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국제학석사학위논문

미국과 중국의 대북정책에 관한
현실주의적 해석:
2017-2020년 시기를 중심으로

A Realist Interpretation of
the U.S. and China's North Korea Policy:
Focusing on the Period of 2017-2020

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August 2022

**Graduate School of International Studies
Seoul National University
International Area Studies Major**

Jinseo Kim

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Advisor Park, Cheol Hee

Submitting a master's thesis of
International Studies

August 2022

**Graduate School of International Studies
Seoul National University
International Area Studies Major**

Jinseo Kim

Confirming the master's thesis
as written by Jinseo Kim

August 2022

Chair	<u>Sheen, Seong-Ho</u> (Seal)
Vice-Chair	<u>Jeong, Jong-Ho</u> (Seal)
Examiner	<u>Park, Cheol Hee</u> (Seal)

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Abstract

There are various debates on the dynamics of changing world order and what determines the current international system. Yet, it seems undeniable that the U.S.-China's evolving relations are at the core of such debates. Meanwhile, there are prior security issues remaining volatile today. One of the problems is North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons and the divergence of its programs. After since North Korea had quit the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the issue has been regarded as an entangled conundrum to both the U.S. and China. Overall, these two countries comprehensively agreed upon the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula. However, the perspective of viewing the progress of such state varies, since both countries' national interest involved on the matter is different.

The most recent critical juncture was the heightening of crisis in 2017, triggered by Pyongyang's testing of ICBM and thermonuclear weapons. Surprisingly, there were vigorous policy transitions within few years, showing a wide range from pressure to engagement. It was alike a thumbnail of 30 years of the U.S.' North Korea policy. However, it was not only the U.S. but also China which displayed fast shifts in its position with North Korea. The puzzle of this research started with, "why are there distinctive fluctuations shown simultaneously on both the U.S. and China's North Korea policy during the years from 2017 to 2020," and "what accounts for such behaviors of the U.S. and China?"

Through the examination of both countries' North Korea policy during the relevant period, the research aims to reveal the outputs of both countries resulting in some form of adjustments in North Korea affairs. The central argument of this paper is that the interaction of the two major powers produced a certain behavior in North Korea policy, influenced by different national interests—even though there are times when these interests target each other. Also, the study adapts the intervening feature of national interests at the domestic level, claimed by the neoclassical realism. With such theoretical elements, the paper seeks to provide a new

perspective on North Korea policies from 2017 to 2020. The research takes a position that the coordination of the U.S. and China in North Korea affairs does not necessarily happen with conscious and explicit agreements, rather realized when the priority of national interests meet upon loose expectations on certain regional security challenges.

Keywords: The U.S.-China Relations, The U.S. and China's North Korea Policy,
Realism, Neoclassical Realism, National Interest

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Reviewing of the North Korea Contingencies

North Korea's development of nuclear weapons in the last few decades arouse massive security threats not only in the East Asia region but also to the world. Especially, the U.S.' concerns over North Korea's rapid change of attitude toward the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are well shown in the classified documents of the State Department since the early 1990s. According to the recently declassified dialogue of William Perry and South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung (1998), it is stated that during June 1994, the U.S. government seriously concerned about preemptive strikes on North Korea and calculated casualties of war.¹

Yet, the consideration of a disastrous plans was calmed down by the persuasive actions of various players. Enduring negotiations led to building up the Agreement Framework of 1994, also well known as the Geneva Agreement.² Meanwhile, the agreement became no longer valid when North Korea did not stop developing strategic weapons, and when the heavy oil supplement by the U.S. was delayed by the opposition of the Republican majority in both houses. The biggest miscalculation was that the North Korean regime would soon collapse after Kim Il-sung died, which apparently was not realized. The U.S. had to face North Korea's production of plutonium and the failure of international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).³

The second nuclear crisis arouse right after Clinton's succession of détente when the Bush administration came up to emphasize North Korea as the "Axis of Evil." On the other

¹ The United States Government, Cable, Amembassy Seoul 6928 to SecState, December 8, 1998, Subject: Former Secretary Perry's Meeting with President Kim (Confidential), (1998).

² The United States Government, State Department Talking Points [re the Agreed Framework], ca. November 1994., (1994).

³ The United States Government, Department of State INR Paper, Subject: DPRK Nuclear Status, December 20, 1996., (1996).

hand, the Kim Dae-Jung government kept the initiation of the Sunshine policy to persuade North Korea, and it was again succeeded by Roh Moo-Hyun's Reconciliation and Cooperation policy. Such active engagement strategies were denied by the following administrations of Lee Myung-Bak and Park Geun-Hye, which promoted sanctions and pressure tactics on North Korea.⁴

However, despite the various types of bilateral actions by the South Korean government and multilateral talks of the international society, the nuclear weapon development of North Korea was never suspended, rather flourished, proven by the successful development of the ICBM.⁵ As the issue of North Korea and its possession of nuclear weapons has become a crucial matter to the international society, many countries have long sought to find a method to manage the crisis and solve the problem. Since North Korea officially realized its first nuclear test on October 9, 2006, UN Security Council rectified resolution no. 1718, right after accepting resolution no. 1695 regarding North Korea's missile tests. Since then, there have been a total of eleven UNSC sanctions on North Korea,⁶ and not only the frequency but also the intensity of sanctions increased recently.

2. U.S.-China's Coordination on the Issue: *Possible or Not?*

Especially, it is shown that the U.S. and China have their significant reasons and objects involved in the matter, while their collective actions seem to work seldom.⁷ The rhetoric of U.S.-

⁴ Chung-in Moon, *The Sunshine Policy: In Defense of Engagement as a Path to Peace in Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2012).

⁵ Chung-in Moon, "Managing North Korean Nuclear Threats: In Defense of Dialogue and Negotiations," *Asia policy*, no. 23 (2017).

⁶ The United Nations Security Council, "UN Documents for DPRK (North Korea): Sanctions Committee Documents," in *Security Council Report*.
https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/sanctions-committee-documents/?ctype=DPRK%20%28North%20Korea%29&cctype=dprk-north-korea.
* Following are the UN Security Council's resolution lists on North Korea sanction: resolution no. 1695 (July 2006), no. 1718 (October 2006), no. 1874 (June 2009), no. 2087 (January 2013), no. 2094 (March 2013), no. 2270 (March 2016), 2321 (December 2016), no. 2356 (June 2017), no. 2371 (August 2017), no. 2375 (September 2017), no. 2397 (December 2017).

⁷ Bonnie S. Glaser; Brittany Billingsley; Stephan Haggard; Marcus Noland; Scott Snyder, *Reordering Chinese*

China cooperation on the North Korea issue has existed for decades yet has been realized. Not so long after Joe Biden started his presidency at the oval office, he had a long conversation with the Chinese president Xi Jinping on the phone for two hours. The White House (2021) explained that both leaders exchanged standard views on three issues: the challenges to global health security, climate change, and preventing weapons proliferation.⁸ Also, the Secretary of State Anthony Blinken (2021) addressed a speech on foreign policy for the American people and explained that the levels of the U.S.-China relationship are multi-layered.⁹ Stewart Patrick (2021) observed that such cooperation includes the issue of North Korea and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.¹⁰

Also, China displays larger attention on its role as a great-power status. In the recent article titled, "Becoming Strong," Yan Xuetong (2021) reviews the U.S.-China summit meeting held in Alaska and explains the new Chinese foreign policy. It is firmly stated that Beijing, with newfound confidence, will not challenge Washington in every single domain. An important element to point out is that the article refers to the statement of Blinken and Sullivan and answers that Beijing is also seeking coexistence with the United States. Xuetong claims that China is anxious not to frame the relationship with the West as a new Cold War but rather expecting a healthy competition.¹¹ Also, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has signaled that Beijing will support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) of 2015.¹²

Ironically, the repeated message of collaboration reveals the reality of the non-

Priorities on the Korean Peninsula, CSIS (November 2012 2012).

