

**DETERRENCE OR PEACE?
THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND NORTH KOREA**

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INTRODUCTION

The Korean Peninsula has posed a dilemma for every American president since 1950. Their options were obvious and simple: limited war, armed deterrence, a negotiated peace, or some combination of the three. War killed millions of Koreans in their narrow, densely populated homeland. Armed deterrence has maintained a fragile truce, but a durable peace had remained illusive. Only the Clinton Administration (1993-2001) tried to negotiate with North Korea. The effort blunted North Korea's nuclear weapons development program and opened the nation to the outside world as never before, but fell short of what the critics in Washington, D.C. expected: full disarmament and transformation from a despotic socialist to a democratic capitalistic society. President Bush now has four years, possibly longer to achieved these unfulfilled expectations.

Before assessing younger Bush's policy toward the Korean Peninsula, we would first do well to define the context for U.S. foreign policy. A persistent fallacy of many "Washington watchers" in Northeast Asia (specifically Seoul, Tokyo, Beijing and Pyongyang) is to attempt to decipher Washington's intentions through the prism of regional concerns. More often than not, this has caused far greater confusion than clarity..

Simply stated, national interests and domestic political concerns drive U.S. foreign policy. Geo-political realities and the concerns of U.S. allies have a secondary influence on policy formulation in Washington. Each morning, only after the president has listened to the local Washington news, and glanced at the front pages of several national newspapers, does he go to the Oval office for his daily intelligence briefing about reality beyond the United States. The incumbent president, like his predecessors, spends about thirty minutes listening to glance over Dr. Rice's gist of the CIA's colorful, thoroughly illustrated and unnecessarily highly classified daily briefing, and the Defense Intelligence Agency's "dog and pony" show of satellite pictures and impressive and colorful charts. National Security Agency (NSA) and State Department's Morning Summary rely primarily on succinct prose, and spare the visual aids. All the world is a stage, Shakespear reportedly said. On that stage, Washington politics are always at center stage in the president's mind. The rest of the world must wait in the wings.

This is an unchanging reality, irrespective of whether Democrats or Republicans dominate the White House and Congress. Presidential Administrations differ, however, regarding priorities and methods. Elements of realism and idealism enter the picture, but serve more as theoretical polarities for assessing and characterizing specific aspects of U.S. foreign policy than as motives for action.

After one year in office, President Bush finally has a foreign policy. He arrived in Washington without one. Instead, he brought a parochial world view rooted in Christian fundamentalism and Texas political populism. Also accompanying Bush was an accomplished team of Cold War warriors, all of whom had worked for his father:

- Vice President and former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney,

- Secretary of Defense and former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld,
- Secretary of State and former Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell,
- Deputy Secretary of Defense and former Defense Assistance Secretary for Security Policy and State Department Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Paul Wolfowitz, who served both Presidents Reagan and Bush,
- Deputy Secretary of State and former Defense Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific Armitage,
- Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs and former National Security Council official Jim Kelley,
- Former foreign policy adviser to President Reagan and academic specialist on the Soviet Union National Security Adviser Condollissa Rice,
- National Security Adviser for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and former Defense Department officer in the Reagan and Bush Administrations Torkel Patterson.

Initially, they more than he defined the Administration's foreign policy strategy. Their shared Cold War experience had forged a common world view. The United States was, and must remain the "leader of the free world," champion of democracy and promoter of individual prosperity, the embodiment of humankind's foremost aspirations. Beyond the U.S. borders, however, lurks the enemy. Peace is preferred, but "Pax Americana" requires armed deterrence and the risking of conflict. The "evil empire" has collapsed and its communist ideology discredited, but a new enemy has emerged. It is a group of international outlaws, the "rogue" nations: Iraq, Iran, Libya and North Korea. Each is individually weak, yet their common development of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) - nuclear bombs and warheads, ballistic missiles and chemical and biological weapons - make them the most potent contemporary threat to Pax Americana.

Armed deterrence, supplemented by diplomacy, served as the cornerstone of U.S. policy during the Cold War. This is to continue to be the case. But for Bush's foreign policy team, deterrence would be made so potent that no one would dare challenge the United States' might. Diplomacy is necessary, but only to deal with one's allies and friends, not one's enemies. To defend America, they have proposed National Missile Defense (NMD), a global network of sophisticated, long range anti-ballistic missile detection and destruction facilities would be built in the United States. Just as "Britannia ruled the wave," so too must the United States rule the air that envelops the earth.

The benefits, we are promised, will be multiple. Fortress America, the dream of strategic defense planners before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1943, will be restored. Where as powerful fleets of battleships guarded America's shores, batteries of ballistic missiles will secure America's air space. NMD will secure the United States from the irrational and outlaw behavior of the "rogue" nations' leaders, not to other potential enemies like Russia and China. It will also prevent these international outlaws from using

their weapons of mass destruction to coerce concessions from the United States and its allies.

