kahn, “China, Shy Giant, Shows Signs of Shedding Its False Modesty,” *New York Times*, December 9, 2006.

⁶¹¹ Jianwei Wang, “China’s Multilateral Diplomacy in the New Millennium,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 163.

⁶¹² Cited in Peter Hayes Gries, “China eyes the hegemon,” *Orbis*, Summer 2005, pp. 407-408.

⁶¹³ “Six-Party Talks Should Become Mechanism: FM Spokeswoman,” *People’s Daily*, February 23, 2004, cited in Jianwei Wang, “China’s Multilateral Diplomacy in the New Millennium,” p. 187.

⁶¹⁴ Dalton and Snyder, “Ties that Bind?” pp. 127.

⁶¹⁵ Wu Xinbo, “The End of the Silver Lining: A Chinese View of the U.S.-Japanese Alliance,” *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2005-6, pp. 126-127.

China would likely be “willing to live with it and even work with it” on various regional issues of common interest such as the North Korean challenge.⁶¹⁶

As the Bush administration forced regional actors to follow its hard line approach toward North Korea, they found themselves in a strategic quandary where internally-shaped regional roles were to be sacrificed in favor of U.S.-directed roles. By insisting on its own stance over North Korea and intensifying role conflict in East Asia, the Bush administration made regional efforts to balance relationship with the United States and regionalism very difficult. Moreover, by emboldening North Korea bashers in each country and influencing domestic coalition dynamics, the Bush administration reshaped the regional order in East Asia, especially in alliance politics and security regionalism among the regional actors.

5-3. The Bush Doctrine and Alliance Politics

For more than half a century, the United States has served as the backbone of regional stability in East Asia. The so-called hub-and-spokes system of its alliances with Japan and South Korea have not only maintained the regional status quo but also lessened the security dilemma among regional actors. By producing the doctrine of preemption and the global posture review (GPR), the Bush administration has charted a new course in alliance politics. As demonstrated in various U.S.-led multilateral security measures, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), more than ever before, the United States utilizes ad hoc, fluid coalitions, rather than a permanent, fixed alliance mechanism. At the same time, the Bush administration has been eager to transform its traditional alliances into a global military pact to address various global challenges. This trend stands in a stark contrast to the close alliance coordination

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 128-129.

between the United States and its two Asian allies in the implementation of the Agreed Framework and North Korea's missile moratorium during the Perry Process.⁶¹⁷

When the second North Korean crisis erupted, however, there was an expectation that the crisis would serve as a useful opportunity for enhancing security cooperation between Japan and South Korea and consolidating trilateral alliance relationship between the U.S. and its East Asian allies.⁶¹⁸ As the Bush Doctrine conflicted with the regional approach toward North Korea, such initial expectations did not come to fruition. Instead, the crisis has altered the contours of the U.S. East Asian alliance system. Overall, the U.S. alliance in East Asia have been losing regional focus, with the U.S.-South Korean alliance, until recently, strained over the North Korean issue and the U.S.-Japan alliance focusing more on global dimensions. In the process, the trilateral cooperation mechanism among the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, established under the banner of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG), faced mounting difficulties and ceased to exist. The task of alliance management grew even more difficult as Sino-South Korean security ties increased dramatically and South Korea's Roh Moo Hyun government talked of the role of regional balancer.

As the Bush administration pushed for putting concerted pressures on North Korea and dashed regional efforts to redefine relations with North Korea, South Korea's reactions to the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea were most prompt and decidedly negative. The U.S.-South Korean alliance has been "unraveling due to diverging perceptions of the principal threat, coordination problems regarding policies toward North Korea," and what Michael Armacost calls "a

⁶¹⁷ Ralph A. Cossa and Alan Oxley, "The U.S.-Korea Alliance," in Robert D. Blackwill and Paul Dibb, eds., *America's Asian Alliances* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), p. 81.

⁶¹⁸ Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, *Nuclear North Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 173.

significant erosion of public support for the alliance among elites in both countries.”⁶¹⁹ South Korean concern was first and foremost directed at the impact of the Bush administration’s approach on inter-Korean relations. Most South Koreans felt that the U.S. was “sabotaging North-South interactions.”⁶²⁰

The South Koreans in general have deemed President Bush’s policy toward North Korea as “aggressive, even hostile, and unaccommodating to South Korea’s interests,” sparking anti-U.S. sentiment among the South Korean public. Instead of respecting the regional approach, from a South Korean perspective, the Bush administration was “trying to project and impose its own understanding and approach on others.”⁶²¹ Similarly, the South Koreans tended to view the Pentagon’s decision to reposition and reduce U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula as “punishment” for anti-American sentiments, further worsening South Korea’s resentment of “the whims of U.S. policymakers.”⁶²² In his 2003 meeting with Secretary of State Colin Powell, then South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Young Kwan even warned that if the United States were not more forthcoming at the Six Party Talks, the South Korean government might not send troops to Iraq.⁶²³ Expressing his displeasure, Powell shot back, “That is not how allies deal with each other.”⁶²⁴

In the immediate aftermath of the second North Korean nuclear crisis, Japan played a crucial “mediating role between South Korea and the United States” over the

⁶¹⁹ Michael H. Armacost, “The Future of America’s Alliances in Northeast Asia,” in Michael H. Armacost and Daniel I. Okimoto, eds., *The Future of America’s Alliances in Northeast Asia* (Stanford: Asia-Pacific Research Center, 2004), p. 16.

⁶²⁰ Eric V. Larson, Norman D. Levin with Seonhae Baik, Bogdan Savych, *Ambivalent Allies?: A Study of South Korean Attitudes Toward the U.S.* (Santa Monica, CA: the Rand Corporation, 2004), p. 34.

⁶²¹ Kang Choi, “A View on America’s Role in Asia and the Future of the ROK-U.S. Alliance,” in *The Newly Emerging Asian Order and the Korean Peninsula*, Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies, Vol. 15, 2005, Korea Economic Institute, Washington, D.C., p. 225.

⁶²² Katharine Moon, “South Korea-U.S. Relations,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2004, p. 59.

⁶²³ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 242.

⁶²⁴ *New York Times*, October 14, 2003, cited in Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 242.

North Korean issue.⁶²⁵ The South Korean government positively assessed Japan's role in "inducing peaceful negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea."⁶²⁶ For instance, during respective bilateral summits with President Bush and South Korean President Roh in May and June 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi attempted to "bridge the gap between South Korea and the United States," while using its participation in the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) as a chance to harmonize "the disparate views and attitudes of South Korea and the United States."⁶²⁷ In this way, at the beginning of the second crisis, the TCOG offered U.S. Asian allies an additional benefit of ensuring that "the United States will not move unilaterally on policy toward [North Korea]."⁶²⁸

The Collapse of the Trilateral Cooperation at the TCOG

From its inception in 1999 to September 2004, there were 35 TCOG meetings among the three allies.⁶²⁹ The frequency of meetings attests to the level of commitment to maintaining intra-alliance dialogue among the Asian allies. As the second crisis deepened, however, the TCOG was transformed into an "informal caucus among allies" within the broader Six-Party process.⁶³⁰ Despite its significance as the first attempt at multilateralism among U.S. allies in the region, especially in the wake of the second crisis, growing signs of tension emerged among the three allies in the

⁶²⁵ C.S. Eliot Kang, "Japan in Inter-Korean Relations," in Samuel S. Kim, ed. *Inter-Korean Relations: Problems and Prospects* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p. 105.

⁶²⁶ Kim, "The Sunshine Policy and Its Impact on South Korea's Relations with Major Powers," p. 608.

⁶²⁷ Kang, "Japan in Inter-Korean Relations," p. 105.

⁶²⁸ Victor D. Cha, "Multilateral Security in Asia and the U.S.-Japan Alliance," in G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi eds. *Reinventing the Alliance: U.S.-Japan Security Partnership in an Era of Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 152.

⁶²⁹ For a detailed chronology of the meetings, see *Coordinating regional strategies for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula*, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis Report on the NK Nuclear crisis, May 2004, pp. 26-27. For a South Korean view of the TCOG, see Jung-Hoon Lee, "Multilateral Security Arrangements: A South Korean Perspective," paper presented at the International Political Studies Association Conference in Quebec, Canada, August 4, 2000. However, few scholarly works have focused specifically on the role of the TCOG. This, in my view, attests to the dwindling role of the group, especially after the outbreak of the second crisis.

⁶³⁰ Schoff, "Building on the TCOG."

TCOG meetings. For instance, Lee Soo Hyuck, former South Korean representative at the TCOG and the Six Party talks, admitted that there were disagreements on specific issues at the TCOG meetings that required the use of “indirect and implicative” language in an attempt to paper over the differences.⁶³¹

Even before the outbreak of the second crisis, signs of trouble emerged over the apparent inconsistency in U.S. policy toward North Korea. At the January 2002 TCOG meeting, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly expressed his willingness to meet North Korean officials “any time, any place without preconditions.” But only four days later, President Bush delivered his axis-of-evil speech, effectively nullifying Kelly’s remark and further delaying Kelly’s visit to Pyongyang. The three countries also used subsequent meetings in April and September 2002 mainly as venues for post-hoc management of South Korea’s special envoy’s visit to Pyongyang and Koizumi’s North Korea visit and not as opportunities for formulating a coordinated policy toward North Korea. In particular, the announcement of Koizumi’s planned Pyongyang trip “took almost everyone by surprise, and it underscored how the TCOG was not a forum for discussing such sensitive information.”⁶³²

Soon, the TCOG began to “take on characteristics more of a trilateral negotiation process than of a means to coordinate their respective North Korean policies.”⁶³³ Most importantly, some South Koreans argued that the trilateral meeting could be better used to “help soften the Bush team’s harder line.”⁶³⁴ One Japanese analyst seemed to agree when he maintained that President Roh Moo Hyun’s emphasis on South Korea’s “leadership role” in dealing with the North might be “an attempt to

⁶³¹ Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, p. 246.

⁶³² *Coordinating Regional Strategies*, IFPA Report May 2004, p. 18.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

restrain the United States from launching a Bush-style preemptive strike.”⁶³⁵ Not surprisingly, the meetings were soon relegated to a channel for covering the gap between the allies, particularly between the U.S. call for suspension of the Agreed Framework and South Korea’s push for a U.S. nonaggression pledge to North Korea. It is in this changing context that the three countries decided to make the trilateral meetings informal, dropping the name TCOG altogether. The U.S. State Department soon started downplaying the importance of the meetings, simply stating that they are “just informal consultations between allies.”⁶³⁶

South Korea’s Growing Ties with China

Another source of concern for alliance management has been an improving relationship between South Korea and China. Since the normalization of diplomatic ties in 1992, the Chinese and South Korean governments have substantially expanded their cooperation in various areas, particularly in economic affairs. Faced with a unilateralist U.S. approach toward North Korea, some Koreans have been calling for “closer relations with China as providing an attractive counterweight to possible U.S. unilateralism on the Korean Peninsula.”⁶³⁷ Trapped between its alliance ties with the United States and its efforts to improve relations with North Korea, South Korea may indeed find that its best option is to combine “its leverage and influence on North Korea with that of China in pursuit of a diplomatic breakthrough.”⁶³⁸ In this way, the North Korea crisis has served to shape “a new alignment in East Asia, with China and

⁶³⁵ Kurata, “North Korea’s Renewed Nuclear Challenge,” p. 96.

⁶³⁶ *Coordinating regional strategies*, pp. 18-19.

⁶³⁷ Geun Lee, “The Rise of China and Korea’s China Policy,” in Tae-Hyo Kim and Brad Glosserman, eds., *The Future of U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Balancing Values and Interests* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2004), p. 198.

⁶³⁸ Scott Snyder, “South Korea’s Squeeze Play,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(4), Autumn 2005, p. 94.

South Korea moving closer toward each other on one side and the United States on the other.”⁶³⁹

Early signs of South Korea’s deference to China on regional security issues date back to March 1994. During the first North Korean nuclear crisis, then South Korea’s ambassador to China, Hwang Byung-Tae, caused a stir by saying,

South Korea-China cooperation over the issue of North Korea’s nuclear program should go beyond the current level of simply notifying Beijing what has already been decided between Seoul and Washington . . . South Korea’s diplomacy should break out of its heavy reliance exclusively on the United States.⁶⁴⁰

While the South Korean government immediately dismissed his view and the ambassador retracted his remark, South Korea’s consideration of China’s regional position was clearly on display.⁶⁴¹ In the late 1990s, Chinese-South Korean ties further improved with regular defense ministerial meetings occurring since August 1999 and mutual naval port calls in October 2001 and in May 2002.⁶⁴²

After the second North Korean nuclear crisis, China’s proactive role in the Six Party processes elevated the relationship between China and South Korea to a new level. With the North Korean challenge driving them in a similar direction, both governments increasingly “defer to each other’s preferences,” along the way making their policies toward North Korea “nearly identical.”⁶⁴³ In fact, many South Korean

⁶³⁹ David C. Kang, “Japan: U.S. Partner or Focused on Abductees?,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(4), Autumn 2005, p. 114.