⁸ The United States Government, Readout of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Call with President Xi Jinping of China, February 10, 2021, (2021).

⁹ The United States Government, A Foreign Policy for the American People, March 2, 2021, (2021).

¹⁰ Stewart M. Patrick, "The Biden Administration and the Future of Multilateralism," (2021).
<https://www.cfr.org/blog/biden-administration-and-future-multilateralism>.

¹¹ Yan Xuetong, "Becoming Strong," *Foreign Affairs*, Jul/Aug 2021, 2021.

¹² Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union, Wang Yi Speaks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the Phone, March 15, 2022, (2022).

cooperation between the U.S. and China. It is true that there has been long existence of different regional interests in the Korean peninsula, therefore it was hard for the U.S. and China to meet commonality in the matter. In conclusion, it is hard for both states to have a same purpose and show a consensus on North Korea. Nevertheless, although there has been a lack of promised teamwork between the U.S. and China, a series of events seems to reveal the behavior of alignment, if not, convergence, in North Korean affairs in the last few years. Especially during the years of President Donald Trump, Beijing has shown visible series of fast transitions toward Pyongyang, unlike the relatively silent days during the previous U.S. administration.¹³

Therefore, an important reality of the U.S. and China's evolving relationship matters in determining the issue. It is not an option to discard the complex situations both the U.S. and China are facing, but in fact, a must, to mention the changing of relations. The following literature reviews will cover the American views on the nature of the relationship between the U.S. and China and overall changes in the U.S. North Korea policy. Also, the section will include the limitations of the existing approaches and recommend a supplementing perspective.

¹³ Evans J.R. Revere, *Lips and Teeth: Repairing China-North Korea Relations*, Brookings (Brookings Institution: Brookings Institution, 2019).

Chapter 2. Literature Review

1. Changes of North Korea Policy and Expected Roles

Since the late 20th century, American scholars have sought to provide a broad spectrum of practical approaches to dealing with North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons while policymakers were in a deadlock situation. Bruce Cumings (1999), an expert on the history of the Korean peninsula, suggested the "comprehensive settlement" toward North Korea, as the expectation of the collapse of the Kim family has been revealed to be wishful thinking. Cumings explained that the Cold War framework would continue in the Korean peninsula as the Korean War has never ended, and the best one can seek a settlement rather than a complete solution. Also, Cumings showed an optimistic view based on the interpretation that North Korea is trying to make conversations with the international society to recover from the severe famine. North Korea will eventually stop developing weapons of mass destruction when it successfully gets involved in the world economy.¹⁴

Another approach was shown in efforts to understand the unique, North Korean way of negotiation. Scott Snyder (1999) claims that the economic desperation and the end of the Cold War have influenced North Korea to change its attitude to sit at the negotiation table. Rather than fabricating North Korean counterparts as mad or irrational, Snyder suggests that the U.S. will have a broader spectrum of options if they understand the rhetoric of North Korea in the new era.¹⁵ In fact, according to the North Korea report of William Perry (1999), the U.S. administration had to consider the fear of isolation, suspicion, and negotiating style of North

¹⁴ Bruce Cumings, "Toward a Comprehensive Settlement of the Korea Problem," *Current History* 98, no. 632 (1999).

¹⁵ Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (USIP Press: USIP Press, November 1999, 1999).

Korea and was required “steadiness and persistence even in the face of provocations.”¹⁶

On June 6, 2001, the G. W. Bush administration stated that they completed the review of North Korea policy and named the new method as the “comprehensive approach.” The announcement included that the U.S. would try to recover the Agreed Framework of 1994 and seek further discussions.¹⁷ However, as the administration soon turned its focus on Middle East Asia and enhanced the rhetoric of the “war on terrorism,” details of the North Korea issue lost its priority in the U.S.’ foreign policy sector.¹⁸ Also, the Bush administration had no imperativeness to make improvements with Pyongyang since North Korea was one of these “Axis of Evil.”¹⁹ Consequently, the administration had no room for any comprehensiveness.

On the contrary, both the academia and think tanks during the period of the Obama administration had a confident perspective on engagement through international support. Especially when the new administration was preparing for its transition, the Atlantic Council issued a proposal on the new strategy of a comprehensive settlement of North Korea. The primary policy recommendations are affirming and facilitating talks with high-level officials, appointing a special envoy with presidential authority, concluding agreements and relative accords, and offering a U.S. diplomatic recognition of North Korea.²⁰ Not only the scholars but also experts in the field emphasized engagement, including the options of negotiations, discussions, cultural exchanges, and even diplomatic relations between the U.S. and North Korea.

¹⁶ The United States Government, Review of United States Policy Toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations, Unclassified Report by Dr. William J. Perry, U.S. North Korea Policy Coordinator and Special Advisor to the President and the Secretary of State, (Department of State: Department of State, 1999).

¹⁷ The United States Government, Statement on Completion of the North Korea Policy Review, June 6, 2001, (GPO: The United States Government, 2001).

¹⁸ Sebastian Harnisch, "U.S.-North Korean Relations under the Bush Administration: From "Slow Go" to "No Go"," *Asian Survey* 42, no. 6 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2002.42.6.856>.

¹⁹ Alex Wagner, "Bush Labels North Korea, Iran, Iraq an 'Axis of Evil'," (Arms Control Association, April 16, 2002). <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002-03/press-releases/bush-labels-north-korea-iran-iraq-axis-evil>.

²⁰ James; Gross Goodby, Donald; Park, John; Romberg, Alan; Sigal, Leon V.; Snyder, Joseph, *A New US Diplomatic Strategy toward North Korea*, The Atlantic Council (The Atlantic Council, 2009).

William Boik (2011), a former U.S. Army Colonel and currently an active scholar in the academic field of the military, also suggested that the policy of actively engaging North Korea at multiple levels will provide a forum for the U.S. to exert more substantial influence.²¹

As Obama took the office in 2009, North Korea tested the Obama administration by committing provocations such as the missile launch in April and its second nuclear test in May. However, the administration failed to boldly promote its North Korea plans, while prioritizing policies on overcoming the Global Financial Crisis and wars in Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq. The Secretary of State Hillary Clinton rationalized their North Korea policy as “strategic patience”, a term which originates from Stephen Bosworth, a special representative for North Korea.²² Strategic patience implies that sanctions and diplomatic efforts must be combined until North Korea shows sincerity toward denuclearization. Deliberating the first term of the Obama administration, the initial stage of the U.S.’ North Korea policy included the active role of not only the U.S. but also China. It could be referred to as partial coworking with China, in the matter of having North Korea come to the negotiation table. The administration did make profound efforts to start diplomacy with Pyongyang. In February 2012, the delegations of the U.S. and North Korea met in Beijing, with high expectations of progress. They reaffirmed that the U.S. “does not have hostile intent toward the DPRK and is prepared to take steps to improve [the] bilateral relationship.” As a result, the delegations agreed upon making a February 29 agreement, specifying Pyongyang’s commitment to the moratorium of nuclear development. However, such promises were violated by North Korea only two months after the agreements were made. With deep disappointment, Washington turned to pressing sanctions rather than having a direct conversation with Pyongyang.

²¹ William Boik, *Understanding the North Korea Problem: Why it has become the “Land of Lousy Options”*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (2011).

²² 이인호, "미국 오바마 2기 행정부의 아·태전략 및 대북정책 전망," [Prospects for the Second Term Obama Administration's Policy towards Asia-Pacific and North Korea.] *국방정책연구* 29, no. 3 (2013).

The atmosphere seemed to shift into a strained state since North Korea's disclosure of its uranium enrichment program (UEP) in 2010. Especially during the second term of the Obama administration, the U.S. did not make bilateral approaches with North Korea, keeping the stance of patience. As a result, President Obama was highly criticized for cutting off dialogue under the premise of North Korea's denuclearization declaration throughout his term, allowing North Korea to comfortably develop nuclear weapons without any external interference. The level of North Korea's nuclear technology has been advanced without aggressive interference under the Obama administration and has not suffered enough from the sanctions nor have provided room for dialogue.

