Institute for the Study of Diplomacy
Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Diplomacy and Security in the 21st Century

U.S. Strategy to Stem North Korea's Nuclear Program: Assessing the Clinton and Bush Legacies

WORKING GROUP REPORT, NO. 1, FEBRUARY 20, 2007
WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

Chair: Janne E. Nolan

The Study Group on Security and Diplomacy held its inaugural meeting on February 20, 2007 to discuss American efforts to halt North Korea's nuclear program. This is the first of a series of four meetings to be convened by ISD over the course of the coming year. This project will examine the role that the U.S. intelligence and policy communities play in advancing effective diplomatic initiatives aimed at reducing global and regional security threats, particularly nuclear proliferation. The other cases to be considered in the future include South Asia, Libya and Iran.

The meeting began with two presentations by former senior officials, both of whom were centrally involved in the management of efforts to contain the North Korean nuclear weapons program. Ambassador Robert Gallucci, who served as the chief negotiator for North Korea while he was the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, spoke about the policies of the Clinton administration; Dr. Michael Green, who spearheaded the George W. Bush administration's policies in his position as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council, gave an overview of the Bush administration's North Korea strategy.

North Korea is an obviously crucial challenge for American interests and provides a rich case study, not least because of the enormous stakes the U.S. has pledged over decades to protect the stability of the Korean Peninsula and the region as a whole. With a conventional military force of over 1.1 million men, a record of illicit exports of ballistic

missile technology to regimes like Iran and Pakistan, huge stockpiles of biological and chemical agents which it is continuing to develop, and, most importantly, its successful pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability which resulted in a test of a nuclear device in 2007, North Korea poses high level threats to both regional and global security.[1]

A highly-charged and contentious domestic debate about U.S. policy towards North Korea has been ongoing since the early 1990s, a debate marked from the outset by partisan political divisions, bureaucratic rivalries, controversies over intelligence judgments, and fundamental disagreements among officials, Congress and experts about the character of the threats North Korea poses and how best to redress them. As one expert on Korean policy put it, "(If you) put two people in a room to discuss North Korea, three different opinions will emerge—all likely to be charged with emotion, if not outright vitriol."[2]

North Korea is a microcosm of the kind of complex security challenges confronting the U.S. in the 21st century. It also exemplifies the kinds of domestic pressures which can arise from efforts to seek negotiated solutions to security threats which involve adversaries. This case, as such, offers an important example of the core themes of this study, especially in light of the starkly different approaches pursued by two successive administrations.

The following report provides highlights of the Study Group's discussion and presents initial findings from the meeting in February. The report begins with a summary of the regional security situation and the record of efforts to engage North Korea from the late 1980s to the present.

Summary of Key Themes in the Study Group Discussion

The Study Group focused on North Korean security as a way to examine the dynamics of intelligence and policy processes during two administrations, each of which perceived the problems differently and pursued distinct strategies. This case provides important insights into the interaction of policy processes, intelligence and regional relations as they affected the design and conduct of American security initiatives in the Korean Peninsula over the course of a Democratic and Republican administration.

The group's discussion in this and subsequent meetings is guided by a set of key questions, including:

1. *The Decision-Making Process:* How were U.S. government decision-making processes organized during the different phases of efforts to stem nuclear programs (e.g., what was the prevailing perception of the threat, where did the primary responsibility for policy design and implementation reside, was there a clear strategy and set of objectives, was there unity or discord among agencies?)

2. *Intelligence:* What kind of intelligence/information did U.S. policy makers have available to them at different stages of their efforts to stop the development of the nuclear program? (Ranging from technical information about the status of the program, potential targeting intelligence in the event that force would be used, to an understanding of the regime's motivations or potential receptivity to alternate instruments of dissuasion.)

3. *Policy Tools:* What were the tools and options available and/or considered to address challenges? Which were selected or rejected at different times, why and to what effect?

4. *Quality of discourse:* Was there wide-ranging and high quality discourse among policy-makers, regional experts, diplomats and intelligence officials? What was the influence of competing security priorities and other domestic factors?

5. *Regional Implications:* To what extent were regional dynamics important and taken into account in formulating strategy? How did this affect the role of the U.S.?

6. *Net Assessment:* How well did the choice of policies and the overall strategy succeed or fail in achieving U.S. objectives and why?

Summary of Findings

Finding 1. The Decision Making Process

Carefully designing the right bureaucratic decision-making process is the first essential step in making good policy on an issue as complex and dangerous as North Korean weapons of mass destruction. It may have to be different than the way an Administration is handling other foreign policy issues.

- *Clinton:* After finding itself initially adrift, the Clinton Administration used a Special Steering Group on North Korea, led by Assistant Secretary Robert Gallucci, to develop and carry out both the policy and the negotiations. Is giving a key piece of policy to a single official an effective approach? Does this create the necessary focus that might otherwise be diffused across competing agencies? Or do hindrances arise if that individual has to do too much (interagency policy development/coordination, negotiations, and outreach)? Is the official's rank a determining factor, setting back the policy if the individual is not at the right level? How important is the involvement of the President and is this always helpful in advancing strategy?

- *Bush:* The Bush Administration was hampered at the outset by a slow start in putting senior policy officials in place. An unplanned visit of South Korean President Kim Dae Jung to lobby for the continuation of the Clinton policies sparked early

infighting between those wedded to the original approach, and new political appointees determined to take a harder line towards Pyongyang. President Bush determined to continue the diplomatic track with North Korea, but vowed to expand it to address human rights, missiles and the conventional military balance, which his team thought had been neglected in the Agreed Framework. Early proposals for establishing a senior coordinator were rejected and the lead in negotiations was given to Assistant Secretary of State for Asia Pacific Affairs Jim Kelly. However, policy formation continued to be a contest among several actors, including the Undersecretary for Security and Arms Control, the Vice President's Office, NSC and the Asia Bureau. Given the President's approach, each had legitimate claims to represent separate priorities in the policy formation process.

Finding 2. Intelligence

Negotiations with the North Koreans are not sufficiently informed by a deep understanding of the regime's motivations. The United States is well equipped to gather technical intelligence on the North Korean nuclear weapons program, but it is far more difficult to gather political intelligence on the opaque North Korean decision making process, especially given our lack of regular, direct contact with North Koreans.

- *Clinton:* Despite this lack of good political intelligence to underpin policy, the Clinton Administration was able to strike a deal with the North Koreans. However, the "canyon of ignorance" about North Korea within the U.S. government made it more difficult for the U.S. to reach a deal and made it more difficult to build support for it within the United States, in particular with the media and the Congress.

- *Bush:* In contrast, the Bush Administration assumed that—based on available intelligence—the odds were low that North Korea would be willing to give up its nuclear weapons program. The open question is whether more information about the motivations of the North Koreans could have altered that judgment at an earlier point in the Administration.

Finding 3. Policy Tools

Any U.S. non-proliferation policy for North Korea must integrate military strategy and diplomacy: diplomacy is futile absent the threat of force and a refusal to engage in diplomacy is self-defeating.

- *Clinton:* The negotiation that led to the Agreed Framework was a true political-military exercise, involving techniques such as publicly moving military forces to underscore the implied threat of force.