⁶⁴⁰ Jae Ho Chung, *Between Ally and Partner: Korea-China Relations and the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 90-91.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁶⁴³ David Shambaugh, “China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the Long Term,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 26(2), Spring 2003, p. 50.

and Chinese officials observed that “no discernible differences existed between themselves as far as the North Korean nuclear issue was concerned.”⁶⁴⁴ Most of Chinese officials and experts I interviewed subscribed to this view.⁶⁴⁵ The Chinese maintain that the ending of the Cold War on the Korean peninsula is “the key to the peace of the peninsula” and that a comprehensive partnership between China and South Korea is critical to the ending of such cold war tension on the peninsula.⁶⁴⁶ In a November 2005 summit, President Roh Moo Hyun and Chinese President Hu Jintao declared that cooperation between the two neighbors had entered “a new stage.” Some of the joint agreements at the time included the setting-up of a hotline between their foreign ministries, the establishment of a regular discussion channel between vice foreign ministers, expansion of military cooperation, and the doubling of bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2012.⁶⁴⁷

The positive view of Sino-South Korean relations is widely shared by the Chinese policy elites. From a Chinese perspective, the bilateral ties not only prevent formation of the “cold war mentality” in the region but also open the way for regional cooperation in security and economic areas. In this view, the comprehensive partnership between China and South Korea has also “upgraded [South Korea]’s political status and influence in the Northeast Asian region immensely,” along the way contributing to the summit and the subsequent reconciliation drive between the two Koreas.⁶⁴⁸ Amid these developments, a recent report by South Korea’s Presidential Commission on Policy Planning called for establishing “an ‘Asian Union’ that would include North Korea,” and transforming the status of South Korea “from a [South] Korea that is focused on the United States to one focused on Asia, inclusive of both

⁶⁴⁴ Chung, *Between Ally and Partner*, p. 90.

⁶⁴⁵ Interview 02-04, Beijing, November 3, 2004., Interview 04-04, Beijing, November 10, 2004.

⁶⁴⁶ “Past, status quo and future of China-ROK relations,” *People’s Daily*, March 30, 2005.

⁶⁴⁷ Samuel S. Kim, “China’s Conflict-Management Approach to the Nuclear Standoff on the Korean Peninsula,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 30, No. 1, p. 34.

⁶⁴⁸ Li Dunqiu, “Sino-ROK friendship does N.E Asia a world of good,” *People’s Daily*, August 24, 2007.

China and North Korea.”⁶⁴⁹ According to an April 2004 survey of the 204 newly elected members of the South Korean National Assembly, 50 percent of the ruling Uri party members listed China as South Korea’s most important ally, whereas 42 percent chose the United States.⁶⁵⁰

Enhanced China-South Korean ties also meant that South Korea would be “a reluctant participant at best in any possible U.S.-led effort to pressure or constrain China and that the U.S. ability to establish a future order on the Korean peninsula contrary to Chinese interests also will be curbed.”⁶⁵¹ In fact, China’s preferred policy outcome is inter-Korean reconciliation without unification, or what can be called the “status quo plus” outcome: a peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas, ensuring not only a stable North Korean regime but “the peninsula being drawn into a Chinese sphere of influence.”⁶⁵² As such, improving inter-Korean reconciliation also puts China in an enviable position since China can fully cooperate with South Korea on a wide-range of issues while, at the same time, keeping its traditional ties with North Korea largely intact.⁶⁵³ All in all, China has taken advantage of difficulties in U.S.-South Korean relations and moved even closer to Seoul both politically and diplomatically, with the potential “to influence the security environment to its advantage in a post-unification Korea.”⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁹ Gi-Wook Shin and Paul Y. Chang, “The Politics of Nationalism in U.S.-Korean Relations,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2004, pp. 140-41.

⁶⁵⁰ Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 217.

⁶⁵¹ Robert Sutter, “The Rise of China and South Korea,” in *The Newly Emerging Asian Order and the Korean Peninsula*, Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies, Vol. 15, 2005, Korea Economic Institute, Washington, D.C. p. 32.

⁶⁵² Andrew Scobell, “China and Inter-Korean Relations: Beijing as Balancer,” in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *Inter-Korean Relations: Problems and Prospects* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 90.

⁶⁵³ Kim, “The Sunshine Policy and Its Impact on South Korea’s Relations with Major Powers,” p. 605.

⁶⁵⁴ Michael D. Swaine, “U.S. Security Policy under Clinton and Bush: China and Korea,” in Chae-Jin Lee, ed., *U.S. Security Policy Under Clinton and Bush: Continuity and Change*, Monograph Series, Number 17, The Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies Claremont McKenna College, 2005, pp. 75-76.

South Korea's Regional Balancer Role

Alliance tension with South Korea also has implications for broader U.S. regional strategy. At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, then U.S. Commander of the Pacific Command, William Fallon, argued that the U.S.-South Korean alliance must adapt to “the changing security environment” represented by “China’s military modernization.” By cooperating more closely with the U.S. and Japan, he reasoned, South Korea would be able to shift its strategic focus from a North Korean contingency to “a more regional view of security and stability.”⁶⁵⁵ The U.S. call for a South Korean regional role based on the U.S. regional strategic blueprint, however, did not produce any meaningful results. Instead of joining the U.S. regional campaign to balance against China, the South Korean government proposed a new role of regional balancer.

In March 2005 President Roh publicly declared: “we will not be embroiled in any conflict in Northeast Asia against our will. This is an absolutely firm principle we cannot yield under any circumstances.”⁶⁵⁶ With this remark, President Roh Moo-hyun essentially declared that South Korea would not join the United States and Japan to counter China. Instead, he expressed his willingness to seek a multiparty security regime that would include China. His view is well reflected in his interview with a South Korean newspaper:

Some suggest that South Korea should remain in ‘camp diplomacy’ to defend itself and have a deterrent to a war on or around the peninsula . . . but my administration’s policy is that we should overcome the Cold War confrontation

⁶⁵⁵ Michael T. Klare, “Containing China: The US’s real objective,” *Asia Times*, April 20, 2006.

⁶⁵⁶ President Roh’s address at the 53rd Commencement and Commissioning Ceremony of the Korea Air Force Academy, March 8, 2005, cited in Samuel S. Kim, “China’s Conflict-Management Approach to the Nuclear Standoff on the Korean Peninsula,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2006, p. 33.

and march along with our neighbors toward a multilateral security regime on the basis of expanding economic cooperation in the region.

If the U.S. manages the strategic structure based on confrontation with the U.S. and Japan on one side and China and Russia on the other, tensions would hang over the region and something miserable could take place.⁶⁵⁷

In a March 2005 speech delivered at a graduation ceremony of a South Korean military academy, President Roh formally declared South Korea's "balancer role" (*gyunhyungja-ron*): "Korea will play the role of a balancer, not only on the Korean peninsula, but throughout Northeast Asia."⁶⁵⁸ The speech immediately stirred up controversy both in Washington and Seoul, complicating further alliance management between the United States and South Korea.⁶⁵⁹ Meanwhile, a senior Chinese security expert at Renda positively assesses Roh's recent manifestation of South Korea's regional policy by commenting that his speech "could mark a significant change" for the region.⁶⁶⁰ A South Korean opinion piece also attributes Roh's speech not only to South Korea's concern about the U.S. strategic plan in East Asia but also to its growing resentment at Japan's lackluster support for South Korea's engagement policy after the abduction scandal.⁶⁶¹

The U.S.-Japan Alliance and Global Focus

Before North Korea bashers gained prominence in Japan's domestic politics, the mainstream view in Japan was that Japan should engage more fully in regional

⁶⁵⁷ Ryu Jin, "Roh Seeks N-E Asian Security Regime," *The Korea Times*, October 21, 2005.

⁶⁵⁸ Emanuel Pastreich, "The Balancer: Roh Moo-hyun's Vision of Korean Politics and the Future of Northeast Asia," *Japan Focus*, August 1, 2005.

⁶⁵⁹ *Donga Ilbo*, April 15, 2005.

⁶⁶⁰ Interview 09-05, Beijing, April 22, 2005.

⁶⁶¹ *Shindonga*, May 2005.

security cooperation.⁶⁶² In a 2002 policy recommendation, prepared by the Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR) and presented to Prime Minister Koizumi, for instance, a group of prominent Japanese policy elites and experts called for “going beyond the current alliance system and building a web of multilateral cooperation over various issues from military to non-traditional security issues.”⁶⁶³ In striking similarity to the aforementioned Chinese version of building a multi-tiered regional order, the Japanese experts also recommend the establishment of a “multi-layered network” of East Asian security including the U.S.-Japan alliance and regional security frameworks.⁶⁶⁴

The prolonged second crisis and the rise of conservatives in Japan dashed those initial hopes. As the prevalent conservative group rejected the regionalist vision and embraced the U.S. threat perception of North Korea, what followed was “a de facto globalization” of the US-Japan alliance.⁶⁶⁵ Already in the Japanese parliamentary election held in November 2003, for instance, the key foreign policy agenda was not East Asia, but the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance, which contrasted sharply with South Korea’s emphasis on the age of Northeast Asian cooperation.⁶⁶⁶ The most worrisome development, writes Gavan McCormack, was “the 2005/06 agreement to the fusion of command and intelligence between Japanese and U.S. forces.” This agreement effectively subordinates Japan to U.S. strategic leadership and commits it to collective defense, one of the remaining security taboos that Washington has been

⁶⁶² Interview 04-05, Tokyo, March 22, 2005.

⁶⁶³ Summary of the report under the title of “Building a System of Security and Cooperation in East Asia” is available on the Web site of The Japan Forum on International Relations, Inc. <http://www.jfir.or.jp/e/pr_e/e-jf-pr-22/pr22-body.html>.

⁶⁶⁴ Introduction of the recommendation can be found at <http://www.jfir.or.jp/e/pr_e/e-jf-pr-22/pr22-top.html>.

⁶⁶⁵ Aurelia George Mulgan, “Japan and the Bush Agenda: Alignment or divergence?” in Mark Beeson, ed., *Bush and Asia: America’s evolving relations with East Asia* (Routledge: London and New York, 2005), p. 111.

⁶⁶⁶ Lee Jongwon, *Hangyorye Shinmun*, November 3, 2003.

eager to eliminate.⁶⁶⁷ While Japan's latest New Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) made a passing reference to cooperation toward "the realization of an East Asian Community," the central focus is placed clearly on the U.S.-Japan alliance.⁶⁶⁸

Over time, Japan and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to pressing North Korea to take steps toward denuclearization and to call on China to increase transparency with regard to its military. The two nations also maintained that the alliance is "consistent and complementary" with NATO in contributing to world peace and stability, and Japan will work to achieve "broader" cooperation with the alliance.⁶⁶⁹ When fully implemented, the NDPG could also lead to a weakening of the Self Defense Forces' traditional role in favor of other security responsibilities, including a contribution to "the maintenance of global order."⁶⁷⁰ In a 2006 joint statement, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and U.S. President George W. Bush formally proposed the expansion of the bilateral alliance to a so-called global scale, based on "common values and interests," including areas outside of traditional security cooperation. Demonstrating the downfall of the regionalist vision, they simply reaffirmed that strong bilateral cooperation would contribute to maintaining peace and stability in the region.⁶⁷¹

As the beacon of Japan's North Korea bashers, Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, went even further by declaring, "the changing security environment for Japan and the world calls on Japan to contribute to global challenges."⁶⁷² To this end, he proposed to establish what he called the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity," including the United

⁶⁶⁷ Jeff Kingston, "Japan, just a puppet of America?: Client State: Japan in the American Embrace, by Gavan McCormack" *Japan Times*, July 8, 2007.

⁶⁶⁸ *The New National Defense Program Guidelines, East Asian Strategic Review 2005* (Tokyo, Japan: The National Institute for Defense Studies, 2005), p. 8.

⁶⁶⁹ "Japan, U.S. press N. Korea on nukes, China on transparency," *Japan Times*, May 3, 2007.

⁶⁷⁰ Daniel M. Kliman, *Japan's Security Strategy in the Post-9/11 World: Embracing a New Realpolitik* (Westport: Praeger, 2006).p. 24

⁶⁷¹ "Koizumi, Bush trumpet new global-scale alliance," *Japan Times*, June 30, 2006.

⁶⁷² "Abe apologizes anew for wartime sex slavery," *Japan Times*, April 22, 2007.

States and other democratic countries.⁶⁷³ In a more concrete move, in January 2006, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso met with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer for the first ministerial-level security talks between the three countries. At this meeting, they discussed not only concerns over the Taiwan Strait but also possible joint military exercises between the three allied countries.⁶⁷⁴ As the U.S.-Japan alliance increasingly focusing on concerns beyond the region, the traditional U.S. regional alliance aimed at deterring the Soviet Union was “being replaced by a nascent anti-China US-dominated multilateral alliance system.”⁶⁷⁵ However, given the fact that South Korea has refused to join this new regional arrangement, writes Richard Tanter, the “new tripartite security architecture is decidedly wobbly.”⁶⁷⁶

5-4. The Bush Doctrine and East Asian Regionalism

The gradual shift in Japan’s strategic focus from East Asia to the globe did not follow the trajectory of Japan’s strategic evolution in the earlier periods. There were signs of broadening regionalism, often proposed by senior Japanese government officials. For instance, at the 2002 Asia Security Conference, also known as the Shangri-la Dialogue,⁶⁷⁷ then Japan’s Defense Agency Director Gen Nakatani suggested that the Conference be developed into “a formal Asia-Pacific Defense Ministerial Meeting to complement the largely foreign ministry-centered [ASEAN

⁶⁷³ Taro Aso, “Policy Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Taro Aso to the 166th Session of the Diet,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan, January 27, 2007.