The basic outline of the U.S. deterrence posture will be preserved, but with some important adjustments. The strategic triad of nuclear tipped ballistic missiles, long range bombers and nuclear submarines would be preserved along with a dozen aircraft carrier battle groups. In Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would be preserved and expanded to include the Soviet Union's former allies. In Northeast Asia, the separate bilateral treaties with Japan and the Republic of Korea will remain essentially unchanged, except each will be encouraged to more fully complement the U.S. strategic nuclear and NMD umbrellas with conventional forces.

NMD requires the discarding of the US-Soviet Union Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, but two global treaties designed to limit the spread of weapons of mass destruction will be retained: the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Paradoxically, the United States will continue to distance itself from international treaties which outlaw chemical and biological weapons. The NPT strives to limit the possession of nuclear weapons to a small select number of nations: the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, and France. Efforts by Israel, South Africa, and North Korea have been blunted. Iraq's efforts continues to be a major source of concern. Despite the MTCR, China, North Korea and the Ukraine have exported their ballistic missile technology and hardware to several nations in the Middle East, including Iran, Iraq and Libya. Meanwhile, India and Pakistan continue their nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development programs.

But the forward deployment of U.S. ground forces abroad is to become less vital. Bringing the "the boys," home, as American politicians like to call U.S. military personnel, will remove them from harm's way in the event of war, save money and diminish U.S. dependence on the Cold War alliances network. America's defenses would remain all powerful, but become "leaner," "meaner," and less expensive. Yet all options, including military intervention will have been maintained. In the event of conflict, American casualties could be kept to a minimum while the U.S. air and naval forces rain destruction onto the enemy from above. Politically, the minimized risk to American lives will make America's voters less hesitant to use military force against their foes and far from their borders. Then too, reliance on support from allies will diminish, subsequently reducing the need to respond sensitively to their quid pro quo requests in exchange for helping the United States. Consequently, the significance of allies' concerns will diminish even more.

Absent from NMD, however, was a convincing, overarching rationale. Once enunciated, it excited criticism at home and abroad. Moscow and Beijing set aside their differences to complain about it, as it Seoul and Pyongyang, NATO and Japan.

U.S. foreign policy, however, is not static. Despite its underlying continuity of purpose and bureaucracy-inspired inertia, profound and abrupt changes are possible. One such turning point for U.S. foreign policy came when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. An

equally traumatic event now appeared to have been September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

President Bush seized the American people's sense of insecurity to articulate the missing element of his Administration's NMD proposal. The American public's fear and hatred of communism had forged the Cold War era support for deterrence. The 9/11 events gave Bush two "isms" to work with - nationalism and terrorism. Like his father had done with Panama's dictator President Noriega and Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, the younger Bush demonized America's enemy in the person of Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. As is the case in so many screen plays for American cowboy movies, Bush dispatched his posse - the U.S. military - to "get those evil people." Americans roared their approval. Bush then put the world on notice, "either you are with us or against us." A multitude of nations, both allies and former enemies, signed up to help. But before anyone expected, the Taliban and al Qaeda crumpled beneath the sheer massiveness of the U.S. aerial assault.

Bush had forewarned the American people, and the world, that the "war on terrorism" would be global and lengthy in duration. But when the "evil men" succumbed so soon, he had to broaden his definition of the enemy. That he did with the single phrase, "axis of evil," Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

A Shared Dilemma: Against this backdrop, Bush prepared for his first presidential visit to the Korean Peninsula. Unwittingly, he shares with his North Korean counterpart Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il the same goal - preservation of their preferred political and economic systems, and whether this is best done through armed deterrence and perpetuation of the status quo on the Korean Peninsula, or, as South Korean President Kim Dae Jung has proposed, to break with Cold War patterns and forge a durable peace through diplomatic and commercial engagement?

Both leaders appear to prefer armed deterrence. Bush's immediate predecessors, his father and President Clinton, flirted with engagement. Kim Jong Il's father Kim Il Sung undermined the former President Bush's engagement effort in 1992 by trying to conceal the history of plutonium production in North Korea. The Clinton Administration's resumption of engagement yielded the US-DPRK Agreed Framework of October 1994 which halted North Korea's nuclear weapons development program. The Clinton Administration's engagement of North Korea proved inconclusive. North Korea remains a potent potential threat to peace in Northeast Asia. Our focus here is how current U.S. president intends to deal with the problems of the Korean Peninsula.

In Northeast Asia, however, little changed. President Carter considered, but then decided against withdrawing U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula. The Reagan Administration first affirmed the U.S. military presence in South Korea, then nudged Japan toward increasing its capacity to complement U.S. military forces in the region. Ever since the configuration of U.S. forces in Northeast Asia has remained generally unaffected by

events elsewhere. Although the qualitative military capabilities of South Korea and Japan have improved impressively since 1980, the U.S. military presence generally remains unaltered.