- *Bush:* The Bush Administration policy approach combined skepticism about entering into a Clintonesque bilateral negotiation process and instead focused on convincing China and the other regional partners to pressure North Korea to negotiate in the six party talks.

Finding 4. Regional Dynamics

The U.S. has a choice as to whether to take the initiative to change North Korean behavior, including leading negotiations and staking direct interest in the outcome, or whether to share the responsibility with the other players in the region in the hope that a more proximate power will take the lead. The course it chooses directly affects the dynamics of the negotiations as well as the political message conveyed to the North Koreans, regional players, and a U.S. audience.

- *Clinton:* The Clinton Administration chose the former. Its regional efforts were focused mainly on convincing others, such as South Korea, to support its understanding of the threats faced and the approach it was taking to redress them.

- *Bush Administration:* Skeptical that North Korea intended to give up nuclear weapons programs and doubtful that U.S. bilateral leverage was sufficient to begin moving in that direction, the Bush administration chose to focus on the Six Party process to bring Chinese and regional pressure to bear, even with the complications that multilateral diplomacy brings.

Finding 5. Quality of Discourse

A high risk issue such as the North Korean nuclear program requires that there be high quality and wide-ranging discourse within the U.S. government which can ensure that leaders are attuned to the meaning of complex events, such as how to interpret changes in Pyongyang's behavior or assimilate what is essential in the many complex technical issues that cannot be fully understood by non-specialists. In addition, any administration must convey clearly how diplomatic and other initiatives are advancing U.S. interests to the U.S. Congress and media well before any deal is reached. The Executive Branch needs to create a community of informed "stake-holders" in the Congress, media and the public that can help sustain support for diplomatic efforts even during setbacks.

- *Clinton Administration:* Policy-level officials were not always able to understand the nuances of political developments—or technical issues—related to the North Korean nuclear program. The Administration did not do enough consultation with the Congress or outreach to the media before the Agreed Framework was concluded. The result was that the Clinton Administration was under intense

pressure from the Congress, the press and the South Koreans to achieve unrealistic results, guaranteeing that almost anything the negotiations could achieve, including the Agreed Framework, would be bound to disappoint.

- *Bush Administration:* Paralyzed by the fear of leaks or the misuse of information, officials undercut their own strategy by refusing to test their policy assumptions through gaming out different scenarios prior to embarking upon negotiations. Classic splits between officials focused on regional versus functional approaches to proliferation policy occurred throughout the U.S. government. The U.S. effort to disengage from direct involvement with the North suggested to Congressional and media critics that the administration has little interest in stemming North Korea's nuclear developments.

1. The Policy-Making Process

The Clinton Years

At the beginning of President Clinton's first term, there was no established process or structure for dealing with nuclear issues in North Korea. Responsibility was spread across several agencies, including the regional bureaus at State and the NSC, and in various parts of the Pentagon and the Intelligence Community which monitored regional military threats. The White House had just created a new office in the National Security Council to manage proliferation and military export policies. The office was just getting organized when the first Korean crisis hit, just months after the new president's inauguration in 1993.

Pyongyang's announcement that it was refusing to grant IAEA inspectors access to its nuclear facilities and that it would secede from the NPT regime in 90 days sent shockwaves throughout the international system. Suddenly questions were being raised about the viability of the global non-proliferation regime, about how to protect allies in the region, and, most importantly, how best to persuade the North Korean regime to stop trying to develop nuclear weapons. The crisis left the new administration scrambling to devise responses to the North's provocations.

The incident opened a whole new arena for non-proliferation policy, posing a question that had not been asked so starkly before. How to induce a signatory to the Treaty to comply with its provisions when it appeared that the country already had made progress towards developing weapons and was refusing international inspections? This was a turning point for the NPT and for the future status of treaties which relied on consensual agreements. The crisis hardened the views of skeptics who had long believed that the treaty had could be used as a cover for hiding nuclear weapons programs.

North Korea's actions posed challenges that were new and complicated but left little time for reflection. Initial meetings among Clinton administration officials generated some confusion and indications of disorganization, enough to prompt the U.S, ambassador in Seoul to send urgent messages to Washington for clarification. Officials quickly concluded that they needed better policy coordination to deal with the crisis, leading then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher to designate the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military affairs, Robert Gallucci, to manage the interagency process and to lead negotiations.

The bureaucratic structure that was established mirrored that of an interagency Senior Steering Group to manage China policy. Gallucci, a seasoned professional with extensive experience in proliferation and security issues, favored this scheme as it allowed him to have routine interaction with officials at the Deputy level, notwithstanding his lower rank. With the blessing of NSC Director Tony Lake, he tapped the director of the new NSC office for counterproliferation, Dan Poneman, to be his deputy. Together they assembled working groups made up of officials and experts drawn from both senior and mid-level ranks (office directors and deputy assistant secretaries) of several agencies.

Though it was agreed that policy coordination was essential, there were some who opposed Gallucci's appointment, arguing that he was too low-ranking to be given so much authority. Their views did not prevail, however. Gallucci quickly assumed an unusually large set of responsibilities—including not just managing the policy process and leading the negotiations but defending the emerging strategy to the Congress and the press while explaining complex policies and events as they evolved. It was noted by a Group member that the Clinton Administration had a special predilection for empowering individuals with large and complex portfolios, or as, one participant put is, going "further than is usually the case in subcontracting foreign policy issues to a single person, from soup to nuts."

The arrangement had some distinct disadvantages. Critics continued to voice concerns that Gallucci's lower rank would undercut the U.S.'s credibility and its bargaining leverage with the North Koreans or that it would hinder the administration's ability to sell its policies to the Congress and public. As one participant remarked: "An Assistant Secretary of State is going to have to wait in line to see a member of Congress." Two working group members reiterated the view that a "special coordinator" for Korean policy with the rank of Deputy Secretary would have been a better choice. The real value of having a senior official in this slot, one participant argued, "isn't to negotiate with the North Koreans. It is to negotiate with Congress. The second most important thing they can do will be with the Japanese, Koreans and Chinese. And then, eventually, something with the North Koreans. Because if you don't have own ducks lined up internally and

with the allies, you're not going to get anywhere." It is hard to test this proposition empirically or to measure the significance of rank in achieving domestic unity or diplomatic outcomes. As one participant noted, some years later Bush officials, fearing the career-threatening controversies Gallucci experienced and knowing that the new president was not a great fan of diplomacy, ran for cover to avoid being offered this job.

Still, there were also some definite advantages, including granting Gallucci and his team considerable autonomy in setting priorities and devising policy options, enjoying routine interaction with a wide range of officials across several agencies, and being able to count on regular access to the White House. The arrangement also seemed to suit the administration's interests. By designating an Assistant Secretary of State as the leader of experimental initiatives that were likely to be both high-risk and controversial, senior leaders could keep a lower profile; and, if it came to this, avoid direct blame if "Gallucci failed." At the same time, the administration could at any time involve higher ranking officials if a particular situation required it.

