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The Dilemma of the North Korean Nuclear Issue - Denuclearization or Coexistence

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE DILEMMA OF THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE
– DENUCLEARIZATION OR COEXISTENCE

By

Hee Jae Shim

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

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THE DILEMMA OF THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE
- DENUCLEARIZATION OR COEXISTENCE

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The Dilemma of the North Korean Nuclear Issue
- Denuclearization or Coexistence

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North Korea is the only state that publicly reveals its willingness to attack the US mainland with nuclear weapons. If there is a total war between the United States and North Korea, the damage will be huge. The North Korean nuclear issue can be a trigger to drag all of Northeast Asia and even the US mainland into the calamity of war. This study explores how the North Korean nuclear issue has progressed through realism and constructivism. Two concepts are used from the realist view. Those are a “security maximizer,” which pursues its survival based on defensive realism and a “power maximizer,” which pursues hegemony based on aggressive realism. Based on these two notions, this study looks at what position each state has taken in the North Korean nuclear issue. In addition, this paper focuses on identity, which is from the constructivist view, in examining how the United States, South Korea, and China have perceived the identity of North Korea, which is a conflict inducer, and how North Korea has perceived the identity of the US which is a key partner in the North Korean nuclear issue. The analysis results are used to evaluate the current situation and to discuss policy implications.

Based on the analysis results this study argues that it is unrealistic for the international community to recognize North Korea as a nuclear power and a war must be avoided, and a stalemate is also undesirable. Finally, the work concludes that the way to pursue is denuclearization through negotiation. In order to make the process of denuclearization begin this paper suggests that the US should not be too strict and South Korea should abandon its security impatience, and North Korea should exclude the withdrawal of the US Forces in Korea from its demands. In addition, this study claims that if the international community can start to normalize North Korea through a denuclearization agreement and continue to maintain it, the North Korean regime is highly likely to first collapse due to internal changes before the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is achieved. After all, a little concession now may be the most feasible and aggressive option that can eliminate the root cause of the North Korean nuclear issue.

To my beloved wife, Yun Hee Cho, who has been a constant source of advice, support
and encouragement in my life.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview and Objectives

After the inter-Korean high-level talks on January 9, 2018, a high government official of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) told reporters that North Korea's nuclear weapons were aimed solely at the United States of America.¹ Regardless of its practical capabilities, the DPRK is the only state that publicly reveals its willingness to attack the US mainland with nuclear weapons. If there is a total war between the United States of America and the DPRK, the damage will be huge. It is very likely that the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) facing the border with the DPRK will join the war, and the People's Republic of China, which does not want the collapse of the DPRK, is likely to join the war. And the United States' military bases located in Japan can be attacked by North Korea, and it is highly likely that Japan will join the war. Ultimately, the North Korean nuclear issue can be a trigger to drag all of Northeast Asia and even the US mainland into the calamity of war. Especially with the use of nuclear weapons, the damage can be so devastating that it is unprecedented in human history.²

As the joint declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula between South Korea and North Korea was concluded in 1991, the United States Forces in Korea

¹ Katherine Lam, "North Korea's Weapons 'Are Only Aimed at the US,' Regime Official Says," Fox News, January 9, 2018, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/01/09/north-koreas-weapons-are-only-aimed-at-us-regime-official-says.html>.

² Throughout this text, the names of states will be referred to as the United States or the US, South Korea, North Korea, and China.

(USFK) withdrew all tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea.³ However, North Korea was hiding some nuclear materials that could be used for nuclear facilities and nuclear weapons, and when the international community demanded special inspections, North Korea refused them and declared its withdrawal from the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993.⁴ Nonetheless, the situation was not serious compared to now because North Korea did not possess nuclear weapons at that time. Thus, in October 1994, the Geneva Agreed Framework was signed between the United States and North Korea. The objective of the framework was to freeze the operation of North Korean nuclear facilities and to dismantle the nuclear facilities at the time the United States provides North Korea with two light-water reactors for power generation.⁵ The North Korean nuclear issue seemed to be solved easily. However, the North Korean nuclear crisis was repeated although several agreements were made between the US and North Korea. In January 2003, North Korea eventually declared its withdrawal from the NPT and conducted its first nuclear test in October 2006.⁶ North Korea appeared to be on the path of a nuclear state.

The international community has consistently demanded the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Although North Korea has repeatedly agreed and reneged on the agreements with the international community, it continued to insist on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula outwardly. However, the position of North

³ South Korea, Ministry of Unification, the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, Accessed March 27, 2018, <http://nkinfo.unikorea.go.kr/nkp/term/viewKnwldgDicary.do?pageIndex=19&dicaryId=6&searchCnd=0&searchWrd=>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cho Min and Kim Jin-ha, *Timeline of North Korean Nuclear Issue 1955-2014*, (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2014), 14.

⁶ Ibid., 25, 43.

Korea hardened. In May 2012, North Korea adopted a new constitution proclaiming its status as a nuclear armed state.⁷ Since then North Korea has demanded that the international community recognize North Korea as a nuclear state, refusing to accept denuclearization as the subject of negotiations. However, the situation is changing rapidly now. Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, recently proposed a summit meeting between the United States and North Korea. He referred to the possibility of denuclearization on the premises of eliminating the military threat to North Korea and ensuring the security of the regime. In response President Trump agreed to hold a summit meeting by May. While this progress is positive considering the hostile atmosphere between the US and North Korea, North Korea continues to insist on the same preconditions for denuclearization that it has demanded in the past. Even if the preconditions are met, it is still questionable whether North Korea will accept CVID (complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement) of its nuclear weapons already developed as the US wants.

This study will look at how the North Korean nuclear issue has progressed to explore what the states involved in the North Korean nuclear issue have sought to obtain. Then based on the analysis the current situation will be assessed through the following three questions. First, in order to explore whether the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula can be a realistic solution to the North Korean nuclear issue this study poses the question, “If the US military threat (conventional and nuclear threat) to North Korea is removed, will North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons?” Second, in order to examine the possibility of coexistence with North Korea which has nuclear weapons this study

⁷ Ibid., 77.

poses the question, “If the international community recognizes North Korea as a nuclear power, will hostile conflicts be resolved on the Korean peninsula?” Finally, this study will examine the possibility of armed conflict on the Korean peninsula by asking the question, “How will the conflict proceed if denuclearization and coexistence with North Korea, which has nuclear weapons, are both impossible?”

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study will analyze how the North Korean nuclear issue has progressed through realism and constructivism. First, the North Korean nuclear issue is based on the classic concepts of realism, survival, self-help, and balance of power. Therefore, realism helps us to intuitively understand the policies of each state involved in the North Korean nuclear issue. On the other hand, constructivism allows us to understand the things that cannot be clearly explained from the realist view.

Realism

E. H. Carr argues that “there is no authority above the state capable of imposing moral behavior on it.”⁸ The reality of international politics is anarchy. Kenneth Waltz contends that in this anarchic reality a state must take self-help measures to ensure its security by all means because its security cannot be guaranteed by any other state.⁹ In other words, individual sovereign states will increase their security assurance capability through enhancing military forces and establish diplomatic relations with other states to

⁸ Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1946), 161.

⁹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), 111-118.

effectively deter external threats, and to create a favorable external security environment. The realist view provides the most intuitive understanding of the North Korean nuclear issue.

The basis of conflict on the Korean peninsula is the confrontation between South Korea and North Korea, which has continued since the Korean War in 1950. South Korea and North Korea have threatened the survival of each other for more than 60 years. Each has strengthened its military capabilities and maintained alliances with powerful states, the US for South Korea and China for North Korea, to secure its survival. In this context, it is a basic framework of the North Korean nuclear issue that North Korea attempts to overcome the tremendous difference in conventional forces with the US-South Korea alliance by possessing nuclear weapons in order to secure its survival. However, if we consider the discussion so far to be a viewpoint of defensive realism, another framework of analysis is needed to understand the North Korean nuclear issue.

If we look at the North Korean nuclear issue only in the relationship between South Korea and North Korea, the view of defensive realism is effective. However, considering the US, which supports South Korea, and China, which supports North Korea, a different view is needed. For the US and China, the North Korean nuclear issue has not been a vital issue that threatens their survival.

John J. Mearsheimer, an aggressive realist, argues that once a superpower becomes a hegemon in its region, it acts as an offshore balancer to maintain balance of power in other regions.¹⁰ It is the relic of the Cold War era that the United States is

¹⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 41.

actively intervening in the conflict situation on the Korean peninsula by keeping US troops stationed in South Korea, but also the US wants to check China that is growing rapidly. China strategically intends to defend North Korea, which acts as a buffer between China and the US and also wants to check the US in order to ensure its position of regional supremacy.

This paper will use the above two concepts as the theoretical framework. Those are a “security maximizer,” which pursues its survival based on defensive realism and a “power maximizer,” which pursues hegemony based on aggressive realism. Based on these two notions, this study will look at what position each state has taken in the North Korean nuclear issue.

Constructivism

Constructivists have been interested in how the physical forces are perceived, while realists emphasize the logic of power in international relations. They note that in analogous situations the actions of each state are too diverse to assume that all states only move by the logic of power. There are a variety of causes behind state’s actions that do not correspond in the same way to the same situation. Alexander Wendt, a representative constructivist, explains the anarchy of international politics which is the basic premise of realism.

It refers to an absence (“without rule”), not a presence; it tells us what there is not, not what there is. It is an empty vessel, without intrinsic meaning. What gives anarchy meaning are the kinds of people who live there and the structure of their relationships.¹¹

¹¹ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 309.

In other words, from the constructivist view, what matters in the interactions of states in international relations are not the material elements such as military power but the ideological elements such as culture and identity. Ideological elements define the manner in which the actor perceives the other and acts on the other. Therefore, inter-state acts in international relations need to be analyzed not only by the logic of power, but also by various factors that define perceptions of one another.

This paper focuses on identity in analyzing the North Korean nuclear issue. Identity tells me who I am, tells the other who I am, and tells me who the other is.¹² In international relations, a state perceives its own identity and the other's identity and then establishes relations and implements policies based on the relations. And the act of one state again affects the act of another. Like this, the identity formed through the constant interaction among states in international relations can provide a deeper understanding of the relations between states than the material elements do.

This study will examine how the United States, South Korea, and China have perceived the identity of North Korea, which is a conflict inducer, and how North Korea has perceived the identity of the US which is a key partner in the North Korean nuclear issue. The result will be used to evaluate the current situation in combination with the analysis result from the realist view.

¹² Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 258.

1.3 Methodology

This study will use a single case study methodology because the purpose of this study is to analyze in depth how the North Korean nuclear issue has progressed and to provide a clue to solving the North Korean nuclear issue by assessing the current situation based on the results.

The analysis will be limited to South Korea and North Korea, which share a border confronting each other, and the United States and China, which have great influence on both countries. Like other international conflicts, the North Korean nuclear issue is intertwined with the interests of many states. The surrounding four powers, the US, China, Japan, and Russia, are related to the Korean peninsula. The four powers respond to the North Korean nuclear issue according to their interests, but the United States and China are particularly important in terms of their impact. Throughout the Korean War after World War II, the Korean peninsula was divided into Democratic South Korea and Communist North Korea by the US, China, and the Soviet Union. As a result, the United States became a state that has great influence on South Korea and China and the Soviet Union on North Korea. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia's influence on North Korea declined sharply, and now China alone maintains its status as the past.

The analysis period will be from 2006, when North Korea conducted its first nuclear test, to February 2018 because this study will look at how North Korea has changed since the acquisition of nuclear weapons and how other states have responded. However, considering the sudden change of circumstances such as the agreement to hold

the South-North Korea and the US-North Korea summit, this study will mention some of the recent situations in the part of the evaluation of the current situation.

The analysis period will be divided into four periods, depending on the leaders of North Korea and the United States, which are in fact the most important states in the North Korean nuclear issue: Kim Jong-il and Bush era, Kim Jong-il and Obama era, Kim Jong-un and Obama era, and Kim Jong-un and Trump era. Under the premise that changes of the decision maker will strongly affect state's policies, the analysis period is divided.

For the analysis from the realist view, official documents of each government related to military strategy will be used as basic materials. In the case of North Korea, this study will use the defense white paper published by the South Korean Ministry of Defense because North Korea does not disclose official military documents. As the basic materials for the United States, the National Security Strategy published by the White House and the Quadrennial Defense Review Report, the Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report, and the Nuclear Posture Review Report published by the Department of Defense will be used. As the basic materials for China, the defense white paper published by the State Council will be used. In addition, various secondary data such as expert analyses and news articles will be used as supplements.

For the analysis from the constructivist view, this study will utilize the New Year's Day addresses or equivalent speeches in which each state's leader set forth the

policy directions of the year.¹³ However, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, who died in 2011, has never made a public address. Therefore, this study will use the New Year's editorial, which played a role of New Year's Address at that time, of the major North Korean governmental media. Also, the speeches in the UN General Assembly, which is the biggest diplomatic stage, will be used as basic materials. Each leader's remarks in press conferences and media interviews will be added as supplementary resources. However, Chinese leader's New Year's Day address is not the announcement of the major policies but a New Year's greeting, and it was hard to find the archive of other speech materials. Due to those limitations, the secondary materials that contain Chinese leaders' remarks, such as news articles, will be used as main resources for China.

However, in the analysis from the constructivist view, only the illustrative samples will be used selectively, instead of all the comments of each state's leader. In addition, in analyzing the speeches, this study will analyze the thrust of the remarks through interpretation by the author of this study instead of the quantitative analysis that measures the frequency of words, phrases, and clauses. Therefore, there is a limitation that the result of the analysis may not be enough to reflect the accurate and precise attitude of each state's leader.

¹³ The full text of the North Korean leader's speeches was collected through the website of the "Only with our nation" website (<http://www.uriminzokkiri.com>), one of North Korea's public relations websites. The full text of US President's speeches, press conferences, press interviews was collected from the American Presidency Project of UC San Diego website (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>) and the White House's official archive website for past presidents (<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov>, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov>). The full text of South Korean President's speeches, press conferences, press interviews was collected from the government's presidential archive (<http://pa.go.kr>) and the official website of South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (<http://www.korea.kr>).

