BOMB, SANCTION, OR NEGOTIATE: UNDERSTANDING U.S. POLICY TOWARDS NORTH KOREA

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ABSTRACT

In his first term, President George W. Bush named North Korea as a member of the “Axis of Evil” and denounced the regime as one of the greatest threats to peace and stability in the world. Following the discovery of North Korea’s highly enriched uranium (HEU) program, it seemed that North Korea was next on the list of countries to be invaded following Iraq. Instead, the administration pursued multilateral negotiations in the form of the Six-Party Talks. By the end of Bush’s second term, the administration forged an agreement that had been unimaginable just a few years earlier. This paper seeks to explain why the Bush administration adopted an engagement policy towards the North Korean regime despite the administration’s predispositions against such a policy. This paper explores four explanations – intellectual agreement on North Korea’s motivations, bureaucratic politics, military factors, and regional partner preferences – and determines that bureaucratic politics were responsible for the dramatic shift in policy that occurred in 2005 and 2006. The addition of several administration officials in favor of negotiations following Bush’s reelection, combined with the removal of several North Korean “hawks” led to the adoption of an engagement policy with North Korea. Furthermore, U.S. policy was constrained due to the ongoing war in Iraq, as well as Chinese and South Korean preferences for a negotiated settlement. This paper concludes with recommendations for future administrations crafting policies towards North Korea.
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Introduction

For almost 20 years, the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (henceforth North Korea) have been at odds over North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. Yet despite the efforts of multiple U.S. presidents, North Korea has been able to create nuclear weapons against the will of the United States and the international community. What has been remarkable during this period is that despite repeated warnings, threats, arguments, redlines, compromises, and broken promises, these two countries have not yet gone to war. The closest that the United States came to attacking North Korea was during the Clinton administration, when only a last-minute trip by former President Jimmy Carter prevented President Clinton from ordering an airstrike against North Korea’s Yongbyon power plant and reprocessing facilities. The Bush administration, which openly labeled North Korea as a member of the “Axis of Evil” and promoted regime change within the country, eventually reversed course and chose negotiations over conflict. Now, despite further provocations by the North in the form of new nuclear and missile tests, President Obama advocates negotiation as the method for resolving this crisis. Why have three different presidencies decided to tackle the nuclear issue the same way? Why did a president who started two wars in the Middle East choose negotiation rather than conflict? Why has North Korea been allowed to create and proliferate WMD and missile technology without any noticeable punishment while Iran, which has made arguably less progress in acquiring nuclear weapons, continues to be isolated by the international community?
This paper examines the North Korean nuclear crisis from the end of the Clinton administration through the George W. Bush administration. In particular, it seeks to explain why, despite its ideological predispositions, the Bush administration adopted an engagement policy with the regime. Four explanations are examined to determine why the Bush administration tempered its hostile rhetoric to the North Korean regime and adopted a policy of negotiation. From these explanations, it may be possible to distill lessons for future U.S. administrations seeking a bipartisan approach to highly controversial foreign and defense policies. Contrary to popular belief, it is argued that the Bush administration has always supported a policy of negotiations as one of many measures in dealing with North Korea. However, infighting between different camps in the administration prevented serious negotiations from taking place until the end the Bush’s second term.

This paper begins with a look at the Clinton administration’s policy of engagement, focusing on the administration’s successes as well as the opinions of administration critics. Next, the paper looks at the Bush administration’s early rhetoric towards North Korea, which advocated a harsher stance towards North Korea than its predecessor, labeling North Korea a rogue state and a member of the “Axis of Evil.” After establishing the Bush administration’s skepticism towards negotiating with the North Korean regime, this paper critically compares the four explanations for the administration’s eventual adoption of a full engagement policy following the 2006 nuclear test. After determining what factors shaped the administration’s policy,
conclusions are drawn with lessons for future administrations creating policy towards North Korea.

**The Policies of the Clinton Administration**

Before an examination of the Bush administration’s policy towards North Korea can take place, it is important to first look at the policy of the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration chose to pursue an engagement strategy with North Korea following the March 1993 announcement of North Korea’s intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). An intensive year and a half negotiation process followed, including periods where North Korea threatened to turn Seoul into a “sea of fire” and the U.S. seriously considered a strike on North Korea’s Yongbyon nuclear plant and reprocessing center. However, in October 1994, the United States and North Korea signed the Agreed Framework, bringing the crisis to a successful resolution. While this agreement did not dismantle North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, it did effectively freeze the production of new nuclear material. Furthermore, the agreement called for International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring of the Yongbyon reactor and reprocessing plant. In exchange, the U.S. agreed to provide a yearly shipment of 500,000 tons of heavy oil to North Korea. In addition, the U.S. would provide North
Korea with two light-water nuclear reactors capable of producing 2000 MW of energy each year.¹

Engagement continued to be the preferred method for dealing with North Korea following its 1998 test-firing of a Taepo-dong missile in the Sea of Japan. Negotiations made progress in 1999, when North Korea agreed to halt missile testing in exchange for the reduction of some economic sanctions against North Korea that had been in place since the Korean War.² In October 2000, Secretary of State Madeline Albright became the highest-level U.S. official to visit North Korea when she met with Kim Jong-il to propose a possible missile deal with the country. The agreement would have called for North Korea to stop its missile program, in exchange for assistance with the launch of two or three satellites per year.³ Reports also indicated that the North demanded an additional $1 billion per year in exchange for ending its missile exports to third-party countries.⁴ However, no agreement was concluded before President Clinton left office.

Despite its flaws, engagement left the incoming Bush administration with a legacy of partial success stories: a freeze on the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel rods, a moratorium on missile testing, and significant progress towards negotiating the dismantlement of North Korea’s missile program. Still, many Republicans were critical

of the Clinton administration’s engagement policy. According to Robert Gallucci, chief
U.S. negotiator with North Korea during the 1994 nuclear crisis, the Clinton
administration was criticized for submitting to nuclear blackmail and for appeasing the
North Koreans. Many critics, especially those in Congress, believed that North Korea
was an untrustworthy actor and would never stick to any deal.⁵ Others claimed that the
deal did not go far enough, as the agreement only suspended the nuclear program rather
than dismantle it. In 1998, a Republican North Korea Advisory Group led by U.S.
Representative Benjamin Gilman was tasked to create a study analyzing North Korea’s
threat to the United States. The report found that since the Agreed Framework, North
Korea had become a greater threat to the United States and its allies due to the
advancement of its ballistic missile program, components of which were being exported
around the world. Furthermore, U.S. aid to the country was being used to prop up the
regime, which continued to use fear as a means of maintaining control of the country.⁶ In
the words on Rep. Gilman:

“North Korea is the world’s most repressive regime. It brutally oppresses human rights of its people and sends many of them to languish in political prisons… I am concerned that our policies towards North Korea have
failed and that our aid is sustaining a brutal regime. I also fear that the Clinton administration has conditioned North Korea to believe that brinkmanship will bring benefits.”⁷

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⁵ “Interview: Robert Gallucci,”  Frontline. March 5, 2003. Available at:
A particularly vocal opponent of the Agreed Framework was Senator John McCain. McCain called lead negotiator Gallucci a traitor, saying that the deal was bad for the country. In a 1999 speech, Senator McCain expressed his displeasure toward the Clinton’s administration’s North Korean policy. Having previously labeled the Clinton process “appeasement,” in McCain’s eyes, negotiations had allowed North Korea the time to build up their missile program. He instead pushed for a policy of “supporting indigenous and outside forces that desire to overthrow the odious regimes that rule [North Korea.] Call it rogue state rollback if you will.”