Lacking, however, was a unifying theme to support continued reliance on global deterrence, both nuclear and conventional. North Korea unwittingly filled this void. The Clinton Administration saw North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles as a threat to the viability of both the NPT and the MTCR. To minimize the risk of war in the region, particularly with China, the Administration sought to address the situation through diplomacy backed by deterrence. Similar concerns in Seoul and Tokyo set the stage for the first ever trilateral diplomatic cooperation regarding the Korean Peninsula. A diplomatic accommodation known as the US-DPRK Agreed Framework of 1994 stabilized the situation in the region. North Korea's agreement to respect the terms of the NPT in exchange for several sizable inducements also preserved the credibility of the internationally agreed upon nuclear arms control regime.

The subsequent outcry in Washington, D.C. among Republicans over the alleged "appeasement" of the despotic North Korean regime put the Clinton Administration on the defensive. To counter these allegations, and to avoid appearing "soft" on the despised North Korean regime, the Clinton Administration developed a new mantra. The focus was shifted from Pyongyang to the "weapons of mass destruction" or WMD. In place of the "evil empire," i.e. the Soviet Union, a new formidable foe was defined - the "rogue nations" of North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Libya. Individually, each was a relatively weak military and economic force, but combined they were presented to the American people as the new, potent threat to the United States, a ruthless, irrational band of international outlaws bent on undermining America's security and world peace through their disregard for the NPT and MTCR. Despite the fiery rhetoric, however, the Clinton Administration preferred to deal with each separately through diplomacy. While preserving the awesome might of U.S. deterrence, incentives were extended as enticements to negotiation and to end the development of "WMD." At the same time, distinctions were allowed. North Korea was seen as moving away from its old coercive habits toward compliance with internationally sanctioned conduct. Iran and Libya were seen as moving in a similar direction. Only Iraq was described as intransigent.

Within this global context, President Bush announced on June 6, 2001, the conclusion of his Administration's review of policy toward North Korea. His earlier reference to North Korea as a "rogue" nation, and less than astute March 2000 summit with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, suggest President Bush and his closest advisers prefer perpetuation of the Korean Peninsula's Cold War status quo and armed deterrence to achieving a durable peace through diplomacy and reconciliation. Consequently, the Bush Administration continues to avow the Cold War mantra of deterring North Korean aggression, despite North-South Korean reconciliation, and the warming of North Korean relations with virtually all member states of Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU).

Since 1995, Washington and Pyongyang have maintained duel tracks in their policies toward one another. On the one hand, American diplomats press their North Korean counterparts to dismantle their nation's ballistic missile arsenal in exchange for vague economic inducements. All the while, both sides adamantly preserve their military capabilities in the name of deterrence. For Washington, this means maintaining more than 100,000 soldiers sailors and Marines in South Korea and Japan. Backing them are nuclear submarines with conventionally armed cruise missiles, an aircraft carrier battle group anchored in Yokosuka, Japan, and a nuclear umbrella based in the United States. Further augmenting this potent, forward deployed force are some 650,000 military personnel in the South Korean armed forces. Like their American colleagues, they possess fleets of modern ships and fighter-bombers, tank destroying helicopters, and modern tanks. Quietly, the South Koreans continue to develop their own ballistic and tactical missile capabilities. Additionally, as provided in the newly augmented US-Japan Defense Guidelines of 1996, the United States could also rely on the Japanese Self Defense Forces for logistical support and defense of the sea lanes between the Japanese home islands and the Korean Peninsula.

Pyongyang resolutely attempts to counter this mighty assemblage. It preserves in uniform an estimated one million soldiers. Its once worrisome tank force had aged and become obsolete. The air force possesses only a hand full of modern fighter aircraft. Fuel shortages limited pilot training to a few hours per year. The navy had fared little better. North Korea still maintains two potent weapons – long-range artillery and medium range Scud ballistic missiles. Neither, however, is of sufficient potency to give Pyongyang any hope of victory in war. By 1999, it was widely recognized that North Korea's once formidable military prowess was subsiding, according to the special policy review former US Secretary of Defense William Perry conducted for the Clinton Administration. Since 1990, Pyongyang has lost the once substantial military support and assistance of the Soviet Union. Nor can Pyongyang be confident of Beijing's supply of fuel and "volunteers" in the event of war. At home, Pyongyang's dated industrial sector has collapsed, followed in 1995 by the agricultural sector. By the summer of 1996, US Army personnel while visiting North Korea saw malnourished members of the North Korean People's Army.