⁶⁷⁴ Cynthia Banham, “China snubbed as Australia, Japan, US discuss security,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 6, 2006.

⁶⁷⁵ Richard Tanter, “The New American-led Security Architecture in the Asia Pacific: Binding Japan and Australia, containing China,” *Japan Focus*, March 17, 2007.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Founded in 2002 by Britain’s International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), the dialogue is an annual meeting of defense ministers from most of Asian countries, the United States, and U.S. allies such as Britain, France, Australia, and Canada. See its official website <http://www.iiss.org/conferences/the-shangri-la-dialogue>.

Regional Forum].”⁶⁷⁸ More importantly, he also proposed a new security framework that would include China, the two Koreas, and the United States and, in his official visit to Seoul in April 2002, put forward joint research with South Korea on a regional security framework.⁶⁷⁹ Even in the immediate aftermath of the second crisis, at a trilateral summit in November 2002, Japan joined China and South Korea in promoting regional cooperation in a wide range of areas, while exchanging views on the situation on the Korean peninsula.⁶⁸⁰

The strained alliance ties between the United States and South Korea also had broader implications for nascent regionalism in East Asia. Writing about the prospects for regionalism in East Asia, Gilbert Rozman envisioned a “Korean peninsula becoming the center of an entire region in search of a community that the United States may not easily accept.”⁶⁸¹ In fact, in response to the U.S. plea to forge a unified front against North Korea, President Roh attempted to build an alternative regional coalition with China and Japan against the United States. At the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) meeting in October 2003, for example, President Roh met with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, and they issued, for the first time, a joint statement calling on the parties to seek “a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and to cooperate for the second round of the Six-Party Talks.”⁶⁸² More importantly, the statement, entitled “Joint Declaration on the

⁶⁷⁸ Hughes, *Japan's Re-emergence as a 'Normal' Military Power*, p. 122.

⁶⁷⁹ Takahara, “Japan’s Political Response to the Rise of China,” p. 169.

⁶⁸⁰ Xia Liping, “North Korea’s Nuclear Program and Asian Security Cooperation,” in *The Newly Emerging Asian Order and the Korean Peninsula*, Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies, Vol. 15, 2005, Korea Economic Institute, Washington, D.C., p. 118.

⁶⁸¹ Gilbert Rozman, “Regionalism in Northeast Asia,” in Charles K. Armstrong, Gilbert Rozman, Samuel S. Kim, and Stephen Kotkin, eds., *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006), p. 166.

⁶⁸² Lee, *A Troubled Peace*, pp. 242-43.

Promotion of Tripartite Cooperation among China, Japan, and South Korea,” called for a strengthening security dialogue among the three countries.⁶⁸³

The Rise of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), 2001-2004

The idea of having the APT meetings first emerged in the early 1990s with Malaysian Prime Minister Mohammed Mahathir’s proposal for forming an East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG) and later an East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC). These suggestions failed to materialize owing much to U.S. opposition and the emergence of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as a larger regional alternative. The idea later resurfaced in December 1997 when leaders of ASEAN and China, Japan and South Korea convened an informal meeting on the sidelines of the Second ASEAN Informal Summit in Malaysia. The APT process was formally institutionalized at the Third Summit in 1999 with a Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation.⁶⁸⁴ During this early period, however, cooperation among East Asian countries remained marginal and limited. In November 2000, at the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) meetings in Singapore, Japanese Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung agreed to enhance trilateral cooperation on a variety of issues. The first joint statement by the three countries features “[t]he five-point agreement on environmental, economic, cultural, and information technology (IT) cooperation, and transnational efforts at combating crime and piracy.”⁶⁸⁵ What is significant in this list of agreements is the absence of security related issues other than transnational crimes.

⁶⁸³ Thomas G. Moore, “Chinese Foreign Policy in the Age of Globalization,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 139.

⁶⁸⁴ ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation, ASEAN Secretariat, available at <http://www.aseansec.org/16580.htm>.

⁶⁸⁵ Jae-Seung Lee, “ASEAN Plus Three and East Asian Cooperation,” *IFANS Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2, December 2003; Victor Cha, “Ending 2000 with a Whimper, Not a Bang,” *Comparative Connections*, 4th Quarter, 2000, Japan-Korea Relations.

As examined in Chapter Four, East Asian regionalism in security matters gathered momentum as the Perry Process facilitated regional cooperation over the North Korean issue. In 2000, then Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji suggested that the APT “could become the main channel of East Asia regional cooperation.” In 2001, Zhu expanded China’s vision for the APT to include “dialogue and cooperation to political and security fields.”⁶⁸⁶ For its part, Japan also contributed to the regional effort by hosting the first trilateral foreign minister-level meeting in July 2002. At the APT meeting in Cambodia in November 2002, the three countries held a trilateral summit, agreeing to deepen China-Japan-ROK trilateral cooperation in various issue areas and exchanging their views on the North Korean situation.⁶⁸⁷ The Japanese also stressed the importance of the joint statement on North Korea at the 2003 APT meetings, with a Foreign Ministry website highlighting that the three East Asian countries “reaffirm their commitment to a peaceful solution of the nuclear issue facing the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while addressing all the concerns of the parties and working together to maintain peace and stability on the Peninsula.”⁶⁸⁸ Later in November 2003, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo visited Japan and said that “China intended to cooperate closely with Japan” for peaceful resolution of the North Korean situation.⁶⁸⁹

Overall, compared with the dismal failure of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) among America’s Asian allies, the ASEAN Plus Three meetings (APT) seemed to be evolving into a useful regional site for security cooperation. Even after the second North Korean nuclear crisis broke out, a new

⁶⁸⁶ Jianwei Wang, “China’s Multilateral Diplomacy in the New Millennium,” in Yong Deng and Fei-Ling Wang, eds., *China Rising: Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 176.

⁶⁸⁷ Xia Liping, “North Korea’s Nuclear Program and Asian Security Cooperation,” in *The Newly Emerging Asian Order and the Korean Peninsula*, Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies, Vol. 15, 2005, Korea Economic Institute, Washington, D.C., p. 185.

⁶⁸⁸ “Japan-NK relations,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan, October 2003.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

pattern of regionalism among China, Japan and South Korea continued. At their tripartite meetings, discussion began to cover sensitive security issues and mutual concerns. Among them, the North Korean nuclear issue was at the top of the list. More specifically, on October 7, 2003, at the APT Summit in Bali, China, Japan and South Korea issued the Joint Declaration on the Promotion of Tripartite Cooperation stating, “the three countries reaffirm their commitment to a peaceful solution of the nuclear issue facing the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”⁶⁹⁰ In July 2004, foreign ministers of China, South Korea and Japan also held a trilateral meeting during another APT session in Jakarta, Indonesia, discussing East Asian regional cooperation and North Korea’s nuclear crisis.⁶⁹¹ As late as the November 2004 APT summit in Laos, the three countries reiterated their commitment to a peaceful solution of the nuclear issue through dialogue.⁶⁹²

Although facilitated in part by the need to consult over the North Korean issue, regional cooperation goes beyond Korean Peninsula issues. In fact, even at the height of the second North Korean nuclear crisis, many South Koreans, including President Kim Dae-jung, believed that the Six Party framework should go beyond the nuclear issue to become a permanent regional organization.⁶⁹³ Early signs were promising as the three East Asian countries discussed regional security issues with a broader regional security system in their minds. On June 18, 2003, for instance, the foreign ministers of China, Japan, and South Korea held a trilateral meeting in Cambodia. During the meeting, South Korean Foreign Minister Youn Youngkwan and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Gawaguchi explained to Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing the results of the June 2003 TCOG meeting and discussed the prospect of

⁶⁹⁰ Text of the Joint Declaration on the Promotion of Tripartite Cooperation among Japan, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Korea, October 7, 2003.

⁶⁹¹ *Munwha Ilbo*, July 1, 2004.

⁶⁹² *Japan Times*, November 30, 2004.

⁶⁹³ Kim Dae-jung, “Regionalism in the Age of Asia,” *Global Asia*, p.12.

expanding the three party talks involving China and the U.S., to a five party system including South Korea and Japan.⁶⁹⁴

Soon, various foreign ministry director-general level meetings and consultations became a regular feature of regional security.⁶⁹⁵ For instance, the three countries' foreign ministry officials in charge of Asian affairs held a tripartite meeting in Seoul and Beijing in November 26-28 and a "Japan-ROK-China Director-General-level Meeting" was held in Seoul in December 29, 2003.⁶⁹⁶ Along with official meetings, the three East Asian countries facilitated a flurry of semi-governmental Track II and nongovernmental meetings. Table 5-1 illustrates this new regional development, as manifested in several key governmental and Track II activities among the three countries.

The Decline of Regionalism after 2005

Unfortunately, early positive developments in East Asian regionalism did not last long, as the nuclear crisis reached a stalemate in late 2004 and Japan's North Korea bashers rose to central political positions amid anti-North Korean sentiment. Hamstrung by an unprecedented level of anti-North Korean feelings on the domestic front and an unwavering hard line stance toward North Korea on the part of its ally, the United States, the Koizumi government was unable to find a breakthrough over the North Korean issue. In September 2004, in an unusual meeting with a North Korean vice foreign minister on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Koizumi made another attempt at jump-starting the normalization talks. In this meeting, Koizumi asked the North Korean minister to convey his message to Kim Jong Il that "it is important to both normalize ties between the two countries and get

⁶⁹⁴ *Segye Ilbo*, June 18, 2003.

⁶⁹⁵ Overview: The International Situation and Japanese Diplomacy in 2003, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, May 2004.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

on with six-party talks.” While the North Korean minister stressed the importance of the six-party process, he made it clear that North Korea could not attend the talks due to what they viewed as “a hostile U.S. policy.”⁶⁹⁷

Table 5-1. East Asian Regional Security Meetings (2002-2004)

Venue	Main Features
<p>The 2002 Korea-Japan Millennium Symposium October 26, 2002, Tokyo, Japan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participation by former South Korean President Kim Young-Sam, Former Japanese Prime Ministers Mori Yoshiro, Nakasone Yasuhiro and regional experts. -Masao Okonogi of Keio University called for sharing regional identity, not just system (democracy, market economy and U.S. alliances). -Former Chairman of CSCAP Korea Dalchoong Kim called for regional multilateral cooperation led by China, Japan, and South Korea.⁶⁹⁸
<p>The First Conference of the Network of East Asian Think-tanks (NEAT) September 29-30, 2003, Beijing, China</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The inaugural meeting of the NEAT, one of the two multilateral consultation agendas proposed in the previous APT meetings (The other one is the East Asian Forum below). -The conference was designed to promote Track II cooperation in East Asia with the aim to provide intellectual support and policy recommendations on key economic and security issues. -Discussed the establishment of a regional cooperation organization suited to the regional conditions.⁶⁹⁹
<p>The First East Asia Forum (EAF) December 16, 2003, Seoul, South Korea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hundreds of members of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) participated in the inaugural meeting of the EAF. -South Korean President Roh declared, “Resolving NK nuclear challenge and the peaceful settlement of the Korean Peninsula would contribute to the peace and prosperity in East Asia.”⁷⁰⁰
<p>Symposium on Northeast Asian Security Cooperation and the Six Party Talks May 28, 2004, Seoul, South Korea.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hosted by South Korea’s Donga Ilbo, Japan’s Asahi Shimbun, and China’s State Council’s Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations. -Participants shared a similar view of the situation regarding the Six Party talks. -While admitting different interests of each country at the talks, participants assessed the six party processes as a good starting point for regional cooperation.

⁶⁹⁷ “Koizumi sends message to North Korea,” *Japan Times*, September 24, 2004.

⁶⁹⁸ *Donga Ilbo*, October 28, 2002.

⁶⁹⁹ “The Coordinator-General’s Report of the First Annual Conference of Network of East Asian Think-tanks,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, October 14, 2003, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/zgcydyhz/dqc/t28379.htm>.

⁷⁰⁰ *Hangyorye Shinmun*, December 16, 2003.

Table 5-1. (Continued)

Venue	Main Features
The First China, Japan, South Korea Forum for Peaceful Development and Security October 11, 2004, Beijing, China.	-In this forum, about 70 governmental and nongovernmental security experts from the three East Asian countries participated. -Participants exchanged their views of such diverse issues North Korea's nuclear programs, China-Japan rivalry, and forging a Northeast Asian security framework. ⁷⁰¹

The U.S. hard line position on North Korea also made Chinese efforts to make headway at the Six Party talks difficult. At the beginning of the second crisis, the Chinese, along the lines of its closer cooperation with South Korea, saw the potential for cooperation between China and Japan over the issues of North Korea and the implementation of regional security mechanisms such as the APT meetings. As the Six Party talks reached a stalemate, one prominent Chinese analyst lamented that both parties did not seem to seize the opportunities for regional cooperation.⁷⁰² Given Koizumi's close personal relations with President Bush, some regional actors initially hoped that Japan would play a bridge-building role between the hawkish United States and more moderate regional countries.⁷⁰³ By late 2004, however, the stalled situation and the growing dominance of conservative voices in Japan's political scene left the Koizumi government with few options. As a result, previous efforts at balancing Japan's internally-shaped regional role and externally-expected role gave in to an exclusive focus on alliance ties with the United States.