Transition to the Bush Administration

A sharp change in the tone of U.S. rhetoric towards North Korea came about at the beginning of the George W. Bush administration. Writing before the election, soon to be National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice heavily criticized the Clinton administration’s “[attempt] to bribe North Korea into forsaking nuclear weapons.” In an article in Foreign Affairs, Rice wrote that, “One thing is clear: the United States must approach regimes like North Korea resolutely and decisively. The Clinton administration has failed here, sometimes threatening to use force and then backing down, as it often has with Iraq.” After the election, the Bush administration distanced itself from the policies of the Clinton administration in every way possible. The phenomenon was so prevalent

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8 “Interview: Robert Gallucci”
11 Ibid
that the unofficial policy within the Bush administration became ABC – anything but Clinton.\textsuperscript{12} A key moment occurred in March 2003, when President Bush met with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung. Though publically backing President Kim’s “Sunshine Policy” towards North Korea, President Bush signaled to his Korean counterpart that the U.S. would no longer seek negotiations with North Korea, ending the Clinton administration’s policy of engagement with the country.\textsuperscript{13} In a press conference following the meeting, President Bush showed his skepticism over any deal with North Korea, stating, “Part of the problem in dealing with North Korea, there's not very much transparency. We're not certain as to whether or not they're keeping all terms of all agreements.”\textsuperscript{14}

Following his meeting with President Kim, Bush ordered a comprehensive review on U.S. policy towards North Korea that was completed in June 2001. Though unhappy with the Agreed Framework, without definitive proof that North Korea had broken the agreement, Bush was unwilling to kill the framework. Instead, Bush pushed for “improved implementations of the Agreed Framework…; verifiable constraints on North Korea’s missile programs and a ban on its missile exports; and a less threatening

\textsuperscript{13} “Frontline: Chronology - Kim’s Nuclear Gamble,” \textit{Frontline}, 2003. Available at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kim/interviews/gallucci.html. The “Sunshine Policy” was an engagement strategy undertaken by South Korea designed to promote reconciliation with North Korea, as well as promote economic transformation within the country.
conventional military posture.\textsuperscript{15} In testimony to Congress, Charles Pritchard, Special Envoy for Korean Peace Talks, indicated that the Bush administration was interested in meeting with North Korean officials without preconditions, and that in addition to the nuclear and missile programs, the U.S. wished to discuss the force posture of the North Korean regime as well as humanitarian issues with the regime.\textsuperscript{16} However, prospects for meaningful negotiations between the administration and North Korea seemed bleak. According to Leon Sigal, director of the Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Project at the Social Science Research Council in New York, the administration was determined to attach any relaxation of sanctions and formation of diplomatic relations with improvement on human rights issues, something North Korea vehemently opposed. By deciding that all issues were liked, the administration “all but assured no progress [towards improving relations] across the board.”\textsuperscript{17}

The September 11th attacks on the United States had a profound effect on how the Bush administration viewed the threat presented by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. According to Robert Litwak, following the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration believed that the “unacceptable behavior of these rogue regimes derived

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
from their very nature. Hence, to change the behavior, you had to change the regimes.”

Evidence of this shift became clear in November 2001, as American troops were searching for Osama Bin Laden in the mountainous regions of Afghanistan. When asked if Bin Laden had possibly fled the country, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld mentioned that there were several places Bin Laden could go including Pakistan, Syria, Cuba, and North Korea. Implicit in this statement is the belief by the administration that any rogue state could become a haven for terrorists, and as such, the United States needed to eliminate this threat.

In 2002, the administration ramped up its hostile rhetoric towards North Korea. In the 2002 nuclear posture review, released in January, North Korea was identified as potential target for nuclear attack, due to its continued military threat to South Korea, sponsorship of terrorism, and production of WMD and missile technology. Later in January, in his 2002 State of the Union Address, Bush labeled North Korea as a member of the “Axis of Evil,” putting North Korea in the same category as terrorists in terms of threats to the United States. Bush leveled personal attacks against Kim Jong-il, labeling

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him a “pygmy” who “behaved like a spoiled child at a dinner table.” At a press conference in Korea, Bush clarified his characterization of North Korea as “evil,” saying “I will not change my opinion on the man, on Kim Jong-il until he frees his people and accepts genuine proposals from countries such as South Korea or the United States to dialogue.”

Accusations began to emerge from the administration that North Korea was still pursuing nuclear weapons through a secret highly enriched uranium (HEU) program. In a January 2002 speech to the Conference of Disarmament, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control John Bolton called upon North Korea to cease its violation of IAEA safeguards, adding, “I caution those who think that they can pursue nuclear weapons without detection: the United States and its allies will prove you wrong.” Assistant Secretary of State John Wolf, in an April 19th speech, accused North Korea of colluding with Iran on both missile and WMD technology. Likewise, in a May 6 speech titled Beyond the Axis of Evil: Additional Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction, Bolton mounted “an indictment of North Korea as one of the world’s most dangerous possessors and proliferators of weapons of mass destruction.” Finally, according to declassified findings presented to Congress, the Central Intelligence Agency revealed that North

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23 George W. Bush. “President Bush & President Kim Dae-Jung Meet in Seoul,” Whitehouse.gov, February 20, 2002. At this time, North Korea was refusing to meet with both the Bush and Kim administrations.
Korea had been secretly engaging in clandestine uranium enrichment program, violating the terms of the 1994 Agreed Framework.  

When confronted with this information in October 2002, the North Koreans allegedly confirmed that they did have a secret enrichment program. In response to this admission, the U.S. suspended shipments of heavy oil to North Korea, effectively ending the Agreed Framework. In response, North Korea restarted its reactor at Yongbyon, kicked out IAEA inspectors, and withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in January 2003. As the U.S. began its push for war against Iraq that same year, the administration continued to emphasize the threat posed by a nuclear armed North Korea. In a February 2003 speech in Italy, Rumsfeld brought up the possibility of North Korea selling nuclear materials to a terrorist state. Rumsfeld also warned North Korea not to take advantage of the U.S. preoccupation with Iraq. According to Rumsfeld, “The U.S. is capable of fighting two major regional conflicts. We're capable of winning decisively in one and swiftly defeating in the case of the other, and let there be no doubt about it.”

Echoing Rumsfeld’s reasoning, President Bush warned that “all options are on the table” in regards to North Korea, indicating that an airstrike against the country had not been

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27 CIA. Untitled Assessment of North Korea’s Nuclear Program Presented to Congress, November 2002.
ruled out. Nonetheless, Bush did say that he felt the crisis would be resolved diplomatically without resorting to military means.\textsuperscript{31}

**What Caused the Policy Shift?**

Until 2003, the Bush administration had done everything possible to reverse the Clinton administration’s engagement policy with North Korea. It had stopped missile negotiations, placed a greater emphasis on human rights in relations with the regime, and thanks to North Korea’s secret HEU program, was able to end the Agreed Framework. Yet the Bush administration’s choice to pursue diplomacy with North Korea seems counterintuitive given the rhetoric coming from the government. Instead of pursing military action against the country, the U.S. chose a policy of “tailored containment,” designed to pressure North Korea into giving up its nuclear weapons program.\textsuperscript{32} At the same time, the U.S. pursued negotiations with North Korea to resolve this crisis. Almost overnight, the Bush administration’s changed its position that it could not trust negotiations with North Korea. Rather, the administration would use the next five years to pursue a negotiated settlement with the regime.

There are four explanations possible explanations for this shift. The first explanation is that an intellectual consensus formed regarding North Korea’s motivations for seeking nuclear weapons. On the basis of this consensus, the administration decided


to shift course and negotiate with the North Korean regime. A second possible explanation is that the shift to negotiations was a result of bureaucratic politics. According to this explanation, even though the administration was against negotiating with North Korea, several within the administration saw the benefit of dealing with the regime, and lobbied intensely for the administration to adopt negotiations. A third explanation is that the lack of military options limited the U.S. responses in response to the new crisis. The U.S. was either unwilling or unable to attack North Korean facilities, forcing the administration to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis. A fourth and final explanation is that regional partners pushed the United States towards seeking a diplomatic solution. Consequently, each of these explanations will be explored and discussed.