Taken together, the disadvantages thought to arise from Gallucci's lower rank seem to have been compensated for by other factors, including Gallucci's diplomatic and interpersonal skills, his expertise in nuclear matters, and his ability to clearly but tactfully translate complex technical issues to policy officials and politicians. After more than two decades of working as a Washington insider, moreover, Gallucci had built up an extensive network of contacts in the Executive Branch and on the Hill which helped support his efforts.

Senior officials in the Clinton administration shared the view that the United States should engage North Korea diplomatically. The exception was the Director of Central Intelligence James Woolsey, who was firmly opposed. Provoking amusement among his colleagues, the DCI was said to routinely include reasons for why the talks were ill-advised as part of his situation room intelligence briefings at Deputies meetings. The prevailing outlook among the majority of officials towards peaceful engagement with Pyongyang, however, set the tone for the kinds of initiatives that would be discussed and implemented by the administration. The deliberations also frequently involved the President, important in of itself but even more so given Clinton's intellect and political acumen.

There also was general agreement at senior levels about the need for particular tactics, such as involving the UN to help support and legitimize U.S. actions or emphasizing the importance of a strategy that could integrate political and military instruments. Two participants noted that there was an unusually high level of collegiality among those who worked for the interagency group. The Agreed Framework that emerged from this process, an almost impossibly complicated mix of technical and political inducements offered to Pyongyang in 1994, drew on the discourse and synergy across traditional

bureaucratic alignments made possible by the SSG. The teams working for Gallucci were able to transcend the demarcations separating regional and functional specialists, for example, avoiding the kind of rivalry and infighting which had so often bogged down interagency efforts in the past.

Outside of the group of insiders working on Korea policy, however, the Clinton administration's North Korea strategy was soon besieged by growing political divisions and competing agendas being pushed elsewhere. Over time, different factions in the administration emerged, arguing against one or another option being put forward by the SCC. One group of officials, known to some as the "arms controllers," pushed the view that restoring and assuring North Korea's adherence to the terms of the NPT, including full compliance with IAEA safeguards and special inspections, had to be the highest priority. Opponents of this course of action, the so-called "security pragmatists", emphasized the greater urgency of blocking all of North Korea's access to weapon-usable materials and stopping its nuclear weapons program in its tracks.[3] Officials in the Pentagon, in particular, argued for immediate termination of North Korea's plutonium production, to be achieved coercively if necessary, and did not give any credence to the enforcement provisions of the treaty.[4] Over time, each side began to push its respective agenda as if these objectives were zero-sum.

Policy disagreements were exacerbated by classic turf battles among several government agencies. One participant in the group commented that although the North Korean policy process during most of the Clinton years lacked the typical bureaucratic jockeying over differing conceptions of strategy, in time "everyone reverted to form at the end game, when we had to make choices on priorities. . . ." Bureaucratic battles also "played out, building by building," according to this individual. Negotiations to persuade North Korea to remain a member of the NPT regime, primarily a State Department preoccupation, were persistently attacked by Pentagon skeptics, who argued that the United States would lose its ability to detect and disrupt reprocessing enrichment by the North under such an arrangement. NPT opponents viewed the regime's enforcement powers as hopelessly weak, dismissing the idea that the "special inspections" which the State Department had devised would make a real difference. Any accommodation with the NPT, according to this view, would leave Pyongyang free to claim it was in compliance while buying time to continue its clandestine programs.

At issue were basic concepts of statecraft, including the value of treaties and negotiations to contain "rogue states", as compared to more coercive approaches being considered as part of the Defense Department's new "counter-proliferation" mission. Divisions sharpened once the Pentagon defined "WMD" proliferation as an urgent threat to American security interests. Counter-proliferation policy was said to be just one part of a continuum of options available to policy-makers that left a role for traditional diploma-

cy, but not everyone was convinced this was the case.

These disputes reflected long standing, underlying tensions between advocates of unilateral vs. multilateral forms of international engagement, as well as perceptions of the relative effectiveness of military over diplomatic responses. Harmonizing political and military instruments required time and sustained attention to break down the cultural barriers between Pentagon officials and diplomats, especially the veteran NPT specialists, so-called "NPT Ayatollahs" as some critics called them, referring to the latter's single minded determination to protect the Treaty against any possible incursion.

The complexity of the Korean crisis and the relative lack of good intelligence and expertise about the county exacerbated the bureaucratic difficulties, which were also the result of the relative inexperience officials had working cooperatively across agencies to achieve common ends. The political and military challenges Korea put forward eluded traditional boundaries of policy-formulation or definitions of missions, underscoring how far the US government still had to go in adapting its Cold War institutions to contemporary demands.

In a meeting of principals held in 1994 just prior to a round of negotiations over the Agreed Framework, Gallucci expressed his concern that the U.S. was beginning to overburden the talks with too many demands. He sought guidance from the group about what they believed to be the most urgent priority, asking "What is the single most important thing we need to take away from this round?" As he went around the room, each agency representative said something different. For the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, it was gaining North Korean full compliance to the NPT; for the Under Secretary for Security Affairs, it was special inspections, without which, this individual asserted, the negotiations were sure to be perceived as a failure; and in the case of the Joint Chiefs, something had to be done about North Korea's forward based artillery deployed along the DMZ, which posed a direct and immediate threat to the capital of South Korea.

It fell to then Secretary of Defense William Perry to "bring us all back to earth," as one observer put it. Perry reminded the group that the single most important issue was the North Korean nuclear weapons program. This was what had caused the crisis in the first place and thus it was clearly the most urgent issue. Perry set out a series of specific steps that needed to be taken: "get the plutonium in the spent fuel, make sure it's not separated, make sure no more plutonium is produced in the reactor, then shut down their reprocessing facility." In taking this stand, he also overruled other Pentagon proposals, such as including the Korean ballistic program in the talks, and pushed aside State Department suggestions to offer political and economic inducements until after the immediate nuclear issues were resolved.

For those familiar with how Perry analyzes and articulates priorities, this was a clas-

sic Perry response, revealing his intense focus on the most immediate and dangerous risks while dismissing lesser order issues as distractions to be dealt with later. As a former Clinton Administration official put it, "We cared about ballistic missiles, forward deployed artillery and human rights, but if you link those to nuclear, you're not going to solve nuclear. And, if you don't solve nuclear, you don't solve anything that matters. Nuclear trumps everything." Perry brought discipline into a process that was struggling to overcome the pressures of competing agendas. And his approach worked, at least initially, resulting in the Agreed Framework under which the DPRK agreed to freeze and eventually dismantle core elements of its nuclear program and rejoin the NPT. It was only later, in the effort to implement the agreement, that this coherent strategic vision started to encounter genuine obstacles posed by the policy and political processes in the United States, to say nothing of Pyongyang.

The George W. Bush Administration

The first interagency review of the new Bush administration instantly reversed the Clinton administration's focus on the primacy of the nuclear threat, choosing instead to link a wide range of non-nuclear issues to its DPRK policy, including conventional arms and ballistic missile threats, human rights abuses, counterfeiting, and UN Security Council sanctions. At first, the administration lacked a clear alternative to the Clinton negotiations, at least one the elicited consensus or had the backing of the president. As one working group member described it sarcastically, "The story of the Bush Administration interagency process on North Korea is mostly a happy story of John Bolton and Condoleezza Rice and Jim Kelly sitting around drinking lattes, listening to the Rolling Stones, and reaching consensus, usually within five to ten minutes of any interagency meeting. NOT. There were more body blows, more blood and more chicken feathers."