Meanwhile, it is undeniably clear that America's 45th President, Donald Trump was an extremely untypical figure compared to previous leaderships. The administration's strategy can be largely characterized as "America first" and "peace through economic and military strength."²³ The Trump administration's approach breaks the framework of the diplomatic and security tradition that the U.S. has pursued since World War II, in the following three main aspects. First, the Trump administration rejects internationalism based on multilateralism that established a postwar, U.S.-led liberalist world order, but rather maximizes unilateralism.²⁴ Second, its policy is differentiated from traditional isolationism in that it criticizes internationalism but values the use of force for the domestic interest.²⁵ Third, as President Trump's own share in the foreign policy-making process gradually expands, it shows an improvised and unpredictable pattern of foreign policy enforcement. Yet, as this paper will explain further, the personal characteristics or style of leadership may bring exaggeration of

²³ The United States Government, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017, (2017).

²⁴ Tom McTague; Peter Nicholas, "How 'America First' became America Alone," *The Atlantic*, October 29, 2020, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/10/donald-trump-foreign-policy-america-first/616872/>.

²⁵ Wassim Daghrir, "Trump's Foreign Policy Doctrine of Uncertainty," *E-International Relations*, June 29, 2020, 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/06/29/trumps-foreign-policy-doctrine-of-uncertainty/>.

understanding a state's foreign policy. Thus, one should be aware of a reductionist approach and separate the strong features from reality.

2. Assessments of Previous Literature

It is noticeable to find that since the start of the 21st century, perspectives and policy proposals have become more practical and more detailed scenarios. The cause of such phenomenon is because North Korea has successfully launched strategic missiles in a longer range, and more repeatedly held its nuclear experiments. Interestingly, many existing discussions were mainly focused on a specific incident or covering limited actors within an administration. Or the arguments were deeply rooted in a specific strategy of coercion or appeasement, depending on whether one strongly supports that solution to work. Also, there was a lack of comprehensive analysis of the U.S. perspective on China's role on the North Korea issue or how to work together in a practical sense. Especially, an objective review of China's involvement to the U.S. North Korea policy has been rarely studied. Most of the preconditions were that China was constantly unhelpful and steadily uninterested in solving the matter or rather disturbing as constantly. Therefore, this study aims to supplement the existing discussions and provide a realist interpretation of the U.S.-China relations and both countries' state behavior toward North Korea. The following sections will explain more about the framework of the research.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Elements and Research Framework

1. Elements from Neoclassical Realism

This paper identifies the core intervening variable provided by neoclassical realism. The piling of concept was first established by Gideon Rose (1998). He compiled the arguments of Thomas J. Christensen, Randall L. Schweller, William Wohlforth, and Fareed Zakaria—as a new section of realism. Neoclassical realism shares the fundamental root of realism is the acknowledgment of the anarchical world and the prioritization of a state-level actor. At the same time, the classical realist approach of Hans J. Morgenthau (1952) is recognized here, where such a state actor is also largely influenced by its political power.²⁶ In Rose's phrase, such approaches are undeniably founded on realism, since it assumes that “the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy are driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities.” At the same time, neoclassical realists argue that “the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level.”²⁷

In sum, within the structural basis, neoclassical realism attempts to systemize the state actor's foreign policy precisely by considering its corresponded national interests. Concretely, neoclassical realism tries to deductively analyze the relationship between the international system and state behavior (e.g., foreign policy), and yet involves the intervening variable of national interests.²⁸ What determines a state's national interests is, firstly, a “decision maker's

²⁶ Hans J. Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: New York : Knopf, 1952).

²⁷ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Pol* 51, no. 1 (1998), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100007814>.

²⁸ Elias Götz, "Neoclassical Realist Theories, Intervening Variables, and Paradigmatic Boundaries," *Foreign policy analysis* 17, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/oraa026>.

perceptions,” and secondly, a “strength of a country’s state apparatus and its relation to the surrounding society.”²⁹ As Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (2006) explained, the intervening feature of national interest is generalized as the political power and the decision maker’s perception.³⁰ Consequently, the interpretation of a state-actor in neoclassical realism is more towards a government. According to Zakaria (1998) and Christensen (1996), the political power required by governments to achieve specific policy goals plays a more critical role in the foreign policy-making process rather than the physical power of the country itself.³¹

2. Research Framework

This research attempts to provide a systematic explanation of the current international system by reviewing both the U.S. and China’s state behavior toward North Korea. Therefore, the research methodology is a hypothetical deductive method. While the original deductive analysis presumes the precondition to be true and explains the phenomenon, the hypothetical deductive method reverses such procedure to prove the authenticity of a general idea.³² The study starts from a puzzle, which is stimulated while researching the phenomenon. One may raise the question of whether the general idea fits the real world and constructs a research hypothesis. Also, the researcher would assume a possible outcome and predict a certain conclusion before conducting an actual investigation. The following verification leads to the proving of the hypothesis. Thus, the hypothetical deductive method necessarily involves an

²⁹ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy"

³⁰ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security studies* 15, no. 3 (2006), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410601028370>.

³¹ Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries : Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1996). & Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1998).

³² William Whewell, *History of the Inductive Sciences: From the Earliest to the Present Time*, 3. ed., with additions. ed. (London: London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857).

inductive approach.³³

While researching the North Korea contingencies, the following puzzles were raised: “why are there distinctive fluctuations shown simultaneously on both the U.S. and China’s North Korea policy during the years from 2017 to 2020,” and “what accounts for such behaviors of the U.S. and China?” Accordingly, another condition follows. Considering that there had been rapid shifts in the U.S.’ North Korea policy during the relevant period—if China was aimed to respond to similar matters regarding the power dynamics—China may also have its turning point of fast transition in a comparable time. Repeatedly said, the intervening feature of national interest is not an independent variable, but a concept which influences the interacting units within the international structure.³⁴ Also, as noted above, such intervening descriptions consist of political capability to make foreign policy decisions, especially in accordance with physical powers. In other words, the aim of this research is to reveal whether the U.S. and China have adjusted the existing structure and whether they have recently shown certain behaviors regarding the matter of regional security.

Especially, due to North Korea’s testing of ICBM and the sixth nuclear experiment in 2017, there were critical and fast transitions in agenda-setting. Hazard to guess, it may be said that most of the methods of the U.S. and China’s North Korea policy—from confrontation to dialogue—have all been vividly discovered then. In other words, the period of the Trump administration was the thumbnail of the last 30 years of the North Korean nuclear conundrum. Accordingly, the paper specifically focuses on the critical junctures organized in three phases—from 2017 to 2018, 2018 to 2019, and 2019 to 2020.

This paper sets a total of three main variables limited in the procedure of verification.

³³ 천현득. 2021. “가설연역법에 따른 입증이란.” 서울대 지식교양 강연. 2021년 7월 26 일. 검색일: 2021년 12월 18일. <https://tv.naver.com/v/21456231>

³⁴ Norrin M. Ripsman et al., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, Neoclassical Realism, the State, & Foreign Policy, (Cambridge, UK & New York: Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2009).

The independent variables are U.S.-China relations, the dependent variables are the U.S. and China's state behavior, and the intervening variable is the national interest of the U.S. and China. If the tendency of both countries' North Korea policies shows similar behaviors which reflect comparable national interests, the hypothesis of the paper would possibly support the argument, "yet both the U.S. and China have different interests and policy projections on the North Korean affairs, a pattern of aligning state behavior was shown during the recent years, which was not only dependent on the U.S.-China relations but also intervened by the converging or diverging of the U.S. and China's national interest." This paper aims to find empirical cases of the actual North Korea policies and the events uncovering the national interests of the U.S. and China and intends not only to support the main logic of realism but also to find the new narratives on the U.S. and China's power balances from the cases of both countries' recent North Korea policies.