*Intellectual Agreement on North Korea’s Motivations*

Any debate on North Korean policy is actually a debate over North Korea’s strategic intentions. However, due to the secretive and isolated nature of the North Korean regime, it is impossible to come to a consensus on North Korea’s motivations. This was certainly true within the Bush administration. Debate within the administration codified around two groups. The “Negotiators” believed that under the right circumstances, North Korea might be willing to give up its nuclear weapons program. A top proponent of this belief, Secretary of State Colin Powell led a delegation of administration officials who were in favor of engaging with the North Korean regime.
This group included James Kelly, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Michael Green, senior director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, and in the second term, Victor Cha. They favored a tougher line towards North Korea than the Clinton administration, but recognized the constraints that alliances and regional relationships placed on U.S. policy.\(^3^3\)

Victor Cha, a Professor at Georgetown University who worked in the Bush administration as the Director of Asian Affairs on the staff of the National Security Council and Deputy Head of the U.S. delegation to the Six-party Talks from 2004 to 2007, was a strong advocate of engagement with the North Korean regime. Cha saw three possible uses for North Korea’s nuclear weapons – as shields (protect the regime against attacks), swords (used in a denial strategy to prevent the U.S. from interfering in a North/South conflict), or badges (status symbols for the current regime.)\(^3^4\) Despite not knowing North Korea’s true intentions, Cha worried that if the regime were to collapse, it might use military capability to lash out against the U.S. and South Korea.\(^3^5\) To counter this threat, Cha advocated the use of “hawk engagement.” This strategy promoted testing North Korea’s intentions and willingness to cooperate through negotiations. If North Korea was sincere in its desire to give up its nuclear weapons and integrate into the


international community, then the negotiations should be successful. However, if negotiations failed, then they would serve to unify international opposition towards North Korea’s nuclear program, allowing for sanctions and other measures to be taken against the regime.36

At the other end of the debate were the “Warriors.” This group was led by Vice President Dick Cheney and included Robert Joseph, the NSC’s nonproliferation director, Undersecretary of State John Bolton, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. Members of the Warriors were against any sort of talks with the North Koreans, as they believed that any further engagement with the North would only prolong the Kim regime. Rather, they wanted to put pressure on the government through the use of economic sanctions, believing that the North Korean government was close to collapse and that only a small amount of foreign aid had kept the regime afloat. Furthermore, they believed that if China could be persuaded to stop giving aid to North Korea, then the regime would collapse.37

Ambassador John Bolton, who served in the Bush Administration as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security from 2001 to 2005 and as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations from 2005 to 2006, was the most outspoken critic of negotiating with North Korea. Bolton was against the Bush administration’s second-term shift towards substantive negotiations, believing that North

37 Mazarr 79.
Korea would never honor its obligations in agreements with the United States.  

Bolton believed that North Korea’s production of nuclear and missile technology were forms of “nuclear blackmail,” aimed at receiving billions of dollars in payments from the United States. He was against the use of offering North Korea incentives, as he did not believe that North Korea should be rewarded for giving up its nuclear weapons. Furthermore, he believed that past negotiations served as cover while North Korea continued to build up its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles program. He argued that the United States should pursue regime change within North Korea, as despite the risks of North Korea’s collapse, “There may be a precious opportunity in the midst of potential disaster to reunite the Korean Peninsula under democratic rule” and secure the North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction.

Early in the Bush administration, it became clear that these schools of thought would clash when it came to policy decisions. In March 2001, shortly before Kim Dae-jung was to meet with President Bush, Secretary Powell told reporters that the Bush administration, “plan[s] to engage with North Korea [and] to pick up where President Clinton left off. Some promising elements were left on the table and we will be

41 Bolton “Bush’s North Korea Surrender Will Have Lasting Consequences”
examining those elements.” However, the following day, Powell was forced to backtrack from this statement, commenting that the U.S. was conducting a review of North Korean policy, and would be developing policies “unique to the administration.”

Rather than decide on one policy, the administration adopted a hybrid approach that combined the pressure and condemnation favored by the Warriors with the engagement favored by the Negotiators. As the Bush administration was raising the pressure on North Korea, officials were working on a new negotiating strategy dubbed the “bold approach.” According to reports, this strategy would call for North Korea to end their WMD programs, improve human rights, and move North Korean troops away from the demilitarized zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea in exchange for economic investment and diplomatic recognition.

While the debate between these two schools of thought explains why the administration sought both pressure and negotiations, it does not explain why the administration initially favored regime change over meaningful negotiations. Furthermore, it is unable to explain why the Bush administration was more open to negotiations during its second term. For that, a more detailed look at the interaction between members of the two camps is required. The next section, bureaucratic politics, will better explain how members of these different schools influenced U.S. policy.

44 Quoted in Mazarr 77.
45 Gordon “U.S. Readies Plan to Raise Pressure on North Korea”
Bureaucratic Politics – The First Bush Term

Despite ideological differences with the administration, North Korean policy remained fairly balanced between pressure and negotiation until events conspired to give the Warriors greater control over North Korean policy. In mid-2002, the United States determined that North Korea was pursuing secret uranium enrichment program. According to The New York Times, the revelation of this program sparked a debate within the Bush administration over the risks of abandoning the Agreed Framework. Some felt that killing the accord would prompt North Korea to build nuclear weapons as quickly as possible. However, Warriors felt that the HEU program justified their beliefs that the Agreed Framework was fatally flawed, that North Korea was not an honest negotiator, and any agreement with the country was bound to be violated. Policy debate over how to handle North Korea spilled into press. On October 24, a senior State Department official, speaking at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Mexico, said “I have not yet used the four-letter word [dead] -- and have no plans to do so, at least at this time. No decision has been made.” He added that while the administration was against negotiating with North Korea, the administration had not ruled out further discussion with the North. The next day, another administration official in Washington claimed that the statements given to the press were a “serious breach” in official policy.

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47 Ibid.
49 Ibid
“There is a discipline problem here, whether it's the person who did the [Mexico] briefing, or somewhere else in the State Department,” the Washington official said. “What that person said . . . may represent his view, the State Department view, but it does not represent the administration view.” Eventually, due to “the seeming obviousness of [North Korea’s] cheating and the emotionalism of the principled position,” the decision was made by the administration to kill the Agreed Framework.  

After the death of the Agreed Framework, the Warriors wanted to punish North Korea for their violations of the agreement. The use of economical and political sanctions was particularly attractive since the Warriors believed that the regime was on its last legs. Many agreed with the views of Nicholas Eberstadt, an economist with the American Enterprise Institute, who argued that North Korea was in dire straits in 1999 and only foreign aid had kept it afloat. U.S. intelligence estimates from 2002 echoed this assessment, indicating that the regime was on the verge of falling. These views were also expressed by Paul Wolfowitz, who in May 2003 predicted that unlike Iraq, North Korea would respond to economic pressure, as the country was “teetering on the edge of economic collapse.” In April 2003, momentum began to build for sanctions that would not only convince North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program, but would eventually force a change in regime. This position was advocated by Secretary Rumsfeld, who

51 Mazarr 85.
52 Ibid 80.
argued in a memo that the U.S. should work with China in order to topple the North Korean leadership.\textsuperscript{55} The calculation by the Warriors was that pressure applied by the U.S. and other countries would force the regime to collapse before it would be able to develop a significant stockpile of nuclear weapons.