The turf wars and rivalries that came to characterize policy debates about the DPRK under Bush surfaced in the first months of the administration, when Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that the new Bush administration "plan[s] to engage with North Korea [and] pick up where President Clinton left off." Less than two months later, he was forced retract the statement publicly, explaining that "sometimes you get a little too far forward in your skis." This was not the last time the administration would have such skirmishes.

As one study group member assesses it, the Powell incident represented one of many instances in the Bush administration in which domestic politics trumped policies devised by professionals. Another member described it as a case in which policy professionals, absent alternate guidance from the President initially, continued to work on the basis of policies devised in the prior administration, setting the stage for some confusion and

internal tensions when the new administration devised a new strategy.

"What happened was that the layers of political appointees weren't there, and [Powell] served up what the bureaucracy had been doing all along", as one former Bush adviser explained it. "The {State Department] had a game plan, and they served it right up to the seventh floor, without anyone in the middle. Secretary Powell, being a good military officer, trusting his staff, used those. But, that wasn't where the President was yet. The President, in fact, hadn't made up his mind."

Even if the Bush administration did not move quickly to reach consensus about how to handle North Korea, one thing seemed certain: the Clinton administration's strategy had to be scrapped. Some working group members observed that President Bush's comprehensive policy review at the beginning of his first term was driven primarily for a desire for "ABC" (Anything But Clinton) policy. Repudiating the policies of a preceding administration is common for new presidents, regardless of political party, although it was perhaps unusually pronounced in this instance.

Advisers and officials who were associated with the group known as the "neocons", hard-line conservatives who opposed negotiations with adversaries and included a number of veterans of the arms control debates during the Cold War, played the central role in defining the Bush strategy. This group shared the firm conviction that no amount of diplomatic inducements could convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. They urged the Administration to "take a very hard line" towards Pyongyang, in the words of one meeting participant, stressing its moral repugnance over the regime's human rights abuses and reinforcing the deep-seated belief that Pyongyang would cheat its way through any agreement, all views which the president shared.

This led the administration to adopt a line which would "vigorously oppose any type of strategic engagement with North Korea other than coercive measures," as a former Bush official summarized it. The only caution about this strategy came from the regional bureaus in the State Department, who urged the administration not to act in ways which could put the U.S. relationship with key allies at risk.

In time, the Bush administration opted for a multilateral approach, part of a broader strategy to persuade other states, especially China, to put more pressure on Pyongyang. This seems inconsistent with the administration's predilection for unilateralism, and indeed officials initially had considered a policy of "tailored containment," a concept advanced by Robert Joseph, which was aimed at achieving the complete isolation of North Korea, including cessation of all technology trade and financial flows. Once it was recognized that such a policy could not be effective without involving China and the other regional players, however, the administration resorted to a form of compromise. The Six Party talks became the primary vehicle to achieve the twin objectives of containing North Korea's ambitions while pressing China and the other partners to take on

more responsibility and allowing the U.S. to disengage from direct negotiations. The administration at first left in place many of the elements of the 1994 Agreed Framework even as it sought to distance itself from the practices of the past, sending confusing messages to both allies and adversaries.

Newly appointed Bush officials considered the idea of appointing a senior coordinator for the DPRK, which a number of top officials agreed was a good idea, but the effort foundered when it became clear that none of those advocating this option actually wanted the job. As one participant in the meeting observed, "All of the deputies who reviewed this, Hadley, Armitage, Wolfowitz, said 'this is a great idea.' We did a paper. We said Hadley ought to be the senior coordinator. Then crossed it out and put Armitage. Then (the paper) went over to State and Armitage crossed (his name) out and put Wolfowitz. He crossed it out and put Scooter Libby, this got crossed out. No-one wanted this monkey on their back." Eventually it fell to an experienced ambassador, James Kelly, to assume the responsibility.

The NSC played an important role in setting policy priorities, adapting the imperative to be "hard-line" while pushing demarches to other states in the region to encourage them to align with American views and the emerging strategy for Pyongyang. When the National Security Advisor was appointed Secretary of State in 2004, the primary responsibility for North Korea moved as well, to "be run from the seventh floor", as a former Bush official said, where it has remained.

Since the Bush White House refused to establish a bilateral negotiation process with Pyongyang until the DPRK had committed to the Six Party regional formula—which Pyongyang refused to do—it instead enlisted support from China, South Korea and Japan to squeeze the North Koreans. The U.S. revived the active use of sanctions in response to a host of North Korean provocations, both under the U.N, and unilaterally. Over the next three years, North Korean acts of belligerence, including a long-range missile test in July 2006 and its October 9th nuclear test, were met by various U.N. Security Council resolutions and sanctions, as well as U.S. sanctions, including freezing the assets of Banco Delta Asia, a "primary money laundering concern" used by the North Korean elite, according to the U.S. Treasury Department. Sanctions were in part devised to publicize and punish the regime's corruption, including Kim Jong Il's apparent diversion of resources to the ruling elite whose loyalty he has to buy because he lacks his father's charisma.

The most important strategic objective sought under Bush which distinguished it from Clinton was not to halt nuclear developments in the North per se, a goal which was not considered realistic. It was instead to deny North Korea the leverage to play off the regional partners to seek concessions from the United States in return for adhering to agreements. Otherwise, as a former Bush official summarized it, "North Korea would, if

we allowed them, pull us into a tit for tat, pay per view, pay as you go, inspection process" that was entirely to Pyongyang's advantage. The new approach required much greater coordination among the U.S. and allies in Northeast Asia to stop the DPRK from exploiting divisions to exacerbate tensions in the region.

In seeking the cooperation of Japan, China, the ROK and Russia to support the U.S., the Bush administration essentially exported its policy of linkage overseas, recognizing that each of the states had special grievances with the North that could be included in the Six Party Talks. The policy was animated by the notion that the U.S. would extend benefits to regional partners to get support in ostracizing Pyongyang, including agreements to include specific states' concerns as part of the talks—whether they were about human rights, abductee issues, terrorism or special trade issues One Bush official in the ISD working group stressed that the strategy, according to the administration's criteria, had worked, if not necessarily to halt Pyongyang's nuclear programs then in creating a hardline regional strategy to keep the Koreans regionally isolated: "The Chinese are in this, they're putting some hurt on North Korea. . . . They don't want North Korea to collapse. But they are stopping financial flows to the elite, something that Kim Jong Il notices. The Chinese supported Security Council sanctions. And it's the Chinese that are freezing the assets in Macau, not the U.S."

2. Quality of Intelligence

The closed nature of North Korean society and the inability of Western agents to penetrate its inner workings have been at the root of both administrations' failures to engage North Korea in a way that might have elicited more effective cooperation. The DPRK offers a classic example of the policy and political challenges posed when there is almost no reliable intelligence about the internal dynamics or motivations of leaders and elites. Technical intelligence, for that matter, though it was judged to be of a high quality, also on occasion clouded efforts to engage Pyongyang effectively because what was known was so often subject to divergent interpretation or misused.