Paradoxically, the United States and North Korea cling to deterrence throughout the 1990s while simultaneously striving to normalize their relationship through engagement. Deterrence has a fifty-year track record of preventing war. Engagement remains an uncertain back up policy. A consequence of this duality is each leader's continuing reliance on his generals to preserve peace. A reflect of this fact is the frequent, sometimes outrageous rhetoric of Pyongyang's generals when lashing out at the United States between 1995 and 2000. In Washington, DC, the pattern is much more subdued. It is characterized by an absence of high-level policy statements by the White House between 1995 and 2000. Instead, only under pressure from Republican critics in Congress, the Clinton Administration drafted a former Secretary of Defense, William Perry, to review its policy and belatedly announce that the Administration would continue its duel track policy of deterrence and engagement. All the while, the military establishments in both capitals retained their preeminent position when it came to advising their leader on policy toward

their respective foe. Kim Jong Il boldly made this point by dispatching his senior most military leader to Washington, DC in October 2000. Symbolizing his respect for his military establishment, Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il ordered his soldier representative to the White House in the glittering dress uniform of the Korean People's Army.

Little in their relationship has improved since Washington and Pyongyang resolved the nuclear crisis through negotiations in 1994, quite possibly a consequence of their dual track policy toward one another, and continuing reliance on their military elite to preserve deterrence rather than on diplomats to pursue peace.

China and Russia have undergone radical change during the past decade, both domestically and internationally. Economic stagnation and the need for reform in China and the Soviet Union undercut the political influence of the military in policy formulation and set the stage for the reduction of nuclear and conventional military forces. Moscow and Beijing shifted from deterrence and containment to engagement, from advocating communism and socialism to promoting capitalistic competition. Moscow's and Beijing's advocates of internationalism and globalization have pushed their governments and societies to unprecedented levels of diplomatic and commercial engagement. Both sought to replace rivalry with the United States with rapprochement. Subsequently they established full diplomatic and commercial relations with Seoul. At the same time, they reduced their military support for Pyongyang. Relative to a decade ago, their policies toward the two Koreas are balanced and less conducive to exciting tension and rivalry between Seoul and Pyongyang. Actually, given Moscow's emphasis on economic revitalization, Seoul's prosperity makes it a much more enticing friend than Russia's now impoverished ally in Pyongyang.

Obviously the pace of change in Seoul has overshadowed that in the northern half of the Korean Peninsula. Pyongyang, compelled by the Communist bloc's collapse and Beijing's preoccupation with its own internal problems, began turning elsewhere to satisfy its security and economic needs. Reluctantly, Pyongyang has shelved its former preoccupation with achieving forceful reunification. Instead, it has increasingly shifted from coercive diplomacy, backed by a credible threat of terrorism and aggression, to diplomacy and negotiation to pursue its national interests. Unaltered, however, is its reliance on deterrence to prevent "imperialist" invasion. The transition has been hesitant as evidenced by the nuclear crisis of 1993-94. North Korea's abrupt reversion from diplomatic engagement in 1992 to threatening war in the spring of 1994 accented both its determination to preserve itself as an independent political entity and its continuing preference for armed deterrence. Nevertheless, pressed by its allies Beijing and Moscow, and induced by its former enemies in Seoul and the United Nations, Pyongyang since 1995 has pursued a sometimes reluctant but generally consistent program of striving to integrate itself into the international community.

Relative to 1990, North Korea today is a much less hostile and secluded nation, and tensions of the Korean Peninsula have subsided accordingly. Pyongyang's military leaders,

however, remain reluctant to forego their reliance on armed might to deter attack. These generals appear to rationalize their huge military-industrial complex, and decisive political influence, in terms of the perceived threat from the United States. For Kim Jong-il, this poses a profound dilemma. To perpetuate his rule, he believes he must have a mighty military to protect his domain from the external threat of the United States. At the same time, however, he must have access to the international community, its markets, capital and technology, if he is to quicken the transformation of his society from an armed and secluded fortress to a cosmopolitan member of world society.

No one can deny that between 1995 and 1998, Kim Jong Il blundered repeatedly while striving to improve relations with the United States. Kim seemed to believe he could engage the United States while ignoring South Korea. Instead of responding constructively to the opportunities afforded by the Agreed Framework, Kim Jong Il aroused broad criticism in Washington by refusing to deal with South Korea. While opening North Korea to the US Army, Kim dispatched a commando-filled submarine to South Korea in September 1996. Then the leaking in August 1998 of an unsubstantiated US intelligence report that claimed the existence of a secret underground nuclear facility crystallized broad Congressional opposition to the Clinton Administration's continued pursuit of engagement with North Korea.

Just as changes in the policies of Moscow, Beijing and Seoul have tempered South-North Korean rivalry and reduced tensions on the Korean Peninsula, changes in Washington's policies could achieve similar results regarding North Korea. Theoretically, a substantial de-emphasis on deterrence and greater reliance on engagement could entice Kim Jong-il to rely less on his military-industrial complex to preserve his regime, and subsequently hasten the pace of integrating his nation into the international community. This would require a resolute departure from Cold War "carrot and stick" tactics in Washington. The goal of disarming North Korea first would have to be exchanged for fostering its economic inter-dependence with the international community. This would mean an end to all economic sanctions, particularly those that prevent North Korea from gaining access to advanced technology and loans from international financial institutions. It might even require a reconfiguration, and possibly at least symbolic reduction of US forces in Northeast Asia, beginning with land forces based in Japan. But the easiest, and politically least risky step would be for the United States to resume high level talks with North Korea.