1.4 Outline

This study consists of seven chapters. In the first chapter, the present situation of the North Korean nuclear issue and the questions posed by this study are presented, and the theoretical framework of this study is explained, why realism and constructivism are selected. It also discusses how this study will proceed methodologically.

The second chapter introduces what kind of opinions the existing North Korean nuclear studies have presented and discusses how this study will contribute to the existing studies.

The third chapter discusses the historical background of the North Korean nuclear issue. It explains how the North Korean nuclear issue has progressed from the outbreak of the North Korean nuclear crisis, which began in 1993 when North Korea declared its withdrawal from the NPT, to 2005, before the first nuclear test in 2006.

The fourth chapter analyzes each period from the realist view. It examines why North Korea has been obsessed with the development of nuclear weapons in terms of military power and analyzes how each state has reacted in a military way.

In the fifth chapter, each period is analyzed from the constructivist view. Each state's perception toward the other state will be analyzed through what the leaders of the states have mentioned.

The sixth chapter summarizes the analysis results from the realist view and the constructivist view.

Finally, in the seventh chapter, based on the analysis results, this study will evaluate the current North Korean nuclear issue and anticipate the development of the North Korean nuclear issue in the future through answering the questions of this study and conclude the research by discussing policy implications.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Existing Studies

Many scholars have pointed out that North Korea pursued nuclear development in order to secure its survival.

Before the Iraq war in 2003, James T. Laney and Jason T. Shaplen analyzed that if the United States attacked Iraq, North Korea would try to develop and possess nuclear weapons as soon as possible before the United States ended the war in Iraq and attacked North Korea.¹⁴

Chun argues that despite the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula in 1991, the US nuclear threat felt by North Korea had not been reduced and accordingly North Korea did not give up its nuclear capabilities thereafter. In addition, he claims that the Iraq war showed North Korea how vulnerable a regime, which was labeled as a dictatorship by the US but did not have an enough deterrent, is.¹⁵

In fact, on May 21, 2010, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said that if the US, which had invaded Iraq on the pretext of falsely claiming that Iraq possessed WMD, invaded North Korea, the US would pay a huge cost unmatched by the cost of the Iraq war.¹⁶

¹⁴ James T. Laney and Jason T. Shaplen, "How to Deal with North Korea," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 2 (March/April, 2003): 21.

¹⁵ Kwang Ho Chun, *North Korea's Nuclear Question: Sense of Vulnerability, Defensive Motivation, and Peaceful Solution* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 19.

¹⁶ North Korea, The Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, A Statement from Foreign Ministry Spokesman, May 22, 2010, <http://uriminzokkiri.com/index.php?ptype=igisa2&no=34317>.

Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. argues that two events have spurred North Korea's nuclear development by stimulating its will to survive. The first event he proposes is that Libya abandoned the WMD program in 2003 due to US pressure, but eight years later, in March 2011, the United States attacked Syria. And the second event he presents is the Israeli attack in 2007 on North Korea's reactor, which was under construction in al-Kibar, Syria. The study claims that the North Korean regime witnessed those two events and thought that if those countries had nuclear weapons, it would not have happened, and then accelerated the process of nuclear and missile programs.¹⁷ On March 22, 2011, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said as follows.

The "Libyan way of abandoning Nuclear weapons", which the US have exaggerated so far, has been revealed in the face of the international community that it is a method of invasion by deceiving and disarming the opponent with honeyed words of "ensuring safety" and "improving relations."

Again, the truth of history has been confirmed that as long as there is power politics and tyranny on the planet, only a state with sufficient self-defense power is able to defend peace.

Our "Military First" policy is definitely right and our self-defense force created by it is a precious deterrent to prevent war and defend peace and stability in the Korean peninsula.¹⁸

However, Kim Gi-Yong points out that there is another intention. He argues that North Korea pursued nuclear development in order to secure its own influence in the confrontation between China and the Soviet Union by establishing its own military system. He is based on the fact that North Korea embodied its nuclear weapons program

¹⁷ Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., *North Korea's Development of a Nuclear Weapons Strategy* (Washington: US-Korea Institute at SAIS, 2015), 12.

¹⁸ North Korea, The Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Condemns US Military Attack on Libya, March 22, 2011, <http://uriminzokkiri.com/index.php?ptype=igisa1&no=6772>.

since the mid-1960s, when China and the Soviet Union were in conflict. His research suggests that North Korea intended to establish its own position in relations with China and the Soviet Union through its nuclear program while seeking to raise the status of the state internationally through the image of a military power.¹⁹

Meanwhile, how to respond to the North Korean nuclear issue and what means should be used has been another main subject of the studies on the North Korean nuclear issue.

The US-North Korea relationship, which had remained relatively stable since the Geneva Agreed Framework in 1994, changed when President George W. Bush took office in 2001. The Bush administration initially recognized North Korea as a “rogue state,” and after the 9/11 event, President Bush took a stronger position. He declared that North Korea, along with Iraq and Iran, comprised the “axis of evil.” The US national security strategy changed from “engagement and enlargement” of the Clinton administration to the “preemption and armed intervention” of the Bush administration.²⁰ In accordance with the Bush administration’s hard-line policy, Victor Cha suggests “the hawk engagement” that North Korea’s intentions should be tested and according to the result, an engagement policy or an isolation and containment policy should be selected.²¹

¹⁹ Kim Gi-Yong, “The Comparative Study on the Nuclear Weapon Development Process – A Comparative Study on North Korea and Post Nuclear Development Seven Countries,” (Ph.D. diss., Kyungpook National University, 2016), 132.

²⁰ Kurt M. Campbell and Celeste Johnson Ward, “New Battle Stations?,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no.5 (September/October, 2003): 96-100.

²¹ Victor Cha, “Hawk Engagement and Preventive Defense on the Korean Peninsula,” *International Security* 27, no. 1 (Summer, 2002): 78.

Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland argue that neither incentives nor sanctions by the US and the international community have worked. However, they contend that the North Korean economy is in serious difficulty regardless of sanctions. Although the marketization of the North Korean economy is very slow progress is underway. This suggests that sanctions and incentives that take full account of North Korea's internal situation can be effective.²²

Joshua Stanton, Sung-Yoon Lee, and Bruce Klingner also argue that loose sanctions against North Korea have failed. They also claim that South Korea's economic support for bringing North Korea into the international economy and making it capitalist has further diminished the effect of sanctions on North Korea. The study argues that strong sanctions should be implemented to the extent that the survival of North Korea could be at stake.²³

On the other hand, David C. Kang argues that the United States should embrace North Korea. His study contends that isolation and pressure would have little effect on the North Korean regime and that the United States can find a solution when it understands the security threat that North Korea feels from the United States. He claims that the United States should provide North Korea with security guarantees to reduce North Korea's concerns about US military action. He also argues that this inclusion

²² Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Hard Target: Sanctions, Inducements, and the Case of North Korea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 231-249.

²³ Joshua Stanton, Sung-Yoon Lee, and Bruce Klingner, "Getting Tough on North Korea – How to Hit Pyongyang Where It Hurts," *Foreign Affairs* 96, no.3 (May/June, 2017): 67-75.

strategy can make North Korea consider the international environment less dangerous and clearly recognize the benefits of openness.²⁴

China's position in dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue is also an important subject of the research on the North Korean nuclear issue. Since China has the greatest influence over North Korea, China's cooperation is necessary in order for sanctions on North Korea to be effective. However, in the past, China opposed sanctions against North Korea. As the North Korean nuclear issue became more serious, China began to participate in sanctions but has always maintained a passive stance.

China's perception of North Korea is largely divided into a strategic asset and a strategic burden. First, in terms of strategic asset, North Korea is necessary as a countermeasure against US strategic pressure to surround China in East Asia and as a geopolitical buffer zone.²⁵ On the other hand, in terms of strategic burden, North Korea, which heightens the international crisis, is a troublesome state to China which seeks to achieve stable growth by improving the relations with Northeast Asian states and to establish a constructive and responsible image in the international community.²⁶

2.2 Contribution of This Study

A wide variety of studies have been conducted on the North Korean nuclear issue. The studies analyzed the intentions of the North Korean nuclear program and the way the

²⁴ David C. Kang, "The Avoidable Crisis in North Korea," *Orbis* 47, no.3 (Summer, 2003): 508.

²⁵ Nah Youngju, "Xi Jinping Regime's Policy on North Korea and North Korea's Nuclear Issue," *Journal of Ethnology* 65, (Spring, 2016): 69.

²⁶ Park Tae-hong, "Changes and Causes of China's Policies toward North Korean Nuclear Problems," (Ph.D. diss., Kookmin University, 2016), 26.

international community copes. However, the North Korean nuclear issue is not just a past history, but an ongoing problem as well as an increasingly serious problem.

North Korea, suffering from serious economic difficulties, does not attempt to “bandwagon” or “balance” despite the prominent differences in “power” between North Korea and the United States. There is also no apparent attempt to strengthen the alliance with China, the sole ally after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to balance its power with the United States. North Korea only tries to overcome the inferiority of conventional weapons through the development of nuclear weapons.

The ever-changing circumstances of the North Korean nuclear issue require constant attention on what variables make it possible to negotiate and what is needed to settle the negotiations. The goal of this study is to update existing studies according to the latest situation rather than present a new direction. In addition, this study attempts to explore alternative policies for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, which has not been solved for the past 25 years, by discussing what each state should seek to obtain and what should be abandoned at this juncture.

Chapter 3. Historical Background (1993-2005)

North Korea experienced a sense of insecurity as the US considered the use of atomic bombs in 1951 when the Korean War was in full swing and felt a real threat when the US began to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea in 1958.²⁷ As a result, in 1959, North Korea signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union and in 1965 began operating a research reactor introduced from the Soviet Union. Since then, North Korea joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in September 1974 and the NPT in December 1985, appearing to pursue peaceful use of nuclear energy. However, as North Korea delayed signing the safeguards agreement²⁸ delivered by the IAEA in June 1987, signs of conflict began to appear. North Korea presented a precondition for the signing of the safeguards agreement, including the declaration of the non-use of nuclear weapons and non-threats to North Korea, and the concurrent inspections of the US forces in South Korea. There were various negotiations between South Korea, the United States, and North Korea. As a result of the negotiations, South Korea and the US decided to remove the tactical nuclear weapons of the US forces in South Korea, and South Korea and North Korea adopted the Declaration of Denuclearization in December 1991, which prohibits the development and deployment of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula. Then North Korea signed the safeguards agreement in January 1992 and this seemed to be the end of the North Korean nuclear issue. But the problem soon became more serious.

²⁷ Lee Jae-bong, "North Korea's Nuclear Development and the United States' Response," *North Korean Studies Review* 7, no.2 (December, 2003): 101.

²⁸ It is the agreement to receive IAEA inspections as specific means to prevent nuclear materials, facilities, and technologies from being used for military purposes.

North Korea submitted an initial report to the IAEA in May 1992 under the signing of the safeguards agreement, declaring seven sites and some 90 grams of plutonium that could be subject to IAEA inspection.²⁹ However, the IAEA found significant discrepancies with the initial report after conducting six inspections from May 1992 to February 1993. The IAEA called for special inspections of two unreported nuclear facilities, but North Korea refused. Finally, in March 1993, North Korea submitted a letter of withdrawal to the UN Security Council.

As a result of several meetings between the United States and North Korea, in December 1993 North Korea decided to accept the IAEA inspections and the United States decided to discontinue the Team Spirit, the largest joint military training exercise of the US Forces in Korea and the Military of South Korea. However, at the inspection implemented in March 1994, the IAEA failed to adequately check the necessary parts due to North Korea's uncooperative attitude. Finally, in March 1994, the IAEA referred the North Korean nuclear issue to the Security Council. The UN Security Council adopted the Presidential Statement (S/PRST/1994/13) urging North Korea to allow additional inspections. As the situation continued to worsen, in June 1994, North Korea declared its withdrawal from the IAEA, the UN Security Council began to discuss sanctions against North Korea, and the US referred to the bombing of North Korean nuclear facilities.

In such an urgent situation, from June 15 to June 18, 1994, former US President Jimmy Carter visited North Korea and met with North Korean leader Kim Il-sung. After the talks, Jimmy Carter announced that they agreed that the US would provide light-water

²⁹ Armed Control Association, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy," last modified March 9, 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>.

reactors and eliminate the threat of a nuclear attack and that North Korea would stop the nuclear development program and resume the high-level US-North Korea talks. Former US President Carter's visit to North Korea provided North Korea with an opportunity to get out of the crisis without losing face.³⁰ Although Kim Il-sung died in July 1994, the United States and North Korea continued their follow-up talks and signed the Geneva Agreed Framework in October 1994. The US decided to provide light-water reactor power plants by 2003 and before the completion of the first light-water reactor unit, provide annually 500,000 tons of heavy oil for heating and electricity production. North Korea decided to freeze its nuclear facilities and dismantle those facilities on the completion of the light-water reactor project.

In September 1999, the United States announced the easing of economic sanctions against North Korea, and North Korea declared a moratorium on the launch of the missile test. In June 2000, the first summit talk between South and North Korea was held. In October, "U.S.-D.P.R.K. Joint Communiqué" which was about normalizing relations between the US and North Korea was announced. A friendly atmosphere continued. But in January 2001 George W. Bush was inaugurated as the 43rd president of the United States, and the atmosphere began to change. The Bush administration has come up with tougher measures against North Korea and North Korea warned that agreements could be broken. In particular, with the 9/11 US foreign policy was getting strong. In January 2002, President Bush named North Korea together with Iran and Iraq as the "axis of evil." North Korea strongly opposed President Bush's remarks, saying that it was a

³⁰ Jina Kim, *The North Korean Nuclear Weapons Crisis-the Nuclear Taboo Revisited?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 33.

declaration of war. In March 2002, the US Department of Defense included North Korea in seven nuclear target countries (China, Russia, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya, and Syria) in the Nuclear Posture Review. North Korea declared that it would reexamine all agreements with the United States. In May 2002, the US Department of State designated North Korea as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. Finally, in October 2002, North Korea disclosed that its secret nuclear program was underway. The US National Security Council announced that it would stop providing heavy oil. In return, North Korea removed the IAEA nuclear facility seal and began operations, expelling IAEA inspectors. In January 2003, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution (GOV/2003/3) that called upon North Korea to cooperate fully and urgently with the Agency, but eventually, on January 10, 2003, North Korea declared its withdrawal from the NPT.