The working group agreed that the technical intelligence on North Korea during both the Clinton and Bush administrations was of very good. One participant described the available intelligence in the early 1990s saying: "We had a lot of detail about the facilities. We had good pictures. We had estimates of when the other facilities that were under construction would be finished. We had estimates of how much material was in the spent fuel. We had analyses of the photographs that told us where the special inspection sites would be. We had a lot of really good stuff on the [nuclear] program." The participant noted that operational intelligence support to American diplomatic efforts was also excellent and "really paid off for us."

Intelligence about the political situation was an entirely different challenge, however. The group generally agreed that information about the ruling regime's motivations, decision-making processes, or interest in particular inducements was not anywhere close to the quality or scope of the technical information. Indeed, one intelligence veteran characterized it as "God-awful". Several participants asked if anyone had answers to fundamental questions, such as: Why does [North Korea] want to deal with us?, Will they really do a deal with us?, What difference did Kim Il-Sung's death make, if any?, or Why did they sign the Agreed Framework and then cheat?

One former official involved in the Bush deliberations countered that although political intelligence was never optimal, its quality and the scope of converge improved during the Bush Administration because North Korea had become relatively more porous compared to prior decades. The United States, he argued, also had learned from interactions with Pyongyang to read the regime's signals about elite intent and motivations more accurately.

Another participant disagreed, pointing out that without better regional and political analysis, the technical intelligence was much less useful. According to a member of the intelligence community, technical intelligence concerning the use of tubes in centrifuges was good, but the regional political analysis underpinning the intent of the tubes was entirely absent, severely weakening the basis on which decision-makers could deliver sound policy judgments and strategies. As the participant pointed out, "The same could be said of HEU [highly enriched uranium] programs. We see Iran spinning centrifuges. But, just because they're spinning them, doesn't prove weapons intent. . . . When a policymaker says, 'I'm not getting what I need on regional analysis, regional intelligence, but I'm getting the technical stuff,' that should put flags up."

Intelligence and Alternative Analyses

The working group's discussion revealed another important flaw in the intelligence process needed to help policy-makers anticipate and understand possible North Korean responses to U.S. policy. One former official encountered steep bureaucratic resistance in "gaming though" alternative analyses or positions as they might affect diplomatic efforts: "We very rarely went into the negotiations anticipating North Korean responses. . . . I think there was concern that, if you gamed it out and thought this through, you would be arming the critics of the negotiations or they would leak. Frankly, I think the biggest failing, in terms of intelligence and how we used it, was we didn't use {these gaming exercises] to think through or anticipate North Korean responses, either to induce or to pressure [North Korea]. We know the enemy, so to speak, better than we did perhaps in [the 1990s]. But, we don't use [that knowledge] the way a football coach uses information or intelligence on the other team." The failure to even consider alternative analy-

ses or possible different scenarios constrained the policy debate on North Korea, limiting options and making strategic surprises all the more likely.

The Intelligence-Policymaking Interface

A distinct disconnect between the intelligence and policy communities was surfaced during the discussion of what is means to "know" things. Often what the intelligence community see as assessments of complex problems are seized upon by policy-makers as reliable facts, missing the nuance and underlying assumptions. "In intelligence, we don't use the word 'know' a lot. We use the word 'do not know' some, and we nee to use it more than we do. That's an assessment on the part of the intelligence agencies, but it gets translated often in the media and by policy officials as 'we know.' This is an assessment, not a fact." Several individuals countered that intelligence analysts are too prone to hedging their bets, leaving policymakers without a firm basis on which to mobilize the support for policy. Other working group members saw it differently, emphasizing the increasing tendency of decision makers too selectively use intelligence as a tool aimed only at political ends, which further discourages intelligence professionals from drawing stark conclusions that could be misused

The controversy over the intelligence community's assessment of North Korea's highly enriched uranium program is one such example. In 2002, policymakers drew on a leaked intelligence estimate that had concluded that North Korea "had embarked on a large-scale enrichment program, based on Pakistani technology", in direct violation of agreements under the Agreed Framework. Ambassador Kelly confronted North Korean officials about the program, prompting bitter but ambiguous responses. The dispute led not long after to the collapse of the Agreed Framework and tensions between Washington and Pyongyang ratcheted up accordingly. To complicate matters further, in March 2007, the intelligence community reiterated its assessment that it had "high confidence" that North Korea intended to develop an HEU program but only "medium confidence" about how far along they were. Uncertainty about the program was not new. This is in part what had led Ambassador Kelly to confront the North Koreans about the status of their HEU programs in 2002 as well as subsequent debates about the actual status of North Korean capabilities. It is also unclear whether the Administration made policy decisions based on what it believed were clear, unequivocal statements about a security threat, or whether it used intelligence estimates as a political tool of confrontation with North Korea.

Intelligence and Capitol Hill

Relations between intelligence and legislators have grown more contentious and confrontational over the last two decades. Different roles, objectives and political exigencies

between the intelligence community and Congress also can impede effective strategic initiatives if these groups have weak links between them. Participants pointed to the creation of an overall "mission manager" on North Korea as a positive step in bolstering these links. Congressional members have come to trust the mission manager, according to a Capitol Hill staffer, because "they like to hear the analytical perspectives out of the mouth of a single person who's clearly got credibility, and he can bring all the resources of the community to bear in one direction." The staffer emphasized how little most members of Congress know about North Korea and the critical technical issues involved, a view echoed by other participants involved in briefing Congress. Keeping Congress informed about not only the technical issues but, more importantly, the internal political dynamics of the North Korean leadership, is a critical part of broadening the discussion in the U.S. government about appropriate strategy.

Stretched Intelligence Resources

The interface between the policy and intelligence communities, the emphasis on technical versus political intelligence, or the development of alternative analyses become less salient if the intelligence community does not have basic resources to do its job. Stretched intelligence resources and the shift to other priorities have proved very problematic for the Bush Administration, leaving many intelligence experts to worry whether the community has even basic needs met, let alone the ability to produced highly nuanced assessments. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have stressed the intelligence community, to put it minimally. These intelligence priorities are also geographically distant from the Korean peninsula, one participant noted, which precluded sharing intelligence assets. Many in the intelligence community worried how the U.S. would be able to monitor a North Korean accord on top of all these competing priorities.

3. Tool Box

To what extent has the U.S. government's "tool box"—its mix of policy strategies and tactics—to contain the DPRK's nuclear program been shaped by the larger regional and international strategic context? One especially significant shift in the policy tool box was the consideration of military options against North Korea during the Clinton Administration, which operated in arguably one of the most secure global environments in recent memory, while the Bush administration, facing much stormier international waters, played down military options. Several working group members commented that Clinton Administration policy was an integrated political/military strategy because the Administration was prepared to use to force, and leveraged that intent into a UN Security Council resolution that was "pretty robust compared to what we see these days, on any country," in the words of one participant.

According to one former Clinton Administration official, diplomatic leverage with the North Koreans derived in good measure from a willingness to integrate military strategy with diplomacy. The tools used in this case included deployment of the Patriot missile battalion earlier than had been anticipated, movement of Apache helicopters and Bradley fighting vehicles, counter-battery radar, the use of Team Spirit military exercises, combined with support for the UN security council resolution and direct diplomatic pressure on the North Koreans. The multifaceted approach—military preparations, bringing the international community on board, and bilateral diplomacy—was "reasonably well integrated," argued one working group member, and increased the United State's negotiating position.