The United States policy response in both cases was pragmatic, constructive, and encouraged China and the Soviet Union to change both their foreign and domestic policies. For its part, the United States shifted between 1970 and 1990 from striving to deter and contain the Soviet Union and China to engaging both diplomatically and commercially. In both cases, Republican presidents initiated this shift of policy, Nixon in the case of China and Reagan regarding the Soviet Union.

In neither case was the process smooth. The Tienanmen Incident of 1989 almost derailed the former Bush Administration's engagement policy toward China. The former Bush Administration of 1989-92 deserves credit for having convinced its critics in the wake of the incident that the interests of the United States, as well as those of the Chinese

people, were better served by continuing “engagement” rather than reverting to the Cold War policy of “containment” and “condemnation.” A decade after the Tienanmen Incident, Beijing has achieved profound progress by opening itself to the outside world, and allowing capitalism to flourish beneath a communist oriented political leadership. Beijing continues to transform itself into an increasingly respected member of the international community. Nevertheless, its impressive economic gains have not been matched by political change, which lags far behind.

But this has been the pattern for change throughout East Asia since Japan initiated its modernization nearly a century and a half ago. Economic modernization set the stage for political liberalization, democratization and globalization in Tokyo during the 1950s and 1960s. Manila and Seoul followed during the 1980s. Taiwan and Thailand experienced similar phenomena. Indonesia since 1999 has been engrossed in a domestic struggle over similar issues. Vietnam appears well on its way toward transforming itself along lines similar to the Chinese pattern. Given this historical record, prospects for continuing political liberalization in China appear better now than they did even ten years ago..

Belatedly, the Clinton Administration in its final weeks sought to build on President Kim Dae-jung’s success. For three years, the Clinton Administration’s domestic political problems, among other concerns, distracted it from investing any high level effort in the Korean Peninsula. Further deterring the Administration from any action toward North Korea was the Republican Congress’ intense assault on the Agreed Framework and the Administration’s sending of humanitarian assistance to Pyongyang. But in his final weeks in office, eager to achieve a major foreign policy success prior to the November 2000 presidential election, President Clinton made a last minute stab at a diplomatic breakthrough with North Korea. In the end, the exchange of high level visits between Washington and Pyongyang fell far short of its intended goal: ending North Korea’s ballistic missile development program in exchange for normalizing diplomatic relations. Despite a decade of intense effort, United States, as well as Japan’s relations with North Korea remains close to where they stood in 1994.

Meanwhile, Pyongyang’s generals used Republican criticism of the Agreed Framework and close coordination between Washington, Seoul and Tokyo to perpetuate their decisive influence on Kim Jong-il. They argued that Republicans’ allegations of North Korean diversion of heavy fuel, a commodity promised in the Agreed Framework as an alternative to nuclear power plant generated electricity, indicated the Clinton Administration’s inability to fulfill its commitments to Pyongyang. These generals’ contended publicly that trilateral Washington, Seoul and Tokyo cooperation and the expansion of US-Japan defense guidelines were a plot to “strangle” North Korea.

Unfortunately, the Clinton Administrations last minute initiative, combined with North Korea’s military leadership’s refusal to allow verification of any bilateral missile accord, intensified criticism of engagement in Washington and Seoul. For President-elect Bush, it gave him ample reason to pause before deciding whether to continue pursuing engagement with North Korea. Conversely, reliance on deterrence in both Washington and Pyongyang has increased. For Seoul, its program of engagement sustained a significant set back despite its non-involvement in Washington’s overture.

THE NEW BUSH ADMINISTRATION

The new Bush Administration, after two years of intense effort by the Department of State to negotiate an end of North Korea's ballistic missile arsenal, appears equally determined to reinforce America's nuclear and conventional force capabilities.

Defense Commitments to Japan and South Korea

Over the past half century, the succession of presidential administrations in Washington, DC have worked with Tokyo and Seoul to foster domestic political and public support for a network of bilateral defense agreements that collectively focus on defending Japan and South Korea by deterring war on the Korean Peninsula. One consequence is that specialists in the field of Northeast Asia security issues understandably tend to explain United States policy toward the region in terms of bilateral defense commitments to South Korea and Japan. They explain US policy from a regional focus, one designed and motivated primarily by US concern for the welfare of its allies. North Korea is consistently always cast in the role of potential aggressor, and South Korea the potential victim.