Chapter 4. Policy Convergence toward *Pressure*

1. The Testing of Thermonuclear Weapons and ICBM

North Korea's nuclear program has become more blatant in recent years. That can be seen in the quickening pace of nuclear and missile testing; the formal inclusion of North Korea's status as a "nuclear state" in its constitution; the greater prominence given to the nuclear arsenal in public parades; the expansion of facilities generating fissile materials; and the most recent estimates about the rate of expansion of the arsenal. It might be seen most clearly of all in the explicit political endorsement that Kim Jong-Un has given to the program in his regular and frequent media appearances at key tests.

In a rather more backhanded way, it has also been seen in the reaction of the international society: in the growing global concerns about the program; in the willingness to impose tougher sanctions upon North Korea; in the higher level of interest in ballistic missile defense (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, THAAD) program in South Korea; and in a quickening debate about the nonproliferation principle of the nuclear states and the international society. The growing threat caused by North Korea reached its peak in 2017 with the series of long-range missile tests and the testing of a thermonuclear bomb—also well known as the hydrogen bomb.

On September 3, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test. North Korean state media announced that the test was of a thermonuclear weapon that could fit on the top of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).³⁵ The weapon's explosive yield was reported to be at least five times larger than the fifth nuclear test, the one detonated in Punggye-ri on September

³⁵ Dagyum Ji and Oliver Hotham, "North Korea announces successful test of hydrogen bomb: Announcer Ri Chun Hee reports the "perfect success" of a "hydrogen bomb" for ICBM," September 3, 2017, 2017, <https://www.nknews.org/2017/09/north-korea-announces-successful-test-of-hydrogen-bomb/?c=1504422580020>.

9, 2016. Initial reporting from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) first claimed the magnitude to be 5.2, but quickly upgraded the event to magnitude 6.3.³⁶ Other seismologic agencies including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the Norwegian Research Organization (NORSAR) determined the magnitude to have been 5.8. While multiple readings will need to be refined over the upcoming days, if this lower number is correct, NORSAR calculated that the yield of the test device would be about 120 kilotons or about eight times the yield of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, and about six times that of the fifth nuclear test conducted at 2016.³⁷ This was the first nuclear test by North Korea during President Trump's term in office and a total of sixteenth times of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) related event since his inauguration.

International concerns about the possibility of war accelerated since Pyongyang showed provocative measures of testing long-range ballistic missile tests of the Hwasong-14 and the Hwasong-12 in both July and August 2017. On November 29, North Korea exposed a video of the testing of the new Hwasong-15, which can reach the whole part of the mainland of the United States. In the launching test, the missile flew for 53 minutes, reaching a maximum altitude of 4,500km and a range of 960km before landing in the East Sea/Sea of Japan.³⁸ North Korea's official statement on the Hwasong-15 missile test claimed that it can carry a "super-large heavy warhead which can strike the whole mainland of the U.S." It also noted that the missile had "greater advantages in its tactical and technological specifications and technical characteristics than the Hwasong-14," referring to the previous ICBM tests.³⁹ The Hwasong-15 is estimated to

³⁶ The United States Government, M6.3 North Korea Explosion of 03 September 2017, (U.S. Geological Survey, 2017).

³⁷ 38 NORTH, "Sixth Nuclear Test Detected at Punggye-ri, Declared to be a Hydrogen Bomb," September 3, 2017, 2017, <https://www.38north.org/2017/09/nuke090317/>.

³⁸ Missile Defense Project, *Hwasong-15 (KN-22)* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 7, 2017, last modified July 31, 2021), <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/hwasong-15-kn-22/>.

³⁹ Zachary Cohen et al., "New missile test shows North Korea capable of hitting all of US mainland," CNN, November 30, 2017, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/28/politics/north-korea-missile->

be 21~22.5 meters in length and 2~2.4 meters in diameter. This is notably larger than its immediate predecessor, the Hwasong-14.⁴⁰ The missile's more spacious payload fairing may allow the future deployment of large or multiple nuclear warheads and penetration aids to complicate missile defense. The missile appears to employ two of the Hwasong-14's "Korean-style high-thrust" engines in its first stage. An indigenously produced variant of the Soviet-designed RD-250 engine, the motors use higher-energy propellants to produce up to 48 tons of thrust apiece.⁴¹

2. The U.S.' Interests and Policy Outputs

2.1. *National Interests of the U.S.*

Defining the national interest of the U.S. has faced a great challenge since 2008. The era of the "rise of the rest" arrived since then, and a fierce debate between primacy and retrenchment strategies began shortly after the Global Financial Crisis.⁴² Such a discussion was related to two contradicting challenges in America, which are diagnosed as valid today.⁴³ The first was to come up with an "exit strategy" to readjust the over-projected power during the former administration, including the dispatched military forces in the Middle East countries, and the second was to restore the U.S. governance, which was revealed as fragile since the financial crisis. The former was drifting in a series of structural friction, and the latter was drifting in the

launch/index.html.

⁴⁰ Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea's New Missiles is Bigger and More Powerful, Photos Suggest," *New York Times*, November 30, 2017, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/30/world/asia/north-korea-missile-test.html>.

⁴¹ Ankit Panda, "North Korea's New High-Performance Missile Engines Likely Weren't Made in Russia or Ukraine," *The Diplomat*, August 16, 2017, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/north-koreas-new-high-performance-missile-engines-likely-werent-made-in-russia-or-ukraine/>.

⁴² Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of the Rest," (2008).
<https://fareedzakaria.com/columns/2008/05/12/the-rise-of-the-rest>.

⁴³ Charles A. Kupchan, "America's Pullback Must Continue No Matter Who Is President," *Foreign Policy*, October 21, 2020, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/21/election-2020-smart-retrenchment/>.

face of the simultaneous collapse of the national state system. Thus, the new type of U.S. interest projection, established through this debate, was an eclectic one with extended characteristics—retrenchment to involvement.

The change of government in the U.S. was a terminus a quo for the open proclamation of its national interest. The White House (2017) issued “four pillars” of national interests—protecting the homeland, the American people, and the American way of life; promoting American prosperity; preserving peace through strength; advancing American influence. Such a strategy was directly aimed at “revisionist” actors, specified as China and Russia. It was claimed that these states “use technology, propaganda, and coercion to shape a world antithetical to our interests and values.” Also, the transnational terrorists threatening the U.S. homeland were warned and the policy of raising borders and deploying a layered missile defense systems was declared.⁴⁴

In response to North Korea’s provocations which have accelerated since the end of President Obama’s term, Washington has shown an attitude that it will not tolerate any actions that break the regional equilibrium. However, the level of provocations and the numbers increased, enough to invade the U.S.’ central interest of securing alliance states and defending its homeland territory. Especially, the timeline of testing the weapons of mass destruction intensified in 2017. First to point out is the number of tests. According to the archive of CSIS (2022), among the period from 1984 to 2022, the year 2017 has the largest number of tests.⁴⁵ The second is the type and the trajectory of the weapons. As mentioned above, the displaying and testing of an ICBM and the thermonuclear test was an act of severe provocation. This has become a strong motive for the U.S., to secure the regional balance amid the context of the rising

⁴⁴ The United States Government, President Donald J. Trump Announces a National Security Strategy to Advance America’s Interests, (2017).

⁴⁵ Missile Defense Project, *Missiles of North Korea*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (June 14, 2018 2022), <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/dprk/>.

of revisionist states.