Others felt that a "post-9/11 muscularity" during the Bush Administration strengthened U.S. leverage over North Korea. "I don't think North Korea's nuclear weapons policy was a response to the State of the Union Speech, Iraq, or anything else," said one participant. "They've had the same policy and same goals for decades—the speech gave them a convenient talking point." This view certainly was not the consensus among the working group, however. Many participants questioned the Bush's Administration's uncompromising approach to negotiations with North Korea, particularly given what many viewed as weakened diplomatic leverage in the wake of failure in Iraq and difficulty in Afghanistan. Some argued that the U.S. was unrealistic about the goals it could achieve vis-à-vis North Korea, expecting an essentially complete disarmament process before the U.S. would provide any incentives.

Mobilizing public opinion and managing the press are also central to the success—or failure—of effective strategies to resolve regional security challenges. Several participants pointed out that the poor performance on the part of U.S. government officials to clearly explain the Clinton Administration's goals and reasoning for its support for the Agreed Framework resulted in a popular and Congressional backlash. Both the administration and North Korean nonproliferation policy suffered the price "for a long time," said one participant. Failure to effectively communicate "complicates [the government's] ability to actually negotiate and move forward with the [policy] process when you're dealing with the [press], which has its own agenda," said another participant. "They've got stories to write and copy to produce." Incentives for the press to reduce complex issues to simple sound-bites which sell further hamper an administration's ability to sell their often complex and nuanced policies to the public.

4. Nature of Discourse

Notwithstanding the stark differences in the tone and substance of the Clinton and Bush administration's understanding of the North Korean challenge, domestic political

divisions about the relative utility of engaging North Korea in a coercive or conciliatory way influenced both administrations.

Compartmentalizing the Information and Controlling the Agenda

Several systemic problems impeded the access to information necessary for policymakers to make informed decisions. First, the intelligence process tended to reinforce existing divisions in the policy community; narrow channels of information from different intelligence offices to their counterparts in the policy community meant that getting any kind of informed overview was extremely difficult. Secondly, bureaucratic battles to control the policy making agenda exacerbated these tendencies. One participant cited the example of creating a senior coordinator position for managing all aspects of North Korean policy during the Bush Administration, noting that there was never any consideration of "going outside" to find a coordinator, but a determination by the State Department to retain control of the position. Chronic information hoarding and agenda control in order to gain leverage over another government agency, or simply as a function of ingrained organizational culture has been well documented, as has the adverse impact on U.S. security.

Politicization of North Korean policy has had important repercussions for the U.S. government's ability to contain the regime's nuclear threat and address regional stability. Pressures on professionals to conform to the prevailing mindset limited the scope of discourse and thus constrained policy options. Those who "violate the implicit boundaries of accepted discourse," as the previous study concluded, "are often professionally marginalized as dissenters who have ceased to be 'team players.'"[5] Such dynamics help create a risk averse culture in which protecting the prevailing strategy and limiting controversy becomes more important than creating innovative policy, or simply following best professional practices. Working group members noted instances of conformity pressures in the Clinton administration, but the Bush Administration received the lion's share of criticism for politicizing its policy and the decision-making process. One participant noted that the administration oriented its policies towards stark binary options, containment or use of force which precluded other diplomatic strategies which may have worked with Pyongyang. One participant argued that while neoconservatives "had more brake than gas" when it came to engaging Pyongyang, they injected a "healthy skepticism" about the regime's intentions and willingness to give up nuclear weapons. Others disagreed that the line from the neoconservatives was simply healthy skepticism but rather an ideological straightjacket that affected professionals throughout the system. As one analyst put it, "This administration is so ideologically driven that is already made up its mind and does not want to listen to alternative views. Sadly, our diplomats and intel-

ligence analysts are generally unable to do their jobs or ignored when it comes to North Korea."[6]

The working group debated whether intelligence analysis of the DPRK's uranium enrichment program has been a casualty of conformity pressures. Some working group members disputed the Bush Administration's position that there were no alternative views on North Korea's uranium enrichment program. According to a former member of the intelligence community, alternative views on the details of the enriched uranium program were eventually winnowed out, and doubts about the assessments did not come to light until the U.S. was ready to discuss normalizing relations with the DPRK as part of the February 2007 agreement.

Competing Priorities

Another key factor affecting the quality of discourse about important security priorities is the level of competing priorities facing policymakers. Strategic missteps and surprises can occur when particular issues given priority by senior officials in Washington overwhelm their time and attention, reducing the likelihood they will pay serious attention to other issues being reported by professionals in the field or which are not in acute crisis. Domestic constraints and the desire by senior policymakers to mobilize a particular domestic audience can further impede sound diplomatic engagement initiatives. This certainly has been true for both the Clinton and Bush Administrations. Abroad, the Clinton Administration juggled several major foreign policy crises, including Bosnia, Haiti and Somalia, while facing a hostile political environment at home, particularly after the 1994 Congressional elections. The ascendancy of conservatives in Congress, who rejected the Clinton Administration's multilateral approach to North Korean strategy, set the stage for bitter and constant funding battles on the terms of the Agreed Framework, for example, making the political follow-through necessary for successful initiatives towards Pyongyang difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. President Clinton's sporadic attention to North Korea, given his own domestic political problems, only exacerbated the situation, resulting in inconsistent strategy and policy drift. The Bush Administration has not fared better. The war in distractions in Iraq and Afghanistan have acted as a resource black hole, pulling policymakers' attention, military and intelligence resources away from North Korea. Lack of sustained attention ensures that an issue will only be attended to when it is in crisis mode, when events are exponentially harder to manage. After the 1994 Congressional elections swept a critical mass of conservative representatives and overturned Democratic control of the House of Representative, the Administration began to face serious opposition from Congress

Bilateral/Multilateral Approaches

Presidents in both administrations, and those closest to them, played crucial roles in determining the substance and direction of policy deliberations about North Korea. Many praised President Clinton's stewardship of detailed issues, such as the long range security implications of alternative policy options and his intuitive sensitivity about the likely receptivity of Pyongyang to U.S. proposals. As one former Clinton official put it, "In any principals' meeting that [President Clinton] attended, surrounded by centuries of foreign policy expertise, the one thing he brought in a way that no one else did was an ability to get in the shoes of the other side, and to think how we would be understood by the other side." Some participants recalled Clinton wondering how to give the North Koreans "an escape valve" to save face if Pyongyang decided to acquiesce to U.S. demands. This kind of reasoning lends insight into why President Clinton decided to allow former president Jimmy Carter to fly to North Korea during the height of the 1994 crisis, as Carter had asked. Though he recognized the domestic political liabilities, Carter's visit, the participant recalled Clinton saying, would give the North Koreans the opportunity to say "The former President of the United States came here, they came to us. Now we can do something."