President Bush said in his State of the Union address on January 28, that North Korea is an outlaw regime and that the US would not surrender to North Korea's nuclear threat. And on February 7 he mentioned that he was considering military action against North Korea. While the situation was getting worse, China, which had advocated a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, proposed the US-North Korea talks. Accordingly, trilateral talks between the US, North Korea, and China was held in Beijing from April 23 to 25. At the talks, the US demanded that North Korea gave up its nuclear program first. The US mentioned that if immediate nuclear inspections would be carried out and "the Complete, Verifiable and Irreversible Dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program" (CVID) would be achieved, economic assistance to North Korea could be resumed. On the other hand, North Korea insisted that security guarantee,

economic support, and North Korea's abandonment of nuclear program should be implemented at the same time. In the end, the trilateral talks ended without any results.

In April 2003, when the US-North Korea relations were getting worse, the United States reassigned North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. However, China continued its efforts to launch the multilateral talks between interested states, including itself, in order to secure its influence in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. As a result, the first round of Six-Party Talks involving South Korea, the United States, North Korea, China, Japan, and Russia took place in Beijing from August 27 to 29. Since then, in February and June 2004, the second and third rounds of the Six-Party Talks were held, but no visible results were achieved. Finally, in February 2005 North Korea officially declared possession of nuclear weapons and an indefinite suspension of participation in the Six-Party Talks. The tension was heightened and the summits between South Korea and China, South Korea and Russia, the US and Russia, and South Korea and the US were held from May to June 2004. As a result of various contacts among the interested parties, the first phase of the fourth round of Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing from July 26 to August 7, and the second phase was held from September 13 to 19. As a result of the talks, the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks was adopted. North Korea decided to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and return to the NPT and the IAEA. The US confirmed that it had no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula and had no intention of attacking North Korea with nuclear weapons or conventional weapons. Participants also agreed that North Korea had the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and agreed to discuss the issue of providing light-water reactors to North Korea at an appropriate time.

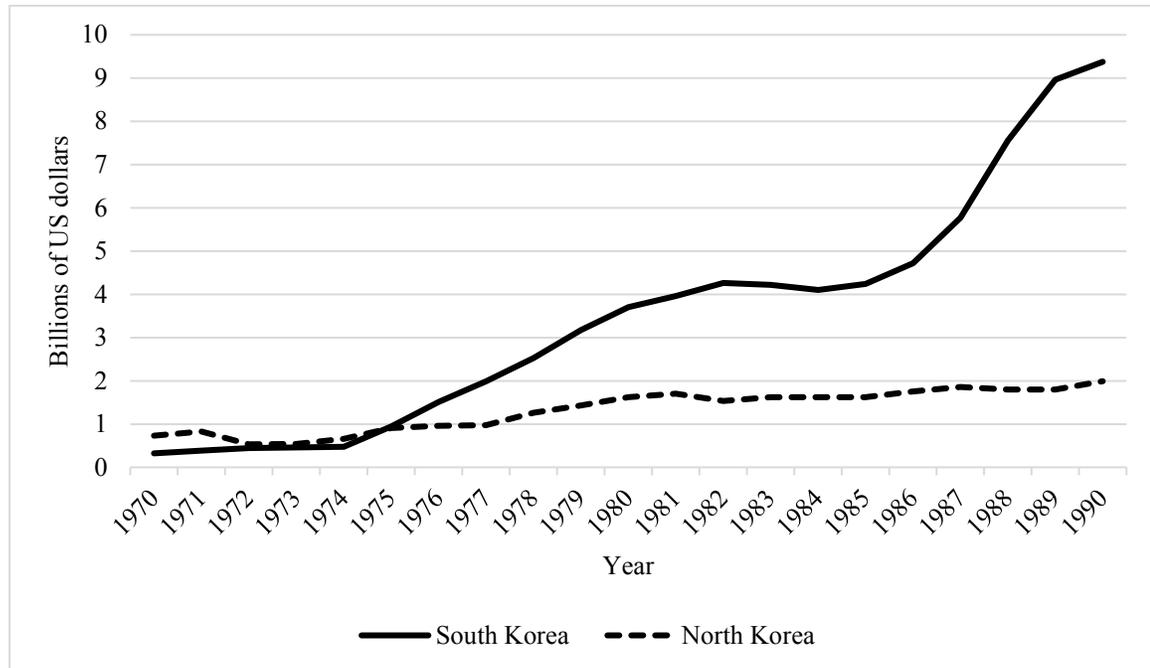
However, shortly after the announcement of the Joint Statement, the US Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Macau's Banco Delta Asia (BDA) bank for allegedly supporting North Korea's illicit financial transactions and banned transactions between US financial institutions and the bank. During this process, about \$25 million of the North Korean funds deposited in the BDA were frozen by the Macau Monetary Authority. The first phase of the fifth round of Six-Party Talks held in November in order to discuss the implementation of the Joint Statement was stalled again by North Korea's opposition to the BDA issue and the US refusal to discuss. In December, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/60/173) on the human rights situation in North Korea. The situation was getting worse again.

Chapter 4. Analysis from the Realist View

4.1 Kim Jong-il and Bush Era (2006-2008)

North Korea

Military Expenditure of South and North Korea³¹



Since the mid-1970s, South Korea's defense expenditure has begun to overtake North Korea, and the gap has grown rapidly. Moreover, in the early 1990s, the changes in socialist countries such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, a major ally of North Korea, and the introduction of a market economy system in China gave North Korea a sense of crisis of system change. In addition, as Russia and China established diplomatic ties with South Korea strengthening economic cooperation, North Korea felt a strong sense of security crisis.

³¹ The Sejong Institute, A Study on the Changes of South and North Korea in Statics, (Seoul: the Sejong Institute), 150-151.

Military Forces in the Korean peninsula (2006)³²

	South Korea	US Forces Korea (USFK)	North Korea
Soldiers	674,000	29,000	1,170,000
Tanks	2,300	60	3,700
Armored vehicles	2,500	140	2,100
Field artillery	5,300	-	13,300
Guided weapons	20	40	80
Combat Aircraft	500	90	820
Helicopters	680	40	310
Vessels	160	-	740
Submarines	10	-	60

As can be seen from the table above, the quantitative comparison in 2006 shows that South Korea's military strength was inferior to North Korea, even when it combined with the USFK. However, due to economic difficulties, North Korea's conventional weapons were already obsolete and its utility was much lower due to the lack of military training. At a hearing of the Senate Committee on Armed Services held on March 8, 2005, Gen. Leon LaPorte, the commander of the USFK, testified that North Korean Air Force spent 12-15 hours per year in flight training, while South Korean and the USFK trained 15 hours a month, and he said that he had not even seen brigade-level training of the North Korean forces over the past several years. Moreover, according to the US-South Korea Mutual Defense Treaty, in case of emergency US forces will be added to the Korean peninsula, with a maximum of 690,000 troops, 160 vessels, and 2,000 aircraft.³³

³² Synthesized from the 2006 Defense White Paper of South Korea.

³³ South Korea, Ministry of National Defense, 2016 Defense White Paper, (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2016), 44.

In 1991, the United States withdrew its nuclear weapons from South Korea but has provided a nuclear umbrella to South Korea based on an overwhelming level of nuclear power, such as the ICBMs and the nuclear submarines in the Pacific.³⁴ It has been reaffirmed every year through the South Korea-US annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), which is held between the defense ministers of the two states.

North Korea was fully aware that it would no longer be able to overwhelm South Korea with conventional power, and that it would become even more obvious given the US support. Therefore, in order to make up for the inferiority of conventional power, North Korea had to focus on asymmetric warfare capabilities, such as nuclear weapons. As a result, in February 2005, North Korea officially declared its possession of nuclear weapons and finally conducted the first nuclear test on October 9, 2006. The yield of the first nuclear test explosion was relatively small, about 1 kt of TNT, which raised questions about whether or not it was a nuclear explosion. However, the office of director of national intelligence confirmed that it was a nuclear test announcing that radioactive materials were detected as a result of analysis of the collected air samples.³⁵ North Korea's first nuclear test had not yet reached the point of actual weaponization but it had been recognized as a technological success in terms of acquiring core technologies of nuclear weapons and gaining confidence in the development of nuclear weapons.³⁶

³⁴ Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 222.

³⁵ Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger, "North Korean Fuel Identified as Plutonium," *New York Times*, October 17, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/17/world/asia/17diplo.html>.

³⁶ Jungmin Kang and Peter Hayes, "Technical Analysis of the DPRK Nuclear Test," last modified October 20, 2006, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-special-reports/technical-analysis-of-the-dprk-nuclear-test/>

Prior to the first nuclear test, North Korea test-fired Taepodong-2 on July 5, 2006, eight years after its first multi-stage ballistic missile launch in August 1998. Tests of Taepodong-2 failed, but it was estimated that the range was more than 6,700 km which could reach Alaska and the range could be further increased if the weight was reduced or the propulsion rocket was added.³⁷

The United States

In the Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR) published in February 2006, the US had set four strategic goals: Defeating terrorist networks, Defending the homeland in depth, Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads, and Preventing the Acquisition or use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In the fourth strategic goal, North Korea and Iran were identified as states threatening the United States and its allies through nuclear development.³⁸

In 2006, the National Security Strategy (NSS) asserted that the United States would launch a preemptive attack, using nuclear weapons, if necessary for the nonproliferation of WMD. It also pointed to Kim Jong-il's regime as one of the most threatening regimes possessing WMD.³⁹

³⁷ South Korea, Ministry of National Defense, 2008 Defense White Paper, (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2008), 30.

³⁸ United States, Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review Report, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2006), 32.

³⁹ United States, The White House, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2006), 21-23.

In addition, a Pentagon official mentioned that a plan to strike North Korea's nuclear facilities using a commando raid and Tomahawk cruise missiles was being considered.⁴⁰

However, it seemed to reflect not only the threat of the North Korean nuclear issue but also the hard-line atmosphere that was symbolized by the Bush administration's key policy posture, the War on Terrorism, since 9/11. This was evidenced by the decision in 2004 to reduce 12,500 USFK troops by 2008 and the deployment of one Apache helicopter battalion in South Korea, consisting of 24 Apache helicopters, to Iraq in November 2008.⁴¹ In November 2003, President Bush had announced the relocation of US forces overseas. The United States pursued a flexible strategy to carry out various strategic missions without discrimination, and accordingly the USFK, which were deployed to deal only with North Korea, were rearranged.⁴²

However, in the midst of the weakening of the USFK, key personnel stressed the need for the missile defense system. On July 13, 2016, Gen. Burwell Bell, commander of the USFK, said at a National Security Forum of South Korean Congress that it was necessary to invest in building the missile defense system to prepare for a North Korean missile threat to South Korea.⁴³ Also, in December 2016, Robert Gates, Defense Secretary-designate, emphasized that the North Korean nuclear issue was a serious threat

⁴⁰ "U.S. Speeds Attack Plans for North Korea," Washington Times, November 3, 2006, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2006/nov/3/20061103-122702-4895t/>.

⁴¹ Yoon Sang-ho, "The Core of Deterrence against the North... Fear of a Security Vacuum," Dong-a Daily, November 17, 2008, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=020&aid=0002004621>.

⁴² Choi Jong-chul, "Strategic Flexibility of USFK and Strategic Response of South Korea," National Strategy 12, no.1 (Spring, 2006): 61-62.

⁴³ Yoon Sang-ho, "Need for the Missile Defense System in the Korean Peninsula," Dong-a Daily, July 14, 2006, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LPOD&mid=etc&oid=020&aid=0000358655>.

and that the missile defense system was necessary for military deterrence against North Korea.⁴⁴ In addition, on March 11, 2008, Vice President Dick Cheney also accentuated that North Korea's nuclear missile development was a potential threat to the US mainland and that the missile defense system was needed to deal with it.⁴⁵

In this period, the United States evaluated the North Korean nuclear issue as a threat but accepted it as a diplomatic conflict rather than a real threat. At the same time, the United States had a desire to check China and Russia by including South Korea in its missile defense system, one of its core 21st century military strategies.

South Korea

South Korea's 2008 Defense White Paper said that the North Korean conventional forces and WMD were the biggest threats to the security of the Korean peninsula and the region. The South Korean Ministry of National Defense estimated that North Korea completed its nuclear fuel cycle from the procurement of nuclear fuel to reprocessing and already acquired plutonium as a fuel of nuclear weapons. In addition, it confirmed that North Korea deployed various missiles having the ranges from 300 km to 3,000 km and was developing long-range ballistic missiles that could reach the US mainland.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Kim Jong-won, "The Point of View of New Defense Secretary on the Korean peninsula," *Segye Daily*, December 11, 2006,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LPOD&mid=etc&oid=022&aid=0000198128>.

⁴⁵ Dick Cheney, "Vice President's Remarks at the Heritage Foundation Dinner Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative" (speech, Washington, D.C., March 11, 2008), <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/03/print/20080311-9.html>.

⁴⁶ South Korea, Ministry of National Defense, 2008 Defense White Paper, (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2008), 20-31.

In response to North Korea's missile threats, on September 28, 2006, South Korea created centralized headquarters to command all military artillery forces, including the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS).⁴⁷ In May 2007, King Sejong the Great, the first Aegis ship in South Korea, was launched at a cost of \$1 billion. It was able to detect simultaneously 1,000 targets approaching from 500km away and attack 20 targets at the same time and equipped with SM-2 missiles for cruise missile interceptor.⁴⁸ In September 2008, the Patriot Missile System (PAC-2) was introduced,⁴⁹ followed by the launch of the second Aegis ship in November 2008.⁵⁰

However, South Korea's missile defense capabilities were inadequate in numbers and qualities, and its reliance on the USFK was very strong. Therefore, the reduction of the USFK was a very sensitive issue to South Korea. At the summit in April 2008, President Lee demanded the cancellation of 3,500 USFK troops reduction, which was the last stage of the USFK reduction plan and scheduled in 2008, and the plan was canceled in agreement with President Bush.⁵¹ It was a case showing the importance of the USFK in South Korea's defense capability and South Korea's security anxiety. However, despite the lack of countermeasures against North Korean missiles, South Korea had been

⁴⁷ Kim Gui-keun and Lee Gui-won, "The Headquarters of Guided Missile Is Created," Yonhap News, September 27, 2006, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=001&aid=0001422715>.