2.2. U.S.' North Korea Policy Outputs: Offensive Pressure

Washington warned Pyongyang not to permit any more offensive actions, and the prime method was to assemble strategic assets in the region. Especially, the nuclear-propelled aircraft carrier Carl Vinson was relocated near the Korean Peninsula. According to the U.S. Navy officials, Carl Vinson arrived at the coast of South Korea, on April 29, guided by the ROK Navy's Sejong the Great and Yang Manchun destroyers. Initially, the plan was to both place the Carl Vinson and the Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier on the period of 85th anniversary of North Korea's army establishment, on April 25, but the substantial placement of Carl Vinson was taken a few days later. These ships stayed near North Korea until early June.⁴⁶

Also, in November, during the period of President Trump's visit to East Asian countries, a total of three aircraft carriers were near the Korean Peninsula and the East China Sea: Gerald Ford, Carl Vinson, and John Stennis.⁴⁷ Especially, the new aircraft carrier Gerald Ford has equipped with the latest technology including the new A1B reactor, Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS), Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) and Dual Band Radar (DBR) all offer the enhanced capability.⁴⁸ The F-35C exercise held in these ships was a clear pressuring message not only to Pyongyang but also to Beijing since these bombers flew across the East China Sea.

However, despite these eminent signs of military clash, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test on November 29. Right after such provocations, the U.S. and South Korea

⁴⁶ Leo Byrne, "Two U.S. aircraft carriers leave waters near North Korea," *NK News*, June 6, 2017, 2017, <https://www.nknews.org/2017/06/two-u-s-aircraft-carriers-leave-waters-near-north-korea/>.

⁴⁷ Franz-Stefan Gady, "3 US Carrier Strike Groups Enter Asia-Pacific Ahead of Trump's Visit," *The Diplomat*, October 25, 2017, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/3-us-carrier-strike-groups-enter-asia-pacific-ahead-of-trumps-visit/>.

⁴⁸ "Gerald R. Ford Class Aircraft Carrier," accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.military.com/equipment/gerald-r-ford-class-aircraft-carrier>.

conducted joint drills, including flyovers by B-1 Lancer bombers. Decisively, significant military pressure was shown subsequently by a trilateral ballistic missile defense exercise between South Korea, the U.S., and Japan. Held on December 11, this joint exercise included three countries' Aegis-equipped destroyers—Seo-ae-ryu Seong-ryong of South Korea, Stethem of the U.S., and Chokai of Japanese Self Defense Force. The joint exercise included conducting computer-simulated training for submarine missile launches by North Korea, according to South Korean military officials.⁴⁹

Another important output of the U.S. was an actual policy review of a preemptive strike.⁵⁰ The Pentagon clarified the possibility of a “massive military response” and the potential of “total annihilation” in the statement of Defense Secretary James Mattis (2017).⁵¹ According to Bob Woodward (2020), the administration approved the firing of a missile to show target precision to North Korea. Quoting various government officials, including the former Defense Secretary, this action was a particular message to Pyongyang since it flew 186 miles before it fell in between the exact point of North Korea's test site.⁵²

Offensive pressures were not only shown in military sectors, but also in economic areas. The method is to levitate the sanction levels. On April 26, the administration invited 100 members of the U.S. Senate to the White House for a private briefing on North Korea policy with the attendance of the NSC members.⁵³ After the briefing, the Secretary of State Rex

⁴⁹ 김귀근, "한미일 3국 北탄도탄 탐지추적 미사일경보훈련 돌입(종합)," *연합뉴스*, 2017년 12월 11일, 2017, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20171211028551014>.

⁵⁰ John Power, "Trump Administration Puts Military Action Against North Korea Back on the Table," *The Diplomat*, March 03, 2017, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/trump-administration-puts-military-action-against-north-korea-back-on-the-table/>.

⁵¹ Mathew Nussbaum, Bryan Bender, and Brent D. Griffiths, "Mattis warns of 'massive military response' if North Korea threatens attack," *Politico*, September 3, 2017, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/03/trump-north-korea-nuclear-242289>.

⁵² Bob Woodward, *Rage* (New York : Simon & Schuster, 2020).

⁵³ W. J. Hennigan, Tracy Wilkinson, and Michael A. Memoli, "Full Senate, in rare move, goes to White House grounds for classified North Korea briefing," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 2017, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-senate-north-korea-20170426-story.html>.

Tillerson, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Dan Coats issued a joint statement. It is summarized that the U.S. policy will lead North Korea to the path of denuclearization through economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure, and the administration will also consider military options if it continues to provoke with long range missiles.⁵⁴ Afterward, the U.S. Congress passed a bill to block access to the U.S. financial network for individuals and entities linked with Pyongyang, passed a full travel ban on North Korea, and a ban on imports of North Korean crude oil. Especially, by adding the possibility of secondary sanctions, the U.S. pressured all individuals, entities, or governments that are in close relationships with North Korea. The reports of the U.S. Congressional Research Service (2020) note that the U.S. “curtails trade with North Korea for reasons of regional stability.”⁵⁵

3. China’s Interests and Policy Outputs

3.1. National Interests of China

Though China has not published any official documents titled foreign policy, one can find the changes in essential ideas through recent security cooperation papers, national defense white papers, or public articles written in international journals. For instance, in the early 2000s, Zheng Bijian (2005) emphasized China’s peaceful rise to a great-power status and claimed that the country was ready to embrace globalization and dedicate itself to world peace. Also, it was highlighted that the prioritized goal of the country is pulling its population from poverty.⁵⁶

Yet, there was a changing tone in the handling of interests afterward. The term “core interests (核心利益)” started to appear in Chinese official statements frequently and has shown

⁵⁴ The United States Government, Joint Statement by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, (2017).

⁵⁵ Congressional Research Service, North Korea: Legislative Basis for U.S. Economic Sanctions, (2020).

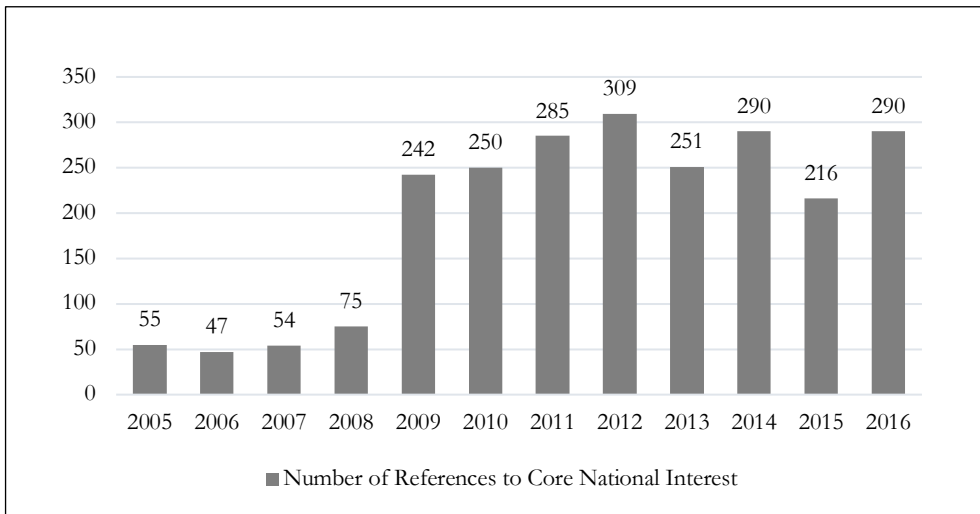
⁵⁶ Bijian Zheng, "China's "Peaceful Rise" to Great-Power Status," *Foreign Affairs* (2005).

the growing confidence in stating its foreign policy. The time received strong attention when included in the U.S.-China Joint Statement of 2009. It was mentioned as the following:

“The two countries reiterated that the fundamental principle of respect for each other’s *sovereignty* and *territorial integrity* is at the core... The two sides agreed that respecting each other’s **core interests** is extremely important to ensure steady progress in U.S.-China relations.”⁵⁷

Xiaodi Ye (2019) pointed out that the number of referring to the term in People’s Daily has dramatically increased since then.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Wang Jisi (2011) recognized the need to organize China’s core interests and declare its principles for the sake of international society.⁵⁹

To answer what China’s core interests are referring to, one may discuss the analysis of Michael Swaine (2011). Swaine separates the concept from “major concerns (重大关切)” or



<Chart 1> Number of References to Core National Interest

(Source: People’s Daily Database) [Original Figures from the Research of Xiaodi Ye, 2019]

⁵⁷ The United States Government, U.S.-China Joint Statement, November 17, 2009, (2009).