⁷⁰¹ *Hanguk Ilbo*, October 11, 2004.

⁷⁰² Jisi Wang, "China's Changing Role in Asia," in Ryosei Kokubun and Jisi Wang, eds., *The Rise of China and a Changing East Asian Order* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004), p. 14.

⁷⁰³ Zhiqun Zhu, "Japan the spoiler in Northeast Asia," *Asia Times*, March 23, 2005, available at <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Japan/GC23Dh04.html>.

China-Japan Rivalry

More broadly, Japanese moderates were losing ground over the issues of East Asian regionalism and normalization with North Korea. In their place, conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers led by then Deputy Secretary General Shinzo Abe and relatives of the abductees joined forces to push an anti-North Korean campaign and economic sanctions on North Korea.⁷⁰⁴ What filled the domestic power vacuum was a conservative call to expand Japan's defense role under the framework of the revitalized U.S.-Japan alliance. In November 2004, the ruling LDP's investigative committee on constitution finalized a draft constitution calling for the exercise of collective self-defense within the U.S.-Japan alliance and the use of Japanese military overseas in the name of contributing to the international community.⁷⁰⁵ The conservatives also considered an expanded role of Japanese defense forces for regional contingencies. In an effort to "revamp the national defense strategy," Defense Agency officials even stipulated "three scenarios in which China attacks Japan," which include "attacks stemming from disputes over ocean resources and claims over the Senkaku Islands as well as a clash across the Taiwan Strait."⁷⁰⁶

Taken aback by the explicit language used against China, the Chinese promptly responded with a warning of Japan's invoking the "Cold War mentality" and suggested that President Hu Jintao's summit with Prime Minister Koizumi at the 2004 APEC meeting might be difficult.⁷⁰⁷ In the midst of the mounting tension between the two countries, it was also reported that a Chinese naval submarine intruded into Japan's territorial waters near Okinawa.⁷⁰⁸ While the Chinese Navy cited a technical problem, the damage had already been done. In a draft version of a New Defense

⁷⁰⁴ Kanako Takahara, "Calls mount for sanctions on North Korea," *Japan Times*, November 17, 2004.

⁷⁰⁵ *Yonhap News*, November 17, 2004.

⁷⁰⁶ "Defense strategists look to China's attack threat," *Japan Times*, November 9, 2004.

⁷⁰⁷ "Japan on alert as suspected Chinese sub detected in territorial waters," *AFP*, November 10, 2004.

⁷⁰⁸ Reiji Yoshida and Kanako Takahara, "China's sub intrusion sparks Tokyo protest," *Japan Times*, Nov. 13, 2004.

Program Outline (NDPO) presented to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in 2004, Japan for the first time names North Korea and China as threats to its security: “North Korea’s military moves are a grave destabilizing factor in the region. At the same time, Japan must pay close attention to China’s modernization of its military and the expansion of its activities in the sea.”⁷⁰⁹

In response, the Chinese wasted no time in expressing their anger in a statement by a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman: “Official Japanese documents openly play up the so-called ‘China threat,’ which is completely baseless and irresponsible . . . China expresses strong dissatisfaction with this, and hopes Japan will do more to improve mutual trust and the healthy and stable development of bilateral ties.”⁷¹⁰ The Communist Party’s official *People’s Daily* also warned, “Japan appears to be following the United States in security strategy.”⁷¹¹ In another opinion piece in the same paper, a columnist claimed that Japan was becoming “the frontline of U.S. Asian policy” of containing China, which “entirely [went] against the trend of the times featuring peace and development.”⁷¹² The timing of the Sino-Japan tension was particularly unfortunate as East Asian countries were about to meet for the Ninth ASEAN Plus Three (APT) meeting and the first East Asian Summit in Malaysia. Citing the negative turn in Sino-Japanese relations, the Chinese government ruled out meetings between Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Prime Minister Koizumi at those meetings.⁷¹³

Sensing troubled regionalism, even Southeast Asian officials began to call on China and Japan to dampen the rising tension between the two major powers. At the

⁷⁰⁹ “Japan plans to call China, North Korea key threats,” *Japan Times*, November 27, 2004.

⁷¹⁰ James Brooke, “Japan’s New Military Focus: China and North Korea Threats,” *New York Times*, December 11, 2004.

⁷¹¹ “Bizarre indication of ‘China threat’ in Japanese defense program: Commentary,” *People’s Daily*, December 11, 2004.

⁷¹² Jiang Xinfeng, “US-Japan military alliance reflects Cold War mentality,” *People’s Daily*, November 05, 2005.

⁷¹³ “China rules out talks between Premier Wen and Koizumi,” *People’s Daily*, December 1, 2005.

meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi, Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo, for instance, expressed concern: "It won't be good for us if these two giants in Asia are going to have bad relations."⁷¹⁴ Unfortunately, the regional apprehension soon became the reality. By late 2005, the Sino-Japanese tension was morphed into a new "conflict between Japan and China over the form of a future East Asian community." Whereas the Chinese asserted that the form of an East Asian community should be discussed within the framework of the ASEAN Plus Three centered on China, Japan, and South Korea, the Japanese insisted on building a regional community based on the broader East Asian summit including Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.⁷¹⁵

Amid the Sino-Japanese rivalry, China's early hopes of developing the Six Party talks into a new regional mechanism failed to materialize. Appearing on a national television in April 2006, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso called China a military threat.⁷¹⁶ Referring to Japan's failure to hold summit talks with China and South Korea, Aso even hinted that Japan's troubled relations with China and South Korea might not improve for some time: "We should be prepared to a certain degree and not expect too much that neighbors should always be on good terms."⁷¹⁷ Breaking away from a previous tendency not to publicly discuss the Taiwan issues, Japanese officials also began to state that they shared with the United States "a common concern about the future of Taiwan," while expressing concern over China's growing military buildup in the region.⁷¹⁸ Citing a U.S.-Japan pronouncement that both the Taiwan and Korean peninsula issues were part of their "common strategic objectives,"

⁷¹⁴ "Region's Leaders Ask China, Japan to End Feud: Dispute Between Economic Powerhouses Overshadows Historic Asia-Africa Forum," *Washington Post*, April 21, 2005.

⁷¹⁵ "Japan, China clash over E. Asia summit," *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 25, 2005.

⁷¹⁶ "Aso says China a threat; shrine overtures rebuffed," *Japan Times*, April 3, 2006.

⁷¹⁷ "Asian relations won't improve soon: Aso," *Japan Times*, February 20, 2006.

⁷¹⁸ Joel Brinkley, "With Taiwan as Security Issue, Rice Prepares to Meet Japan Leaders," *New York Times*, February 18, 2005.

the Chinese warned that Japan was held hostage to U.S. global strategies. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan stressed that the U.S.-Japan alliance was “a bilateral scheme spawned during the Cold War period,” and “should not function beyond the bilateral framework.”⁷¹⁹

Against this backdrop, a “hate-China” sentiment was gradually spreading among top officials at the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Traditionally, Japanese leaders tended to compensate for Japan’s past aggression by showing deference to China in bilateral relations. China, for its part, tried to make the best out of such Japanese sentiments and received concessions from Japan over various bilateral issues. Led by the so-called “China School” diplomats within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japanese deference to China gave rise to Japan’s lukewarm protest after the Tiananmen incident.⁷²⁰ Later in the mid-1990s when the U.S. and Japan agreed to expand the scope of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines, many Japanese officials were mindful of China’s reaction, thereby deliberately couching the regional scope of the new guidelines in the vague phrase “in areas surrounding Japan.”⁷²¹ As the Koizumi administration stressed alliance ties with the United States, however, the influence of the “China school” within the Foreign Ministry decreased substantially. As Japanese commentators have stated, it was in this changing political context that the Japanese government agreed with the United States on common strategies on the Taiwan issue, “a sensitive issue for Beijing.”⁷²²

⁷¹⁹ “Analysis: Japan-US security cooperation breaches bilateral framework,” *People’s Daily*, February 21, 2005.

⁷²⁰ Reinhard Drifte, *Japan’s Security Relations with China since 1989: From Balancing to Bandwagoning?* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 18-19.

⁷²¹ Okawara and Katzenstein, 2001-02, p. 169.

⁷²² Tatsuya Ishii and Osamu Sueishi, “Foreign Ministry mind set: ‘Hate China,’” *Japan Times*, June 11, 2005.

Tension between Japan and South Korea and Failed Regionalism

Regional tension also spread to the relationship between South Korea and Japan. In early 2005, the two countries faced off over the small islets known as Tokdo/Takeshima, which had been annexed to Japan during the colonial period and later in the postwar years placed under South Korea's administrative control. In February, a prefectural government in Japan inaugurated the Takeshima day, reigniting tension with South Korea over the disputed territory. When Japanese officials dismissed the incident as a local matter, South Korea canceled a scheduled visit to Tokyo by then Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon. The dispute effectively put an end to the goodwill efforts made earlier by the two neighbors to celebrate 2005 the year of "mutual friendship."⁷²³ South Korean resentment toward Japan further intensified, as Japan was seen in Seoul as "building up its military and taking a hard line position toward North Korea."⁷²⁴ Amidst a swirl of controversy, the South Korean government publicly opposed Japan's plan to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. South Korean ambassador to the UN, Kim Samhoon, made it clear that a country not trusted by its neighbors is not worthy to play a greater role in the international community.⁷²⁵

As Japan's relationships with China and South Korea headed toward the worst level in the postwar period, earlier regional developments toward forging an inclusive regional security mechanism were replaced with a narrowed, exclusive focus on the U.S.-Japan alliance. In a major shift from the region-focused Higuchi Report of 1994, the 2004 strategic report, known as the Araki Report issued by a blue-ribbon prime ministerial advisory council, proposed a markedly different foreign policy blueprint

⁷²³ Anthony Faiola, "Islands Come Between South Korea and Japan: Ordinance Intensifies Diplomatic Dispute," *Washington Post*, March 17, 2005.

⁷²⁴ Norimitsu Onishi, "Dispute Over Islets Frays Ties Between Tokyo and Seoul," *New York Times*, March 22, 2005.

⁷²⁵ *Donga Ilbo*, April 1, 2005.

for Japan. Its main recommendations include “strengthening Japan’s security alliance with the United States and changing the Self-Defense Forces into a ‘multifunctional, flexible defense force.’” The report proposed an “‘integrated security strategy’ that deals more actively with international security issues as well as self-defense under the alliance with the United States.”⁷²⁶ In this way, the transformation of the bilateral alliance took concrete form, but in a manner designed “to reaffirm the US-dominated hegemonic framework of security in the region.”⁷²⁷ The Chinese in turn blamed America’s “unsophisticated effort to encourage Japan to take a more activist regional and global security role” for the tension between China and Japan.⁷²⁸

5-5. Conclusion

Comparing the Clinton and Bush administrations’ approaches to North Korea, one regional expert maintained that while Clinton was interested in reformulating the regional security order, Bush seemed to have no such interest.⁷²⁹ In fact, the Bush administration did have a regional plan of its own. It is rooted in a new global strategy of countering proliferation threats and reshaping the regional security structure in a mold that is markedly different what the regional countries have in mind. By shifting the strategic focus away from “intra-regional issues toward a common global threat,” the Bush administration has paved the way for a transformation of the regional security order.⁷³⁰ As examined in this chapter, by intensifying role conflict and helping

⁷²⁶ Natsumi Mizumoto, “Defense panel seeks enhanced ties with U.S., flexible force,” *Kyodo News*, October 4, 2004.

⁷²⁷ Christopher W. Hughes, Japan’s Re-emergence as a “Normal’ Military Power, *Adelphi Paper* 368-9, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005, p. 146.

⁷²⁸ Minxin Pei and Michael Swaine, “Simmering Fire in Asia: Averting Sino-Japanese Strategic Conflict,” *Policy Brief* 44, November 2005, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p. 7.

⁷²⁹ Interview 14-05, Beijing, April 28, 2005.

⁷³⁰ Gilbert Rozman, *Northeast Asia’s Stunted Regionalism: Bilateral Distrust in the Shadow of Globalization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 348.

the rise of conservatives in Japan, the Bush administration's approach reshaped the regional order in East Asia.

One of the most significant outcomes is the change in the U.S.-centered hub-and-spokes regional alliance structure, in particular the U.S.-South Korean axis. The South Korean government not only rejected the U.S. call for pressuring North Korea and joining the global coalition against proliferation but also aligned itself with China. At the beginning, the Japanese also emphasized the importance of balancing the U.S.-Japan alliance and the trilateral cooperation among Asian allies.⁷³¹ If Japan simply followed the American neo-conservatives, one Japanese scholar warned, its channels for cooperation with South Korea and China and the chance to forge a broader regional security framework would be lost.⁷³² Amid the growing anti-North Korean sentiments and the predominance of "revisionist" voices on the domestic political scene, the Koizumi government's normalization drive was hijacked by a conservative agenda of redefining Japan's defense role in the regional and global realms.

Such a transformation did not bode well for the regional momentum sparked by the Perry Process. Having had high expectations of developing the Six Party talks into a new regional security mechanism, the Chinese government found itself in a rapidly worsening conflict with Japan over their respective strategic influence and the proper format of a regional security framework. Failing to realize its regional strategy of turning the Korean Peninsula into a new hub of regional integration and cooperation, the Roh Moo-Hyun government in Seoul even talked about South Korea's balancer role in the region, while finding fault with anti-North Korean sentiments in Japan. Against this background, the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and the East Asian summit did not reach their full potential.