⁴⁸ Kim Ho-gyung, "The first Aegis Ship in South Korea," Kookmin Daily, May 25, 2007, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=005&aid=0000279249>.

⁴⁹ Yoon Sang-ho, "The Patriot Missile System Introduced from Germany," Dong-a Daily, September 24, 2008, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=020&aid=0001991277>.

⁵⁰ Jung Choong-shin, "The Second Aegis Ship Launched," Munhwa Daily, November 15, 2008, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=021&aid=0001971781>.

⁵¹ Park Sung-jin, "USFK Reduction Is Stopped," Kyunghyang Daily, April 15, 2008, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=032&aid=0001951050>.

reluctant to participate in the US missile defense system because of concerns about a strong backlash from China.

China

Unlike the United States, China does not deploy military forces on the Korean peninsula. However, China's position can be gauged through government documents such as the Defense White Paper.

China, in its 2006 Defense White Paper, pointed to the strengthening of the US military forces in the Asia-Pacific region and the consolidating of the US-Japan alliance as an element of unrest, along with North Korea's nuclear and missile tests. In addition, it was mentioned that the People's Liberation Army had taken over the defense of the North Korea-China border from the border public security force since 2003, which showed that China considered the factors of insecurity in the North Korea-China border, such as the defectors from North Korea, to be important.⁵²

In its 2008 Defense White Paper, China noted the achievements of the six-party talks in 2007, 2.13 agreements, 10.3 agreements, and stressed the relaxation of tensions in Northeast Asia.⁵³ On the other hand, the possibility of military conflict was mentioned, emphasizing that all countries increasingly focused on using military measures to resolve diplomatic conflicts.⁵⁴

⁵² China, The Information Office of the State Council, China's National Defense in 2006, Last modified December 29, 2006, <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/wp2006.html>.

⁵³ China, The Information Office of the State Council, China's National Defense in 2008, (Beijing: the State Council, 2009), 5, 53.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.

Meanwhile, China publicly criticized the alliance between South Korea and the US. On May 27, 2008, a spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China said that the South Korea-US military alliance was a relic of the past history and that because the times had changed, the problems in the region could not be dealt with old ideas.⁵⁵ It was very unusual for the Chinese government to criticize officially the South Korea-US alliance. It was a response to President Lee's announcement that he would respond to the North Korean nuclear issue, centered on the South Korea-US strategic alliance.

China had been wary of North Korea's nuclear test, but it had focused on peaceful resolution through the six-party talks rather than tough policies. And China sought to check the expansion of US forces in Northeast Asia rather than the North Korean nuclear program.

4.2 Kim Jong-il and Obama Era (2009-2011)

North Korea

On May 25, 2009, North Korea conducted the second nuclear test. According to various evaluations, the yield of the test was estimated to be 2-7 kt of TNT, several times higher than that of the first nuclear test in 2006, which was measured to be less than 1 kt.⁵⁶ It was still insufficient compared to the first nuclear test of other nuclear powers at 10-20 kt. However, it was evaluated that there had been significant progress in terms of the performance of the nuclear test. In the first nuclear test, information on the nuclear

⁵⁵ Koo Ja-ryong, "ROK-US Alliance Is a Relic of the Past," Dong-a Daily, May 28, 2008, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LPOD&mid=etc&oid=020&aid=0001963172>.

⁵⁶ Vitaly Fedchenko, North Korea's Nuclear Test Explosion, 2009, (Solna: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2009), 3-4.

test was obtained through the capture of the radioactive materials in the atmosphere but in the second nuclear test, no radioactive materials were detected. This demonstrated the possibility that North Korea developed technology to block the release of radioactive materials during its nuclear tests.⁵⁷

On April 5, 2009, a launch test of Taepodong-2, a three-stage long-range missile, was conducted. Unlike the 2006 long-range missile test that failed, the missile test was relatively successful. It failed to separate the third-stage, but it flew 3,200 km over Japan and fell on the Pacific Ocean. The Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report (BMDR), which was published in 2010, estimated that the test was unsuccessful but would soon be successful in developing a long-range missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.⁵⁸

North Korea's second nuclear test and the long-range missile launch test showed that its technology still did not meet the level of weaponization and that additional testing was necessary. However, it was clear that North Korea made some progress compared to past tests.

The United States

The 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report reported that North Korea's ballistic missile threats continued to increase but that the US missile defense system had sufficient capabilities for the defense of the US mainland. The report emphasized that the missile defense system of the United States was not for the strategic balance with China

⁵⁷ Jonathan Medalia, *North Korea's 2009 Nuclear Test: Containment, Monitoring, Implications*, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 23.

⁵⁸ United States, Department of Defense, *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), 4.

and Russia but for the response to North Korea and Iran's threat, and mentioned that because South Korea was interested in the missile defense system, the missile defense cooperation between the two states could be consolidated.⁵⁹

The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review Report noted that North Korea did not comply with its obligations to the international community and that the possibility of using US nuclear weapons on states, that had nuclear weapons and did not comply with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations, had not yet been eliminated.⁶⁰

In the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, the United States expressed its concern about North Korea's nuclear weapons and mentioned active response against it.⁶¹ However, the report explained that the status of the USFK would be changed from "forward-deployed" to "forward-stationed" and that it would be possible for USFK troops to be put into emergency situations in other regions.⁶² It showed that the war against the al Qaeda and the Taliban, which were underway, was more important to the US than the North Korean nuclear issue. In addition, the 2010 National Security Strategy emphasized the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, mentioning that if North Korea continued to pursue its nuclear program, isolation would be intensified, but if it abandoned its nuclear program, harmonization with the international community would be possible.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid., 13, 33.

⁶⁰ United States, Department of Defense, Nuclear Posture Review Report, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), viii.

⁶¹ United States, Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review Report, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2010), 31.

⁶² Ibid., 51.

⁶³ United States, The White House, National Security Strategy, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2010), 23.

The Ballistic Missile Defense Review and the Nuclear Posture Review Report, which were sectoral reports on ballistic missiles and nuclear capabilities respectively, pointed to the importance of strong responses to North Korea's threats. However, in the Quadrennial Defense Review Report and National Security Strategy that dealt with US security more broadly, it was emphasized that the ongoing wars against the terrorist forces were more important than the North Korean nuclear issue. Therefore, the United States put more emphasis on diplomatic solutions than on strengthening the military forces on the Korean peninsula.

South Korea

The 2010 Defense White Paper explained that North Korea was intensifying its asymmetric power such as WMD, which was a serious threat to South Korea. In addition, the white paper estimated that North Korea's long-range missile, Taepodong-2, could reach Alaska.⁶⁴

During this period, several armed conflicts broke out between the two Koreas. On November 10, 2009, the North Korean patrol boat, which crossed the Northern Limit Line, attacked South Korean patrol boats. On March 26, 2010, a South Korean naval vessel sank due to a torpedo attack of a North Korean submarine. On November 23, 2010, North Korea attacked the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong with artillery. These events had heightened military tensions on the Korean peninsula.

⁶⁴ South Korea, Ministry of National Defense, 2010 Defense White Paper, (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2010), 20-29.

In this atmosphere, South Korea decided to introduce the GBU-28 Bunker Buster Bomb, which the United States had classified as a strategic weapon and controlled exports abroad, the Early Warning Radar for ballistic missiles, the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) GPS-guided bombs, and the GBU-24 laser-guided bombs.⁶⁵ In March 2011, the third Aegis destroyer was launched,⁶⁶ and in July 2011, an airborne early warning and control aircraft, Peace Eye, was introduced for the first time in South Korea to detect all over North Korea with a detection distance of 500 km.⁶⁷

In the tension caused by armed conflicts, South Korea continued to strengthen its defense capabilities. However, with regard to the participation of the US missile defense system to reinforce the defensive abilities against the North Korean missile threat, the passive attitude of South Korea continued because of the relations with China and Russia.

China

China noted in its 2010 Defense White Paper that it closely cooperated with North Korea in terms of border management and strengthened its military relationship.⁶⁸ It also emphasized that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should be achieved through peaceful efforts such as the Six-Party Talks.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the Paper argued that the United States was strengthening interventions in regional security through military

⁶⁵ Kim Gui-keun, "The Defense System against North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Will Be Introduced," Yonhap News, June 24, 2009, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=001&aid=0002730034>.

⁶⁶ Kim Gui-keun, "The Third Aegis Ship Launched," Yonhap News, March 10, 2011, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=001&aid=0004951720>.

⁶⁷ Lee Han-seok, "The Early Warning and Control Aircraft First Introduced," SBS News, August 1, 2011, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=096&aid=0000145258>.

⁶⁸ China, The Information Office of the State Council, China's National Defense in 2010, (Beijing: the State Council, 2011), 27.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 29.

alliances and had damaged US-China relations through arms sales to Taiwan.⁷⁰ In particular, China responded strongly to US arms sales to Taiwan. On January 9, 2010, the US Department of Defense approved the sale of the latest Patriot missile system, the PAC-3, to Taiwan. In response, China immediately urged the United States to cancel its arms sales to Taiwan and warned that bilateral ties could worsen. Experts analyzed that China's response was due to concerns that the US missile defense system would be built in Taiwan.⁷¹

China, in principle, agreed to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula but felt threatened by the strengthening of US forces and the US attempt to build the missile defense system in Northeast Asia rather than the North Korean nuclear program.

4.3 Kim Jong-un and Obama Era (2012-2016)

North Korea

During this period, North Korea conducted three nuclear tests and three long-range missile tests.

On April 13, 2012, North Korea conducted a test launch of the long-range missile Taepodong-2. The missile exploded in the air two minutes after launch and the test failed. However, North Korea conducted a test launch of Taepodong-2 again on December 12, 2012, and this time it was successful. The US North American Aerospace Defense Command also admitted that the North Korean missile had flown along its intended

⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁷¹ Hong Je-sung, "US-China Conflict on Arms Sales to Taiwan," Yonhap News, January 11, 2010, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=001&aid=0003066657>.

orbit.⁷² The South Korean Ministry of National Defense estimated that North Korea extended the range of the missile to 10,000 km and the western US was included in the range.⁷³

On February 12, 2013, North Korea conducted the third nuclear test. The South Korean Ministry of National Defense assessed the yield of the third nuclear test as 6-7 kt.⁷⁴ On January 6, 2016, the fourth nuclear test was conducted. North Korea insisted that the fourth nuclear test was a hydrogen bomb test, but South Korean National Intelligence Service assessed it was hardly a hydrogen bomb because its yield was only 6 kt, similar to the third nuclear test.⁷⁵

On February 7, 2016, a long-range missile Taepodong-2 was launched. The US Strategic Command acknowledged the success of the missile test.⁷⁶ On September 9, 2016, the fifth nuclear test was conducted. South Korean National Intelligence Service estimated that the speed of nuclear development was getting faster than expected, assuming the power of nuclear test was about 10 kt, similar to the atomic bombs dropped on Japan's Hiroshima in 1945.⁷⁷ The South Korean Ministry of National Defense

⁷² Jethro Mullen and Paul Armstrong, "North Korea Carries Out Controversial Rocket Launch," CNN, December 12, 2012, <https://www.cnn.com/2012/12/11/world/asia/north-korea-rocket-launch/index.html>.

⁷³ South Korea, Ministry of National Defense, 2014 Defense White Paper, (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2014), 29.

⁷⁴ Hong Jin-soo, "The Yield of the Nuclear Test Is 6-7 kt," *Kyunghyang Daily*, February 12, 2013, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=032&aid=0002304237>.

⁷⁵ Kim Dong-hyun and Son Jung-bin, "National Intelligence Service Estimated that the Nuclear Test Was Not a Hydrogen Bomb Test," *NEWSIS*, January 6, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=003&aid=0006970286>.

⁷⁶ Danielle Demetriou, "North Korea Launches Missile in Defiance of UN Sanctions," *the Telegraph*, February 7, 2016, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/12100723/North-Korea-launches-space-rocket-in-defiance-of-sanctions-threats.html>.

⁷⁷ Cho Hye-ryung, "National Intelligence Service Announces that the Progress of North Korean Nuclear Development Is Getting Faster," *Nocut News*, September 9, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=079&aid=0002872171>.

assessed that North Korea possessed about 50 kg of plutonium which could be used to make nuclear weapons and that its capability for nuclear warhead miniaturization had reached a considerable level.⁷⁸

During the period of 2012-2016, North Korea still had a lot to improve, but it had dramatically increased the range of long-range missiles, and its technology for manufacturing nuclear warheads seemed to have reached completion. During this period, North Korea became a de facto nuclear power.

The United States

In the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, the United States emphasized the missile defense as a means for the mainland defense, and as part of it, it announced that it would install radar in Japan to monitor North Korea's missile launches.⁷⁹ It was a fairly specific plan compared to general statements which were mentioned in the past reports. This change showed that the US perception of North Korean missile threats was changing from a potential threat to a real threat. Shortly after the publication of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, the media reported that Department of Defense was considering the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), a key interceptor in the missile defense system, to South Korea.⁸⁰ It was only a press release, but China argued that if South Korea participated in the US missile defense

⁷⁸ South Korea, Ministry of National Defense, 2016 Defense White Paper, (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2016), 27.

⁷⁹ United States, Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review 2014, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2014), 32.

⁸⁰ Julian E. Barnes, "Washington Considers Missile-Defense System in South Korea," Wall Street Journal, May 27, 2014, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/washington-considers-missile-defense-system-in-south-korea-1401233131>.

network, a tremendous economic relationship between South Korea and China would be sacrificed and the entire region would become unhappy.⁸¹

On September 30, 2014, Robert Work, Deputy Defense Secretary, officially announced that Department of Defense was in discussions with the South Korean government considering the deployment of THAAD to South Korea.⁸² Finally, on July 13, 2016, the South Korean Ministry of National Defense announced that the deployment of THAAD to South Korea was approved by the South Korean and US defense ministers.⁸³

As the western part of the United States was included in the range of North Korean long-range missiles and North Korea's nuclear warhead technology had developed rapidly, the United States felt North Korea's missile threat as a real threat and began to seek concrete and military countermeasures.