⁵⁸ Xiaodi Ye, "Rediscovering the Transition in China’s National Interest: A Neoclassical Realist Approach," *Journal of current Chinese affairs* 48, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868102619876830>.

⁵⁹ Wang Jisi, "China's Search for a Grand Strategy: A Rising Great Power Finds Its Way," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2011).

“fundamental interests (根本利益),” which were employed earlier than core interests. Core interests are repeatedly suggested as the concept of sovereignty and territorial integrity (主权和领土完整).⁶⁰ However, when it comes to the details, it seems unclear and vague what the boundaries are — in other words, what is *not* the matter of sovereignty? Chinese scholars are also interested in the conceptualization of the idea since the assumption is that misinterpretations lead to wrong implications of foreign policy. For instance, Jinghan Zeng et al. (2015) position that there is no consensus over whether China’s core interest can exclude events happening outside of the country.⁶¹

In such a sense, South Korea’s deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system raises the controversy of whether it invades China’s core interests. In February 2016, the South Korean government announced that it would start its discussion on placing the U.S. technology-based anti-ballistic missile system. In an interview with Reuters, Wang Yi (2016) highly criticized the intentions of the U.S. targeting China, claiming that it “will not only directly damage China’s strategic security interests, but also harm the security interests of other countries in this region.”⁶² Also, Jia Qingguo (2016) warned that this would seriously hurt the China-South Korea bilateral relationships and the process of persuading Pyongyang.⁶³ When the Chinese were handling the issue of THAAD, the term “security interest (安全利益)” appeared to the surface, and it was claimed that the deployment of a system deliberately damages

⁶⁰ Michael D. Swaine, “China’s Assertive Behavior—Part One: On “Core Interests,”” *China Leadership Monitor* 32 (2010).

⁶¹ Jinghan Zeng, Yuefan Xiao, and Shaun Breslin, “Securing China’s Core Interests: the State of the Debate in China,” *International Affairs* 91, no. 2 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12233>.

⁶² John Irish, “INTERVIEW-China urges U.N. action to make North Korea “pay price,”” *Reuters*, February 12, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/china-wangyi-korea-usa-idINKCN0VL13F>.

⁶³ 王哲, “北京大学国际关系学院院长贾庆国谈朝核问题 解决方案 (Dean of School of International Studies at Peking University, Jia Qingguo, discusses how to solve the North Korean nuclear crisis),” *JoongAng Ilbo Chinese*, October 14, 2016, 2016, http://chinese.joins.com/gb/article.do?method=detail&art_id=158244.

the interests of China.⁶⁴

Interestingly, another critical problem of U.S. investigation of intellectual property rights appeared to cause massive discomfort. The investigation was not a naive one, but the activation of trade law section 301—protectionist legislation, made in 1974, can be a basis for retaliatory action. The initiation happened in August 2017, and reports were made throughout 2018.⁶⁵ The numbers of USTR reports claim China's cyber-enabled theft, global espionage, unfair technology transfer, and discriminative investments. Such issues will be discussed further from 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020.

3.2. China's North Korea Policy Outputs: Defensive Pressure

Considering such interests of China, North Korea's action of testing thermonuclear weapons and ICBM seriously invaded Beijing's efforts to secure the regional status-quo. Yet the pressure policy may be described as defensive, compared to that of the United States'. The long-existing Chinese perspective on North Korea could be found in the article of Hui Zhang (2005). Zhang states, "China has several major interests in a nuclear-free Korean peninsula" and lists three specific reasons. First is that avoiding war and preserving peace is a top priority since China requires a stable environment for development. Secondly, China peruses nuclear non-proliferation because neighboring countries such as Japan and South Korea may follow the arms race, leading to the rise of tensions in the region. The third reason is that China is deeply concerned with refugees. It is already an existing reality since China faces thousands of border crossers every year. The last reason is the most important—it makes it harder for China to "balance relations with the U.S. and North Korea."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ 钟声, "中国安全利益不容蓄意损害 (China's security interests should not be deliberately damaged)," *People's Daily*, August 1, 2016, 2016.

⁶⁵ The United States Government, Investigation: Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property, and Innovation, (2017).

⁶⁶ Hui Zhang, "Chinese Perspectives on the North Korean Nuclear Issue," *Institute for Nuclear Materials Management* June/July 2005 (2005).

Of Pyongyang's 24 missile tests in 2017, one took place just before the U.S.-China summit in Florida on April 6 and another happened before the first Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, the same year May.⁶⁷ Considering the aim of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative—the regional integration of economy and security cooperation⁶⁸—the scheduling of these tests appeared to decisively discomfort Beijing. Tong Zhao (2017), of Carnegie-Tsinghua Center, delivered strong concerns that Pyongyang must “not really need a direct nuclear deterrence against the homeland of the U.S.”⁶⁹ With such a series of provocations, China's North Korea policy met crucial shifts in two areas: one in the military sector and the other in the economic realm. There is a common misconception that the borderlines of China will be heightened when the China-North Korea relations are amicable. Yet, it is the opposite cause—when the relations deteriorate, the border crossing gets tougher. Sea Young Kim (2018) explores that there have been three times when China showed such crackdowns: 2003, 2011, and 2017—all of them with Beijing's concerns over the possibility of North Korea's regime collapse.⁷⁰ Such contingencies make Beijing move on the military area, which leads directly to assembling troops near the border. The Financial Times (2017) reported its obtained intel on China's leaked document, including plans for building at least five refugee camps in Changbai riverside, Changbai Shibalidaogou and Changbai Jiguanlizi. The New York Times (2017) followed the coverage and added two more places: Tumen and Hunchun.⁷¹

The spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to confirm the

⁶⁷ James Griffiths, "North Korea blights China's One Belt, One Road party with missile launch," *CNN*, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/14/asia/china-north-korea-missile-obor/index.html>.

⁶⁸ 원동욱, "중국의 지정학과 주변외교: "일대일로"를 중심으로," *현대중국연구* 17, no. 2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.35820/JMCS.17.2.9>.

⁶⁹ James Griffiths, "North Korea blights China's One Belt, One Road party with missile launch."

⁷⁰ Sea Young Kim, "China's Crackdown on North Korean Refugees: North Korean Provocations Intensify Border Control" (M.A. Georgetown University, 2018).

⁷¹ Tom Phillips, "China building network of refugee camps along border with North Korea," *The Guardian*, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/12/china-refugee-camps-border-north-korea>.

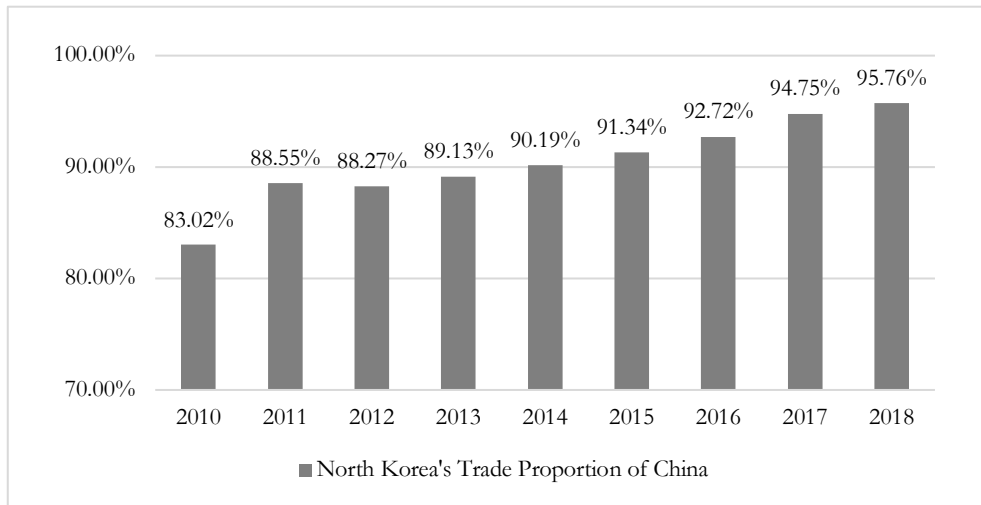
camps' existence or the exceptional preparation for a crisis. However, according to New York Times, special forces conducted "a live-fire drill in June by helicopter gunships and one in July by an armored infantry unit recently transferred from eastern China and equipped with new weaponry." All were explained as regular maintenance of an army or part of Xi Jinping's military revolution, but the experts pointed out that it was an act of ramping up its defense in a disastrous war. Mark Cozad pointed out that the preparations go well beyond just seizing the buffer zone.⁷² When the U.S. issued a statement of condemnation shortly after Pyongyang's testing of ICBM in July, China also delivered strong signs of warning and emphasized the principle of military non-intervention if North Korea carries out an initial strike against the United States.⁷³