⁷³¹ Yoichi Funabashi, *Donga Ilbo*, September 19, 2003.

⁷³² Mizushima Asaho, "A New Security Framework for Northeast Asia," *Japan Focus*, 2004, <http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=048>.

All in all, the Bush administration's approach has seriously undermined regional "hopes for a more robust multilateral security order" in East Asia.⁷³³ Rather than showing flexibility in addressing the North Korean challenge and, in the process, turning the Six Party process into a broader regional security framework, the Bush administration insisted on addressing the short-term, proliferation dimension. By forcing the regional actors to adopt its preferred role as U.S. partners in the anti-North Korean coalition, the Bush administration not only stalled regional efforts to forge a broader regional security mechanism but also opened the way for a more exclusive and conflictual regional order.

⁷³³ Amitav Acharya, "The Bush Doctrine and Asian Regional Order," in Mel Gurtov and Peter Van Ness, eds., *Confronting the Bush Doctrine: Critical Views from the Asia-Pacific* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 221.

CHAPTER SIX:

Conclusion:

Making Global Strategy and Regional Order Congruent

6-1. Introduction

After North Korea conducted what appeared to be a sub-kiloton nuclear test in October 2006, some politicians and pundits were quick to point out that China's limited pressure on North Korea, coupled with South Korea's unconditional support for the North Korean regime, has sustained and emboldened the outlaw regime. Implicit in this view is an assumption that North Korea's neighbors have different, idiosyncratic national priorities vis-à-vis North Korea, making a joint resolution at the Six Party Talks very difficult to achieve. David Steinberg, for one, chalks the difficulty in coping effectively with the North Korean challenge up to "disparate national security priorities" between the United States, with its global focus on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and South Korea, whose interests remain fixed on the Korean Peninsula.⁷³⁴

As examined in this dissertation, the image of East Asian countries "nationalizing" the North Korean issue to the detriment of global security, however, misses the extent to which the North Korean challenge has been reshaping the larger regional security landscape in East Asia. Rather than a venue for defusing the nuclear crisis, the Six Party Talks have become a site of competing logics between the U.S. framing of North Korean as a clear-cut global challenge and the East Asian view of it as a complex regional problem whose solution will have repercussions for the East Asian security order. As one expert observes, the Six Party Talks have not resulted in

⁷³⁴ David I. Steinberg, "Repairing Seoul's Tattered Alliance," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 2007, pp. 32-33.

the resolution of the crisis in part because “North Korea figures very differently in the regional plans” of the countries involved.⁷³⁵

The question is precisely how North Korea is linked to the regional strategies of the East Asian countries and with what consequences. This dissertation has attempted to answer these questions by exploring the link between regional role conceptions and North Korea, as contested in the three East Asian countries. The East Asian experience surrounding the North Korean challenge is also emblematic of a larger shift in the regional order. As Mitchell Reiss points out, the Six Party process is not just a global campaign to prevent nuclear proliferation; more importantly, at stake is “the vigor of [US] alliances, the future of northeast Asia, America’s stature and standing in East Asia.”⁷³⁶ By examining alliance dynamics and regionalism, this dissertation has demonstrated how the North Korean challenge has been reshaping the post-Cold War regional order in East Asia.

This concluding chapter proceeds in the following manner. The next two sections provide a brief summary of findings and a discussion of both theoretical and policy implications. I then consider the possibility of applying the analytical framework advanced in this dissertation to other regional contexts and suggest a possible avenue of further research. The chapter concludes with a section discussing the potential implications and the future prospects of the latest developments at the Six Party Talks in which the Bush administration began to take a more flexible approach toward North Korea. Although the final outcome remains to be seen, how this recent policy shift unfolds in the coming years will have consequences for regional role conceptions and the evolving regional order in East Asia.

⁷³⁵ John Feffer, “Grave Threats and Grand Bargains: The United States and Regional Order in Northeast Asia,” in John Feffer, ed., *The Future of US-Korean Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 190.

⁷³⁶ Mitchell B. Reiss, “Hope Over Experience: Denuclearizing the North,” *The National Interest*, May/June 2007, p. 23.

6-2. Findings and Theoretical Implications

Summary of Findings

In this dissertation, I have put forth an argument that stresses the role of ideational factors, especially regional role conceptions. By examining the post-Cold War East Asian experience around the North Korean challenge, I have shown that regional role conceptions—the way political elites articulate regional roles—influence the understanding of threat and national interests vis-à-vis North Korea. Specifically, the search for new regional roles by East Asian countries shaped their understanding of and policy behavior toward North Korea. It also influenced the way East Asian countries responded to the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea. They not only questioned the validity of the Bush Doctrine as applied to the North Korean case but also tried to persuade the United States to take an alternative, more flexible approach.

Such a regional response is a radical departure from East Asian behavior during the Perry Process of the Clinton presidency. During this period, East Asia's quest for greater roles *vis-a-vis* North Korea blended well with the U.S. approach, facilitating role congruence in East Asia. Along with positive outcomes after the resolution of the crisis, the regional order in this period became more stable as new patterns of alliance cooperation and regionalism emerged amid role congruence. As the Bush administration took a hard line position toward North Korea and triggered role conflict, East Asian countries refused to go along with the United States. As a result, alliance relationship faltered, while regionalism among East Asian countries was promoted. However, as the prolonged crisis differently affected domestic security debates in each country, regional cooperation has backtracked since 2005.

More broadly, this dissertation has demonstrated how the same objective reality of facing North Korea has been interpreted differently by different actors

placed in different political contexts. Regional role conceptions powerfully shape understanding of the nature of threats and the appropriate means to address them. By forcing East Asian countries to adopt the global frame of fighting rogues and to play the roles it preferred for the North Korean issue, the Bush administration put itself on a collision course with the regional actors. At the domestic level, however, it also ignited domestic contestation in which different political actors compete for different regional roles and regional visions. In the process, the earlier collective regional resistance to the U.S. approach was replaced with a series of regional rivalries. All in all, the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea and regional role conceptions in East Asia set in motion a transformation in the regional strategic landscape, blurring traditional boundaries between friends and foes, while creating new ones between allies and neighbors.

Various Explanations and the Regional Outcomes

The empirical chapters provide a useful testing ground for several alternative explanations for the variation in the regional outcomes in different time periods and across the region. As summarized in Table 6.1, existing accounts are useful for explaining certain aspects of regional outcomes, but they provide only partial insight into the regional situation surrounding North Korea. Given the different regional responses to the U.S. approach in different time periods, power alone is limited in explaining regional behavior. With a more nuanced view of the power variable, the perceived power account is more effective in explaining the regional outcome during the second crisis. However, as demonstrated in the empirical chapters, it is not the perceived power itself, but the perceived legitimacy of power that is key. Of particular importance in securing the authority of the ruler is “the consent of the ruled.”⁷³⁷ The

⁷³⁷ David A. Lake, “Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics,” *International Security*, Vol. 32 (1), Summer 2007, p. 79.

East Asian response to the U.S. during the Perry Process represents a type of authority relationship where “shared understanding allows the powerful to exert legitimate control.”⁷³⁸ However, the Bush administration’s approach toward North Korea lacked such authority, prompting regional resistance.

Table 6-1. Competing Explanations and Regional Outcomes

Cases (regional outcomes)	Perceived Power	Perceived Threat	National Interests	Regional Role Conceptions
1998-2000 (regional convergence and support for the U.S.)	Yes	No	No	Yes
2002-2004 (regional convergence against the U.S.)	No	Yes	No	Yes
2005-2006 (regional divergence)	No	No	Yes	Yes

In this vein, one could highlight the effects of 9/11 as a key factor shaping the U.S. approach during the second crisis. From this vantage point, not just Bush, but the hypothetical third-term Clinton administration or a Gore administration would have pursued more or less a similar, hard line approach toward North Korea. Such counterfactual reasoning is plausible, yet largely untenable for two reasons. First, as evidenced in Chapter 4, during the 1998 missile crisis, despite the strong push for immediate action from the Republican-dominated Congress, the Clinton administration from the beginning frequently consulted the regional countries, extending the review process to almost a year. Given its tendency to coordinate with

⁷³⁸ Paul K. MacDonald, “Correspondence: The Role of Hierarchy in International Politics,” *International Security*, Vol. 32 (4), Spring 2007, p. 172.

the regional countries, even a post-9/11 Clinton administration would have pursued a cautious approach toward North Korea, a prospect that might have been facilitated further had President Clinton's planned visit to Pyongyang occurred. Second, even prior to 9/11, the Bush administration pursued a markedly different approach toward North Korea, making regional actors worry about potential consequences for regional stability and regional visions.

The perceived decline of U.S. power may also have affected domestic coalitional politics by empowering different political groups. In fact, the Japanese conservative government since 2005 shifted to the U.S. position on the North Korea issue, at times taking an even more hard-line stance than the United States. In contrast, other regional countries remained unsupportive of the U.S. position.⁷³⁹ However, it is not clear what caused such regional divergence: Why, despite the similar change in the perception of U.S. power, did domestic responses vary? We cannot adequately assess the impact of perceived power on state behavior without understanding the nature of domestic contestation; especially the types of regional role conceptions that prevail in each country in the region.

The explanation based on threat perception can also be credited with some success, especially in accounting for the regional convergence on resistance to the coercive U.S. approach during the early part of the second crisis. One could also point out the different threat perceptions of North Korea *among* the regional actors as a factor influencing regional outcomes. Here Japan's hard line approach toward North Korea since 2005 can be attributed to its heightened threat perception of North Korea. As examined in the empirical analysis, however, managing threats or reducing costs does not seem to be the first order of business in East Asia. This was the case even in

⁷³⁹ While one could point out that the newly-elected Lee Myongbak government in South Korea has moved closer to the U.S. side on the North Korean question, this was in large part due to the change in the U.S. position toward North Korea, which allowed the new government in Seoul to emphasize the alliance ties with the United States without risking its future plans for inter-Korean relations.

Japan where the North Korean threat is most widely voiced. It is suggestive in this regard that while Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe set up an office to manage the abductions issue, he did not establish a similar office in charge of addressing North Korea's nuclear or missile programs.⁷⁴⁰ Similarly, Japan's persistent efforts at raising the abduction issue at the Six Party talks, even to the point of disrupting negotiation at the multilateral meetings, indicate that the North Korean threat is often evoked for political purposes, rather than being seriously addressed. In this vein, one former Japanese diplomat points out that talks about the North Korean threat in Japan have resurfaced whenever the need to stress Japan's ties with the United States arises.⁷⁴¹

Moreover, as evidenced in Chapter 3, there is an element of elasticity in regional threat perceptions vis-à-vis North Korea: the North Korean threat is voiced by the regional actors who identify with the United States, while it is moderated in the assessments made by those in conflict with the U.S. approach. As such, East Asian countries' threat perception of North Korea is largely a function of how the regional countries perceive their regional roles. The salience of particular regional role conceptions (e.g., external or internal role conceptions) then provides clues about whether or not the North Korean threat is (de)amplified in the region. In short, the regional threat perception of North Korea itself is endogenous to regional role conceptions, and the latter do not simply reflect the former.

With its focus on the regional countries' disparate national interests vis-à-vis North Korea, the national interests account is most convincing in explaining the regional divergence during the latter half of the second crisis, but ignores the fact that, despite divergent national interests among regional actors, the actors converged on the importance of North Korea as a regional focal point during the Perry Process and the

⁷⁴⁰ Hajime Izumi and Katsuhisa Furukawa. "Not Going Nuclear: Japan's Response to North Korea's Nuclear Test," *Nautilus Institute Policy Forum Online*, July 19, 2007.

⁷⁴¹ Interview 01-04, Tokyo, September 30, 2004.

early rounds of the Six Part Talks. As evidenced in Chapters 4 and 5, the explanations centered on regional role conceptions account for the variation in regional outcomes in both the Perry Process and the second crisis, while shedding light on the sources of the regional divergence since 2005.

Role Conceptions and Power Transition

The analysis offered in the dissertation can also help us better understand power transition in the international system. Noting that China has both immediate security concerns and longer-term strategic objectives on the question of North Korea and the Korean peninsula, Henry Kissinger proposed a Sino-U.S. strategic dialogue aimed at discussing “the political evolution of the Korean Peninsula and of Northeast Asia.”⁷⁴² In fact, Chinese commentators draw attention to a permanent peace mechanism on the Korean Peninsula specified in the September 2005 joint statement from the Six Party Talks. They stressed in particular a shift in the focus of the Six Party Talks from “discussion on solutions of the Korean nuclear issue to discussion on questions concerning Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian security mechanisms.”⁷⁴³

Underneath China’s interest in broader regional security frameworks lie different priorities between the United States and China. Despite their common interest in stability on the Korean peninsula, their long-term goals tend to diverge. While the United States seeks to resolve the situation in ways that preserve and enhance its regional influence, China pursues “a post-Cold War security architecture that is less U.S.-centric.”⁷⁴⁴ Hence, the combined effects of unfolding events on the

⁷⁴² Henry Kissinger, “A Nuclear Test for Diplomacy,” *Washington Post*, May 16, 2006.