South Korea

As a result of the amendment of the South Korea-US Missile Guidelines in October 2012, the allowance of South Korea's ballistic missile range had been increased from 300km to 800km, enabling the development of missiles that could reach the whole country of North Korea.⁸⁴ In December 2012, an early-warning radar Green Pine with

⁸¹ Yoon Sang-ho and Jung Mi-kyung, "Missile Defense Dilemma Between Security and Diplomacy," Dong-a Daily, May 30, 2014, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=020&aid=0002583700>.

⁸² Ashley Rowland, "Official: THAAD Missile Defense System Being Considered for South Korea," Stars and Stripes, October 1, 2014, <https://www.stripes.com/news/official-thaad-missile-defense-system-being-considered-for-south-korea-1.305980>.

⁸³ Yang Nak-gyu, "South Korea-US Defense Secretary Approved the Deployment of THAAD," the Asia Business Daily, July 13, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=277&aid=0003786862>.

⁸⁴ Before the amendment, according to the South Korea-US Missile Guidelines, South Korea was only able to develop ballistic missiles with a range of less than 300km and a warhead weight of less than 500kg.

ballistic missile monitoring capabilities⁸⁵ and, in December 2016, an air-to-surface missile Taurus with a range of 500km were deployed in South Korea.⁸⁶

However, the most controversial thing was the deployment of THAAD. The public opinion of South Korea was clearly divided into pros and cons. Opponents argued that THAAD was ineffective for medium and short-range missile attacks on South Korea because it was able to intercept only high-altitude missiles aimed at the United States. The tremendous loss that South Korea would face due to China's retaliation was also the reason of opponents. In the midst of controversy, the deployment of THAAD was finally decided in July 2016. China started a powerful economic retaliation against South Korea.

South Korea eventually agreed to the deployment of THAAD because it was more afraid of North Korea's nuclear and missile threats than China's retaliation.

China

In the 2012 Defense White Paper, China indirectly criticized the United States mentioning that "Some country has strengthened its Asia-Pacific military alliances, expanded its military presence in the region, and frequently makes the situation there tenser."⁸⁷ On the other hand, the Paper did not mention about North Korea's nuclear test and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, so it did not stimulate North Korea.

⁸⁵ Ban Jong-bin, "The Specification of Green Pine Radar," Yonhap News, December 5, 2012, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0005972249>.

⁸⁶ Kim Sun-hyung and Kim Jun-bum, "The Deployment of TAURUS Missiles Completed," Yonhap News, December 22, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0008908706>.

⁸⁷ China, The Information Office of the State Council, The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces, Accessed March 27, 2018, http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/08/23/content_281474982986506.htm.

The 2014 Defense White Paper directly criticized the United States, mentioning that its strengthening of military alliance and expanding military presence in the Asia-Pacific region had exacerbated regional instability. In addition, by referring to the instability of the Korean peninsula, China expressed concern about North Korea's nuclear test in February 2013.⁸⁸

However, most of all, China responded strongly to the deployment of THAAD in South Korea. In February 2016, the Chinese foreign minister criticized the US, saying that THAAD harmed Chinese security and interest,⁸⁹ and even President Xi called President Park to emphasize the danger of THAAD.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the deployment of THAAD was decided in July 2016. In response, in December 2016, a Chinese fleet, including an aircraft carrier, carried out military exercises in the sea between China and the Korean peninsula.⁹¹

The deployment of THAAD in South Korea stemming from the North Korean nuclear issue was accepted as a real threat to China. China recognized THAAD in South Korea as an attempt of the United States to set up a surveillance network for China.

⁸⁸ China, The Information Office of the State Council, *China's Military Strategy*, (Beijing: the State Council, 2015), 2.

⁸⁹ Kwon Sung-keun, "THAAD Is a Threat to Chinese National Interest," NEWSIS, February 26, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=003&aid=0007063226>.

⁹⁰ Cho Jin-goo, "THAAD and the End of the Honeymoon between President Park and Xi," *Busan Daily*, July 12, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=102&oid=082&aid=0000615600>.

⁹¹ Jin Byung-tae, "Chinese Naval Fleet Did a Live-Fire Exercise in the Western Sea against THAAD," *Yonhap News*, December 24, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=001&aid=0008912593>.

4.4 Kim Jong-un and Trump Era (2017-2018)

North Korea

During this period, North Korea conducted one nuclear test and three long-range missile tests. First, on July 4, 2017, North Korea tested Hwasong-14 missile. North Korea officially announced the success of the missile test and acknowledged that it was the first intercontinental ballistic missile test. It was different from the previous long-range missile tests, which were announced as rockets for launching satellites. Hwasong-14 was launched at a sharp angle to avoid overflying Japan, in consideration of possible strong reaction from Japan. It had a maximum altitude of 2,300 km and a flying distance of 930km. It was estimated that the range could be from 7,500 to 9,500 km.⁹² Paul Selva, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, admitted that Hwasong-14 had a range that could threaten the US mainland.⁹³ And on July 28, 2017, less than a month later, North Korea conducted another Hwasong-14 missile test. The missile was also fired at a sharp angle and had a maximum altitude of 3,700 km and a flying distance of 1,000 km. It was an improvement over the previous launch test. The range was estimated to be more than 10,000 km at normal firing and most of the US mainland was considered to be included in the range.⁹⁴

⁹² Ankit Panda, "Why Is Russia Denying That North Korea Launched an ICBM?," *the Diplomat*, July 11, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/why-is-russia-denying-that-north-korea-launched-an-icbm>.

⁹³ Jim Garamone, "Selva Addresses Global Challenges, Readiness in Capitol Hill Hearing," *DoD News*, July 18, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/DesktopModules/ArticleCS/Print.aspx?PortalId=1&ModuleId=753&Article=1251212>.

⁹⁴ Center for Strategic & International Studies, "Hwasong-14 (KN-20)," last modified July 27, 2017, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/hwasong-14/>.

On September 3, 2017, the sixth nuclear test was conducted. The yield was estimated to be about 50 to 140 kt and to be 10 times stronger than the atomic bomb that fell on Hiroshima in 1945.⁹⁵ It was a tremendous progress compared to the previous fifth nuclear test's yield, about 10 kt.

On November 28, 2017, the last long-range missile test to date was conducted. It was Hwasong-15 which was the next model of the previously launched Hwasong-14. The missile was also fired at a sharp angle and had a maximum altitude of 4,500 km and a flying distance of 960 km. It was an improved record compared to Hwasong-14. The range was estimated to be 13,000 km and the entire mainland of the United States was presumed to be included in the range.⁹⁶ North Korea disclosed the video clip of the missile test and proclaimed the completion of its nuclear-armed forces.⁹⁷

Of course, there is much controversy as to whether North Korea's long-range missile could be evaluated as a true ICBM, including its ability to mount a nuclear warhead and its accuracy. What is clear, however, is that North Korea came to have an asymmetric power that could actually threaten the United States in terms of the yield of nuclear warheads and the range of long-range missiles.

⁹⁵ Tom O'Connor, "North Korea's Latest Nuclear Bomb Is Stronger than All Its Previous Combined," *Newsweek*, September 5, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/north-korea-latest-nuclear-bomb-stronger-all-previous-combined-659925>.

⁹⁶ David Wright, "North Korea's Longest Missile Test Yet," *Union of Concerned Scientists*, November 28, 2017, <http://allthingsnuclear.org/dwright/nk-longest-missile-test-yet>.

⁹⁷ Kim Ji-sun, "North Korea Disclosed Hwasong-15," *YTN*, November 30, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=052&aid=0001088778>.

The United States

Unlike the previous National Security Strategy reports, the threats of North Korea were dealt importantly and specifically in the 2018 National Security Strategy. Starting with President Trump's preface, throughout the report, North Korea's dictatorship was condemned, and in the first chapter on protection of the US mainland, it referred to North Korea's nuclear weapons as the first threat, threatening millions of Americans.⁹⁸ It also stressed that the missile defense system was focused on the North Korean threat, mentioning the development of North Korea's missile technology in the section on the missile threat to the United States.⁹⁹ More than ever, the threat of North Korea was treated as important.

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review also stressed North Korea's nuclear and missile threats more strongly than ever before. The report recognized North Korea's last missile test as an ICBM test and estimated that North Korea would acquire the nuclear missile ability to attack the United States soon.¹⁰⁰ It also mentioned that the missile defense system would evolve continuously as a means to combat North Korea's missile threats.¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, the THAAD deployment to South Korea had accelerated. Despite China's strong objection and controversy in South Korea, on April 26, 2017, the USFK deployed two of the six launchers that make up one battery.

⁹⁸ United States, The White House, National Security Strategy, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2017), 7.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰⁰ United States, Department of Defense, Nuclear Posture Review, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2018), 11.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 37.

As can be seen from the above, the North Korean nuclear issue is no longer a regional security issue or a potential threat but a practical and urgent threat to the US mainland.

South Korea

On July 29, 2017, the day after North Korea conducted the test launch of Hwasong-14, President Moon ordered his staffs to immediately discuss the additional deployment of the remaining four THAAD launchers with the United States.¹⁰² The South Korean Ministry of National Defense announced a plan for additional THAAD deployment on September 6, 2017, and the following day, February 7, the USFK deployed the remaining four THAAD launchers and completed the construction of one THAAD battery.¹⁰³

In the South Korea-US summit on November 7, 2017, it was agreed to introduce 20 F-35A stealth fighters, E-737 Peace Eye airborne early warning and control aircraft, and four RQ-4 Global Hawk high-altitude unmanned reconnaissance aircraft with a total budget of nine billion dollars.¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile, China's retaliation regarding the THAAD deployment was serious. China was South Korea's number one trading partner and the decision to deploy THAAD could bring a disastrous consequence to South Korea, a trade-oriented state. Until South Korea sought understanding from China at the South Korea-China summit in December

¹⁰² Park Hong-hwan, "The Destiny of THAAD Changed by North Korea," Seoul Daily, July 29, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=081&aid=0002841489>.

¹⁰³ Lee Young-jae, "The THAAD Deployment Is Completed," Yonhap News, September 7, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0009529237>.

¹⁰⁴ Jung Choong-shin, "The Introduction of US High-Tech Weapons," Munhwa Daily, November 9, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=021&aid=0002332942>.

2017, South Korea suffered about 22 billion dollars in damage due to China's economic retaliation.¹⁰⁵

President Moon, who took office in May 2017, had a critical stance on the THAAD deployment when he was a candidate. Nonetheless, his position has changed to the extent that he urges further deployment of THAAD. Eventually, what happened around the THAAD deployment to South Korea showed how seriously South Korea felt threats from the rapid development of North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities.

China

By 2017, China's rhetoric had become very violent. On May 31, 2017, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman urged the cancellation of the THAAD deployment, arguing that THAAD would harm Chinese strategic security and security interests seriously and undermine the possibility of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.¹⁰⁶ In addition, Chinese state-owned media warned that China would punish South Korea and that bilateral relations could be damaged seriously.¹⁰⁷ China conducted a full range of retaliation such as the investigation of Korean companies in China, prohibition of selling Korean travel products, and cancellation of Korean cultural events.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Koo Hui-ryung, "THAAD Retaliation... Loss of Tourism Sector Is 9 Billion Dollars," JTBC, November 1, 2017,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=101&oid=437&aid=0000166522>.

¹⁰⁶ Park Eun-kyung, "China's Concerns on the THAAD Deployment," Kyunghyang Daily, May 31, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=032&aid=0002792361>.

¹⁰⁷ Koo Ja-ryong, "Chinese State-Owned Media Has Gone Too Far," Dong-a Daily, March 1, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=020&aid=0003046220>.

¹⁰⁸ Yang Ki-woong, "South Korea Needs a New Strategy," Segye Daily, March 30, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=102&oid=022&aid=0003160198>.

Meanwhile, on July 28, 2017, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that China opposed North Korea's long-range missile test, which ignored the resolution of the UN Security Council and the hope of the international community.¹⁰⁹ On the same day, however, the Chinese foreign ministry announced that China "resolutely" opposed to the deployment of THAAD to South Korea when President Moon ordered additional deployment of the remaining four THAAD launchers.¹¹⁰ The Chinese foreign ministry's stance, opposing North Korea's missile test and "resolutely" opposing THAAD, showed that China accepted the strengthening of the US military force on the Korean peninsula as a far more serious threat than the North Korean nuclear weapons.

¹⁰⁹ Oh Young-hwan and Ye Young-jun, "China Opposes to North Korea's Ballistic Missile Test," Joong-ang Daily, July 5, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=025&aid=0002732953>.

¹¹⁰ Ye Young-jun, "China, Opposes to North Korea's Missiles, Resolutely Opposes to THAAD," Joong-ang Daily, July 29, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=025&aid=0002740515>.

Chapter 5. Analysis from the Constructivist View

5.1 Kim Jong-il and Bush Era (2006-2008)

North Korea

In the 2006 New Year's editorial, the United States was described as follows.

The main obstacle to the reunification of our nation is the United States. The ruling ideology of the United States, which has forcibly occupied half of the country for 60 years and infringed the nation's sovereignty, is becoming more and more evil day by day. North Koreans, South Koreans, and overseas Koreans must reject US intervention and domination through national cooperation...

The 2007 New Year's editorial also mentioned that the United States, with its invasive nature, was dreaming of dominating the Korean peninsula, saying that US vicious maneuvers were severely threatening the peace and security of the Korean peninsula.

However, criticism of the United States itself disappeared in the 2008 New Year's editorial. It only mentioned that the United States should end its hostile policy against North Korea and replace the ceasefire agreement, that halted the Korean War, with the peace treaty.

To North Korea, the reunification of the Korean peninsula is a matter of sovereignty that should be determined only by Koreans. In this regard, North Korea perceives that the United States infringes its sovereignty by dominating South Korea by force. During this period, however, criticism of the United States was declining. North Korea's critical attitude, which described the US behaviors on the Korean peninsula as "viciousness", had changed in 2008.

The United States

In his 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush said as follows.

And we do not forget the other half—in places like Syria and Burma, Zimbabwe, North Korea, and Iran—because the demands of justice and the peace of this world require their freedom as well.

In the United Nations General Assembly address in September 2007, he mentioned that all civilized states should oppose the dictatorship regime of North Korea, which was ruthlessly suppressing the human rights of its citizens. Also, in the September 2008 UN General Assembly address, he told that North Korea was threatening the civilization world.