This desire by members of the Bush administration to topple the Kim regime was reflected in the administration’s adoption of the policy of “tailored containment,” announced in December 2002. Though never clearly articulated, the policy was designed to put political and economic stress on the North Korean regime and “reflected a desire to isolate Pyongyang through a combination of cargo inspections, financial and other sanctions validated… by the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{56} According to a senior administration official, “Tailored containment was constructed to enable us to move in a number of different directions. The main objective at the moment is to get them to give up their nuclear weapons program. If they don't, we can work with allies to increase their isolation. No one anticipates that North Korea will collapse right away. But we won't do anything to prop them up, and we will let the internal forces continue to work away.”\textsuperscript{57} Pressure on the regime would come from three sources: Patriot Act measures that allowed for financial restrictions against the North Korean regime, multilateral sanctions

\textsuperscript{57} Gordon “U.S. Readies Plan to Raise Pressure on North Korea”
enacted by the U.N. Security Council, and establishment of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).\textsuperscript{58}

Despite their best efforts, Warriors were unsuccessful in preventing negotiations from occurring. However, this did not stop them from doing everything in their power to prevent an agreement from being reached between North Korea and the United States. With some hesitancy, the administration agreed in April 2003 to participate in Three-Nation Talks with China and North Korea regarding the nuclear issue. Secretary Powell, who had pushed for these talks, received approval for the meeting despite the protests of Secretary Rumsfeld, who warned that the talks were a Chinese trap to force the U.S. to speak bilaterally with North Korea, something that was fiercely opposed by the administration.\textsuperscript{59} Rumsfeld later sent a memo insisting that U.S. negotiator James Kelly, a member of the Negotiator camp, be replaced by either John Bolton or Robert Joseph, two Warriors with harsh views towards negotiations with North Korea. However no action was taken.\textsuperscript{60}

Policy debate within the administration led to strict negotiation guidelines for American officials that offered little in terms of room to maneuver. This severely limited the prospects of striking an agreement. The creation of these guidelines was a result of an

\textsuperscript{58} Martin 68-69 and Frank Reudiger. “The Political Economy of Sanctions against North Korea,” \textit{Asian Perspectives}, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2006, pp. 29. The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) was established by the Bush Administration to “to stop trafficking of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern.” The program calls for the use of existing domestic and international laws to end WMD trafficking, including the interdiction of ships and planes suspected of transporting WMD material. More information about the PSI can be found at: \url{http://www.state.gov/t/isn/c10390.htm}.


\textsuperscript{60} Kessler ibid
interagency process that had the effect of watering down of U.S. policy. One administration official described the process in this way: “Powell would work something out with the president, Rice would agree – and then the policy would have to be fought through the interagency process, where staffers sympathetic to the hard-line view and doing the bidding of Rumsfeld, Cheney, and others would do their best to prevent any deal from actually being struck with North Korea.”

According to The LA Times, another official in favor of negotiations “expressed frustration with the bickering [over policy,] saying he did not believe the president knew what his aides were doing in his name.”

As a result of this infighting, Kelly was forbidden from speaking directly with the North Koreans during the April 2003 Three-Nation Talks. In addition, he was told to stick to a script that espoused a very tough line towards North Korea. This position frustrated many within the State Department. In an e-mail disseminated in the State Department, Charles Pritchard wrote, “These talks will not last the scheduled three days. North Korea will walk out.” The North Koreans, who were promised by the Chinese that they would be able to interact one-on-one with the Americans, were disappointed by the talks, and as Pritchard predicted, left a day before talks were scheduled to end.

After the failure of the Three-Nation Talks, the Bush administration, still opposed to one-on-one negotiations with North Korean, agreed to participate in Six-Party Talks which were to take place in August 2003. These new negotiations would expand the

61 Mazarr 87
63 Kessler “U.S. Has a Shifting Script on North Korea”
three-nation format to include Japan, South Korea, and Russia. At this time, the Negotiators seemed to regain the momentum following a trip by Secretary Powell and National Security Advisor Rice with President Bush to Africa in July 2003. According to reports, Powell urged President Bush to allow U.S. negotiators to meet one-on-one with the North Koreans on the sidelines of the Six-Party Talks. However, once again the Warriors worked to undermine the new talks. On the eve of the first round of the Six-Party Talks, John Bolton gave a speech in Seoul, South Korea, denouncing Kim Jong-il that was “seen as an effort to sabotage the [Six-Party] talks.” In addition, State Department officials claimed that Bolton organized press releases designed to hamper negotiations between the U.S. and the North Korean regime. In July 2003, shortly before the talks began, Charles Pritchard resigned his post within the State Department, citing the Bush administration’s unwillingness to meet bilaterally with North Korea. According to Pritchard, “My position was the State Department's envoy for North Korean negotiations, yet we were prohibited from having negotiations. I asked myself, 'What am I doing in government?'”

Due to the multilateral nature of the Six-Party Talks, any negotiated settlement would have to involve agreement between all six parties. The Warriors who opposed negotiations with North Korea came to “embrace the [Six-Party Talks] because they

66 Ibid
thought that it was so cumbersome that it would not achieve much, and because North Korea's behavior grated on other participants. When the first round of the Six-Party Talks got underway, Secretary Kelly again received strict instructions about what he could do. In the opening rounds of negotiation, Secretary Kelly could only repeat official administration line – that North Korea must completely, verifiably, and irreversibly disarm (CVID) its nuclear program. Only after this was accomplished, would the U.S. discuss possible benefits for the regime. The U.S. team did meet with the North Koreans on the sidelines after the first day’s session. After listening to the North Koreans, Kelly refused to answer specific questions regarding his presentation, telling the North Koreans to, “Go back and carefully review [his] statement.” Strict negotiation guidelines prevented Kelly from saying anything else. When Kelly asked for permission from Washington to issue a joint statement offering vague security assurances to the North, his request was flat out denied. As such, the first session ended with a Chairman’s Summary, as no agreement on a joint statement could be made.

In between the first and second rounds, the Chinese proposed a draft statement, issued to all Six-Party Members, designed to show some progress during the second round of negotiations. This draft departed from the U.S. position in that it removed the CVID language that members of the administration strongly pushed for. Vice President Cheney, who until this point had taken little interest in the North Korean crisis,

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68 Kessler “Bush Faults Clinton Policy, But the Debate is Complex”
69 Sigal “Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in North Korea”
70 Kessler “U.S. Has a Shifting Script on N. Korea”
71 Sigal “Misplaying North Korea and Losing Friends and Influence in North Korea”
personally shot down the draft resolution, saying “We don’t negotiate with evil; we defeat it.”\textsuperscript{72} Cheney also directly impacted the Second Round of the Six-Party Talks, which began in February 2004. When Assistant Secretary Kelly reported that the North Koreans had outright rejected the CVID language, he asked for permission to draft a statement using more bland diplomatic language. Bush, with input from Cheney, drafted instructions that ordered Kelly to hint that administration would no longer support the talks if the North Koreans refused to accept CVID language. This was done without the knowledge of Secretary Powell and Assistant Secretary Armitage, who quickly tried to repair the damage caused by this position. Powell convinced President Bush to accept a statement without CVID language, only to later have North Korea reject it.\textsuperscript{73}

Not until the Third Round of the Six-Party Talks in June 2004 did the United States put forth a formal proposal to North Korea. In the proposal, the U.S. offered “the possibility of energy aid from South Korea, security assurances and other benefits during a three-month test period if [North Korea] promised to disclose and end its nuclear weapons programs.”\textsuperscript{74} However, the proposal was flawed - the timeframe was unreasonable (North Korea was given only three months to dismantle its entire nuclear program) -- and it withheld security benefits to the regime until after the North’s nuclear program had been completely dismantled. State Department officials had suggested that the security benefits should be given at the same time as fuel aid, but this was rejected by

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{73} Kessler “Impact From the Shadows”
\end{flushright}
Secretary Rumsfeld. The North Koreans did not respond to the proposal, halting progress until after the 2004 Presidential Election.

The Shift towards Engagement

During the Bush administration’s first term, the Warriors were able to scuttle any attempts by Negotiators to come to an agreement with North Korea. However, after President Bush won re-election, it became clear that a new policy approach was sought. The administration added several new Negotiators who pushed for renewed engagement with North Korea. Gone was Secretary of State Colin Powell, who was replaced by former National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. Rice felt that as Secretary of State, it was her responsibility to take a greater role in resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis. Rice replaced outgoing lead negotiator James Kelly with Christopher Hill. Hill was a career State Department official who had previously served as a special envoy to Kosovo in the late 1990s and was a firm believer in negotiating with the North Korean regime. Victor Cha, an open advocate of “hawk engagement,” joined the National Security Council as Director of Asian Affairs in December 2004. The inclusion of these

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75 Pan and Glessler “U.S. Revises Final Proposal at North Korea Nuclear Talks”
76 Mazarr 88. One possible reason for the U.S. proposal at this stage in the negotiations was the pressure placed by Democratic nominee John Kerry against the Bush administration. Kerry articulated his views on Bush’s North Korean policy in a televised presidential debate in September 2004. During the debate, Kerry blamed Bush for abandoning the Clinton administration’s approach. Under Bush’s watch, the U.S. lost the ability to freeze North Korea’s plutonium program, and had allowed North Korea to develop nuclear weapons. For more information, see: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6146353/.
77 Ibid 88-89.
79 “Victor Cha Returns to Georgetown from NSC,” Georgetown University, May 1, 2007. Available at: http://explore.georgetown.edu/news/?ID=24785.
pro-negotiation officials, combined with the need to see results following the ongoing turmoil in Iraq, led to a greater emphasis on engagement with North Korea during Bush’s second administration.  