Others were critical of Clinton for not sustaining his attention on North Korea after the 1994 crisis had passed, leaving a leadership vacuum which let policy drift for some time. Several participants hypothesized that Clinton's apparent neglect prompted North Korea "to do things to get back onto Page 1 [of the newspapers]." Others argue that Clinton's loss of interested contributed to the intelligence community's failure to pay attention when North Korea accelerated its efforts to created secret uranium enrichment program, believe to have begun during this period.

Lack of professional expertise, as well as routine discourse among top policymakers and professionals with such expertise, can hamstring the government's ability to adapt to changing conditions, let alone anticipate or respond to security crises. According to former officials from both the Clinton and Bush Administrations, the paucity of professionals with expertise on North Korea was a serious hindrance. Only a very few experts with substantive knowledge served in the decision-making process, especially in the Bush administration, and often those with prominent roles had very little substantive background at all. As one former official put it, "The really frightening thing is that I got to feel like an expert on North Korea, and I don't know anything about North Korea. I don't speak the language, I don't know the culture, I don't know the history, I've never been to North Korea. There's a huge, enormous canyon of ignorance, and we talk about North Korea, even now, largely by deduction."

Besides having few experts at hand to supply policymakers with vital information about the threats posed by North Korea, policymakers demonstrated a lack of understanding about the information that was available to them. During the 1994 crisis, for example, few policymakers understood basic technical aspects of the DPRK's nuclear program, on which critical security interests, such as the possibility of going to war with the regime, depended. Lack of technical understanding of the problem hamstrung the U.S. negotiating team in the early days of talks with the DPRK, forcing them to stick to talking points demanding North Korea abide by the North-South declaration on denuclearization and abandon their reprocessing. This flew in the face of the technical reality—North Korea had a gas graphite reactor which requires reprocessing; the fuel cannot remain indefinitely in the facilities' ponds. Policymakers also vigorously resisted the idea of delivering light water reactors to the North Koreans under the Agreed Framework, despite the fact that such reactors are agreed to be more "proliferation resistant" than the gas graphite system. Regarding North Korea's nefarious mixing of its spent fuel rods, one participant asked, "Did anybody in the policy community, who were all prepared to go to war, and lose a 'trillion and a million,' know exactly what the North Koreans were doing? Did they know how they were destroying history?" Poor understanding of the empirical factors which could prompt a decision to use force is a prescription for policy—and security—disaster.

Channels of information which could improve the quality of professional discourse are further constrained by lack of sustained diplomatic engagement with North Korea. As the working group report concluded in part, "Global objectives like the war on terrorism have replaced Cold war containment as the rationale for superficial international engagement. . . . But as President George W. Bush articulated in mid-2006, today there is no quick fix to security problems like nuclear proliferation. Diplomacy has become an essential instrument to resolve such dilemmas, while the declining utility of unilateral force projection continues to be driven home in many contingencies around the world."[7] Political knowledge, in particular, is crucial to forming appropriate strategies and responses to such a closed society as the DPRK, whose motivations, decision-making processes and intentions are often obscure. This means active engagement with the professionals involved in North Korea, but also with key regional allies.

President Bush's repugnance over the human rights situation in North Korea and his openly expressed "loathing" of President Kim Jong-Il exerted a strong influence on how the administration approached policy deliberations. The administration favored: muscular" rhetoric and coercive strategies designed to draw a line in the sand with Pyongyang. President Bush's strong feelings about the futility of bilateral diplomatic engagement with North Korea were echoed in Vice President Cheney's assertion that "We don't negotiate with evil. We defeat it."

The perennial division between hard-liners who rejected diplomatic engagement with North Korea (nothing but a "cycle of extortion with North Korea," a "one-sided love affair," or "the screwiest policy that I have ever seen," according to some), and those who favored engagement (referring to the Agreed Framework as an "unsung success story," for example) played a part in both administrations, although to different degrees. [8] Hard-liners in Congress have proven consistent in vehemently opposing negotiating with North Korea at all. Warring strategic visions have played out in myriad policy battles, such as the recurring fight to secure appropriations for the annual fuel-oil delivers called for in the Agreed Framework or over whether the provisions of the tentative agreement reached in 2006, can ever be met. There is opposition, moreover, from both sides of the aisle. Liberal critics have suggested that the agreement closely mirrors the Agreed Framework, but it has been eroded by years of interim secret enrichment activities by the North.

5. Regional Political Dynamics

The working group agreed that regional dynamics were crucial to reining in North Korea's nuclear ambitions, as well as getting the regime to adhere to international agreements, and engage in negotiations. The nature of the demarches to other regional players was markedly different in the Clinton and Bush Administrations, particularly with respect to the use of bilateral versus multilateral engagement. The Clinton administration received blistering condemnation from many conservatives for its strategy of bilateral engagement with Pyongyang. It provided a target for critics who caricatured U.S. involvement as a "policy of appeasement" towards a despicable regime which could only serve to embolden it.

The Bush Administration, for its part, has been attacked for disengaging and refusing to talk to the North Koreans bilaterally, a policy which critics claimed allowed North Korea to keep building its nuclear program. One participant disagreed, arguing that the debate over bilateral or multilateral engagement had become "an unfortunate distraction," and oversimplified the issue. Engagement with the DPRK during the Bush Administration was subsumed in a multilateral context which the North Koreans resisted because they wanted to convey the impression that this was a matter between two hostile states, "and not any business of Japan or the ROK or China," said one working group member.

One participant explained how top officials came to believe that engaging Pyongyang bilaterally before China "came around" on the DPRK would discourage the Chinese from participating in a multilateral solution; also that China's willingness after the nuclear crisis of 2002 to put more pressure on North Korea was a major factor in the

Bush Administration's "higher comfort level" in engaging in bilateral US-DPRK discussions. One working group member asserted that North Korea came back to the negotiating table to conclude the recent February agreement because of enormous Chinese pressure. Others disputed this view, arguing that the Bush Administration was forced into a more bilateral approach by the failures of its previous no-engagement strategies, not because the Chinese brought North Korea to the table.

That said, China's role and influence in the diplomatic process is undeniable. China supplies an estimated 70 to 90% of North Korea's energy needs, one third of its total international assistance, and one fourth of its total trade.[9] One former official noted China's significantly increased cooperation with the U.S. vis-à-vis North Korea in stopping financial flows to the elite, supporting Security Council sanctions, and freezing the assets of Banco Delta Asia. Although China has own strategic interests in avoiding a collapse of the DPRK regime and the subsequent refugee flood across its borders, a nuclear North Korea could prompt proliferation throughout the region, including in Japan and Taiwan, which would negatively impact Chinese security. As one Korean expert noted, "The best argument . . . for China to play a more active role in diplomacy with North Korea is not to improve relations with the United States, but to fulfill Beijing's own aspirations to be a great power in the region. Through the North Korean problem, Beijing can take regional stability to heart and undertake a responsibility to provide a public good for the region."[10]

Tensions Among Key Players

The working group debated the influence of the waxing and waning of US-ROK relations across both the Clinton and Bush Administrations. One participant felt the U.S. "did not do a very good job" in managing its relations with Seoul during the Clinton Administration, and another one former official commented that the US-ROK relationship during the Bush Administration "could not have been more ideologically different or more difficult." Both administrations have been criticized for not recognizing important South Korean political pressures, and creating fissures within Seoul's government and in popular South Korean support for engagement with the North.