⁷⁴³ Li Dunqiu, “Six-party talks set the direction clear,” *People’s Daily*, September 20, 2005.

⁷⁴⁴ Avery Goldstein, “Across the Yalu: China’s Interests and the Korean Peninsula in a Changing World,” in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 150.

Korean Peninsula and regional actors' responses to such events will shape both U.S.-China relations and "the security architecture" in the region.⁷⁴⁵

Paying due attention to the contingent nature of Sino-U.S. relations, Jeffrey Legro in a recent study has rejected deterministic claims such as the "rising China" thesis and the "interdependence argument." Instead, he pointed out that such systemic factors are filtered through "enduring foreign policy ideas in domestic politics and subsequent national behavior."⁷⁴⁶ The key question is what kinds of foreign policy ideas will prevail in China and under what condition? My research suggests that one way of discerning a prevailing foreign policy idea in China is to examine role conceptions—how Chinese political elites think about China's role in the region and how certain regional issues (e.g., the North Korean question) are linked to that vision, shaping national policy behavior.

More broadly, the findings of this dissertation suggest that ensuring role congruence between the U.S.-directed and internally-shaped roles can be conducive to achieving a peaceful power transition. Singling out the Korean issue as a potential model case for U.S.-China relations and future cooperation on broader East Asian security issues, Ashton Carter and William Perry have argued that US regional leadership should engage in "catalyzing cooperative action" with China in ways that can be viewed by the Chinese as "being used to defend precisely those interests that China will share with the United States."⁷⁴⁷ Thomas Christensen concurs by suggesting that a sensible U.S. Asia strategy would be the maintenance of a regional

⁷⁴⁵ Avery Goldstein, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations and the Korean Peninsula," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2002, p. 126.

⁷⁴⁶ Jeffrey W. Legro, "What China Will Want: The Future Intentions of a Rising Power," *Perspectives on Politics*, September 2007, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 522.

⁷⁴⁷ Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), pp. 118-120.

presence anchored in its regional alliances “without attempting to undercut China’s diplomatic relationships with other regional actors, even with U.S. allies.”⁷⁴⁸

If the United States and China, along with other regional powers, were able to produce a positive outcome on the North Korean question, I argue, it would signal “a long-term strategic convergence between Washington and Beijing.”⁷⁴⁹ The Clinton administration was indeed close to this best-case scenario on a variety of issues, including stability on the Korean Peninsula, while the Bush administration’s approach has been fixated on the broader agenda of prolonging U.S. primacy even at the risk of endangering regional stability.⁷⁵⁰ Prolonging tension on the Korean Peninsula or seeking a regime change in North Korea would only intensify role conflict in China, with negative implications for Sino-U.S. relations in the future.

Conversely, facilitating role congruence can be an effective way for the United States to secure legitimacy in the era of US global primacy. As Stephen Walt observes, “the key [in maintaining US primacy] is not power but persuasion” through which the United State should demonstrate to the world why American primacy is better than possible alternatives.⁷⁵¹ This view is echoed in the notion of a benign hegemonic order that John Ikenberry and others advance.⁷⁵² Michael Mastanduno also follows this line of reasoning: “the more other states are willing to recognize the hegemonic project as legitimate and share its purposes, the more durable it will be.”⁷⁵³

⁷⁴⁸ Thomas J. Christensen, “Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy toward East Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer 2006), p. 124.

⁷⁴⁹ Jonathan D. Pollack, “The Transformation of the Asian Security Order: Assessing China’s Impact,” David Shambaugh, ed., *Power Shift* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 343.

⁷⁵⁰ Michael D. Swaine, “U.S. Security Policy under Clinton and Bush: China and Korea,” in Chae-Jin Lee, ed., *U.S. Security Policy Under Clinton and Bush: Continuity and Change*, Monograph Series, Number 17, The Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies Claremont McKenna College, 2005, pp. 55-57.

⁷⁵¹ Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), p. 247.

⁷⁵² G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory*, 2001, G. John Ikenberry, ed., *America Unrivaled*, 2002.

⁷⁵³ Michael Mastanduno, “The U.S.-Japan Alliance and Models of Regional Security Order,” in G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi eds. *Reinventing the Alliance: U.S.-Japan Security Partnership in an Era of Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 25.

Without “a reasonable degree of acceptance or acquiescence on the part of other major states in the system,” hegemonic order is bound to disintegrate. In this sense, hegemony differs from power preponderance, which is based on brute force, rather than “the legitimate exercise of power.”⁷⁵⁴ Christian Reus-Smit makes a similar distinction by pointing out that coercive power is useful only in “domination (rule by control),” but not in “governance (rule by authority).”⁷⁵⁵

Curiously though, existing literature does not explore how hegemonic power becomes legitimate in the eyes of local actors. We need to look at various regional processes in which the power-based framing gets shared or rejected. Moreover, as Francis Fukuyama notes, power and legitimacy, the two key factors required for the U.S. in the post-9/11 context, are often mutually inconsistent.⁷⁵⁶ This is because, as Colin Dueck reasons, the unilateral use of hard power often comes at the expense of soft power. Hence, in his view, it would be in the U.S. interest to focus less on the aggressive strategy of sustaining US primacy than on working with other countries via multilateral venues.⁷⁵⁷ The findings of this research provide another way to achieve legitimacy at the regional level: conduct global and regional strategies in ways that ensure role congruence on the part of regional countries.

Role Conceptions and Regional Orders

More broadly, this dissertation highlights the importance of the regional level as an analytical focus in IR theorizing. Examining regional role conceptions can be a useful way to conceptualize regional orders. Despite the expectations of systemic

⁷⁵⁴ Michael Mastanduno, “Hegemonic order, September 11, and the consequences of the Bush revolution,” in Mark Beeson, ed., *Bush and Asia: America’s evolving relations with East Asia* (Routledge: London and New York, 2005), pp. 25-26.

⁷⁵⁵ Christian Reus-Smit, *American Power and World Order* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2004), p. 60.

⁷⁵⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 191.

⁷⁵⁷ Colin Dueck, “Strategies for Managing Rogue States,” *Orbis*, Spring 2006, p. 202.

theories, both realist and liberal, regional orders are not preordained, a simple outgrowth of systemic forces such as the balance of power, or economic interdependence. As Peter Katzenstein has observed, regions are not merely material objects within the world system. They are also “social and cognitive constructs that are rooted in political practice.”⁷⁵⁸ Constantly in the making through social interaction among regional actors, there are neither fixed regions nor fixed regional interests. Rather, they are formed “in the process of interaction and intersubjective understanding.”⁷⁵⁹

The dissertation has demonstrated how the North Korea challenge affects the pattern of regional interaction in a far more complex way than the existing literature leads one to expect, creating both new sources of cooperation and division in the region. While useful in explaining the regional order during Cold War period, realist and liberal/institutionalist theories of regional order are constrained by their largely static and deterministic claims about the future of East Asian security order. What is also common in realist and liberal/institutionalist analyses is the central role accorded to the United States in shaping the future of the region.

From a realist perspective, many scholars argue that the strengthening of the existing hub-and-spokes system centered on the U.S. and its allies is the key to regional stability in East Asia.⁷⁶⁰ Pointing to the absence of formal multilateral frameworks in the region, however, liberal/institutionalists stress the importance of

⁷⁵⁸ Peter J. Katzenstein, “Regionalism and Asia,” *New Political Economy*, Nov 2000; 5(3), p. 354.

⁷⁵⁹ Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum, “Theorising the Rise of Regionness,” *New Political Economy*, 5(3), 2000.

⁷⁶⁰ Victor Cha and David Kang, *Nuclear North Korea* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 162-163. For a summary version of the book, see Victor Cha and David Kang, “The Korean Crisis,” *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2003, pp. 20-28. Also, Michael Green, *Japan’s Reluctant Realism: Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 144; Zalmay Khalilzad et al, *The United States and Asia: Toward a New U.S. Strategy and Force Posture* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001); Nishihara Masashi ed., *The Japan-U.S. Alliance: New Challenges for the 21st Century* (New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2000).

broadening the current U.S.-alliance system.⁷⁶¹ In their article on the U.S.-Japan alliance, for instance, Mike Mochizuki and Michael O’Hanlon argue that America’s Asian alliances need to be tightened up, “not against threat, but in the name of common interests and values.”⁷⁶² They reason that the United States and Japan, as with the case of the U.S.-U.K alliance, should pursue a “liberal agenda that serves the goals of democracy, human rights, economic development, and regional inclusiveness,” thus laying the groundwork for a multilateral collective-security arrangement for the region.⁷⁶³ John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno concur by suggesting that rather than turning to “the realpolitik effort to prevent the deterioration of the Asian security environment,” it is time to take a “progressive step” toward a regional security community.⁷⁶⁴

However, the growing gap between the U.S. and regional understanding of—and responses to—the North Korean challenge suggests an increasing difficulty in realizing U.S.-centered regional designs. Given the contested nature of the North Korean problem at different levels and the importance of the North Korea factor in regional role conceptions in East Asia, improving regional cooperation among U.S. allies and broader regional integration will be difficult. By locating contested regional role conceptions at the center of analysis, this dissertation explains both regional resistance to the U.S. approach and a lack of progress in building a broader regional security framework.

At a deeper level, regional role conceptions can help us better understand the nature of interaction among regional actors. In this regard, constructivist scholars have

⁷⁶¹ G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), Mike Mochizuki and Michael O’Hanlon, “A Liberal Vision for the U.S.-Japanese Alliance,” *Survival*, Summer 1998.

⁷⁶² Mochizuki and O’Hanlon, “A Liberal Vision,” p. 127.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 133-4.

⁷⁶⁴ G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, “Conclusion: Images of Order in the Asia-Pacific and the Role of the United States,” in Ikenberry and Mastanduno, eds., *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*, p. 435.

begun to analyze regional actors' different understandings of a proper regional order. In Europe, for instance, different members have different understandings about regional order building. The British tend to view European integration largely as "a process without a specific end." In contrast, the French tie it to "the vision of a powerful independent Europe as a major player in world politics," while the Germans consider it a steppingstone to an "eternal peace" in Europe. Given these different perceptions of region making process and visions for the future, Lisbeth Aggestam argues, European stability hinges in large part on how its members harmonize their role conceptions and ensure stable expectations among themselves.⁷⁶⁵ My research extends this insight to East Asia.

The prospects of creating a new regional order in East Asia by harmonizing regional role conceptions were growing rapidly in the late 1990s. As inter-Korean reconciliation began new regional momentum, some scholars began to call for dialogue between the United States and East Asian countries on "how to move toward a more self-sustaining and stable regional order."⁷⁶⁶ Writing in early 2001, Kent Calder also predicted that the combination of regional meetings on North Korea and the U.S.-Japan-South Korea policy coordination processes via the TCOG would bring about "an institutional basis for the new geopolitics" in East Asia.⁷⁶⁷ Such initial expectations, however, did not materialize as the Bush administration took a hard line approach toward North Korea.

In this vein, the Perry Process in the late 1990s provided a rare opportunity to build such a new regional framework that would make the existing U.S.-centered order more stable while satisfying regional actors' yearning for greater regional roles.

⁷⁶⁵ Lisbeth Aggestam, "A Common Foreign and Security Policy: Role Conceptions and the Politics of Identity in EU," in Lisbeth Aggestam and Adrian Hyde-Price, eds., *Security and Identity in Europe: Exploring the New Agenda* (London: MacMillan Press, 2000), p. 109.

⁷⁶⁶ Charles A. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), p. 281.

⁷⁶⁷ Kent E. Calder, "The New face of Northeast Asia," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2001, 80(1), p. 122.

The Bush administration not only failed to seize the opportunity but also ran the risk of disrupting the existing regional order. Frustrated by dwindling U.S. influence in East Asia during the Bush presidency, several IR scholars called for a “forward-looking foreign policy” aimed not only at managing crises but also at proactively shaping “the context for future policy choices.” In this context, Francis Fukuyama recommends that the United States turn the Six Party framework into a permanent regional organization.⁷⁶⁸ Similarly, John Ikenberry proposes the formation of a broader regional multilateral organization involving all the regional countries to make the U.S.-centered order “more credible and durable.”⁷⁶⁹ I argue that paying attention to regional role conceptions is an important first step in achieving a new regional order in East Asia.

6-3. Policy Implications

The findings from this dissertation also have several policy implications in both regional and global dimensions. First and foremost, East Asian dynamics around the North Korean nuclear challenge offer an important lesson for U.S. administrations: the success of future global anti-proliferation campaigns hinges on grasping the complexities of regional dynamics surrounding proliferators. In their campaign against proliferation, US policymakers should use America’s power and influence prudently, that is, in ways that are not in conflict with local dynamics. Conversely, facilitating role congruence can both contribute to the success of global proliferation policy and enhance regional order. At the heart of this issue lies role conflict on the part of United States: its traditional regional role as a stabilizer and its new global role as an enforcer of counterproliferation and anti-terror strategies.

⁷⁶⁸ Francis Fukuyama, “Re-Envisioning Asia,” *Foreign Affairs*, 84(1), Jan/Feb 2005, p. 75.

⁷⁶⁹ G. John Ikenberry, “A New Order in East Asia?” in Kent E. Calder and Francis Fukuyama, eds., *East Asian Multilateralism: Prospects for Regional Stability* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), p. 218.

