Failed Conflict Management: The US Role in the Korean Nuclear Crisis

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Abstract: This paper proposes three elements that have impinged on conflict management in the post-Cold War era. The Korean nuclear crisis is used as a case study, in that it is not only one of the most intractable security issues in the world but also it indicates that the region is the last vestige of the Cold War. Among them are two IR theoretical perspectives and one conceptual framework. Firstly, to borrow a phrase from Neo-realism, the rise of China made the US-led conflict management process much more complex in terms of international system. Secondly, from constructivists' viewpoint, the perception of each other has deteriorated between the US and North Korea. The interpretative gap made the conflict management nearly impossible. Lastly, the absence of an elaborate design for peace process has made this issue be trapped in a vicious cycle.

Keywords: Asia, China, Conflict Resolution, Constructivism, International Relations, Neo-realism, USA

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Introduction

As Iran basks in the Obama administration’s engagement policy, North Korea is now left alone in the tradition of axis of evil.² It has been over twenty years since the North Korea’s collapse discourse emerged, and the US has bothered its head about the North Korean nuclear issues for over thirty years. North Korea did not collapse despite the shattered economy, millions of victims of starvation during the 1990s and the death of Kim Il-sung, the founder of North Korea. In the meantime, under Kim Jong-il’s era (1994–2011), North Korea carried out nuclear tests twice (in 2006 and 2009). Kim Jong-un, Kim Jong-il’s youngest and third son, took power in December 2011 when his father died and pushed ahead with further development of its nuclear programme. In 2013, North Korea conducted its third nuclear test, which was larger in force than previous tests. It is widely believed that North Korea now focuses on mastering uranium enrichment, after getting the hang of plutonium production over a decade ago. Whether North Korea used plutonium or uranium for the 2013 test remains unclear. What is interesting is that all of the three nuclear tests came after the North’s launching rockets, which means that North Korea has tried to have their nuclear warheads small enough to fit on the ballistic missiles. In May 2015, North Korea has reportedly test-fired a strategic submarine ballistic missile.³ Proliferation issue is another concern. North Korea is believed ‘to have sold in the past ballistic missiles and associated materials to several Middle East countries, including Iran’. It is also known that North Korea assisted the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria with ‘the construction of a nuclear reactor’.⁴

The North Korean nuclear issue began in 1982 ‘when an American surveillance satellite whirring unseen in the skies photographed what appeared to be a nuclear reactor vessel under construction’.⁵ North Korea joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985 owing to Soviet pressure. However, after the demise of the Soviet Union and the East-European bloc, North Korea’s nuclear programme became problematic in earnest in the early 1990s. It was 1993 when North Korea announced its intention to withdraw from the NPT (1st Korean nuclear crisis). The first crisis abated as North Korea and the US signed an agreement, called the 1994 Agreed Framework, whereby the US supply North Korea with two 1,000 MW light water reactors and 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil per year in return for freezing North Korea’s ability to make nuclear arms and remaining in the NPT. The Agreed Framework system broke down in 2003 when Washington announced that North Korea admitted to possessing a uranium-enrichment programme (2nd Korean nuclear crisis). After that, although six rounds of the ‘Six-Party Talks’ from 2003–2008 output several joint statements by involved countries—South and North Korea, Japan, Russia, China and the US—this process eventually broke down due to complicated reasons including the US Treasury’s sanctions on North Korea, the way of verifiable and irreversible disarmament, and so forth. As of 2015, it has already been seven years since the Six-Party Talks halted. There are now virtually no experts who believe that North Korea ‘has any intention of giving up its nuclear programme’, analysts are now saying ‘the world has run out of ideas about how to disarm North Korea’.⁶

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² In January 2002, at the State of the Union Address, President Bush called North Korea ‘axis of evil’ along with Iran and Iraq. One of them, Saddam Hussein, of course, was deposed by the Bush administration in 2003.
³ Telegraph, North Korea test-fires underwater ballistic missile, 8 May 2015.
⁴ Mary Beth Nikitin, North Korea’s nuclear weapons: technical issues (Congressional Research Service, 3 April 2013), p. 28.
⁶ Jayshree Bajoria and Beina Xu, The Six Party Talks on North Korea’s nuclear programme (CFR Backrounders, 30 September 2013).
The unreality of Realism