President Bush described North Korea as a force that threatened human civilization's justice and peace, and not simply a threat to certain states. These comments were in line with his mention of the "axis of evil" in his 2002 State of the Union address, and he saw North Korea as a force which threatened human universal values, an evil.

In addition, in an interview with foreign journals on July 10, 2006, he said as follows.

See, in the past, negotiators from the United States sat down and said this, that, and the other, and the North Koreans didn't honor the agreement.

Also, in an interview with foreign print media on August 30, 2007, with Korean TV channel on July 30, 2008, and with the Nation Multimedia Group of Thailand on July 30, 2008, he emphasized that North Korea should honor the previous agreements and only North Korea's commitments to the agreements could make a progress.

President Bush believed that North Korea did not keep its promises. At the time, North Korea had made three agreements on September 19, 2005, February 13, 2007, and October 3, 2007 through the six-party talks. However, all of these agreements were abandoned by North Korea's non-cooperation in the implementation process. During this process, North Korea was imprinted on President Bush's perception as an untrustworthy opponent.

South Korea

On June 16, 2006, President Roh Moo-hyun mentioned the three priorities which should be considered in the South-North relations: security as the first, peace as the second, and reunification as the third. In the meantime, he emphasized that economic support for North Korea was a cost to make North Korea trust South Korea.

On January 23, 2007, in his New Year's Special Address he emphasized that peace was a more important value rather than reunification of the Korean peninsula and mentioned that North Korea's missile launch might affect future security, but it was not a crisis at the moment.

On February 27, 2007, in the press conference for the fourth inauguration anniversary, he said as follows.

I cannot imagine seeing the North Korean nuclear as offensive weapons.
... The preemptive nuclear attack without being attacked is insane.

He understood North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and missiles in terms of North Korea's self-defense rights. Rather, he emphasized that South Korea should make efforts first to prevent a situation where peace was broken due to miscalculation of North

Korea. In other words, he thought that it was necessary to embrace North Korea in order to build peace, recognizing that North Korea's nuclear development was inevitable for its survival. This recognition of President Roh led to the improvement of relations with North Korea, and finally the South-North summit in October 2007. At the summit, positive results were achieved, including strengthening inter-Korean exchange and cooperation and implementing the agreements made at the six-party talks.

However, the atmosphere had changed a little since President Lee Myung-bak took office in 2008. In his inaugural address, he said as follows.

If North Korea abandons its nuclear program and chooses the way to openness, a new horizon will be opened in inter-Korean cooperation. I will work with the international community to help North Korea's per capita income reach up to \$ 3,000 in 10 years. I think that is a way for our fellow Koreans and a way to speed up reunification.

Former President Roh emphasized South Korea's active efforts to change North Korea, but President Lee thought that South Korea would respond if North Korea gave up its nuclear weapons first. In other words, unlike President Roh's emphasis on embracing North Korea, President Lee thought it was urgent to eliminate the threat of North Korea's nuclear weapons.

China

During the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's visit to China in January 2006, President Hu Jintao said in a welcoming speech that the Chinese Communist Party and

the government would highly value North Korea-China relations and continuously develop friendly relations.¹¹¹

On the other hand, on July 11, 2006, shortly after North Korea's long-range missile test launch, President Hu expressed concern to North Korea's high-level delegation over the tensions on the Korean peninsula raised by North Korean missile tests and mentioned that China opposed any action that could worsen the situation on the Korean peninsula.¹¹² But this was not the case for North Korea alone. President Hu also called on President Bush to resolve the issue through dialogue and negotiations, saying he would oppose any action that could cause tensions on the Korean peninsula.¹¹³ On October 9, 2006, after the first nuclear test by North Korea, President Hu urged all states involved not to aggravate the situation in a telephone conversation with President Bush.¹¹⁴

Basically, China sought to maintain its alliance and friendly relations with North Korea, a socialist ally, based on the Friendship Treaty. According to this position, China demanded calm responses of all concerned states rather than condemn only North Korea. However, North Korea's nuclear development had continued to weaken the legitimacy of China's defense of North Korea in the international community. As a result, when the UN

¹¹¹ Jang Yong-hoon, "Kim Jong-il Emphasized Overcoming the Difficulties with China," Yonhap News, January 18, 2006,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0001199502>.

¹¹² Lee Don-guan, "President Hu Meets Yang Hyung-sup," Yonhap News, July 11, 2006,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=001&aid=0001354533>.

¹¹³ Lee Don-guan, "Chinese and Russian Foreign Minister Discuss Response to UN," Yonhap News, July 9, 2006,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=001&aid=0001351817>.

¹¹⁴ Choi Kyung-sun, "China Opposes Tensions in the Korean Peninsula," Maeil Business News Korea, October 10, 2006,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=101&oid=009&aid=0000535963>.

Security Council resolution on North Korea's long-range missile test on July 15, 2006, was put to a vote, China voted in favor for the first time. In other words, China had a basic sense of alliance with North Korea, but over time, it came to regard North Korea as a burden.

5.2 Kim Jong-il and Obama Era (2009-2011)

North Korea

There was no direct criticism of the United States in the 2009 New Year's editorial. However, it criticized some South Koreans for worshipping the United States. In the 2010 New Year's editorial, direct criticism of the United States was also refrained. Rather, it emphasized the importance of the United States by mentioning that ending hostilities between North Korea and the United States was a fundamental element of ensuring peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. There was also no criticism of the United States in the 2011 New Year's editorial.

North Korea, which had experienced the worst relations with the United States during the Bush Administration, seemed to have expectations for President Obama who repeatedly announced the engagement policy towards North Korea during the campaign. Although the perception that the United States infringed the sovereignty of the Korean peninsula had not disappeared, at least North Korea recognized the United States as the other side of dialogue and negotiation.

The United States

In his first UN General Assembly speech on September 23, 2009, President Obama warned that North Korea's nuclear program was a threat to the international

community and that if North Korea continued to violate international standards, there would be sanctions under the international law. However, in the same speech, he said that he respected North Korea's rights as a member of the international community and that if North Korea fulfilled its obligations, the relations between two states could be improved by diplomatic efforts.

In his 2010 State of the Union Address speech, he noted that North Korea was facing isolation and sanctions because it sought to develop nuclear weapons by violating the international community's consensus. And in his UN General Assembly speech on September 21, 2011, he mentioned that if North Korea honored its obligations to the international community, there would be a future of greater opportunities. In addition, in an interview with CNN on September 20, 2009, with Russian TV on May 6, 2010, and with ABC on November 23, 2010, he mentioned that North Korea should act responsibly and observe rules of the international community.

President Obama stressed that North Korea should honor international obligations and the United States would make efforts to solve the problem with the international community, rather than mentioning the past violations of North Korea. In other words, he looked at the future, not the past, and he expected the possibility of North Korea's change even though North Korea was a trouble to the international community.

South Korea

In his 2009 New Year's State of the Nation Address, President Lee urged North Korea to stop fueling conflicts in the Korean peninsula and cooperate with the international community. In his 2010 New Year's State of the Nation Address, he urged

North Korea to return to the six-party talks and said that he expected that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and inter-Korean cooperation would begin.

However, as North Korea's armed provocations took place in 2010, his position became harder. In his 2011 New Year's State of the Nation Address, he said as follows.

We cannot let North Korea invade our territory. We cannot tolerate any provocation that threatens our lives and property. There will be only strong punishment for provocation ... We cannot discuss peace with North Korea which threatens South Korean people, which has the same ethnic roots, with nuclear weapons.

Unlike former President Roh, who emphasized South Korea's active efforts, President Lee took a different stance from the inauguration, emphasizing that North Korea should abandon its nuclear weapons first. This stance had been strengthened by the missile test in April 2009, the nuclear test in May 2009, and the armed provocations from November 2009 to November 2010. In the end, his perception of North Korea as a hostile threat was consolidated.

China

When the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il visited China in May 2010, President Hu said, "It is a common historical responsibility to inherit friendship between the two countries," and "The friendship between the two countries is a valuable property of Chinese Communist Party, North Korean Labor Party, and the people of the two countries."¹¹⁵ During Kim Jong-il's visit in August 2010, President Hu said, "China will try to raise the bilateral friendly relations to a higher level in the next century," and at the

¹¹⁵ Park Bo-gyun, "Kim Jong-il's Visit to China," Joong-ang SUNDAY, May 9, 2010, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LPOD&mid=etc&oid=353&aid=0000000896>.

meeting with the North Korean delegation, he said, “Chinese Communist Party values China-North Korea relations and will try to promote cooperation in every aspect.”¹¹⁶

During this period, North Korea also conducted nuclear tests and missile tests and the Chinese Foreign Ministry repeatedly warned North Korea to refrain from dangerous actions. However, as a leader of China, President Hu did not directly condemn North Korea. Rather, every time Kim Jong-il visited China, President Hu respected North Korea as a socialist ally and promised a steadfast development of bilateral relations.

5.3 Kim Jong-un and Obama Era (2012-2016)

North Korea

There was no mention of the United States in the 2012 New Year’s editorial and Kim Jong-un’s first New Year’s address in 2013. In his 2014 New Year’s address, Kim Jong-un started to criticize the United States.

The war-maniacs of the United States and South Korea are deploying nuclear weapons around the Korean peninsula and practicing a nuclear war to invade North Korea, and this creates a dangerous situation in which even minor accidental military clashes can lead to a total war.

If war breaks out on the Korean peninsula, it will bring a tremendous nuclear disaster and the United States will never be safe.

He began blaming the United States and warned that it would use nuclear weapons against the United States in case of emergency. The hostile atmosphere for the United States, which had disappeared in the last few years, began to strengthen again.

¹¹⁶ Cho Un-chan and Chon Byung-yuk, “President Hu Consolidate Relations with New North Korean Leadership,” *Kyung-hyang Daily*, October 3, 2010, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=032&aid=0002085926>.

In his 2015 New Year's Address, Kim Jung-un mentioned that the United States, which divided the Korean peninsula, was intensifying a risk of war in the Korean peninsula by implementing anti-North Korea policies and should stop it. And he argued that this reality justified North Korea's development of nuclear weapons. In his 2016 New Year's Address, Kim Jung-un blamed the United States again. He mentioned that the United States was blocking the reunification of the Korean peninsula and US anti-North Korea policies and military exercises with South Korea made the situation on the Korea peninsula very dangerous. He also said, "the United States is raving to criticize the human rights situation in North Korea."

During this period, Kim Jong-un changed his perception of the United States from a partner of dialogue to a violent infringer of the Korean sovereignty. In addition, he strongly opposed the United States's criticism of North Korea's human rights situation. The US mention of human rights was accepted to North Korea as an intervention in domestic affairs.

The United States

In his 2013 State of the Union Address, the day after the North Korea's third nuclear test, President Obama said that if the North Korean threat persisted, the United States would strengthen the missile defense system and the international community would respond more firmly. In an interview with Google on January 22, 2015, he mentioned that the North Korean regime would eventually collapse, saying that it was the worst dictatorial regime. In his speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2016, shortly after the North Korea's fifth nuclear test, President Obama mentioned that North Korea, which put the international community at risk, should pay the price. In addition, in

an interview with the German media on April 26, 2016, he also said that the United States was capable of destroying North Korea.

During this period, President Obama still emphasized the importance of dialogue, but he also mentioned that the United States had powerful military means to counteract North Korea's threat. He also referred to the collapse of the cruel North Korean dictatorship. As time went by, he became tired of pursuing diplomatic solutions to the North Korean nuclear issue and became increasingly hostile to North Korea, eventually losing patience with the North Korean regime.

South Korea

In 2013, President Park Geun-hye declared in her inaugural address that she would not tolerate any act threatening the lives of the people and the safety of South Korea. And she urged North Korea to give up its nuclear program, emphasizing that North Korea's nuclear test was a challenge for the people's survival and future and that the greatest victim would be North Korea. From the outset, President Park viewed North Korea as an imminent security threat.

In her 2014 State of the Nation Address, President Park pledged to end North Korea's nuclear threat and endeavor to dismantle the North Korean nuclear program, urging North Korea to accept denuclearization and to prepare for reunification with South Korea. In her speech to the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly in 2014, she emphasized that North Korea's nuclear program was a serious threat to international peace and argued that the reunification of South and North Korea, which share the same language, culture, and history, would be a solution to the North Korean nuclear issue.

And in the 2015 State of the Nation Address, she urged North Korea to actively cooperate with South Korea in resolving the separated families issue, improving the quality of life for the North Korean people, and restoring national homogeneity.

President Park, like former President Lee, recognized the North Korean nuclear program as a pressing threat and emphasized that the situation could advance only if North Korea abandoned its nuclear weapons first. At the same time, however, she regarded North Korea as a partner of reunification and stressed Korea's national identity.

However, President Park's position became stricter in her 2016 State of the Nation Address, just after North Korea's fourth nuclear test.

It is now clear that the existing way and good will never be able to defeat the North Korean regime's will to develop nuclear weapons and those will ultimately lead to a catastrophe on the Korean peninsula by allowing North Korea to upgrade its nuclear capabilities. I will not be dragged by the deceit and threat of North Korea anymore, and I think we should stop supporting North Korea in the fear of North Korean provocations ... I and the government will surely change the North Korean regime in order to bring peace to the Korean peninsula and will ensure that the people of North Korea enjoy freedom, human rights, and the benefits of prosperity that we enjoy now.

She expressed a sense of betrayal to North Korea and emphasized the threat of the North Korean regime. And she foreshadowed that she could use other means than the existing peaceful means to change the North Korean regime. The hostile perception of the North Korean regime was further reinforced. At the same time, however, she felt the national homogeneity of the North Korean people.

China

In September 2015 at the South Korea-China summit, President Xi Jinping urged North Korea to halt its nuclear and missile tests, saying that he opposed any action that would heighten tensions on the Korean peninsula.¹¹⁷ And on April 28, 2016, he vowed that as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China would fully enforce the sanctions against North Korea.¹¹⁸ At the China-Russia summit on June 25, 2016, he said that China would not accept North Korea's nuclear missile strategy, and North Korea could use its nuclear energy only under the condition of full enforcement of all UN Security Council requirements.¹¹⁹

However, on June 1, 2016, at a meeting with a North Korean delegation, President Xi said that China and North Korea should develop friendship and maintain peace in Northeast Asia.¹²⁰ In addition, in his congratulatory telegram to North Korea on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the China-North Korea Friendship Treaty on July 13, 2016, President Xi said that it was a firm policy of Chinese Communist Party and the government to constantly develop the friendly relations between the two countries.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Lee Woo-seung and Shin Dong-ju, "South Korea and China Oppose Any Action Strengthening Tensions," *Segye Daily*, September 2, 2015, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=022&aid=0002903230>.