With Secretary Rice running the show, Hill was given the go-ahead to pursue serious negotiations with North Korea. In July and September 2005, the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks took place in Beijing. Unlike previous rounds where U.S. officials were limited to three days of negotiations, this round lasted for 20 days. Ambassador Hill believed that in order for negotiations to be successful, a “statement of principles” was necessary to help guide the process. However, officials in the Bush administration felt that North Korea could not be trusted with a nuclear energy program of any kind, and were dead set against any agreement that would provide North Korea with a light-water nuclear reactor (LWR). While Ambassador Hill worked behind the scenes to convince U.S. allies to not discuss a LWR with North Korea until it had rejoined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Robert Joseph, who was now Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, crafted a statement which implied that LWR talks could only take place after North Korea’s nuclear weapons program was fully dismantled. According to Jack Pritchard, the statement implied that, “Not only does North Korea have to return to the NPT and come into compliance with IAEA safeguards, it has to satisfy an arbitrary – but unspecified – goal set by the United States before even

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80 Mazarr 89
a ‘discussion of the subject of the provision of an LWR’ can take place.”

Despite signing the statement, the North Korea’s later balked at the conditions.

The September 2005 joint statement set the stage for a possible resolution to the North Korean crisis. But disputes within the administration continued to mar the process. The Warriors continued to put pressure on the North Korean regime that directly interfered with the negotiating effort. In September 2005 the U.S. Treasury Department announced that Macao-based Banco Delta Asia was a “primary money laundering concern.” This led to a freeze on the bank’s assets, including nearly $25 million dollars of North Korean funds. This started a chain reaction where countries became extremely wary of handling North Korean money, leading to an “informal financial embargo” against the regime. When the Fifth Round of Six-Party Talks began in November, North Korea accused the U.S. of “spoiling the atmosphere” due to the penalties imposed on Banco Delta Asia. No progress was made at the talks, and North Korea refused to return to negotiations until its assets frozen at the bank were released.

As negotiations went on hiatus for the majority of 2006, policy within the administration veered sharply in favor of the Negotiators due to the departure of several Warriors from the administration. In November 2006, Democrats took a majority in both

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82 Pritchard “Six Party Talks Update: False Start or a Case for Optimism?”
the House and Senate, gaining control of Congress for the first time since 1994. This
election was seen as a rebuke of the President, his administration, and his policies, and
precipitated the ousting of several administration officials who advocated a tough line
towards North Korea.\textsuperscript{88} In November 2006, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld resigned
under considerable pressure to step down due to the deteriorating war in Iraq.\textsuperscript{89} He was
replaced by Robert Gates, who served as the Director of Central Intelligence under
George H.W. Bush. In 1994, Gates implied in an editorial that a military strike on North
Korea’s reprocessing facilities was the best way to halt their nuclear program. However,
during his confirmation hearing, Gates came out in favor of negotiations, stating, “I’ve
changed my view on how to deal with North Korea. I believe that clearly at this point the
best course is the diplomatic one.”\textsuperscript{90}

Also departing the administration in December 2006 was John Bolton, who had
been perhaps the biggest critic of negotiations. In 2005, Bolton left his post as
Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security to become the U.S.
Ambassador to the United Nations. However, Bolton was never confirmed in the Senate,

\textsuperscript{89} Michael A. Fletcher and Peter Baker. “Bush Ousts Embattled Rumsfeld,” \textit{The Washington Post},
November 9, 2006.
\textsuperscript{90} “Transcript: Confirmation of Robert Gates to Be Secretary of Defense,” \textit{The Washington Post}, December
and left the administration at the end of his appointment. Bolton’s replacement at the State Department, Robert Joseph, resigned from his position January 2007.

In addition to the departure of key Warrior officials by the end of 2006, Vice President Dick Cheney had lost a significant amount of control over administration policy. According to Representative Ray LaHood, “During the first term, Cheney was considered one of the smartest guys in the administration. But his influence has been diminished because of the Scooter Libby thing and because the war in Iraq has not gone well.” Libby had served as the vice-president’s “eyes and ears,” allowing him to influence foreign policy issues before they came to the attention of President Bush, and his loss greatly weakened the vice president. Furthermore, Cheney’s hard-nose tactics were seen as “radioactive” as his interventions into Congress often resulted in the loss of votes. Cheney’s power was further diluted with the resignations of Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Douglas Feith, who all resigned from positions within the Department of Defense and had been long-time allies of the vice president.

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93 Sanger and Schmitt “Cheney’s Power No Longer Goes Unquestioned”

94 Ibid

Following North Korea’s 2006 nuclear test, the Six-Party Talks took a greater sense of urgency. With the balance clearly in favor of the Negotiators, the Second Phase, Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks resumed in December 2006. Unfortunately, the Banco Delta Asia issue continued to impede discussion. However, a chance meeting between Victor Cha and the North Koreans at the Beijing Airport led to the opening of a second, bilateral track of negotiations. Following the meeting with North Korean officials, Cha wrote a memo to President Bush arguing that the time had come “to test North Korea's intentions -- seeking an agreement with specific actions and a limited time frame.” He urged Bush to pursue bilateral dialogue with North Korea. Bush agreed, and American officials met North Korean negotiators in January 2007 in Berlin for a series of talks that would lead to the outline of a deal. During Third Phase, Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks in February 2007, North Korea agreed to shutdown the Yongbyon nuclear reactor within 60 days. In exchange, it received 50,000 metric tons of fuel aid.

In order to prevent the Warriors from using the interagency review process to squash the deal, as had been done in the past, Secretary Rice bypassed several layers of traditional policy review. During negotiations with the North Koreans in Berlin, Rice only discussed the outlines of the deal with National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and with President Bush. Notably, the vice president’s office was not consulted.

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According to one official, Secretary Rice had become the driving force for U.S. foreign policy. “Cheney is taking a back seat, and there is no check or balance on Condi in foreign policy. It is what Condi decides and what the president agrees to.”\(^{100}\) This sentiment was echoed by an administration official, who acknowledged that Rice was a strong influence in the administration’s new North Korean policy. “What’s different this time is that it is clear that both the president and Condi wanted a deal.”\(^{101}\)

Over the next two years, the administration continued to engage with North Korea. Progress was delayed during the Six Round of the Six-Party Talks, as North Korea demanded that it receive its funds held at the Banco Delta Asia before resuming negotiations. In June 2007, these funds were transferred back to the regime, and talks resumed. The sixth round of negotiations ended with the creation of the “Second Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement.” In this statement, North Korea agreed to the complete dismantlement of its nuclear program and a “complete and correct declaration” of its nuclear programs by the end of the year. In return, the United States promised to remove North Korea from the state sponsors of terror list and to work to establishing formal diplomatic relations with the North.\(^{102}\) In June 2008, North Korea presented the United States with documents providing a summary of North Korea’s

\(^{100}\) Quoted in Sanger and Schmitt, “Cheney’s Power No Longer Goes Unquestioned”

\(^{101}\) Quoted in Sanger and Shanker, “Rice is Said to Have Speeded North Korean Deal”

nuclear activities. In addition, North Korea destroyed a cooling tower at the Yongbyon reactor. In response to these actions, and despite the protestations of Warriors both inside and outside the administration, in October 2008 North Korea was removed from the U.S. state sponsors of terror list.