It seems that North Korea is absolutely abiding by the core rules of Realists’ theory. In international relations theory, Realism has often been called power politics school of thought since Niccolò Machiavelli contemplated the theme. Of course, the origin of intellectual Realism goes further back than Before Christ. The ‘Melian dialogue’ inserted by Thucydides in *The Peloponnesian War* connotes a number of Realist principles. The dialogue between the Athenians and the Melians shows the paucity of trust in international relations. Facing the Athenian threat, the Melians expected that Sparta would help them because they believed that if Sparta abandoned the island of Melos, Sparta would lose trust from other allies. However, contrary to the Melian’s expectations, there was no help from Sparta, and eventually Melos was forced to capitulate to the Athenians. One of the pre-eminent goals of Realism that unites all kinds of Realism is survival. Given that states seek survival on the premise that they are short of information and surrounded by uncertainty, bias and misperception, a continual fear is inevitable. The Hobbesian perspective—everyone against everyone in a state of nature—derives from the fact that nothing can be trusted without conviction. The possibility of war always exists, although the world is not in a constant state of war.

In general, it is natural to think that Realism has permeated throughout the Korean peninsula more than any other theory. In fact, there was no room for other theories such as Idealism, (Neo) liberalism and Functionalism to take their places amongst the ‘realistic’ theories derived from Realism. During the Cold War period, as a security free-rider, South Korea exhaustively bandwagoned with the United States and underwent the experiences of Realism as a comprehensive version of empirical theory, which includes balancing, bandwagoning, containment, deterrence, and so forth. It is also an unequivocal fact that the US chose a containment policy throughout the Cold War era for dealing with North Korea, which relied heavily on the Realist thoughts including defence, sanctions, non-proliferation and counter-proliferation. Against the backdrop of this context, it seems that people, regardless of whether policymakers or scholars, focusing on the US-North Korea relations have instinctually linked Realism with containment or any relevant concepts that stand on an antipodal point of engagement that represents Liberalism or equivalent theories, which has led policymakers to think that any kind of engagement could be a policy of appeasement.

Regarding the North Korean nuclear issue, Neo-realism seems to have gained its interpretative influence, as China continues to grow. As Buzan and Wæver put it, the single key of great powers is being ‘observable in the foreign policy processes and discourses of other powers’. In this sense, China is absolutely a great power, if not a superpower. Particularly after the 2000s, whether it is a coercive diplomacy or an engagement with North Korea, the US could not help but rely on China given Chinese influence upon North Korea.

After a few months with no progress, I tried a different argument. In January 2003, I told President Jiang [Zemin of China] that if North Korea’s nuclear weapons programme continued, I would not be able to stop Japan—China’s historic rival in Asia—from developing its own nuclear weapons. [...] In February, I went one

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step further. I told President Jiang that if we could not solve the problem diplomatically, I would have to consider a military strike against North Korea.\(^{11}\)

This shows that President Bush tried to persuade China to get North Korea to the negotiating table of the Six-Party talks. Although Bush seems to be tough in this quotation, it was not that realistic for the US to launch a military attack against North Korea unless China agrees to it. In other words, the American threat of military strike against North Korea was a kind of political rhetoric. Condoleezza Rice, former US secretary of state and Bush’s national security advisor, explains the context in which the Bush’s threat is emerged:

I suggested that he raise the spectre, ever so gently, of a military option against North Korea. He [Bush] liked the idea, and when Ziang began to recite the timeworn mantra about the need for the US to show more flexibility with the North, President stopped him. A bit more directly than I’d expected, he told Ziang that he was under a lot of pressure from hard-liners to use military force and added, on his own, that one also couldn’t rule out a nuclear Japan if the North remained unconstrained.\(^{12}\)

This quotation implies that the political rhetoric of using military force against North Korea from the US was in large part due to their aspiration to win China over to US side as far as the North Korean nuclear issue is concerned. Besides, taking military action against North Korea itself is very dangerous. North Korea deploys massive conventional force along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that can cause significant damage to the South as well as the US Forces in South Korea. In 1993, the Pentagon concluded that ‘a war in Korea could cost as many as 500,000 military casualties within the first ninety days, more lives than were lost throughout the 1950–1953 [Korean] war’.\(^{13}\) Rice also acknowledged that ‘the military option against Pyongyang was not a good one; it was fraught with unintended consequences and the near-certainty of significant damage to Seoul’\(^{14}\).