Ensuring Role Congruence between America's Global and Regional Roles

Just as East Asian countries are mulling over their proper regional roles, it is time for U.S. policymakers to think about how to reconcile the U.S.'s new role as a global proliferation enforcer with its traditional role as a regional stabilizer.⁷⁷⁰ The promulgation of the Bush Doctrine caused growing tension between these two roles. How to cope with this contradiction is a central task in effectively addressing the global proliferation challenge and securing a viable U.S. East Asian strategy. At a minimum, efforts to solve a global problem should not come at the expense of U.S. leadership role in East Asia, a guarantor of regional stability throughout the Cold War.

Tension between global and local dynamics is hardly a new phenomenon. Peter Katzenstein, for one, observed that U.S. foreign policy is bound to fail “when it neglects the dynamics of region.”⁷⁷¹ The key question is how to effectively manage both new global security priorities and old regional ones. Writing about a US regional force realignment plan under the Global Posture Review (GPR), Kurt Campbell and Celeste Ward cautioned against “collateral damage to long-standing arrangements and relationships” in the region. As they argued, it is pointless “to gain marginal benefits for possible future operations at the cost of undermining close existing alliances or causing important countries to question their security ties to the United States.”⁷⁷² The same lesson can be applied to the Bush administration’s proliferation policy.

During the Clinton presidency, the United States made conscious efforts to balance global proliferation strategy with regional stability and U.S. regional influence. For instance, during the first North Korean nuclear crisis, the Clinton

⁷⁷⁰ Similarly, Michael Mastanduno observes that due to its focus on the war on terror, “the United States may not be prepared to stabilize regional conflicts as consistently and predictably as it did during the 1990s.” See his “Hegemonic order, September 11,” pp. 33-34.

⁷⁷¹ Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 244.

⁷⁷² Kurt M. Campbell and Celeste Johnson Ward, “New Battle Stations?” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2003, Vol. 82 Issue 5, p. 103.

administration at times promoted inter-Korean relations for nonproliferation reasons: As the United States needed South Korea's support in its nuclear negotiations with North Korea, the Clinton administration bargained hard for South Korea's request that it not be "excluded from negotiations on the peninsula."⁷⁷³ More importantly, the Clinton administration approached the proliferation issue in ways that were not in conflict with regional stability. As the chief U.S. negotiator during the first crisis, Robert L. Gallucci, remarked at a congressional hearing, the Agreed Framework held out the "possibility of gradually opening the way for all countries in the region to establish more normal political and economic ties with North Korea," which "would serve our broader interests in regional stability and prosperity."⁷⁷⁴

A key problem with the Bush administration's approach has been its emphasis on global priority in ways that negatively affect regional security. Its relentless focus on the war on terror and the global counterproliferation campaign came at the cost of regional stability and US influence in East Asia. As William Tow points out, a crucial question for the United States is "how to reconcile traditional alliance politics in the region with the new emphasis on more fluid and diverse force capabilities."⁷⁷⁵ In this vein, William Odom laments that the Bush administration has pursued "a destabilizing and feckless nonproliferation policy at the expense of regional stability" in the Middle East and East Asia.⁷⁷⁶ In short, the regime change specified in the Bush Doctrine is "a losing nonproliferation strategy."⁷⁷⁷ In this vein, the recent change in the U.S. approach toward North Korea marks a welcome development, which may portend

⁷⁷³ Victor D. Cha, "The U.S. Role in Inter-Korean Relations," in Samuel S. Kim ed., *Inter-Korean Relations: Problems and Prospects* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), p. 143.

⁷⁷⁴ *Implications of the U.S.-North Korea Nuclear Agreement*, Hearing before the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, Second Session, December 1, 1994, p. 12.

⁷⁷⁵ William Tow, "Bush and Asia: The evolving strategic context," in Mark Beeson, ed., *Bush and Asia: America's evolving relations with East Asia* (Routledge: London and New York, 2005), p. 90.

⁷⁷⁶ William E. Odom, "The Nuclear Option," *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2007, p. 51.

⁷⁷⁷ *Going Critical*, p. 405.

both a restoration of America regional influence and, at the same time, the fulfillment of its global role as the leader in addressing proliferation problems, including the North Korean challenge.

US Regional Strategy

The analysis in this dissertation also suggests that the renewed U.S. strategy to turn its bilateral alliances with East Asian countries into a coherent regional alliance would be difficult to achieve, especially in the context of alliance tension between the US and South Korea and South Korea's growing ties with China. It is in this context that the 2007 Armitage Report stresses the importance of maintaining "a robust, dynamic relationship with the new Asia," with the central aim of "defining a regional architecture that will be consistent with U.S. interests."⁷⁷⁸ Noting a recent discord between the U.S. and South Korea, it also calls for the U.S. and Japan to improve ties with South Korea, while raising question about China's regional intentions.⁷⁷⁹ Similarly, referring to a regional community centered on East Asian regionalism, a high-ranking U.S. official expressed concern that China hopes to dominate the region via such an exclusive regional mechanism, and, hence, he warned, "Japan cannot possibly afford to advocate Asian regionalism."⁷⁸⁰

Such American's attitudes, with their emphasis on the U.S.-directed regional roles at the expense of internally-shaped roles, are not well received in the region. Instead, regional actors prefer a U.S. regional strategy that harmonizes both externally and internally-shaped roles. This is why Yoichi Funabashi has argued that the U.S.-Japan alliance and East Asian regionalism are compatible, "not a matter of choosing

⁷⁷⁸ Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Getting Asia Right through 2020*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2007, p. 2.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁸⁰ Yoichi Funabashi, "Japan needs its own 'Asian' vision," *Asahi Shimbun*, December 14, 2004.

one or the other.”⁷⁸¹ From this vantage point, Japan’s ideal approach in the region is to promote an “Asia Pacific fusion,”⁷⁸² or one Japanese business executive puts it, “*Shin-Bei Nyu-A* (close to America and entering Asia).”⁷⁸³

While acknowledging that Japan’s search for an Asian identity could conflict with its geopolitical interest in keeping strong alliance ties with the United States, a former Japanese diplomat nonetheless makes the following statement.

the harmonization of its power, efficiency, and identity can ultimately be achieved through its two fundamental postwar policy objectives: *strengthening its alliance with the United States and reentering Asia*. If the international situation compels Japan to choose one of the two, the consensus is clear: alliance will be given precedence. But this kind of zero-sum picture is not desirable for Japan. *It must achieve both objectives in order to maximize its diplomatic posture and satisfy its national interest.* (Emphasis added)⁷⁸⁴

Proliferation and Renewed Focus on Demand-Side Measures

In the literature on nuclear proliferation, scholars have traditionally explored the sources and consequences of proliferation. Specifically, some of the key works analyze motivations behind states’ seeking or giving up nuclear ambitions,⁷⁸⁵ while

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Yoichi Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1995) cited in Mike M. Mochizuki, “Japan’s Changing International Role,” in Thomas U. Berger, Mike M. Mochizuki and Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, eds., (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), p. 17.

⁷⁸³ Jitsuro Terashima, “Shin Bei Nyu A no sogo senryaku o motomete [Aspiring for a Comprehensive Strategy of ‘Close to America and Entering Asia’]” Chuo Koron (March 1996), pp. 20-38, cited in Mike M. Mochizuki, “Japan’s Changing International Role,” in Thomas U. Berger, Mike M. Mochizuki and Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, eds., (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), p. 17.

⁷⁸⁴ Kazuhiko Togo, “Japan and the Security Structures of Multilateralism,” in Kent E. Calder and Francis Fukuyama, eds., *East Asian Multilateralism: Prospects for Regional Stability* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), p. 188.

⁷⁸⁵ Etel Solingen, “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint.” *International Security*, 19(2), Fall 1994, pp. 126-169; Mitchell Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Scott D. Sagan, “Why Do States

others address the question of whether or not proliferation contributes to stability in the international system.⁷⁸⁶ In the post-9/11 world, however, the analytical focus has been shifted decisively to the question of how best to contain the danger of nuclear proliferation.⁷⁸⁷ As a consequence, scholarly and policy debates have been fixated on addressing supply-side measures (e.g., what policy tools are to be used to contain the spread of WMD, etc.) at the expense of the demand-side of the ledger (e.g., how to mitigate permissive conditions, such as regional security concerns, that drive nuclear developments in the first place, etc.).⁷⁸⁸

Traditionally, U.S. nuclear policy utilized various demand side measures. For instance, the Carter administration offered negative security assurances (i.e., reassuring potential adversaries against a nuclear first strike). Such assurances, however, have been weakened by the Bush administration. Along with the axis of evil rhetoric, however, the doctrine of preemption and a renewed focus on new-generation nuclear weapons, as manifested in the December 2002 *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, may signal to other nations that nuclear weapons may play “a growing, not diminishing, role in U.S. security decisions.”⁷⁸⁹ Instead of relying too much on “the overmilitarized means” for meeting the proliferation challenge,⁷⁹⁰ the United States should utilize various resources to shape the incentive structure of rogue states.⁷⁹¹ In this regard, the East Asian experience suggests that for proliferation

Build Nuclear Weapons?” *International Security*, 21(3), Winter 1996/97, pp. 54-86; Peter Liberman, “The Rise and Fall of the South African Bomb,” *International Security*, 26 (2) Fall 2001, pp. 45–86.

⁷⁸⁶ Scott D. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Scott D. Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons,” *International Security*, 18(4), Spring 1994, pp. 66-107; Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003).

⁷⁸⁷ Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism*; Cirincione, *Deadly Arsenal*.

⁷⁸⁸ For a useful discussion on the distinction between supply-side and demand-side measures, see Chaim Braun and Christopher F. Chyba, “Proliferation Rings: New Challenges to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” *International Security*, 29(2), Fall 2004, pp. 5-49.

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁷⁹⁰ Francis Fukuyama, “After Neoconservatism,” *New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

⁷⁹¹ Dueck, “Strategies for Managing Rogue States,” p. 240.

strategy to be effective, the United States should take into consideration not only the incentive structure of rogues but also that of their neighbors. Unless neighbors can align their interests with that of the United States over the proliferation challenge at stake, no solution will be sustainable. To this end, the United States should gain a deeper understanding of regional dynamics surrounding proliferation challenges.

More fundamentally, given the East Asian interest in engaging North Korea, another way to solve the rogue states problem would be to “[embed] them in regional security orders that constrain them while offering them the stability and encouragement needed for successful economic development.” Engagement in this sense can be “a part of a larger multilateral process of establishing a new security order involving great power cooperation.”⁷⁹² Similarly, Richard Haass emphasizes a strategy of “incremental regime change or “regime evolution,” a policy that chooses to integrate, not isolate, despotic regimes.⁷⁹³

6-4. Extension and Further Research

Extending to the Situation in the Middle East

The analysis offered in this dissertation can be extended to other regions of the world where proliferation problems are intertwined with the complexities of broader regional situations. A case in point is Iran in the Middle Eastern context. As with the North Korean case, the Bush administration has been focusing on regime change, not regime evolution. Flynt Leverett, a Middle East expert who served on Bush’s National Security Council, revealed that the Bush administration has consistently refused to consider serious negotiations with Iran over its nuclear and regional ambitions: “The dirty secret is the administration has never put on the table an offer to negotiate with

⁷⁹² Sherle R. Schwenninger, “Beyond Dominance,” New America Foundation, February 1, 2004, http://www.newamerica.net/publications/policy/beyond_dominance.

⁷⁹³ Jim Lobe, “Engaging talk,” *Asia Times*, June 4, 2005, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GF04Ak01.html.

Iran the issues that would really matter: their own security, the legitimacy of the Islamic republic and Iran's place in the regional order."⁷⁹⁴

Instead of pursuing regime change and using pressure tactics, the United States could have engaged in direct talks with Iran. In fact, there are a wide variety of shared interests between the United States and Iran, ranging from opposition to the Taliban regime to regional stability in the region.⁷⁹⁵ It is in this context that one scholar characterizes U.S.-Iranian cooperation as the single most important factor in improving "U.S. capacity to redress the power balance in the Middle East."⁷⁹⁶ While relations have soured in recent years, there were missed opportunities during the first term of the Bush presidency.

In 2003, for instance, Iran approached the Bush administration via a Swiss diplomat with an offer of help in capturing terrorists, stabilizing Iraq, stopping support for Hezbollah and Hamas, moderating its position toward Israel, as well as solving Iran's nuclear question. In return, Tehran asked for the lifting of U.S. sanctions and better ties with the United States. While some U.S. officials showed an interest in the idea of potential U.S.-Iranian cooperation on such wide-ranging issue areas, hawks in the administration not only rejected the offer, but also sent the Swiss ambassador a diplomatic cable, rebuking him for relaying the Iranian message to Washington.⁷⁹⁷

Instead of bilateral negotiations with the Tehran regime, some Bush officials later conceded that they had considered setting up a regional meeting, modeled after the Six Party Talks, mainly to confront Iran. As was the case in East Asia, such a move, however, had little chance of success since "none of Iran's neighbors are

⁷⁹⁴ Steven Lee Myers and Helene Cooper, "Bush Insists Iran Remains a Threat Despite Arms Data," *New York Times*, December 5, 2007.

⁷⁹⁵ Nicholas D. Kristof, "Diplomacy At Its Worst," *New York Times*, April 29, 2007.

⁷⁹⁶ William E. Odom, "The Nuclear Option," *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2007, p. 52.