This analysis has shown that bureaucratic politics were the primary reason why the Bush administration adopted an engagement policy. Since the beginning of the administration, the Negotiators wished to pursue a policy of engagement with North Korea. However, the Warriors within the administration believed that North Korea could not be trusted, and pushed for the U.S. to pressure the North Korean regime. During the Bush administration’s first term, the Warriors held the advantage, thanks to revelations that North Korea cheated on its commitments to the Agreed Framework. In response to North Korea’s secret HEU program, Warriors instituted plans to pressure North Korea through the use of diplomatic pressure and sanctions to force a collapse of the regime. At the same time, the Warriors scuttled attempts by Negotiators to work on a deal with North Korea by requiring American officials to adopt strict hard-line policies in negotiations. However, during the administration’s second term, the addition of several new Negotiators to the administration shifted policy in favor of engagement of the North. This policy shift was fully completed in November 2006, when several key warriors left the administration following the 2006 midterm elections. It was these two events that led

to a shift in United States’ policy, and negotiations with North Korea would continue in earnest until the end of Bush’s second term. Still, this analysis does not answer the question why the administration chose not to pursue regime change through the use of military force. This will be explained in the next two sections – military factors and regional partner preferences.

Military Factors

The Bush administration’s decision to not use force against North Korea is striking considering the administration’s use of force in Iraq. For a time, it seemed like North Korea would be the next “Axis of Evil” country to be attacked by the United States. Following the revelation of North Korea’s secret HEU program, several remarks by the Bush administration indicated that the U.S. would take “every possible means” (including military action) to prevent North Korea from achieving a nuclear weapons capability. In February 2003, in order to prevent “opportunism” by North Korea in the wake of a possible U.S. invasion of Iraq, the administration ordered 12 B-52 and 12 B-1 bombers to Guam. In addition, the administration sent the carrier U.S.S. Carl Vincent to Japan to replace the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk, which was deploying to the Persian Gulf. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld also announced a realignment of U.S. troops on the Korean peninsula, in order to move U.S. troops out of artillery range near the DMZ and

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better position them for a counter-attack in the event of a North Korean invasion.\textsuperscript{108} Yet, even as these moves were being made, many Warriors within the administration downplayed the need to attack North Korea. According to John Bolton, “In contrast to the long standing situation with Iraq, we have only begun to exercise our diplomatic options for dealing with North Korea…[A]s President Bush has said, ‘all options are on the table’ for dealing with the North Korean problem. We have made it clear that North Korea can choose the path of compliance; it is not necessarily destined for the dead end Iraq has backed itself into.”\textsuperscript{109} This sentiment was echoed by Paul Wolfowitz, who felt that North Korea, unlike Iraq, was susceptible to economic pressure, and therefore military action was not needed at the time.\textsuperscript{110} Unspoken during these assessments were two worrying constraints – the possibility of war with North Korea and the pressure on U.S. forces due to the war in Iraq.

A military strike against North Korean nuclear targets has been a publically articulated option for U.S. forces since 1994, when President Clinton discussed the possibility with his senior advisors.\textsuperscript{111} However, the prospect of a strike has always been risky. Writing in 1994, Robert Gates acknowledged that best way to prevent North Korea from making weapons grade plutonium was an assault on North Korea’s reprocessing facilities. “However,” he continued, “an attack… could well provoke a conventional

\textsuperscript{109} Bolton “Why North Korea is Different” 23
\textsuperscript{110} “Wolfowitz Says Economic Pressure Will End Nuclear Standoff”
military assault by the North on South Korea, an assault for which neither our forces nor the American people have been adequately prepared.”

During nuclear negotiations, North Korea made clear that any conflict would have devastating repercussions for South Korea. In a televised meeting between North and South officials in May 1994, North Korean representative Park Yong-su said, “Your side has to deeply consider the dear price of war. Seoul is not far from here. If war breaks out, it will be a sea of fire… it will probably be difficult for you to survive.”

Any attack by North Korea would also result in large casualties for the United States. In 1954, the United States and South Korea signed a Mutual Security Agreement, agreeing to defend each other in case of attack. U.S. troops stationed on the Korean peninsula are a physical representation of that strategic commitment. According to operational plans between the United States and South Korea, the U.S. would respond to a North Korean invasion by sending 690,000 troops to defend the peninsula. A 1999 review by the Clinton administration estimated that war on the peninsula would result in hundreds of thousands of deaths, millions of refugees, and the destruction of large urban areas, specifically Seoul.

When North Korea’s secret HEU program was revealed in late 2002, an attack against North Korean nuclear facilities was considered unattractive. A 2003 Congressional Research Service report evaluating military options to end the crisis warned that “North Korea, unfortunately, has a history of unpredictable, and often violent, reactions to even slight provocations. Therefore, even the most modest U.S. military attack risks escalation to higher levels of conflict and most analysts agree that no military option should be chosen without full recognition of such danger.”

One estimate concluded that a North Korean response to U.S. military action could include transnational terrorist acts, an invasion of South Korea, and the use of chemical and nuclear weapons. 2005 estimates by Pentagon officials determined that within the first 90 days of a conflict on the Korean peninsula, U.S. and South Korean casualties might range from 300,000 to 500,000, in addition to hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths, and the destruction of South Korea’s economy.

Despite these risks, some felt that maintaining the possibility of war with North Korea was necessary in order to pressure the North into ending its nuclear weapons program. Senator Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in an interview before the April 2003 Three-Nation Talks that military action, “always has to be there as a very strong possibility,” despite the risk to American and

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South Korean forces. However, there were concerns that the United States would be unable to fight a war in Iraq and a war in Korea at the same time. These concerns are explored in the next section.

*The Iraq War’s Impact on the Military*

In March 2003, the U.S. invaded Iraq committing American troops to struggle that has now entered its seventh year. Iraq, another member of the “Axis of Evil,” had openly defied the U.S. for nearly 12 years. The Bush administration, arguing that Iraq “possess[ed] and conceal[ed] some of the most lethal weapons ever devised” and had “aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al-Qaeda,” launched an attack to overthrow the Iraqi government. Though the motivations of the Bush administration’s decisions to invade Iraq vary, some feel that invasion was meant to show North Korea that if they did not agree to give up their nuclear weapons program, then the United States would topple the Kim regime with force if necessary. John Bolton expressed such a sentiment when he stated “We are hopeful that a number of regimes will draw the appropriate lesson from Iraq that the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction is not in their national interest.”

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Initially, Bush’s invasion of Iraq seemed to pay dividends. In December 2003, the U.S. and the United Kingdom announced a deal where Libya, a known proliferator and supporter of terrorism, agreed to end its nuclear weapons programs. In addition, Syria, another state hostile to the U.S., also sought to meet with U.S. negotiators after the U.S. imposed sanctions against the country. For many in the Bush administration, this was a sign that the invasion of Iraq had convinced other states to give up their weapons of mass destruction and seek settlements with the United States. However, in the case of North Korea, the opposite effect occurred - the regime became determined to seek nuclear weapons to prevent an attack against the country. According to a North Korean press release, “The Iraqi war teaches a lesson that in order to prevent a war and defend the security of a country and the sovereignty of a nation, it is necessary to have a powerful physical deterrent.”

The war in Iraq had another unintended consequence – it tied down thousands of U.S. troops in the Middle East, impairing the ability of the U.S. to respond militarily to a crisis in North Korea. According to Robert Kagan and William Kristol, defense budget cuts throughout the 1990s left the U.S. military unable to fight two major theater wars at the same time. As a result, “The army divisions necessary to invade and occupy Iraq are, essentially, all the army divisions we have available for major actions. Should military conflict in North Korea escalate the American ability to respond as flexibly and as

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126 Sanger “Administration Divided Over North Korea”
decisively as we would want would be in question.”  Concerns over the effects of large deployments of U.S. troops on other national security priorities were raised as early as summer 2003. In 2004, retention rates, especially among reserve troops, began to drop as soldiers were required to spend multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the end of 2006, military officials were warning that the stress placed on U.S. troops was simply too great, and that the Army was suffering as a result. Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker, testifying before the House of Representatives, warned that “At this pace, without recurrent access to the reserve components, through remobilization, we will break the [Army’s] active component.”