Japan is seen as the benevolent partner of the United States. Its defense role gradually has expanded over the past two decades from one of defending its home islands to defending its sea-lanes. Since the 1996 elaboration of the US-Japan defense guidelines, Japan has agreed to complement US forces in Northeast Asia in the event of hostilities on the Korean Peninsula. Deterrence, focused on the Korean Peninsula and anchored in the US-Japan defense alliance, is the corner stone of US policy toward Northeast Asia.

This perspective was not necessarily inappropriate so long as the basic dynamics of the Cold War persisted in Northeast Asia. Beneficiaries of the US bilateral alliances understandably hope that the United States will incorporate their concerns into its policy priorities. Both Japan and South Korea invest impressive effort to influence US policy, relaying on numerous high level official visits to Washington, DC, and by entering into burden sharing and weapons co-production arrangements with the United States. The effort is partially responsible for continuing significant Congressional support for the US bilateral alliances with these two nations.

The Point of Divergence in US Foreign Policy

America's political leaders diverge, however, when it comes to how best to achieve an enduring peace. The Clinton Administration promoted engagement, even to the point of military intervention when diplomacy fell short of its mark. In the Balkans and Iraq, President Clinton reluctantly authorized military action after prolonged diplomacy failed to achieve US interests. He promoted the expansion of NATO, and offered the Ukraine attractive financial inducements to allow dismantlement of its nuclear arsenal. In East Asia, diplomacy and inducements were the basic approach to North Korea and China. The Clinton Administration sought to tame both China and North Korea with economic inducements. For China, this meant Most Favored Nation trade status and admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO). For North Korea, it meant food aid and an end of economic sanctions for North Korea. Intense diplomacy backed with ample amounts of foreign aid marked the Clinton engagement policy in the Middle East. The results were mixed, but the approach was clearly one of diplomatic and commercial engagement backed by the possible use of conventional military force in selected situations.

Return to Fortress America?

Thus far, the Bush Administration's approach to promoting stability is still being debated and defined. Thus far, the still maturing Bush Administration's approach to foreign policy has more similarities than differences with the Clinton approach. President Bush in meetings with the leaders of South Korea and Japan, as well during his recent visit to Europe, has confirmed the United States commitment to its traditional treaty system. Likewise, his administration has affirmed the United States commitment to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and Missile Technology Control Regime.

Still under debate, however, is the extent to which the United States may intervene either diplomatically or militarily around the globe. Strategically, the Bush Administration has committed itself to the National Missile Defense (NMD) system. This is a significant departure from the policies of Bush's predecessors. Despite a generally cool response of all of America's allies, both in Europe and Northeast Asia, Bush has pressed ahead with his advocacy of NMD. This is an uncharacteristically unilateral break with the traditional multilateral approach of US defense policy. The extent to which it may adversely affect the United States' collective security system in Europe, i.e. NATO, and bilateral treaties with Japan and South Korea, remains to be seen. If the Bush Administration decides to go ahead with NMD, even at the risk of alienating some of its allies, this would indicate a fundamental shift in US defense strategy. Rather than continuing to rely heavily on collective security arrangements, it could indicate a shift toward unilateral defense beneath an anti-ballistic missile shield based within the United States.

Another hint of Bush's longer-term policy intentions are his advocacy of enhancing, or as he says restoring the potency of the US conventional forces. This is a second spending priority for Secretary of Defense. Again, this suggests a desire to make the US more self-reliant in the defense area, and, conversely, less dependent upon its allies. Given the still eroding defense capability of Russia and its former allies, increasing self-reliance appears the only possible logical argument for increasing the US defense budget at this time. While Clinton, like his predecessor President Bush, senior, used US military capabilities to intervene globally (i.e. Panama and Desert Storm) to enforce peace, the new Bush Administration appears more focused on pursuing a "fortress America" approach to defense. This too is a significant departure from the Clinton engagement approach to maintaining stability around the world.

Also, the Bush Administration's new mantra highlights what it believes will distinguish it from its forerunner. During the Bush campaign, and since its electoral victory, the Bush Administration's key foreign policy advisers repeatedly have called for "conditionality and verification." Conditionality links inducements to concessions. In other words, the Bush Administration's sanction of an agreement, quid pro quo must measure up to its requirements. Verification requires all arms control accords spell out how the United States will be able to confirm whether the other side is fulfilling its commitments.

This mantra reflects conservative Republican criticism of the Clinton Administration's reliance on food aid and heavy fuel oil to induce North Korea's cooperation under the US-DPRK Agreed Framework. Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee until unseated by the Republicans' recent loss of control over the Senate, and former House International Relations Committee Chairman

Gilman led a chorus of conservative criticism of the US-DPRK Agreed Framework. For them, the accord was a prime example of President Clinton's willingness to provide economic benefit to "rogue" nations like North Korea without conditionality and verification.