Although Neo-realism may be a good looking glass that reflects the structure of the international system as well as a balance of power between great powers, as Jackson and Sørensen pointed out, it ‘does not provide explicit policy guidance to state leaders as they confront the practical problems of world politics’.\(^{15}\) What kind of policies based on Realist thought can be adopted in order to denuclearise North Korea? For example, Hwee Rhak Park is dismissive of the engagement policy and he believes that ‘North Korean policymakers are not as rational as most people assume’.\(^{16}\) Yong-Woo Sohn called North Korea’s nuclear policy a ‘proliferation consistency’, since North Korea’s pursuit of nuclear armament has continued to be strengthened.\(^{17}\) Sue Mi Terry argues that the acquisition of an international status as a bona fide nuclear weapons state has been one of the most consistent strategic goals of North Korea. According to her, the current stalemate on the peninsula could be changed only if a fundamentally different leadership emerges in North Korea.\(^{18}\) What seems


\(^{14}\) Rice, *No higher honour*, p. 712.


problematic here is that they see Realism as a problem solving policy whereby North Korea can either collapse or buckle under the pressure from the US. As noted before, however, this is not a solution, but rather strategic patience, at best. Differently put, for Realists, the end game of the Korean nuclear crisis ought to be with the demise of the current North Korean regime, which has survived ‘for more than half a century despite isolation from the United States and the international community’. Realism seems to have unwittingly turned into an egocentric and stubborn theoretical perspective in this process.

Is Constructivism more realistic?

Identity refers to a perspicuous representation or interpretation of the other. Identity is the agent’s relationships with others. Bush publicly referred to Kim Jong-il as a ‘pigmy’, ‘tyrant’ and a ‘spoiled child at the dinner table’. In response, the North Korean government called Bush ‘a political imbecile bereft of even elementary morality’. Bush’s ‘Kim Jong-il phobia’ appears to have a deep fountainhead.

One of the most influential books I read during my presidency was Aquariums of Pyongyang by the North Korean dissident Kang Chol-hwan. The memoir [...] tells the story of Kang’s ten-year detention and abuse in a North Korean gulag. [...] Kang’s story stirred up my deep disgust for the tyrant who had destroyed so many lives, Kim Jong-il.

Bush called North Korea ‘an evil, evil place’ once again in 2014. The American antagonism of North Korea does not end here. US secretary of State John Kerry also said North Korea is an ‘evil place’. Obama has recently mentioned that the regime in North Korea will eventually collapse. In response to this, North Korea slammed Obama as a ‘loser’. Days earlier, the official North Korean Central News Agency called Obama ‘a monkey in a tropical forest’. All of these vituperative terms clearly represent the present state of the perceptual relationships between North Korea and the US. Let us call this pejorative intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity by definition means ‘the variety of possible relations between perspectives’, which can ‘belong to individuals, groups, or traditions and discourses’. Nonetheless, not all of US officials seem to have the inherent antagonism of North Korea. Madeleine Albright, former US secretary of state in the second Clinton administration, argued that ‘we know very little of Kim Jong-il. Our intelligence said that he was crazy and a pervert. [...] He’s not crazy. Bush didn’t listen to the talks the Clinton administration had with North Korea’. As secretary of state, she visited North Korea and met with Kim Jong-il in October 2000. This is interesting. Albright is the first and last senior American official who met Kim Jong-il, the then-leader.

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19 Rice, No higher honour, p. 712.
22 Bush, Decision points, p. 422.
23 Korea Times, Bush calls North Korea evil state, 3 March 2014.
24 USA Today, North Korea: Obama is a ‘loser’, 26 January 2015.
25 Telegraph, North Korea calls Obama ‘a monkey’ in latest hacking salvo, 27 December 2014.
of North Korea. After meeting with Kim Jong-il, Albright said ‘he was very well-prepared, responded without notes, was not only respectful but also interested in what I had to say’. What is interesting is that the thoughts of the highest level South Korean leaders who met with Kim Jong-il were similar with that of Albright. Jongseok Lee, former Unification Minister of South Korea, believes that North Korea’s national identity or interests can be altered by the efforts provided by the international community. According to him, the North Korean regime did not know whether it should continue to develop the nuclear programme, at least before 2011 when Muammar Gaddafi died. If anything, in terms of denuclearisation, North Korea relies heavily on the US’ decision, which has a vast influence on the North’s nuclear issue, rather than on its own choice. If that is the case, since identities are not unchangeable, the relationship between North Korea and the US is a key to solving the North Korean nuclear issue.