As the working group's previous study revealed, the tendency among senior officials to view regional players, including allies, only according to how they might be useful in advancing U.S. strategic objectives, regardless of the impact of those objectives abroad, impedes constructive and lasting engagement with other countries, and constrains the policy options and latitude the U.S. has to protect its national interests.

By the time the Bush Administration took over in Washington, some key strategic elements had changed. One participant argued that North Korea had gained the ability to threaten South Korea and Japan with ballistic missiles and had significantly advanced

its nuclear weapons program, making military options much less palatable. The Iraq war had created tensions in the U.S.-South Korean relationship to the point that, said one working group member, "You have a South Korea that's much more worried about us creating war than they are about North Korea." One participant argued that active consideration of military options played into the North Korean hand: "It was useful, from time to time, to let Pyongyang know that significant numbers of B1s and B2s were surging in Guam at certain points, and so on. . . . But the reality was, it was mostly quiet, because loud saber rattling is what North Korea wants. That's how they drive a wedge between us and South Korea." This view, however, belies the very vocal and repeated calls within the Bush Administration and among administration supporters in Congress and the public for "regime change" in North Korea, as well as President openly expressed "loathing" of Kim Jong-il, and his State of the Union speech in which he named North Korea as a member of an "axis of evil." Many analysts believe that these types of saber rattling played to North Korea's deep-seated security fears and contributed to its subsequent belligerent tactics and behavior.

One former Bush Administration official acknowledged that the Roh government and the Bush administration "could not be more ideologically different, and the relationship could not be more difficult." Some view the election of President Roh, who supports continued engagement with North Korea and greater autonomy from the United States, as a referendum in part on the Bush Administration's position and policies.[11]

Net Assessment: Success or Failure?

There are widely disparate views about whether and how different U.S. policies, tactics, and strategies succeeded or failed to rein or at least slow North Korean's nuclear ambitions. The balance sheet for the Clinton Administration seems to show partial success and partial failure. Success came from the 1994 Agreed Framework, which halted North Korea's plutonium production program and sealed the nuclear reactors at the Yongbyon complex, all under the watchful eyes of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency. U.S. projections show that without the agreement, an unconstrained North Korea could have produced "hundreds of kilograms of plutonium and dozens or more nuclear weapons."[12] The agreement staved off such production for many years.

However, it is now clear that the North Koreans were cheating on the Agreed Framework, secretly pursuing a uranium enrichment project. While this was less urgent than the plutonium production program, as the North Koreans were much further along with that program, it was more dangerous, because producing a uranium bomb was technologically far easier than building a plutonium bomb.[13] Ultimately, the administration failed to stop North Korea's nuclear weapons program, and failed to resolve other impor-

tant security issues on the Korean peninsula, as demonstrated by the periodic flare-ups of hostilities there during the 1990s, including the capture of a North Korean spy submarine in South Korean waters, and the 1998 North Korean ballistic missile test over the Sea of Japan. Critics argue that the Clinton Administration tendency towards "benign neglect" was not so benign, giving the North Koreans plenty of room to pursue its weapons program.

Many have excoriated the Bush Administration's policy of confrontation towards North Korea and its shunning of bilateral engagement with the regime, arguing that such strategies have been detrimental to U.S. security interests. The common perception among Bush advisers that direct engagement with the regime was ill-advised meant that intelligence analysts and policy professionals could not add to the knowledge about the regime. The administration's long-standing insistence that North Korea commit to a process that would eventually lead to "complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantling" of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program through the 6-party negotiations framework before incentives such as bilateral negotiations could be considered proved to be a prescription for stalemate with North Korea for several years.

There was little clear guidance from senior levels as to how to leverage carrots and sticks as the two sides deepened their enmity. At the end of the day, the Bush strategy allowed for the resumption of nuclear activities, ultimately leading to the test of a nuclear device in 2006. In February 2007, the U.S., China, South Korea, Russia and North Korea reached a deal in which North Korea agreed to freeze production of plutonium at its Yongbyon nuclear complex and allow monitoring by international inspectors in exchange for food and fuel oil aid from the U.S., China, South Korea and Russia. The impact of this agreement in the long term, however, is still very uncertain.

NOTES

1. Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 2.

2. Ibid.

3. Alexander Lennon's *North Korea Background and Discussion Paper*, prepared for the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy's Working Group, Security and Diplomacy in the 21st Century, held on February 20, 2007, p. 2.

4. Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical:The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), p. 140.

5. Janne Nolan, Douglas MacEachin and Kristine Tockman, *Discourse, Dissent and Strategic Surprise: Formulating U.S. Security Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 2007), p. 104.

6. Peter Beck. "The Bush Administration's Failed North Korea Policy." *Japan Policy Research Institute*, vol. IX, no. 3 (June 2004). Accessed at: www.jpri.org.

7. Nolan, MacEachin, and Tockman, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

8. Cha and Kang, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

9. Cha and Kang, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
10. Ibid.
11. Cha and Kang, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
12. Wit, Poneman and Gallucci, *op. cit.,* p. 389.
13. Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

The Institute for the Study of Diplomacy (ISD), founded in 1978, is part of Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and is the School's primary window on the world of the foreign affairs practitioner.

ISD studies the practitioner's craft : how diplomats and other foreign affairs professionals succeed and the lessons to be learned from their successes and failures. Institute programs focus on the foreign policy process: how decisions are made and implemented.

ISD conducts its programs through a small staff and resident and nonresident "associates." Associates, primarily U.S. and foreign government officials, are detailed to or affiliated with the Institute for a year or more. The Institute seeks to build academic-practitioner collaborations around issues using associates and Georgetown faculty. ISD staff and associates teach courses, organize lectures and discussions, mentor students, and participate on university committees.

In addition, ISD's Pew Case Studies in International Affairs are used in over 1,000 courses across the country and around the world.

Diplomacy & Security in the 21st Century

With generous support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy has launched this study to identify systemic weaknesses in the way the U.S. government integrates intelligence support, diplomacy, and policy implementation in the management of international security problems. An experienced group of former policymakers and specialists, chaired by Janne Nolan, is drawing lessons from recent historical cases of regional nuclear proliferation. The objective is to produce recommendations for improving the way intelligence informs policy choices to help sustain effective initiatives aimed at achieving desired security outcomes in the 21st century.

The study is examining four cases of governmental efforts to address the rising threat of nuclear proliferation, including North Korea, South Asia (with the study of India and Pakistan combined in one case), Libya and Iran. By examining the relative strengths and weaknesses of U.S. nonproliferation strategies as they applied in these cases, this inquiry will help policy-makers to identify improvements in policy and intelligence processes that may be needed to support successful American initiatives to counter complex regional and global security threats, currently and in the future.

This work was made possible through a grant by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The views expressed in this monograph do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the organizations, governmental or private, with which the individual participants in the discussion group are affiliated.

Institute for the Study of Diplomacy
1316 36th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007
Tel 202-965-5735 *Fax* 202-965-5652
Web http://isd.georgetown.edu
Copyright 2007. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. All Rights Reserved.