¹¹⁸ Kim Duck-hyun and Lee Joon-sam, "China Don't Tolerate Chaos in the Korean Peninsula," *Yonhap News*, April 28, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=001&aid=0008365281>.

¹¹⁹ Lee Joon-sam, "President Xi and Putin Don't Accept North Korean Nuclear Missile Strategy," *Yonhap News*, June 27, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=001&aid=0008500611>.

¹²⁰ Woo Kyung-im and Koo Ja-ryong, "Exchange Between Chinese Communist Party and North Korean Labor Party," *Dong-a Daily*, June 3, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LPOD&mid=etc&oid=020&aid=0002977503>.

¹²¹ Song Yong-chang, "North Korea and China Getting Closer Because of THAAD," *Hankook Daily*, July 13, 2016, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=469&aid=0000152933>.

Just as President Hu in the past, President Xi also said that China opposed North Korea's nuclear program and would join the sanctions against North Korea. However, when he faced directly with North Korea, he always reaffirmed the friendship between the two states and pledged to develop cooperative relations in the future. This attitude of China showed that although North Korea's provocative actions were burdensome, China still needed to protect North Korea as a socialist ally.

5.4 Kim Jong-un and Trump Era (2017-2018)

North Korea

In his 2017 New Year's Address, Kim Jong-un criticized the United States for threatening North Korea with nuclear weapons. And he argued that the United States should respect the will of the Korean people to reunify independently and withdraw its hostile policies toward North Korea. In addition, he pledged to keep strengthening its defense capabilities, including nuclear weapons, as long as the US threat would continue.

Again, in his 2018 New Year's Address Kim Jong-un criticized the United States for threatening North Korea with nuclear activities, saying that the United States deployed its military forces including nuclear equipment to the Korean peninsula. At the same time, he warned that the entire US mainland was in a nuclear missile range and that he was always ready to hit the nuclear button, arguing that North Korea's nuclear capabilities had been completed. However, he said that he hoped the success of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February 2018, emphasizing the ethnic identity between South and North Korea.

During this period, North Korea's view of the United States as an invader was most strongly expressed. In addition, unlike previous years, in the 2018 New Year's Address, criticism of the United States was mentioned in the beginning, and a larger portions castigated the threat of the United States, the completion of nuclear capabilities, and confidence in nuclear deterrence. On the other hand, Kim Jong-un intended to separate South Korea from the United States by emphasizing national identity.

The United States

In his speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2017, President Donald Trump said as follows.

The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime. The United States is ready, willing and able, but hopefully, this will not be necessary. That's what the United Nations is all about; that's what the United Nations is for. Let's see how they do.

Also, in his 2018 State of the Union Address, he criticized the cruelty of North Korean dictatorship by introducing US college student Otto Warmbier, who died a few days after his repatriation to the United States, and Ji Sung-ho, a North Korean refugee. In addition, he clarified that he would not tolerate the North Korean nuclear threat, saying that North Korea would acquire nuclear missiles that could threaten the US mainland.

Like President Bush, President Trump again began to see North Korea as an evil force. However, the cause of the perception was somewhat different from that of President Bush. President Trump saw North Korea as an evil because North Korea threatened the US mainland and its people with nuclear missiles, while President Bush

viewed North Korea as a pure evil. As the threat to the US mainland became visible in accordance with the improvement of the North Korean long-range missile capabilities, the cruelty and oppression of the North Korean regime were imprinted on the perception of President Trump.

South Korea

At the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017, right after the North Korean sixth nuclear test, President Moon expressed appreciation to the international community for adopting the most powerful resolution, stressing that South Korea and the international community were enraged by North Korea's nuclear provocation. At the same time, however, he tried to reassure North Korea by declaring that South Korea would not seek the collapse of North Korea and artificial reunification. In addition, he argued that 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games would be successful with the participation of North Korea and peace of Northeast Asia would be promoted by that.

As North Korea continued its nuclear and missile tests, President Moon continued to see the North Korean nuclear issue as an urgent threat. However, rather than demanding North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons first, he showed a willingness to actively improve South-North Korea relations. This perception of President Moon was in line with the perception of former President Roh, who tried to make a change rather than waiting for North Korea's change.

China

On April 24, 2017, President Xi mentioned that North Korea's violation of the UN Security Council resolutions should be stopped.¹²² On November 9, 2017, he promised that China would fully implement the UN Security Council's sanctions against North Korea.¹²³ China continued to pledge to actively participate in the international community's activities to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through the sanctions against North Korea.

However, China has always been ambivalent about the North Korean nuclear issue. At a speech commemorating the 90th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army on August 1, 2017, President Xi mentioned the victory of Chinese Army in the "War to Resist US aggression and Aid Korea," which is Chinese name of the Korean War.¹²⁴ It was a reminder of the military alliance with North Korea. Despite the continued emphasis on friendly relations with North Korea, it was a peculiar thing for China to mention China-North Korea military alliance which had not been discussed for a long time. In the midst of controversy over the deployment of THAAD to South Korea, the remarks of President Xi were meaningful. The perception of North Korea did not change, but the military movement of the United States stimulated China.

China, which always emphasized the peaceful solution of the North Korean nuclear issue through dialogue, responded vigorously to the THAAD deployment to

¹²² Kook Ki-Yeon and Lee Woo-seung, "President Xi Emphasizes Cooperation with the US," *Segye Daily*, April 12, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=022&aid=0003164170>.

¹²³ Roh Seock-chul, "US-China Press until the North Gives Up," *Kookmin Daily*, November 9, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=005&aid=0001044357>.

¹²⁴ Kim Oe-hyun, "President Xi Emphasizes the History of the Korean War," *Hankyoreh News*, August 1, 2017, <http://news.naver.com/main/tool/print.nhn?oid=028&aid=0002374350>.

South Korea by imposing strong economic sanctions on South Korea and issuing government statements that were almost intimidating. South Korea, which suffered heavy losses from China's economic sanctions, was able to mitigate the sanctions to some extent only after promising not to deploy any additional THAAD, not to participate in the US missile defense system,¹²⁵ and not to form a triple military alliance between the US, South Korea, and Japan.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Cho Joon-hyung, "South Korea Do Not Consider Additional Deployments of THAAD," Yonhap News, October 30, 2017,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0009644945>. The South Korean government claims that THAAD, which was deployed in South Korea, does not belong to the missile defense system that the United States is building around the world and operates independently to protect South Korea and the USFK from North Korean missile threats.

¹²⁶ Cho Joon-hyung and Lee Sang-hyun, "South Korea and China Agreed to Normalize Relations," Yonhap news, October 31, 2017,

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0009648370>.

Chapter 6. Results

The analysis results from the realist view are as follows.

First, North Korea used to have quantitatively more conventional power than South Korea, but due to obsolescence of weapons and lack of training, it eventually fell behind South Korea. Moreover, given the USFK and the nuclear umbrella provided by the United States, the difference was even greater. In the end, the only way to make up for the gap was to develop nuclear weapons. On the Korean peninsula, where the Korean War was not ended but halted, North Korea had to secure a deterrent against the US threat, which occupied an enormous portion of both conventional and nuclear power in the South Korean defense force, in order to survive. As a result, North Korea has been committed to the development of nuclear missiles capable of hitting the US mainland. North Korea has been a “security maximizer” throughout the analysis period.

In the early days of North Korea’s nuclear development, the United States viewed the North Korean nuclear issue as one of the many conflicts in the world. In particular, the War on Terror was the most important policy task of the United States. North Korea tried to develop nuclear weapons but had limited capabilities and promised to give up nuclear weapons in response to economic supports. Therefore, the North Korean nuclear issue was not an urgent issue that should be placed at the top of policy priorities. Only the United States responded to the North Korean nuclear issue at the level of maintaining the NPT regime, protecting its allies from North Korea’s threats, and maintaining its influence in Northeast Asia. However, as North Korea’s nuclear and long-range missile technology evolved faster than expected and threatened the US mainland, the US position changed. As a result, the United States began to take concrete action, such as hastening

the establishment of the missile defense system to counter North Korea's nuclear missile threat to the US mainland. In other words, the United States, which was originally a power maximizer, became a security maximizer as North Korea's threat became an imminent and direct threat to the US mainland.

South Korea has always suffered from the military threat of North Korea since the Korean War. Therefore, South Korea has been steadily making efforts to reinforce conventional power, which was inferior to North Korea in the past, and eventually has caught up with North Korea. However, North Korea has been struggling to improve its nuclear and missile capabilities, and South Korea has lagged behind North Korea in terms of asymmetric power. Although the USFK and US nuclear umbrella covered the gap, it was urgent for South Korea to set up its own countermeasures considering the nature of international order without eternal friends. Therefore, South Korea made efforts to improve its missile capabilities by requesting a revision of the South Korea-US missile guidelines, which limited the development of long-range missiles, and to build its own missile defense system capable of defending North Korea's missile threats. However, the improvement of the North Korean nuclear and missile capabilities was fast. South Korea, which felt serious security threats, decided to introduce THAAD despite strong opposition and retaliation by its first trading partner, China. As can be seen from the above, South Korea, like North Korea, has been a security maximizer throughout the analysis period.

As one of the five nuclear powers stipulated by the NPT, China is basically in favor of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. However, the strength of China's opposition to the North Korean nuclear program was significantly lower than other states,

and China has consistently maintained peaceful solutions to the North Korean nuclear issue through the six-party talks. In fact, China was more interested in checking the United States, which was strengthening its forces in Northeast Asia, rather than the North Korean nuclear program itself. Nonetheless, because the US response to the North Korean nuclear issue was mainly isolation and containment of North Korea, it did not infringe on the vital interests of China, and accordingly, China was keeping pace with the US to some extent. However, as North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities grew dramatically, the US response shifted to improving military capabilities on the Korean peninsula, including the deployment of THAAD. This US movement became a real threat to China. As a result, China responded more vigorously to the THAAD deployment than to the North Korean nuclear program. In other words, China, which was originally a power maximizer, also became a security maximizer as the United States strengthened its military forces in Northeast Asia.

	North Korea	The United States	South Korea	China
Kim Jong-il and Bush Era (2006-2008)	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer
Kim Jong-il and Obama Era (2009-2011)	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer
Kim Jong-un and Obama Era (2012-2016)	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer + Security Maximizer	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer + Security Maximizer
Kim Jong-un and Trump Era (2017-2018)	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer + Security Maximizer	Security Maximizer	Power Maximizer + Security Maximizer

The analysis results from the constructivist view are as follows.

North Korea characterizes the United States as the worst enemy in the world because it believes that the reunification of the Korean peninsula at the time of the Korean War failed due to the United States. Based on this historical source, to North Korea the United States is an infringer of sovereignty occupying South Korea. In addition, such a perception strengthened as the Bush administration named North Korea as belonging to an axis of evil and designated it as a state sponsor of terrorism. However, as President Obama set forth the engagement policy, North Korea expected a favorable environment and began to recognize the United States as a partner of dialogue and negotiation. However, although the Obama administration focused on resolving the issue through dialogue, the position of urging North Korea to abandon its nuclear program first did not change. Accordingly, expectations of North Korea changed to hostility again. Moreover, as the Obama administration continued to talk about the human rights situation in North Korea, North Korea eventually reaffirmed its perception of the US as an infringer. When President Trump took office and THAAD was deployed in South Korea, North Korea's perception of the United States has been deteriorated from an infringer to an invader.

President Bush viewed North Korea as an absolute evil that threatened the universal values of humanity, taking into account not only North Korea's nuclear development but also dictatorship and human rights conditions. In addition, as North Korea continued to break the agreements, trust could not be established between the two states. However, President Obama hoped that the North Korean threat could be eliminated by international cooperation rather than stereotyping North Korea. Regardless,

although he did not abandon the possibility of peaceful resolution until the end of his term, as North Korea continued to develop nuclear weapons, expectations continued to decline and he started to recognize the North Korean regime as a dictatorship that should be removed. President Trump took a different approach from President Obama, who sought peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. He has publicly mentioned the use of force against North Korea since his inauguration. He has taken a very aggressive stance, calling the North Korean leader “little rocket man” and mentioning that if necessary the US will totally destroy North Korea. For President Trump, “America First” is the most important value. North Korea, however, continued to develop missile capabilities and eventually reached the level of threatening the US mainland. Now, North Korea is not only a threat to Northeast Asia but also a direct threat to the United States. In the end, North Korea once again became evil.

South Korean President Roh understood North Korea’s nuclear and missile development in terms of self-defense. And he emphasized peace rather than the reunification of the Korean peninsula. Accordingly, he chose a way to reach out and achieve peace rather than put pressure on North Korea. However, the next president, President Lee, set forth North Korea’s abandonment of nuclear program as a precondition for peace. He saw the North Korean nuclear issue as a serious threat and believed that peace could be achieved only by removing the North Korean nuclear weapons. Again, the inter-Korean relations worsened and North Korea carried out local military provocations as well as nuclear and missile tests. President Park, who succeeded President Lee, also insisted that North Korea should abandon its nuclear weapons first. However, at the same time, she emphasized the national identity between the two Koreas in order to achieve the

reunification of the Korean peninsula. President Moon, who took office in May 2017, also recognized the North Korean nuclear weapons as an urgent threat to the Korean peninsula. Unlike the previous government, however, he showed a willingness to actively approach North Korea rather than wait for North Korea's abandonment of nuclear weapons. He saw North Korea as an object to embrace.

China's position has hardly changed compared to the other three states. It is China's basic position to maintain friendly relations with North Korea as the only socialist ally in the region. Therefore, China has taken a position not to criticize North Korea directly when it is criticized by the international community for its provocative actions, but rather to prevent all concerned states from aggressive actions. However, like other states, China also wants the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Moreover, as the criticism of the international community grows due to North Korea's continuing nuclear and missile tests, China is gradually losing its legitimacy to defend North Korea. Accordingly, North Korea became a burden and nowadays China keeps pace with the international community to some extent while it still tries to lower the level of sanctions of the UN Security Council resolutions.