Dale Copeland argues that Neo-realism lacks intersubjectively shared ideas, which is what is often a more determinant factor, by which actors constitute the identities and interests of actors. From this perspective, identity is relational: one’s identity and the ‘other’ are dependent on one another. A social context of friendship/enemy comes into notice at this point. Similarly, Post-structuralists hold that their ‘analytical focus is on the discursive construction of identity’. The factor ultimately relies on each agent’s perception of the other, as it is also an outgrowth of intersubjective interaction between state actors, even though the factor has a material form. For Constructivists, ‘it is simply impossible to get a grasp on reality by only looking at the material world.’ The US expresses grave concern at one shabby North Korean nuclear warhead while many French or British nuclear warheads do not matters to the US. In similar vein, South Korean government also regard North Korea’s nuclear weapon as a dire threat, whereas China’s nuclear capability is not being recognised as an imminent threat to South Korea despite its proximity to the Korean peninsula. Ideas, or ideational factors, are the kernel of this tradition. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that discourse incorporates material. Even Post-structuralists acknowledge that materiality is important. What is crucial is that materiality is ascribed significance through discourse. The idea here is that most political leaders try to legitimise their policy initiatives and marginalise others with their use of discourse. This is also closely linked to a broader constructivist notion of power: ‘Constructivist theories tend to understand power as both agential and intersubjective, and they are also more attuned to questions of open or taken-for-granted and naturalised legitimisation processes’.

Are (Neo-) Liberal and Constructivist approaches to the Korean nuclear issue more realistic than Realism? The answer depends on which part one puts more weight on the issue. It is ‘yes’ in that it has been trying to diversify the perspectives on ourselves as well as on North Korea so that the

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28 Documentary on the negotiations between Albright and Kim Jong il, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J1aaMLL2M4
29 National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, Minutes of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, 27 June 2005; Simin Yoo, It’s destiny: Roh Moo-hyun’s autobiography (Paju: Dolbegae, 2010) (Korean).
33 Flockhart, Constructivism and foreign policy, p. 84.
South Korean governments can perceive North Korea as it is, and not as the country they wish it to be. However the answer could also be ‘no’ since it has not been free from the Realists’ disapproval that Constructivism is short of an explanation for power politics as it tends to show the liberal-wing deviationism. In effect, studies that have tried to utilise Constructivist concepts in the case of the relationship between North Korea and the US does not seem to have been able to overcome the level of simple analysis of each ideological side. Constructivism, regardless of whether it is based on Wendtian (conventional) perspectives or Post-structuralist ones, seems to remain at an initial stage in terms of epistemology.

Only securitisation: the absence of peace process

Whether it is based on Democrats or Republicans, as far as the North Korean nuclear issue is concerned, the US has had the ultimate aim: having North Korea denuclearised. They have mainly used coercive diplomacy, including both US and UN sanctions, threats of military strike, carrots and security assurances. The truth is that the North Korea’s nuclear weapons production capabilities has continuously strengthened, and the possibility of North Korea’s denuclearisation now seems to be the lowest ever. In regard to this, North Korea revised its constitution in 2012 and proclaimed itself a ‘nuclear state’. It seems true that ‘there is essentially no solution to the North Korean problem’, unless the current Kim regime of North Korea promotes a Copernican change such as overall opening of the market and transition of power. The demise of the North Korean regime might be the sole solution. Yet this does not mean that the US can get away with the responsibility for the failure of denuclearisation. At least we need to know what kind of structure has made the US unsuccessful in dealing with North Korea.