To fully understand China's behavior of pressure during this period, the proportion of China in North Korea's trade and Beijing's previous attitudes toward the North Korean sanctions must be explained. According to the figures from the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), China accounts for most of North Korea's trade, and the percentages have been increasing since 2010.⁷⁴ Although China has agreed on posing international sanctions against North Korea before (i.e., UN Security Council resolutions no. 2094, 2270, and 2321), it showed a passive attitude toward individual follow-up. As the least response to the multiple UN sanctions, China only exercised limited measures on importing goods, published lists banning import and export goods, and only temporally suspension of coal imports from North Korea. As to further responses, Beijing declared that it "should be prudent, appropriate and conducive

⁷² Jeremy Page, "China Prepares for a Crisis Along North Korea Border; Beijing bolsters defenses along its 880- mile frontier and realigns forces in surrounding regions," *Wall Street Journal* (New York, N.Y.) 2017.

⁷³ Simon Denyer and Amanda Erickson, "Beijing warns Pyongyang: You're on your own if you go after the United States," August 11, 2017, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/china-warns-north-korea-youre-on-your-own-if-you-go-after-the-us/2017/08/11/a01a4396-7e68-11e7-9026-4a0a64977c92_story.html.

⁷⁴ 국가통계포털, *북한 주요국별 교역비중 변화추이(2000~2020)*, 통계청 (2022), https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1ZGA99A&vw_cd=MT_BUKHAN&list_id=101_001_007&scrId=&seqNo=&lang_mode=ko&obj_var_id=&itm_id=&conn_path=MT_BUKHAN&path=%252FstatisticsList%252FstatisticsListIndex.do.



<Chart 2> North Korea's Trade Proportion of China, 2010~2018 [Data from KOSIS, 2022]
to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula,” and hesitated to get involved further.⁷⁵

Compared to the previous passiveness, a series of UN Security Council resolutions no. 2371, 2375, 2397 was passed unanimously in August, September, and December, as an imminent response to North Korea’s ICBM tests and the sixth nuclear test. China warned of blocking crude oil as a follow-up to the UN sanctions. Accordingly, the report of Reuters (2017) revealed that China’s suspension of oil exports to North Korea goes beyond the UN sanctions. Since June, China’s state-run oil company, China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) stopped sales of gasoline and diesel to North Korea.⁷⁶ The most critical measure was, resolution 2397 adopted on December 22, which stroke North Korea’s economy. The Commerce Ministry of China responded just in time by issuing the ban on importing North Korean coals, which was a critical follow-up measure of these UNSC resolutions. Such actions made by China had a serious

⁷⁵ Hannah Park, "UN's N. Korea response should be 'prudent': China," *The Korea Herald*, December 13, 2012, 2012, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20121213000905>.

⁷⁶ Ryan Woo and Muyu Xu, "China halts oil product exports to North Korea in November as sanctions bite," *Reuters*, December 26, 2017, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-economy-trade-northkorea-idUSKBN1EK0FB>.

impact on North Korea's trade. Comparing the trade balance of 2015 and 2016 to that of 2017, the rates showed a radical change.⁷⁷

	2015	2016	2017
Exports to China	2,484 (-12.6%)	2,634 (6.1%)	1,650 (-37.3%)
Imports from China	2,946 (-16.4%)	3,192 (8.3%)	3,328 (4.3%)
Balance of Trade	-462	-558	-1,677

<Chart 3> Trend of North Korea's Trade with China, 2015~2017

(Unit: 1 million USD, year-on-year %) [Data from Korea International Trade Association]

4. Distinct Levels of Pressure

Both countries' mechanisms of influence during the period may be holistically defined as pressure. Jong-Kwan Jeong (2017) explained the typical coercion strategy of the U.S. and pointed out that such physical pressure must imply both the capability and credibility of the use of force.⁷⁸ Won Gon Park (2017) described the U.S.' foreign policy during the period as "credible intimidation." Park also diagnosed that the issue of North Korea's denuclearization will be placed in a compromising area for the U.S. and China and whether China will let go of the old perspective of "without the lips, the teeth feel the cold (脣亡齒寒)" must be analyzed as a crucial matter amid the changing U.S.-China relations.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ 한국무역협회, *북한무역(2001~2020)* (2022), <https://stat.kita.net/stat/istat/kpts/KptsWholeList.screen>.

⁷⁸ 정종관, "트럼프 행정부의 대북 강압전략 연구와 한국의 대응 전략," *한국동북아논총* 23, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.21807/JNAS.2018.03.23.1.99>.

⁷⁹ 박원곤, "트럼프 행정부의 대북정책: 대중국 압박과 믿을만한 위협(credible intimidation)의 실현," *EAI 논평* (2017).

Surprisingly, the support for pressure toward North Korea was shown within China. Tong Zhiwei (2017) claimed that the cooperation treaty should be reconsidered and mentioned the possibility of punishment in the article in Financial Times China. Zhiwei stated that North Korea's development of nuclear weapons was not in China's interests, but only a Pyongyang's method to avoid the punishment of its wrongful doings.⁸⁰ Also, China's critical follow-up measures to the UNSC resolutions and military pressures have been vividly distinguished during the period. Especially, one should focus on the changing tone of statements, delivered with the sanctions. Since North Korea's sixth nuclear test in September 2017, China levitated its level of warning by adding "strong denunciation (强烈谴责)."⁸¹

An attempt of breaking of the regional equilibrium was a driving force of both the U.S. and China to show a method of pressure. Though these two countries had different motives

	UN Security Council Resolution	China's Statement	China's Follow-up Measures
3rd Nuclear Test (2013. 2. 12.)	Resolution no. 2094	Firm Opposition (坚决反对) to North Korea's Actions	Ministry of Commerce: Ban of Importing North Korea's WMD (2013. 9. 23.)
4th Nuclear Test (2016. 1. 6.)	Resolution no. 2270		Ministry of Commerce: Presenting the Lists of Banned Goods in Trade with North Korea (2016. 4. 5.)
5th Nuclear Test (2016. 9. 9.)	Resolution no. 2321		Ministry of Commerce: Temporal Ban of Importing North Korea's Coal (2016. 12. 31.)
6th Nuclear Test (2017. 9. 3.)	Resolution no. 2375	Firm Opposition (坚决反对) and Strong Denunciation (强烈谴责) to North Korea's Actions	Ministry of Commerce: Complete Ban of Importing North Korea's Coal According to UNSC Resolution no. 2321 (2017. 2. 8.) State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs: Limiting High-Level Personnel Exchanges According to UNSC Resolution no. 2375 (2017. 9. 22.) Ministry of Commerce: Termination of North Korean Cooperation Established within 120 Days According to UNSC Resolution no. 2375 (2017. 9. 28.)