During this same period, the Army was having trouble meeting its recruiting quotas, and was forced to lower its standards. From 2003 to 2007, the number of recruits with high school diplomas dropped from 94% to 70.7%. Category IV recruits (those that scored in the 10th to 30th percentile of the Army Forces Qualification Test, or AFQT) rose from .6% in 2004 to 4.1% in 2007. As the need for troops grew greater, the administration relocated troops from various military bases around the world to

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support the war effort, including those on the Korean peninsula. In 2004, 37,500 troops were stationed in South Korea. By 2007, this number dropped to 28,000, with further cuts expected by 2012.\footnote{Thom Shanker. “North Korea Still a Threat, South Korean Tells Gates,” The New York Times, November 8, 2007.}

The effect of Iraq on the Bush administration’s North Korea policy can best be described by a March 2003 op-ed written by Charles Krauthammer. “Because of Iraq, the U.S. cannot contemplate a military confrontation today. Iraq has stretched our military, political and diplomatic resources to the limit. The only alternative policy is to temporize, to make a series of concessions to North Korea as a way to buy time…”\footnote{Krauthammer, Charles. “Temporary Appeasement for North Korea,” Townhall.com, March 7, 2003. Available at: http://townhall.com/columnists/CharlesKrauthammer/2003/03/07/temporary_appeasement_for_north_korea.  Charles Krauthammer, as an op-ed writer for the Washington Post, wrote series of scathing articles lambasting the 1994 Agreed Framework as appeasement. In this column, he advocated a temporary appeasement policy, which would end as soon as the U.S. was done with Iraq.} However, rather than a quick war, the conflict in Iraq continued to drag on, severely damaging the credibility of the Bush administration and taking a large toll on the armed forces, especially the Army. Furthermore, the 2006 nuclear test reinforced the perception that any conflict on the Korean peninsula would be devastating. Despite concerns of about the readiness of the U.S. military, there is little doubt that any attack by North Korea would be defeated by U.S. and South Korean forces.\footnote{General consensus among military scholars is that while a conflict on the Korean peninsula would be devastating, it would most likely result in victory by the U.S. and South Korea forces over the North. This is a sentiment echoed by the American military. In Spring 2009 testimony before Congress, when asked how the U.S. would respond to an attack by North Korea, Marine commandant General James Conway said that “There would have to be a level of ad hoc conglomeration of forces. But in the end, I am convinced we would prevail.”  See Mark Thompson. “Could North Korea Provoke a New Korean War,” Time, June 10, 2009. Available at: http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1903717,00.html.} Still, a conflict on the Korean
peninsula is not an attractive option, and this surely weighed on the mind of Bush administration officials.

Regional Partner Preferences

U.S. policy towards North Korea does not exist in a vacuum. There are several countries within Northeast Asia, specifically China, South Korea, and Japan, that are rightly concerned with North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. The Bush administration’s policy of “tailored containment” called for a mix of pressure and multilateral negotiations to resolve the nuclear crisis. Officials hoped that by negotiating in a multilateral forum, it would be easier to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program. However, there was a major flaw in this plan - other negotiating parties held different priorities from that as the United States. According to John Park, “Despite extensive diplomatic efforts to facilitate and host the six-party talks, domestic policy constraints, differing priorities, and conflicting historical analogies among each of the countries have brought vastly differing perspectives to the multilateral negotiating table.”

Japan by and large supported the Bush administration’s hard-line policy towards North Korea and adopted measures such as joining the Proliferation Security Initiative, imposing unilateral sanctions on North Korea, and deploying theater missile

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defense. China and South Korea, however, both work to limit U.S. options and push for a negotiated settlement that would include concession to North Korea.

The Bush administration viewed Chinese cooperation as the lynchpin for any effort to pressure North Korea into giving up its nuclear weapons. China is North Korea’s largest trading partner with roughly $2 billion in trade annually. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, China has become North Korea’s largest supplier of energy, providing 90% of North Korea’s energy imports. This economic leverage placed China in an ideal position to pressure the regime. In February 2003, President Bush called Chinese President Jiang Zemin and urged him to help prevent North Korea from obtaining nuclear weapons. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld even pushed in April 2003 for China’s help to topple the North Korean regime. Instead of agreeing to levy sanction against North Korea, the Chinese responded by pushing for negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea, despite the insistence by the Bush administration that it would not negotiate bilaterally with the North. In April 2003, China convinced the Bush administration and North Korea to participate in Three-Nation Talks. At the meetings, Chinese officials openly admitted that the goal of these talks was to get the U.S. and North Korea to sit down at the same table. According to a Chinese Foreign Ministry Official, "The main achievement is just to get them talking. We have low expectations of what could come

137 Martin 80. Japan’s eagerness to adopt a hard-line policy towards North Korea was a direct result of Kim Jong-il’s admission that North Korea abducted several Japanese citizens. Still, Japan’s preferred outcome was for a negotiated settlement. For more information, see: http://www.rachi.go.jp/en/index.html.
139 Dao “Bush Urges Chinese President To Press North Korea on Arms”
140 Sanger “Administration Divided Over North Korea”
out of the talks this time, but just having the meeting is a success." Following the breakdown of the Three-Nation Talks, China pushed for the U.S. and North Korea to reconvene negotiations, which eventually became the Six-Party Talks.

China’s constant resistance towards increasing pressure on North Korea frustrated top Bush administration officials, and its priorities differed vastly from those of the Bush administration. China has long worried that the collapse of North Korea would lead to a unified Korean state with pro-U.S. tendencies on its border. Speaking in 1996, a senior Chinese military official said, “If the leaders in the United States think the US military or its ally South Korea can simply march north in the event of a collapse in North Korea without some consultation with the [People’s Liberations Army,] it will look like 1950 all over again.” China has a strong interest in keeping North Korea as a buffer state. In the words of one Chinese academic, “North Korea acts as a guard post for China, keeping at bay the tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed in South Korea.”

A second concern of China is the hundreds perhaps millions of refugees that a collapse of North Korea would bring. Following the famines that took place in North Korea throughout the 1990s, several thousand North Koreans fled across the border into

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142 Park 79
neighboring China. It is estimated that 100,000 to 300,000 remain there today.\textsuperscript{145} China views these refugees as criminals and when caught, forcibly repatriates them back to North Korea. In the event of a North Korean collapse, South Korean planners estimate that up to 1 million refugees might flee the country, with roughly half heading into China.\textsuperscript{146} China is worried about its ability to handle a humanitarian crisis on this scale, and if international forces were not quick to act, would send in troops in order to stabilize North Korea.\textsuperscript{147} According to Daniel Sneider, the associate director for research at Stanford's Asia-Pacific Research Center, “For the Chinese, stability and the avoidance of war are the top priorities.”\textsuperscript{148} 

Like China, South Korea was also worried about a collapse of the North Korea regime. In 2002, Roh Moo-hyun was elected President of South Korea. Roh was eager to continue the engagement policies of his predecessor Kim Dae-jung but was worried that the United States’ harsh rhetoric towards North Korea would ruin any chance of a closer relationship with the North. As president-elect, Roh spoke out against the Bush administrations “tailored containment” policy, saying that he was skeptical that the policy would be successful in controlling North Korea. He urged President Bush to adopt a more open policy towards the North, saying “Success or failure of a U.S. policy toward North

Korea isn't too big a deal to the American people, but it is a life-or-death matter for South Koreans. Therefore, any U.S. move should fully consider South Korea's opinion.”

Roh’s presidency coincided with a rise in anti-American sentiment in South Korea due to the continued presence of U.S. military forces on the peninsula. A flashpoint occurred in 2002, when two South Korean girls were killed in a motor vehicle accident involving two U.S. soldiers. The acquittal of these soldiers in a U.S. military court led was seen as an “unconscionable affront to South Korean sovereignty” and fueled public protests in December 2002 and January 2003. In a sharp rebuke of U.S. policy, President-Elect Roh announced that he would step up aid and investment to North Korea, and ruled out the possibility of economic sanctions or military strikes against the North. Speaking at a rally, Roh said “Koreans should stand together, although things will get difficult when the United States bosses us around.”