Uncertain Beginning

All new US presidential administrations falter initially in their handling of foreign policy. The trend is particularly true for administrations whose experience was rooted in local politics. Bush, like Presidents Carter and Clinton, moved from a state governor's mansion to the White House. Their provincial perspective naturally focuses their initial efforts on domestic policy concerns. The rush of reality, however, quickly redirects their priorities. The US submarine sinking of a Japanese fishing vessel and Chinese seizure of a US reconnaissance aircraft distracted Bush from his priority of pushing the income tax reduction bill through Congress. Bush apparently found South Korean President Kim Dae-jung's visit similarly distracting, and may account in part for his mishandling of the visit. But since May, President Bush has concentrated increasingly on foreign policy as indicated by his lengthy visit to Europe, meetings with the leaders of Russia and Japan, and the completion of his review of policy toward North Korea. Against this broader backdrop we can now assess the possible future direction of President Bush's policies toward the Korean Peninsula.

The Korean Peninsula in the Bush Administration's Foreign Policy

In spite of the lengthy policy review, President Bush's policy toward the Korean Peninsula contains more elements of continuity than of change. The United States' foremost priority is to preserve stability in Northeast Asia by deterring war on the Korean Peninsula. Deterrence requires:

- Maintenance of the US nuclear umbrella over the Korean Peninsula in conjunction preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region;
- Continuation of the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty which provides for the forward deployment of US ground, air and naval forces on and around the peninsula;
- The anchoring of US military reinforcements and logistical support in Japan.
- Engage the DPRK in negotiations.

The Clinton Administration initiated this latter aspect in 1993 with its decision to negotiate a resolution to the North Korean nuclear crisis. Critics of the policy felt diplomatic negotiations with North Korea rewarded Pyongyang for its threat to pull out of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The issue was revisited early on in the Bush Administration, but President Bush's June 6, 2001 announcement resolved the debate in favor of a resumption of negotiations.

At first glance, it would appear that the Bush Administration is continuing former Secretary of Defense William Perry's policy of backing negotiation with deterrence. Essentially, this is an accurate characterization, but only in a superficial way. Bush's June 6 policy statement marks a very significant departure from the Clinton Administration's approach to North Korea.

The release of President Bush's statement on the eve of South Korean foreign minister's arrival in Washington suggests the new US Administration strives to claim for itself leadership of policy toward North Korea. President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea

has asserted his leadership over this policy since his election at the end of 1997. His unprecedented June 2000 summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang, followed by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Kim Dae-jung, seemed to confirm South Korea had the decisive voice on policy toward Pyongyang. But Bush's rather abrupt and marginal treatment of President Kim at their first summit in March in Washington, and then unilateral announcement on June 6 are clear indications that the two allies harbor divergent views.

Further evidence of this can be gleaned from their respective policy positions. President Kim's so-called "sunshine diplomacy" toward North Korea accents reconciliation and economic cooperation. Time and again he has refused to retaliate for North Korean incursions into the South's territorial waters and similar armed misconduct. Instead, Kim has bestowed millions of dollars in cash, investments and humanitarian assistance on North Korea. Progress toward reconciliation has been gradual, but steady in some areas, particularly regarding the opening of North Korea to investment from South Korea. Consequently, tensions on the Korean Peninsula have steadily declined since the Inter-Korean summit of June 2000.

The Bush Administration, however, is pursuing an entirely different approach, one that resumes the United States' traditional confrontational approach to North Korea. Bush's June 6 policy statement reverts to the policy stance of his father's administration. In other words, the United States will reward North Korea's disarmament by reducing economic sanctions and taking "other political steps," apparently a vague reference to eventual diplomatic normalization. This is only more old wine in a new bottle. Missing from the Bush approach is a sense of reciprocity. The Bush Administration insists that North Korea accept "verifiable constraints" on its ballistic missile programs, but without the promise of comparable steps by the United States and its allies.

Also remarkable about President Bush's proposal is the implied reversion to using diplomatic protocol as an inducement for North Korea's "good behavior," compliance with US policy objectives. In short, if North Korea agrees to the US agenda, working level talks can eventually lead to higher-level talks. Ultimately, measuring up to US norms will merit North Korea diplomatic recognition. This essentially Cold War approach is outdated. As an inducement, it lacks potency. If anything, it is primarily an obstacle to progress, a point South Korea's Ambassador to the United States made to the New York Times on June 7 when he candidly pointed out that resuming dialogue with North Korea at a working level would only retard progress. Ambassador Yang recalled that when the United States initiated rapprochement with the People Republic of China, the process began with the US Secretary of State and the President making the preliminary overtures in Beijing to China's leaders.

Future Prospects

Despite initial impressions, an optimistic outlook seems warranted over the longer term. The new administration, like all of its predecessors, remains focused on promoting peace and minimizing the risk of the United States being drawn into war. Recent missteps in foreign policy are more a consequence of inexperience with foreign policy, not an indication of a fundamental shift toward a more assertive or isolationist foreign policy. These early mistakes temporarily increased tensions between the United States and both its allies and enemies, regardless of whether Japan and South Korea, China and North Korea were involved.