The first factor is the US’s fundamental position as South Korea’s patronage. It is hard to say that the US has been a mediator between South and North Korea. The US is essentially in favour of South Korea, while North Korea has been a target of US containment policy since the Cold War era. The term conflict is defined as ‘a social condition that arises when two or more actors pursue mutually exclusive or mutually incompatible goals’. In effect, the US goal itself is incompatible with that of North Korea. For North Korea, securing its regime is the supreme good, while still dreaming of attaining unification of the entire peninsula under the flag of socialism and communism. For the US, it is unacceptable to see the ‘rogue state’ keep surviving and proliferating its missile and nuclear technology. In other words, they are linked to structural conditions. From a broader perspective, however, the US has carried out conflict management activities in the peninsula. In general, conflict management is ‘achieved by strategies of mutual, general deterrence’. In that respect, in terms of conflict management, one can say that the US has been successful, as there has been no full-scale

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36 The Preamble says: ‘in the face of the collapse of the world socialist system and the vicious offensive of the imperialist allied forces to stifle the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Comrade Kim Jong Il administered Songun politics; [...] developed the DPRK into an invincible politico-ideological power, a nuclear state and an unchallengeable military power, [...]’.
40 Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, The penguin dictionary of international relations, p. 94.
war on the peninsula since the end of the Korean War in 1953. However, it does not mean that 'deeply entrenched and contentious issues' were removed.  

The second factor may be linked to the concept of securitisation. Securitisation is to prioritise or to choose specific political issues. P (or securitising actors) designate something as existential threat by convincing audiences—public opinion, opinion leaders, etc.—that relevant objects would be in peril without taking extraordinary measures. Relevant objects refer to 'things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival'. One of the core concepts of securitization is speech act. That is, policymakers use 'language to articulate a problem in security terms and to persuade a relevant audience of its immediate danger'. Once securitised or highly politicised by policymakers, the issue tends to be at the centre of issues as long as possible, since it is one of the best ways for policymakers to legitimate their authorities. According to Norman Fairclough, 'political leaders will argue that their views are, basically, common sense, whilst their opponents' are entirely ideological'. Most political structures and leaders uphold their own common sense, and at the same time stigmatise the others as entities preoccupied with authority and ideology. In a political context, using Carl Schmitt’s terminology, the others could be named as the enemy. The level of the American conflict management could not get over the settlement and containment. The US has consistently securitised the North Korean nuclear issue by demonising and stigmatising the North Korean regime. (It goes without saying that North Korea is also known for its acerbic and caustic political rhetoric. Many analysts might agree that North Korea is a 'modern theatre state whose missions is to resist, via the man-made politics of art, the natural mortality of charismatic authority'. What they found, however, is that the North Korean nuclear issue is too resilient, and that they do not have efficacious extraordinary measures. To put it differently, an actor's securitisation cannot but be repetitive as the enemy's threat is resilient. Consequently, a securitisation process falls into institutionalisation. In hindsight, the US securitisation process was doomed to fail, in that its conflict management was not able to be transformed into conflict resolution, which 'addresses the deep-rooted causes of conflict, rather than to merely manage them peacefully'. In a nutshell, the process of nuclear negotiations has been fraught with mutual securitisation supported by pejorative intersubjectivity. There seems no place for both North Korea and the US to take away discourses that reproduce violence.

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The third factor is that, for the last twenty-five years of the post-Cold War era, the US does not seem to have had an elaborate and consistent design whereby they can deal with fragile but resilient regime like North Korea. North Korea is neither a weak state nor a failed (collapsed) state. International Relations textbook defines weak states as state possessing ‘infrastructural incapacity, evidenced by weak institutions and the inability to penetrate and control society effectively or enforce state policies; lack of coercive power and a failure to achieve or maintain a monopoly on the instruments of violence; and the lack of national identity and social and political consensus on the idea of the state’.\(^{50}\) None of this can be applied to North Korea. Even though some doubt surrounding the Kim Jong-un regime has deepened after his several blood purges, the staying power of the regime does not appear to be waning. Predictions of the Kim regime’s collapse have been hanging around for over twenty years, it never happened. All of the predictions seem to have underestimated the Kim regime’s organisational power. Is North Korea a fragile state? It depends as ‘there is no internationally-agreed definition of the term fragile states’. Some say fragile states are defined as political entities that are ‘incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice’.\(^{51}\) If that is the case, North Korea is not fragile. If anything, it is strong. When it comes to the state of fragility, OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) tends to focus more on socioeconomic perspective. North Korea is labelled as a fragile state by the OECD DAC for eight consecutive years (2007–2015).\(^{52}\) In accordance with this, let us call North Korea a fragile state. North Korea ‘receives virtually no ODA’. Life in North Korea ‘is tough for everyone except for a tiny Pyongyang elite. The sanctions regime in place to curtail North Korea’s nuclear programme and to tackle the appalling human rights record now threatens to make the lives of the most vulnerable even worse’.\(^{53}\) This is the current state of the US-led conflict management in the Korean peninsula.