South Korea was particularly worried about allied entrapment; that an airstrike by the U.S. against North Korean nuclear facilities would result in a war with devastating consequences for the Korean peninsula. There was also a fear of the economic costs associated with a rapid absorption of North Korea following its collapse, similar to what

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Germany experienced following reunification.\textsuperscript{153} South Korea, like China, “insistently maintained that the nuclear dispute must be resolved by exclusively peaceful means.”\textsuperscript{154}

Due to these various preferences, instead of having a united front against North Korean, negotiations often resulted in a split between Japan and the U.S. who favored a harsher line towards the North, and China and South Korea who preferred conciliatory action.\textsuperscript{155} This became evident following the First Round of the Six-Party Talks, when China declared that the United States, not North Korea, was the “main obstacle” towards reaching a negotiated settlement.\textsuperscript{156} Before the second round of negotiations, Bush openly disagreed from suggestions by South Korean President Roh that the United States should offer incentives towards North Korea as a face-saving measure to get the North to end its nuclear program.\textsuperscript{157} After the Second Round, there was a feeling that neither the United States nor North Korea were ready to seriously negotiate with each other. According to a Russian diplomat present at the talks, “Four countries are ready to make a deal. Two countries are not. When those two countries are ready, there will be a basis for negotiations.”\textsuperscript{158}

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\textsuperscript{154} Hathaway 274. In May 2003, in a summit between President Roh and President Bush, the South Korean President strenuously objected to a military strike on North Korea. For more information, see Gregory Elich. “Hawk Engagement: A Dangerous Turn in U.S. Plans for North Korea,” Centre for Research on Globalisation, November 30, 2004. Available at: \url{http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/ELI411A.html}.

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Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President Roh finally forced a U.S. proposal at the Third Round of Six-Party Talks, though the proposal was unable to end the crisis.

Despite consistent efforts by the Bush administration, the U.S. was unable to convince China to enact economic sanctions against the North Korean regime until North Korea’s October 2006 nuclear test. Following the test, the U.N. Security Council passed resolution 1718, which ordered North Korea to “abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner,” dismantle its missile and WMD programs, and banned the purchase or sale of major weapons systems, equipment related to the North’s nuclear and missile programs, and luxury goods.\(^{159}\) This resolution represented a victory for the Bush administration, as it enacted long-sought multilateral sanctions, gave legal backing to the Proliferation Security Initiative, and called for elimination of all North Korea’s WMD programs. However, no authorization was given for military action and despite condemning the test, both China and South Korea still preferred a negotiated settlement to the crisis. If anything, the nuclear test pushed the United States closer to China and South Korea’s position.

According to Scott Snyder, Director of the Center for U.S.-Korea Policy at the Asia Foundation, “[the] test catalyzed major policy shifts, enhancing the potential effectiveness of the six-party process and, in turn, the viability of any Northeast Asian collective security mechanism.”\(^{160}\) Instead of convincing China and South Korea to

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accept a harsher policy towards North Korea, it was the United States that adopted a more conciliatory policy, leading to the breakthroughs in the later rounds of the Six-Party Talks.

**Limitations of Research**

Research for this paper was limited by a lack of firsthand knowledge from many key officials from both within the administration and from regional partners such as China and South Korea. Instead this paper relied on second-hand reporting through newspapers that often failed to identify the official making comments. In addition, this paper did not include an analysis of how North Korea’s actions affected U.S. policy, in part because of the secretive and reclusive nature of the North Korean regime. The only readily available information about North Korea’s viewpoint comes from press releases from the Korean Central News Agency, which are often little more than propaganda. Despite these limitations, this paper was able to make the argument that bureaucratic politics were responsible for the Bush administration’s change in policy. Future research on this topic may involve interviews with Chinese, South Korean, and American officials to determine why they felt that policy changed. Furthermore, a look at North Korean propaganda towards the Bush administration might provide insight on how North Korea attempted to influence U.S. policy.
Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Implications

The main implication from this research is the need for a consensus on U.S. policy towards North Korea. During the Bush administration, no consensus existed on what policy the U.S. should pursue. The Negotiators believed that North Korea might be willing to give up its nuclear weapons, therefore negotiations were needed to test North Korea’s willingness to open up to the outside world. The Warriors felt that North Korea would never give up its nuclear weapons, and should not be rewarded for seeking them in the first place. This group eschewed negotiations in place of pressure that would lead to regime change. As a result of these competing ideologies, policy formation became a competition between these two schools, with officials from the Warriors attempting to undermine the policies of the Negotiators. The result was a disjointed foreign policy that failed to prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons.

Another implication of this research is that China has no intention of allowing North Korea to collapse. China views North Korea as a strategic buffer between the United States and South Korea. A collapse of North Korea would place pro-American troops on China’s, diverting attention away from possible areas of concerns such as Taiwan and India. Furthermore, the collapse of North Korea would result in hundreds of thousands of North Korean refugees spilling into China. China strongly wishes to avoid a humanitarian crisis on this scale. Despite North Korea’s 2009 nuclear and missile test, China is continuing to support the regime, pledging to invest $10 billion dollars into the
country in February 2010. It is highly unlikely that the United States would be able to convince China to support a policy of regime change in North Korea.

A third implication from this research is that South Korea is fearful of potential costs associated with North Korea’s collapse. Any attempt to remove the North Korean regime by force would likely result in a war on the Korean peninsula. Due to the closeness of Seoul to the DMZ, casualties from a conflict would likely range in the hundreds of thousands, if not millions. South Korea was worried that the Bush administration’s hostile policies would start a conflict on the peninsula, and actively worked to prevent the United States from using force against the North Korean regime. South Korea is also wary of rapid reunification with the North. Similar to the East-West Germany unification, reunifying North Korea would likely cost billions of dollars, as South Korea would have to shoulder the costs of developing a backward North Korea.

This leads to the final implication of this research. U.S. policy towards North Korea is heavily constrained by regional factors. First, as mentioned above, any use of force against North Korea would likely escalate into war on the peninsula, which South Korea wishes to avoid. In addition, China is unwilling to pressure North Korea, due to the fear of a North Korean collapse. This leaves little maneuver room for the United States.

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Lacking the ability to coerce the North Korean regime, the U.S. is forced to choose between actively engaging or ignoring North Korea.

Policy Recommendations

Based on this analysis, the U.S. should pursue an engagement policy towards North Korea. As mentioned above, the U.S. lacks the ability to strongly pressure the North Korea regime. Due to the risks involved, any airstrike against North Korean facilities must be condoned by the South Korean government. It is highly unlikely that this would occur. China, which has the necessary leverage to force North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program, refuses to do so, in fear of the regime’s collapse. In addition, whenever the United States adopts a policy of “benign neglect” towards North Korea, the regime has a habit of starting a crisis to force the United States to pay attention to it. Instead, the U.S. should adopt comprehensive negotiations with North Korea, with the goal of ending North Korea’s WMD and missile programs. In exchange, the United States would provide aid and assistance, with the final goal of establishing full diplomatic relations with the North Korean regime. It should be clear that this deal is based on conditional reciprocity – for every positive action taken by North Korea, the U.S. should respond in kind. While this approach is hardly novel, it offers the best chance for the U.S. to end North Korea’s nuclear program and it has the full support of its allies and partners in the region.
While engaging North Korea, the United States needs to maintain its deterrent against North Korea’s military and contain the spread of North Korea’s nuclear and missile technology. In June 2009, President Obama stated that “[North Korea’s] nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a grave threat to peace and security of Asia and to the world.” Everything must be done to prevent North Korea from passing this knowledge to other countries or terrorist groups who might wish to use these weapons against the United States. The U.S. should use international institutions such as the United Nations and the Proliferation Security Initiative to help prevent the spread of North Korea’s nuclear and missile technology, in addition to maintaining sanctions preventing the sale of North Korean arms. Moreover, in the event that engagement with North Korea fails, a strong American military deterrent on the Korean peninsula is needed to dissuade North Korea from taking any military action against the South. The presence of U.S. military troops on the peninsula has been a source of stability in the region for more than 50 years, and it is essential that they remain until North Korea is no longer a threat.

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