Further enhancing prospects for stability in Northeast Asia is the blend of personalities President Bush has drawn into his foreign policy community. If anything, they tend to strike a balance between so-called hardliners and moderates. Those in the Department of Defense, specifically Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, tend to be assertive advocates of “fortress America.” But they must contend with equally assertive but more moderately oriented policy makers at the Department of State, Colin Powell and Mike Armitage. Coordinating these two very different bureaucratic cliques are Condoleezza Rice at the National Security Council, a champion of an assertive US foreign policy and CIA Director Tenet, who projects a more cautious and measured approach to foreign policy.

The abrupt shift of power to the Democrats in the Senate has certainly had a tempering affect on President Bush’s approach to foreign policy. No longer can Republican Senator Jesse Helms hold Bush’s appointees to foreign policy position hostage to his conservative perspective and priorities. The defection of a single Republican senator cost Helms his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. A moderate Democrat now occupies this powerful position. He also happens to be an assertive advocate of diplomatic engagement and economic inducements.

Politically, the Bush Administration is still seeking to strike a balance in its foreign policy between domestic political preferences and the demands of foreign reality. An example of this is Bush’s push for National Missile Defense. The project may endear him to conservative political supporters at home, but abroad it has cost him criticism from both friends and not so friendly nations. NMD has restored common ground between Russia’s Putin and China’s leadership. Both adamantly oppose it. European allies have distanced themselves from NMD while both Tokyo and Seoul have politely declined to embrace the project. President Bush is certain to continue pressing Congress to fund the project, but equally certain is the slowing of the programs research and development.

The case of North Korea policy is equally complicated because of the number of concerned parties. Whether Bush can assert his leadership over policy toward North Korea remains to be seen. The more determined he is in this endeavor, the greater the risk of US-ROK friction. There is already ample evidence of tension in US-Japan relations, less because of the submarine incident off of Hawaii and more as a consequence of the growing Japanese public consensus that the US military has worn out its welcome on Okinawa. North Korea would be foolish not to try to exploit such tension to its own benefit. Here again, the Bush Administration needs to reconsider its priorities. Which is of greater value in pursuing stability on the Korean Peninsula – Washington’s leadership regarding policy

toward North Korea or harmonious collaboration between Washington, Seoul and Tokyo regarding policy toward North Korea?

These problems are not likely to undermine stability on the peninsula, or adversely affect the potency of US military deterrence in the region. If anything, dueling between the allies will slow progress in US-DPRK negotiations by enabling Pyongyang to play one ally off against another.

Similarly, the Bush Administration has yet to learn that North Korea's isolation is largely a lingering myth embraced by conservatives in the US foreign policy community. North and South Korea, in spite of still very significant differences, are making impressive progress in the area of economic cooperation. Economic activity between the two halves of Korea continues to grow at an impressive pace. Diplomatically, North Korea is no longer estranged from most European nations, including the United Kingdom. It has also normalized relations with most members of ASEAN and is expanding its ties to Latin America. A consequence of this is a very significant decline in the potency of US economic sanctions. If anything, the United States' clinging to economic sanctions is penalizing its businessmen more than North Korea. The attractiveness to Pyongyang of normal diplomatic relations with Washington has also diminished as North Korea has won diplomatic relations from a long list of nations that formerly supported the US diplomatic embargo on the DPRK.

All for this suggests peace is very likely to persist on the Korean peninsula. But US deterrence is only one of several reasons for this. The foremost reason for stability is South Korea's policies of reconciliation and economic cooperation. It is policies such as these that have reduced tensions and shifted the focus from preoccupation with security to reconciliation. At the same time, the European Union has taken similar steps to end its Cold War confrontational stance vis a vis North Korea. The EU's normalization of diplomatic and commercial relations with North Korea have complement South Korea's reconciliation effort. The international humanitarian effort since 1995 to address North Korea's critical need for food and medicine has further defused North Koreans' hostility toward the outside world. As a consequence, North Korea's leadership have opened their once secluded nation to an unprecedented degree.

Nevertheless, Washington and Pyongyang once again appear engaged in a potentially dangerous game of armed reciprocity. The Bush Administration has yet to learn that every time it proclaims its determination to protect itself from North Korean missiles, the Kim Jong Il regime responds by striving to match the rhetoric with warnings that it will restart its nuclear and ballistic missile test programs. This saber rattling can hardly be label negotiation.

Ultimately, the Bush Administration must realize that disarmament will be possible only when both sides agree to do so simultaneously through a mutually verified process. Success in this regard will be possible only when the highest levels of both governments have committed themselves to achieving such an accord. Until both sides achieve mutual realization in this regard, the possibility of war will persist on the Korean Peninsula.

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