⁷⁹⁷ Nicholas D. Kristof, "Hang Up! Tehran Is Calling," *New York Times*, January 21, 2007.

willing and able to play the decisive role alongside the United States.”⁷⁹⁸ The root cause of regional concerns about U.S. approach in the Middle East may well be role conflict between what U.S. policymakers expect from Iran’s neighbors and the regional actors’ own perceptions of proper roles in the region. While Iran’s neighbors are undeniably worried about Iran’s nuclear pursuit, they are equally concerned about America’s regional agenda manifested in the course of the ongoing war in Iraq.

Pointing to such regional worries, Jon Alterman singles out a lack of consensus between the Bush administration and Iraq’s neighbors over the future of Iraq as the most difficult factor facing the United States. Regional suspicion is widespread across the region, including both U.S. allies, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and its adversaries, such as Iran and Syria. Regardless of their strategic ties with the United States, they are united in their view that the U.S. vision for the future of Iraq in particular and the region more broadly is deeply threatening.⁷⁹⁹

A sensible U.S. strategy in the Middle East would involve paying more attention to the delicate inner workings of regional politics and coming up with a way to narrow the gulf between the U.S. regional expectations and the domestic political interests of regional countries. As with the North Korean case, focusing narrowly on the idealistic neoconservative agenda of building a new Middle East at the cost of neglecting regional realities will be disastrous for both U.S. Middle East strategy and regional stability. Further research on the varied role conceptions held by countries in the region will shed light on the prospects for success in U.S. regional strategy and the nature of an emerging regional order in the Middle East. More broadly, a comparative analysis of different regional dynamics concerning proliferation challenges in various

⁷⁹⁸ David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, “Washington Sees an Opportunity on Iran,” *New York Times*, September 27, 2007.

⁷⁹⁹ Jon B. Alterman, “Not in My Backyard: Iraq’s Neighbors’ Interests, in Alexander T. J. Lennon and Camille Eiss, eds., *Reshaping Rogue States Preemption, Regime Change, and US Policy toward Iran, Iraq, and North Korea* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), pp. 358-359.

parts of the world will not only help us cope better with the proliferation challenge but also contribute to our understanding of regional orders in the post-9/11 global context.

Sources of Discord on East Asian Regionalism

An extensive analysis of regional role conceptions in East Asia can be useful in explaining a lack of progress in East Asian regionalism despite the expressed desire on the part of East Asian countries. Since the end of the Cold War era, various regional politicians and pundits have emphasized regionalism and multilateral frameworks in East Asia, but with little success. How can we explain the apparent gap between the region's incessant calls for regionalism and multilateral frameworks and the regional realities centered on bilateral relations with the United States? For regionalism to be successful, regional countries need to foster elements of cohesive regional awareness, a gradual "shifting of national and individual consciousness of state to a new center—a region."⁸⁰⁰ As it stands, East Asian regionalism lacks such a shared vision. For instance, as Jitsuo Tsuchiyama observes, the majority of Japanese tends to view multilateral frameworks "as an academic argument partly because there appears to be no such common identity as "we" in East Asia."⁸⁰¹ Without a common conceptual framework for the region, chances of developing a common vision for the region will remain slim.⁸⁰²

The findings from this dissertation indicates that the main problem with East Asian regionalism is a lack of consensus on the nature and the proper shape of regional order. One possible reason for the discord may be different role conceptions

⁸⁰⁰ Fu-Kuo Liu, "East Asian Regionalism: Theoretical Perspectives," Fu-Kuo Liu and Philippe Regnier, eds., *Regionalism in East Asia: Paradigm Shifting?* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 19.

⁸⁰¹ Jitsuo Tsuchiyama, "Ironies in Japanese Defense and Disarmament Policy," in Takashi Inoguchi and Purnendra Jain, eds., *Japanese Foreign Policy Today: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), p. 149.

⁸⁰² Tsuneo Akaha, "Conclusion: Nationalism Versus Regionalism in Northeast Asia," in Tsuneo Akaha ed., *Politics and Economics in Northeast Asia: Nationalism and Regionalism in Contention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) p. 381.

and role conflict on the part of the regional countries. If the United States conducts regional policy in ways that are sensitive to internally-shaped role conceptions, it will not only help U.S. policymaking but also facilitate regionalism, as was the case during the Perry Process. Absent such consideration, and with the U.S. push for the U.S.-centered roles, East Asian countries will face role conflict, with growing difficulties in reaching a mutual understanding on regionalism.

This is indeed what has been taking place in the region. The Chinese, for instance, now tend to view regionalism as a way to balance the U.S. regional influence. The South Koreans increasingly see regionalism as a channel to revamp the stalled inter-Korean relations, whereas the Japanese regard regionalism as a hedging option in case of America's withdrawal from the region. Lacking common threads or narratives about regionalism, East Asian regionalism is increasingly adrift. A careful survey of the different narratives about regionalism in each country during the Bush presidency would help us to better understand the sources of difficulty in forging an effective regional security framework.

6-5. Recent Developments in the Six Party Talks and Future Prospects

America's About-Face and the New Deal at the Six Party Talks

After years of refusal to engage in direct, bilateral talks with North Korea and the coercive approach toward the North, the Bush administration, since 2007, has finally softened its hard line position. The immediate catalyst was North Korea's nuclear test in October 2006. The subsequent defeat of the Republican Party in the 2006 congressional elections further necessitated a new breakthrough in foreign policy, paving the way for the U.S. "reverse-course" policy toward North Korea.⁸⁰³ This is particularly surprising given President Bush's previous characterization of

⁸⁰³ Gavan McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 114.

John Kerry's call for bilateral negotiations with North Korea as "naive and dangerous." The policy shift also represents a marked relaxation of the previous position of rejecting East Asia's call for adopting a "step by step" approach aimed at addressing North Korea's plutonium capability first, and then discussing the issue of uranium enrichment.⁸⁰⁴

In January 2007, the first official bilateral meeting between Bush administration officials and North Korean representatives was held in Berlin. After two days of meetings with his North Korean counterpart, Christopher Hill even announced that, should North Korea forgo its nuclear path, the United States is prepared to pursue "a bilateral process" to establish "a normal relationship" with North Korea.⁸⁰⁵ In February 2007, the new gesture toward North Korea led to an agreement to shut down the Yongbyon reactor in return for energy support for North Korea. In July 2007, North Korea shut down the reactor and readmitted a permanent UN inspection team.⁸⁰⁶ Then in October 2007, North Korea agreed to disclose and disable its nuclear facilities by the year's end in return for 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil.⁸⁰⁷ In June 2008, North Korea also submitted a declaration on its nuclear programs in exchange for the U.S.'s lifting of sanctions and removal of North Korea from the list of states sponsoring terrorism.⁸⁰⁸ How will this flurry of recent developments in the waning months of the Bush administration affect regional role conceptions and the regional order in East Asia?

⁸⁰⁴ Glenn Kessler, "To Reach Pact With N. Korea, Bush Adopted an Approach He Had Criticized," *Washington Post*, October 4, 2007.

⁸⁰⁵ Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Open to Bilateral Talks on Ties With N. Korea," *Washington Post*, January 18, 2007.

⁸⁰⁶ David E. Sanger, "North Koreans Say They've Shut Nuclear Reactor," *New York Times*, July 15, 2007.

⁸⁰⁷ Helene Cooper, "North Koreans Agree to Disable Nuclear Facilities," *New York Times*, October 4, 2007.

⁸⁰⁸ Despite the positive development, the definitive resolution of the situation remains elusive given the fact that the declaration does not include nuclear weapons, enriched uranium and the proliferation aspect and that the Bush administration has too little time left to make further progress. Norimitsu Onishi and Edward Wong, "U.S. to Take North Korea Off Terror List," *New York Times*, June 27, 2008.

Signs of Change in Regional Dynamics?

Along with its contribution to the recent progress at the Six Party Talks, the U.S. policy shift toward North Korea seems to be contributing to role congruence and regional dynamics. Amid the nuclear breakthrough between the United States and North Korea, for instance, the two Koreas proceeded with their own breakthrough, resulting in the second inter-Korean summit in October 2007. Both sides issued a joint declaration signed by President Roh Moo Hyun and Chairman Kim Jong Il. In it, the two Koreas agreed, “[they] should end the current armistice and establish a permanent peace regime.”⁸⁰⁹

As Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s hard line position toward North Korea put Japan at odds with its neighbors, many Japanese elites began to express concern that Japan was “losing an opportunity to influence the talks and help shape the future of Northeast Asia.”⁸¹⁰ Dismissing the Abe administration’s hard line stance toward North Korea as “a simplistic policy” amid the recent thaw between North Korea and the United States and between the two Koreas, an editorial in *Asahi Shimbun* declares, “Japan must not miss the bus” and urges the current Fukuda government in Tokyo to produce a comprehensive North Korea policy.⁸¹¹ Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda has recently decided to “seek a resolution to the North’s nuclear programs, missile threats and the abductions in a ‘comprehensive’ manner.”⁸¹² Along the way, Japan’s relations with its regional neighbors have also improved.

In fact, some members of the opposition, Democratic Party of Japan have raised question about successive LDP governments’ focus on the U.S. alliance at the

⁸⁰⁹ Full text of the declaration is available in Korean in *Chosun Ilbo*, October 4, 2007, http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2007/10/04/2007100400774.html.

⁸¹⁰ Mitchell B. Reiss, “Hope Over Experience: Denuclearizing the North,” *The National Interest*, May/June 2007, p. 22.

⁸¹¹ “Editorial: Sanctions on N. Korea,” *Asahi Shimbun*, October 11, 2007.

⁸¹² Kaho Shimizu, “Lee gives Japan hope for united front against North,” *Japan Times*, February 8, 2008.

cost of regional cooperation. For instance, Shinkun Haku, a Democratic Party lawmaker who is a member of the upper house of parliament's foreign affairs and defense committee, expresses concern about Japan's exclusive focus on the alliance: "I don't deny that the Japan-U.S. alliance is our most important one. But is it right to look only to the United States and turn our backs on China and South Korea?"⁸¹³ A *Japan Times* editorial echoes the growing view by pointing out that the U.S.-Japan alliance is "only a starting point" for Japan's foreign policy; its neighbors, especially China, are equally important strategic partners.⁸¹⁴

Amid the latest developments in Japan, South Korean Foreign Minister Song Minsun spoke highly of the change in Japan's stance toward North Korea, noting the difference in policy orientation between the Abe and Fukuda governments.⁸¹⁵ Chinese Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan visited Japan in August 2007, the first visit by a Chinese defense minister since February 1998.⁸¹⁶ In June 2008, in a new sign of institutionalized regional cooperation, China, Japan and South Korea also agreed to hold regular annual foreign ministerial meetings in each country, while agreeing to work on a trilateral summit in Japan in late September 2008.⁸¹⁷ Now the key question is whether recent developments surrounding the Korean Peninsula portend new regional momentum, *a la* the Perry-Redux.

Continuing Tension and the Uncertain Future of the Regional Order

While the situation is still evolving, another development concerning the alleged nuclear link between North Korea and Syria raises questions about the

⁸¹³ Norimitsu Onishi, "Japanese Premier Ill, Party Waits on Successor," *New York Times*, September 14, 2007.

⁸¹⁴ "Editorial: Mr. Fukuda makes progress in Asia," *Japan Times*, November 23, 2007.

⁸¹⁵ "Report: N Korea open to dialogue with Japan on abductions, official says," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 11, 2007.

⁸¹⁶ "Chinese defense minister to visit Japan this month," *Japan Times*, August 11, 2007.

⁸¹⁷ *Chosun Ilbo*, June 14, 2008.

prospects for the emergence of a cooperative regional order. In April 2008, the Bush administration, in a CIA-led briefing, made public the North Korea-Syria connection. The timing of the briefing, which came after several months of delay, was viewed with suspicion by the media. As the *New York Times* editorializes, it may be “another example of this administration insisting that information be withheld for national security reasons — until there is a political reason to release it.”⁸¹⁸ David Sanger suspects that by disclosing the intelligence, labeled only as “low confidence,” Vice President Dick Cheney and other hawks in the administration may have wished to scuttle the diplomatic efforts led by Christopher Hill. With the hawks on the rise again over the North Korean question, writes Sanger, Hill is “feeling pretty abandoned by Rice and Bush.”⁸¹⁹

As of this writing, it is still uncertain how the latest developments will affect the processes of the Six Party talks and the U.S.-North Korea deal. As analyzed in this dissertation, however, the way the United States conducts regional policy making and its impact on regional role conceptions will help shape the nature of the regional order in East Asia. In this sense, no single thing would more enhance U.S. capacity to manage the regional order in East Asia than a regional solution that would skillfully address both nuclear and regional security dimensions. Given the continued influence of North Korea bashers in the United States and the limited time the Bush administration has, however, the recent about-face will not likely yield a final resolution of the North Korean situation. So, the crucial task of reconciling the global and regional roles of the United States and harmonizing global and regional priorities over the proliferation challenge will fall into the hands of the next administration. How it will manage this task in turn will help redefine the nature and shape of the East Asian security order in the years ahead.

⁸¹⁸ “Editorial: North Korea Redux,” *New York Times*, April 25, 2008.

⁸¹⁹ David E. Sanger, “U.S. Sees N. Korean Links to Reactor,” *New York Times*, April 24, 2008.

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