	North Korea → The United States	The United States → North Korea	South Korea → North Korea	China → North Korea
Kim Jong-il and Bush Era (2006-2008)	An infringer of sovereignty	An absolute evil An untrustworthy State	An object to embrace	Friendly relations A subject to protect A burden
Kim Jong-il and Obama Era (2009-2011)	A partner of negotiation	A state that can be change A partner of negotiation A threat to the international community	A security threat	Friendly relations A subject to protect A burden
Kim Jong-un and Obama Era (2012-2016)	An infringer of sovereignty	A threat to the international community A partner of negotiation A dictatorship to be removed	A security threat	Friendly relations A subject to protect A burden
Kim Jong-un and Trump Era (2017-2018)	An invader of the Korean peninsula	An Evil threatening the US An object to be destroyed	A security threat An object to embrace	Friendly relations A subject to protect A burden

Chapter 7. Conclusions

From now on, based on the results of the analysis so far, this study attempts to speculate how the North Korean nuclear issue will proceed in the future by answering the three questions posed by this study. In addition, based on that speculations, this study discusses policy implications for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.

Before answering the questions, it is necessary to clarify what denuclearization means. North Korea may claim that denuclearization means that it does not conduct nuclear and missile tests any more, maintaining its current nuclear capabilities. However, the US may define CVID (complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement) of the North Korea's nuclear capabilities as denuclearization. Under the assumption that the situation of South Korea, which does not possess nuclear weapons now, and North Korea must be equalized through denuclearization, this study sees CVID as denuclearization. Of course, in order for South Korea and North Korea to be completely equal, North Korea may go under the nuclear umbrella of China or Russia, just as South Korea is under the US nuclear umbrella.

7.1 If the US military threat to North Korea is removed, will North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons?

Given what North Korea has claimed so far, the elimination of the US military threat means withdrawing the USFK, replacing the ceasefire agreement of the Korean War with the peace treaty, and establishing diplomatic relations between the United States and North Korea.

North Korea, a security maximizer, is likely to agree to denuclearization, provided that their demands are accepted. As a result of the withdrawal of the USFK, the security threats will be largely reduced and the peace treaty and US-North Korea diplomatic relations can offset some of the security threats that North Korea may feel due to US forces outside the Korean peninsula, such as US forces in Japan and the Pacific. However, North Korea has been recognizing the United States as an infringer of sovereignty and an invader of the Korean peninsula for decades, and this cannot be changed overnight. As long as the great military strength of the United States exists outside the Korean peninsula, North Korea will continue to feel security threats. Therefore, even if their demands are accepted, North Korea is likely to secretly hold a certain level of nuclear power.

The United States is a power maximizer and a security maximizer. A power maximizer seeks to get more than it has now, but a security maximizer seeks not to lose what it has. Thus, a power maximizer can refrain from aggressive behaviors unless the expected benefit is higher than the cost.¹²⁷ It is not an impossible scenario for the United States to accept North Korea's demands to eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons that threaten the US mainland. However, President Trump will demand a firm implementation of denuclearization, CVID, to North Korea. To President Trump, North Korea is a force of evil and an unreliable state, so the process of implementation will be monitored very strictly. Therefore, in the monitoring process, there is a high possibility of conflict with North Korea trying to conceal its nuclear weapons.

¹²⁷ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 37.

As a security maximizer, South Korea will take the withdrawal of the USFK as a major security loss. Accordingly, South Korea is likely to oppose North Korea's demands. However, President Moon emphasizes South Korea's leading and active efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. Therefore, if North Korea accepts denuclearization, despite domestic controversy President Moon may agree that the United States accepts North Korea's demands.

For China, a power maximizer and a security maximizer, the withdrawal of the USFK and North Korea's abandonment of nuclear weapons are the most desirable situations. China can achieve its goal of power maximizing in the sense of preventing US expansion in Northeast Asia. At the same time, China can achieve its goal of security maximizing through eliminating security threats arising from the deployment of THAAD.

In conclusion, from the realist view, it is possible that the United States promises to eliminate military threats to North Korea on the Korean peninsula and North Korea promises to denuclearize. However, a lack of trust that came from the way the US and North Korea perceive each other will significantly reduce the feasibility of promises. Finally, the fails of the past nuclear negotiations are likely to be repeated.

7.2 If the international community recognizes North Korea as a nuclear power, will hostile conflicts be resolved on the Korean peninsula?

The recognition of North Korea as a nuclear power by the international community means that all sanctions against North Korea due to nuclear weapons will be lifted. In other words, it is the situation that the international community, especially the United States, reverses its hostile attitude toward North Korea first.

It is the best situation for North Korea. North Korea can keep its nuclear deterrent to defend its security and extricate from the US military threat. If this situation persists, North Korea's negative perceptions of the United States as an infringer of the sovereignty and an invader can be removed in the long term. In the end, hostile conflicts on the Korean peninsula are highly likely to be resolved.

However, as a security maximizer that sees North Korea's nuclear weapons as an imminent threat to the US mainland, it seems unlikely that the United States will be willing to recognize North Korea as a nuclear power. In particular, during his presidency of President Trump, who is willing to use force against North Korea, it is an extremely unlikely scenario. Moreover, the perception of "a force of evil" and "an unreliable state" that the United States has about North Korea further reduces the feasibility.¹²⁸

As a security maximizer, South Korea is also unlikely to recognize North Korea as a nuclear power. However, it is possible that President Moon who emphasizes South Korea's leading and active efforts would make a decision. In fact, since North Korea already has nuclear weapons, recognizing North Korea as a nuclear power is a declaratory action than an actual increase of threats. Considering this, it is possible that South Korea may seek to achieve peace in the long term by removing the current hostile conflict through recognizing North Korea as a nuclear power.

Although China is a power maximizer and a security maximizer, it has not seen North Korea's nuclear weapons as a serious threat. Rather, it has been the United States

¹²⁸ Of course, as the US lifted the long-term sanctions against India and Pakistan, which had conducted nuclear tests against the NPT regime, in order to cooperate with them in the War on Terror, it cannot be ruled out that the US position on North Korea may change in the future.

that China considered as serious threats. In this regard, it is quite possible for China to recognize North Korea, which is against the United States, as a nuclear power, even though China has a basic position in favor of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Moreover, if the international community recognizes North Korea as a nuclear power first, China is highly likely to join in.

However, it is unlikely that North Korea would be recognized as a nuclear power. This is because the United States, the key decision maker, is unlikely to tolerate it. And if the United States strongly opposes it, South Korea cannot help but follow. In addition, it is very unlikely that China would first propose to recognize North Korea as a nuclear power unless the United States and the international community move first.

7.3 If denuclearization and coexistence with North Korea, which has nuclear weapons, are both impossible, how will the conflict proceed?

If the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula or coexistence with North Korea, which has nuclear weapons, are both impossible, the remaining options are a stalemate or a war.

In a stalemate, every state feels uneasy under the possibility of a war. North Korea will continue to conduct nuclear and missile tests to maximize its security. Accordingly, international sanctions against North Korea will become more intense. However, China will continue to oppose sanctions that would cause North Korea to collapse in order to maximize security and check US influence in Northeast Asia. If such a level of sanctions would be adopted by the UN Security Council, China would secretly support North Korea to prevent its collapse. South Korea will seek to eliminate the North Korean

nuclear threat to maximize its security, but it would be embarrassed to consider the positions of the United States and China at the same time. The United States will use all possible measures to maximize security by removing North Korea's nuclear missile capabilities, which threatens the US mainland. The measures would be sanctions in a variety of aspects, but any future US leader who is confident might consider using force.

If there is a war on the Korean peninsula, it is most likely to be caused by US preemptive attack. The North Korean regime knows better than anyone that it will collapse if a war happens. Therefore, although North Korea threatens the international community through its nuclear weapons, it is unlikely that North Korea launches a preemptive attack. China, which wants to maintain the North Korean regime, does not want a war that could bring about the collapse of the North Korean regime. South Korea, which will suffer the greatest damage if a war happens, does not want a war either.

Even if the United States attacks North Korea, it is unlikely that it would be a full-scale war, considering the security of allies such as South Korea and Japan and the possible criticism of the international community. The US attack is likely to be a pinpoint strike aiming at North Korea's nuclear facilities to remove only nuclear weapons that threaten the US mainland. In this case, the United States will expect that the North Korean regime would not fight back in the fear of collapse or that there would be limited damage to its allies, such as South Korea and Japan, even if North Korea responds. However, against expectations, the result is likely to be disastrous.

First, North Korea is likely to respond immediately to the US attack. One of the most important values emphasized by the North Korean regime is its sovereignty. If North Korea does not counterattack in spite of the infringement of its sovereignty by the

US attack, the internal authority of the regime will be seriously damaged. In addition, North Korean regime considers nuclear weapons as the last resort that can ensure its survival. The North Korean regime would consider the elimination of nuclear weapons by others to be equivalent to the collapse of the regime. Accordingly, the North Korean regime is highly likely to fight back with all possible means. On the other hand, even if the US preemptively attacks North Korea's nuclear facilities, it is difficult to destroy all nuclear facilities at once. North Korea will be able to use the remaining nuclear weapons. North Korea already has enough missile capabilities to attack South Korea and Japan and may have the ability to attack the US mainland in terms of its missile range. If North Korea's nuclear missiles are fired, there is no guarantee that the US missile defense system could intercept all missiles. Even if one nuclear missile reaches its target, the result will be disastrous. More than one million people could die if North Korea's nuclear missile hits Manhattan,¹²⁹ and more than two million people could die if it attacks Seoul or Tokyo.¹³⁰ In addition, North Korea has a considerable amount of biochemical weapons. It is doubtful whether there is a need to use force to destroy North Korea's nuclear facilities despite the possibility of such enormous damage.

7.4 Policy Implications

So far, this study has reviewed possible scenarios related to the North Korean nuclear issue. A war must be avoided, and a stalemate is also undesirable. In addition, it

¹²⁹ Jeffrey Lewis, "This Is How Nuclear War with North Korea Would Unfold," Washington Post, December 8, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/this-is-how-nuclear-war-with-north-korea-would-unfold/2017/12/08/4e298a28-db07-11e7-a841-2066faf731ef_story.html?utm_term=.75320300033b.

¹³⁰ Ruben Gallego and Ted Lieu, "A War with North Korea Would Be Hell: Millions Could Die," CNN, December 1, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/30/opinions/millions-could-die-in-a-war-with-north-korea-opinion-gallego-lieu/index.html>.

is unrealistic for the international community to recognize North Korea as a nuclear power. Therefore, the way to pursue is denuclearization through negotiation.

The North Korean nuclear issue is changing rapidly now. Kim Jong-un, who seemed to never accept denuclearization, suddenly began to mention the possibility of denuclearization. This has led to rapid progress and in April and May of this year, summit talks between South and North Korea, and the United States and North Korea will be held back to back. In addition, Kim Jong-un met President Xi on March 27, and once again mentioned his commitment to denuclearization. Now, once again, a negotiation table has been set up. What is needed now is for each state to decide what to seek to obtain and what to abandon so that negotiations would not be in vain.

As mentioned above, China will naturally favor the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through negotiation. Therefore, what is important to achieve denuclearization is the choice of North Korea, the United States, and South Korea. These states should know that the situation will not improve at all if all concerned states want to be a security maximizer. Unless the perceptions of each other change, it is unlikely to solve the North Korean nuclear issue.

Although North Korea is now expressing its commitment to denuclearization, CVID would not be fulfilled immediately. As already mentioned, North Korea is unlikely to abandon its nuclear weapons right now. Of course, the United States would like to maximize its security by removing the North Korean nuclear weapons immediately. However, in order to move the North Korean nuclear issue forward, it is necessary to consider the position of North Korea, which is struggling to survive. It is important that the United States would not be too strict, even if North Korea uses some small tricks. For

now, it is most important to make the process of denuclearization begin. Once a denuclearization agreement is reached, a long-term plan would be needed. After normalizing the relations between the two states through a denuclearization agreement, the United States should take time to change the perceptions of each other. If two states maintain normal relationships, the hostile perceptions of each other can be changed over the long term. Then one day the US and North Korea may no longer recognize each other as a threat. South Korea should not be embarrassed if the United States withdraws the USFK from South Korea. In fact, the USFK is a symbol of the US-South Korea military alliance, and what really matters are the nuclear umbrella provided by the United States and US military reinforcement in case of emergency. South Korea should abandon its security impatience and encourage the United States and North Korea to make progressive choices. This is also true for North Korea. North Korea knows that even if the USFK withdraws from South Korea, the US Forces in Japan and the US Pacific fleet are still aiming at North Korea. Therefore, if North Korea excludes the withdrawal of the USFK from the demands, the burden of the United States and South Korea in the denuclearization negotiation will be much lightened.

The above suggestions may seem to ask only the United States and South Korea to make concessions, allowing, in effect, North Korea to secretly possess some nuclear weapons. However, this is the only option for moving forward into the future, excluding options that are unlikely or should be avoided. Moreover, in the long run, this may be the most aggressive choice for the North Korean regime. As a matter of fact, the situation where all concerned states are in conflict as a security maximizer has played a role to strengthen the survival of the North Korean regime internally. The North Korean regime

has consistently forced its citizens to sacrifice, unite, and fight through exaggeration of external threats such as the United States and South Korea. However, if the international community improves and maintains relations with North Korea through a denuclearization agreement, the situation can be changed. Many North Koreans have already been enjoying South Korea's films and TV shows secretly, avoiding the authorities' crackdown, and they know how the outside world is going. The tyranny of the North Korean regime is just suppressing it. If the international community can start to normalize North Korea through a denuclearization agreement and continue to maintain it, the legitimacy of the North Korean regime to compel its citizens to sacrifice will weaken and the people's consciousness will be raised. Therefore, it is highly likely that the North Korean regime will first collapse due to internal changes before North Korea's perception of the United States and South Korea changes. After all, a little concession now can be the most feasible and aggressive option that can eliminate the root cause of the North Korean nuclear issue.

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