**In lieu of conclusion**

The US role in the Korean nuclear crisis has shown various different looks from engagement to coercion. It is well known that the Clinton administration seriously considered a pre-emptive military strike on the North’s nuclear facilities.\(^{54}\) However, as noted before, it was unrealistic due to Chinese opposition and the possibility of the second Korean War, which will result in the obliteration of the Korean people. After the Agreed Framework was concluded in 1994, the Clinton administration faced real opposition from the Republicans who took control of the US parliament, and resultantly Clinton seemed unwilling to carry out the agreement with North Korea. Many people in the Clinton administration also thought that North Korea would soon collapse in any case.\(^{55}\) During the Bush administration, as Bush himself acknowledged, they were loath to meet with the North Korean regime one-on-one. Even during the Six-Party Talks period, what the Bush administration really wanted to see was the Kim regime’s demise.

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\(^{53}\) Emma Campbell, *North Korea sanctions punish the whole population* (East Asia Forum, 10 October 2013).


\(^{55}\) Documentary on the negotiations between Albright and Kim Jong il, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ1aaMLZM4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ1aaMLZM4)
As long as Kim Jong-il was in power, I thought we had little prospect of inducing his regime to abandon its nuclear weapons programme. [...] Instead of offering inducements of financial aid and heating oil, I thought there might be a remote possibility that if we put enough diplomatic and financial pressure on the country, some of its senior generals might overthrow Kim Jong-il.  

The Obama administration has tried some overtures for engagement with North Korea. However, a series of provocations from North Korea including nuclear and ballistic missile tests, two unparalleled military attacks against South Korea made them reluctant to restart talks to the North Korean regime. The Obama administration’s approach to North Korea is known as strategic patience, ‘which essentially waits for North Korea to come back to the negotiating table while maintaining pressure on the regime’. The problem is that it does not seem that ‘strategic’, simply because sanctions do little against North Korea, and for North Korea, demonstrating its nuclear capability outweighs the disadvantages caused by sanctions.

What is needed then is a new kind of framework, which can break a stalemate. Policymakers cannot but be a practitioner. They just cannot sit back and do nothing. The truth is that North Korea continues its proliferation of missile and nuclear technology. Several points are clear: first, the North Korean issue arose from the North Korean provocations in relation to its nuclear and long-range ballistic missile tests, which are in clear defiance of UNSC resolution and the NPT system. This issue arose from the structural factor; that is, North Korea’s obsession with nuclear weapons is the vestige of Cold War. In terms of microscopic analysis, North Korea has faithfully materialised the Realist thoughts: nationalism, egoism and power-centrism. Second, over the past decades, North Korea and the US helped each other in terms of strengthening pejorative intersubjectivity towards the other. Both countries have focused on securitisation process, not on the peace process. Third, although the US is still a super power in today’s world, from the Realist perspective, its troubleshooting ability over the North Korean nuclear issue appears to be waning due to a new US-China rivalry. More importantly, the East Asian region ‘will not be a straight forward hegemonic order or a traditional balance of power system’. When democracy does not work well either in the US or in other democratic countries, it is likely that the American persuading power dwindle away as China grows. No one knows what will happen in the future. China’s rise might stop at some point. Nonetheless, envisioning the American dream in the post-Cold War era—often dubbed ‘the end of history’ coined by Francis Fukuyama—could not be substantialised unless it gets out of the repetitive securitisation.

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57 North Korea sunk a South Korean corvette *Cheonan* that led to 47 people being killed in March 2010; two South Korean soldiers were killed and 13 others injured after North Korea fired dozens of artillery attacks on the South Korean Yeonpyeong Island in November of the same year. It was the North’s first artillery attack on the South’s territory since the 1950–1953 Korean War.
58 Chanlett-Avery and Rinehart, *North Korea: US relations, nuclear diplomacy, and internal situation*, p. 5.
59 Marcus Noland, ‘The (non-) impact of UN sanctions on North Korea’, *Asia Policy*, 7 (2009); Newsmax, *US sanctions to have limited impact on North Korea*, 2 January 2015.