<Table 1> UNSC Resolutions and China's Follow-up Measures, 2013~2017 [유현정, 2018]

⁸⁰ 童之伟, "终止《中朝友好合作互助条约》符合中国利益 (It is in China's interest to terminate the Sino-DPRK Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation)," *FT中文网*, May 2, 2017, 2017, <http://www.ftchinese.com/story/001072400?page=rest&archive>.

⁸¹ 유현정, *시진핑 2기 중국의 한반도 정책과 우리의 대응 방향*, 국가안보전략연구원 (2018).

and perspectives involved, the foreign policy output resulted in similar behavior of pressuring North Korea. Yet, the levels of pressure should be distinguished. The pressuring of the U.S. turned out to be offensive, in a sense that it involved high possibility of risking the breaking of regional balance, through considering preemptive strike and locating maximized scale of military assets in the region. Meanwhile, the policy output of China was comparatively defensive, though the methods were seen instantly. Considering that there were highly criticizing voices within Beijing, the actual outputs were pointed right toward the areas where North Korea have been regarding as essential. Not to mention, though it may be defensive, it was a policy of pressure which China had shown during this time.

Chapter 5. Policy Convergence toward *Engagement*

1. The 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics

The urgent military tension entered a completely new phase in 2018. In his New Year's address, the North Korean leader declared the completion of nuclear power and demanded improvement in inter-Korean relations, and proposed to open the door for national reconciliation through participation in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics.⁸² With the Olympic games, South Korea's President Moon Jae-In, North Korea's First Deputy Leader of the North Korean Labor Party's Central Committee Kim Yeo-Jung, and the U.S. Vice President Mike Pence gathered in one place, and the potential war phase had changed. Kim Yeo-Jung, who visited the Blue House at the time, invited the South Korean President to Pyongyang by delivering Kim Jong-Un's letter containing his willingness to improve inter-Korean relations.⁸³ Accordingly, on March 5, a special delegation to North Korea visited Pyongyang and announced that it had agreed with North Korea to hold an inter-Korean summit at the end of April. Also, the special delegation delivered Kim Jong-Un's letter to the White House.

After the Panmunjom inter-Korean summit, the U.S. Secretary of State nominee Mike Pompeo made a private visit to Pyongyang as a special envoy to discuss the hosting of the U.S.-North Korea summit. The White House announced in April

⁸² "Kim Jong Un's 2018 New Year's Address," (Script), The National Committee on North Korea, updated January 1, 2018, 2018, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://www.ncnk.org/node/1427>.

⁸³ "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy," 2022, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>.

that the government had a disclosed visit to North Korea and that the State Secretary discussed a Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement (CVID) with the North Korean leader. On May 8, in time for Pompeo's revisit to Pyongyang, North Korea released all three long-held Korean Americans. They returned to the U.S. on May 10 with the State Secretary, and on the same day, the U.S. President announced on his Twitter accounting that the U.S.-North Korea summit will be held on June 12, in Singapore.

The first U.S.-North Korea summit in Singapore was grand enough to attract worldwide attention. The two leaders promised to exchange opinions and cooperate in a comprehensive, in-depth, and sincere manner for the establishment of new U.S.-North Korea relations and peace, prosperity, and safety on the Korean Peninsula.⁸⁴ The U.S. president promised to provide Pyongyang with systematic security guarantees, and the North Korean leader endorsed his firm and unwavering promise to completely denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

2. The U.S.' Interests and Policy Outputs

2.1. National Interests of the U.S.

A review of an actual preemptive strike was taken place in 2017, yet the conclusion was that there must be more losses not only in the Korean peninsula but also, with a high possibility, casualties of the American people overseas and at home. It was estimated in 2017 that the number of American troops in South Korea were 23,500

⁸⁴ The United States Government, Joint Statement of President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the Singapore Summit, (2018).

and around 40,000 in Japan.⁸⁵ Van Jackson (2018) claimed that there are rational reasons why the U.S. did not strike North Korea before, and neither will soon. There are various perspectives on the rationale—for deterrence, non-proliferation, and geopolitics, but the conclusion is that striking North Korea does not suit America's national interests.⁸⁶ It seriously restrains regional stability and opens unwanted wars; therefore, the region falls into a situation far from success.

Especially, the U.S. had to consider the developing of North Korea's second-strike capability aimed at ally states such as South Korea and Japan. Dennis Blair (2018), a retired admiral and former U.S. Pacific Command, explained about his experience of setting a war plan in Korea. Blair claimed that among all the possible military options, preemptive strike is the riskiest one since there is no guarantee that the U.S. can find and destroy all the nuclear programs.⁸⁷ Also, Wallace Gregson (2018), former top Pentagon Asia official and retired general, noted that North Korea has been world's number one importer of mining equipment. In other words, hidden nuclear facilities may exist.⁸⁸ Jonathan Pollack (2017) warned that a perfect surgical strike is less likely to happen and if there is a single missing place, Japan will meet another nuclear bomb in its country and South Korea's nuclear facilities will be aimed as a target.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Dyfed Loesche, *Where U.S. Military Personnel is Stationed Abroad*, Statista (2017), <https://www.statista.com/chart/8598/where-us-military-personnel-is-stationed-abroad/>.

⁸⁶ Van Jackson, "Why not bomb North Korea? Theories, risks, and preventive strikes," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 30 (03/01 2018).

⁸⁷ Demetri Sevastopulo, "Trump and North Korea: the perils of a pre-emptive strike," *Financial Times*, January 9, 2018, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/a6384b1e-eaf7-11e7-8713-513b1d7ca85a>.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Zeeshan Aleem and Jonathan D. Pollack, "An expert warns that a preemptive strike on North Korea would lead to 'very big war'," *Brookings*, April 18, 2017, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/an-expert-warns-that-a-preemptive-strike-on-north-korea-would-lead-to-very-big-war/>.

However, what concerned the U.S. most was China. Washington had to put Beijing's next move into account, including the scenario of China intervening with the purpose of dismantling the nuclear weapons of North Korea.⁹⁰ The U.S. conveyed severe concerns about China's role in such contingencies. In the hearings of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (2018), the U.S. Congress delivered a hardline realist perspective on the matter. At the roundtable, Carla Freeman stated that the Northern Theater Command, including the Shandong province, recently exercised a military operation across a 15,000 square mile area in the Yellow Sea.⁹¹ The overall view was that China did also have complex relationships with North Korea, including the history of friction and the latest events of opposition, but military intervention is inevitable. Also, it was noted that China was severely aware of the U.S.' preemptive move if North Korea was to attempt a strike on the American homeland. The escalation of conflict, with a high possibility, would drag major power states into the region. In sum, this was far from the interests of the U.S. and affected change in its policy.

2.2. *The U.S.' North Korea Policy Outputs: Aggressive Engagement*

Correspondingly, the policy advisors of Washington provided grounds for engagement. One was the advocacy of the principle of deterrence and the other was a need for Washington to open and lead the dialogue. While acknowledging the new challenges of deterring North Korea's nuclear weapons, opinions on setting Pyongyang

⁹⁰ Oriana Skylar Mastro, "Conflict and Chaos on the Korean Peninsula: Can China's Military Help Secure North Korea's Nuclear Weapons?," *International Security* 43, no. 2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00330, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00330.

⁹¹ United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Hearing Transcript of the Roundtable on China's Role In North Korea Contingencies, (United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission: United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2018).

as a rational actor came up to the surface.⁹² Negotiation, dialogue, inducement, and so forth, a strong gesture of engagement became America's North Korea policy during the period.⁹³

Through the first-ever U.S.-North Korea summit meetings in Singapore, the leaders of the U.S. and North Korea promised a cross-visit to overcome tensions and antagonism between the two countries and create a new future that has continued over the past decades. Consequently, the joint statement of the two parties showed different tones compared to that of the adversarial foreign policy projections a few months ago. Though the nature of the document agreed upon by two parties is defined as a statement, not a legally binding treaty in terms of international law, there are core elements to be focused on.

For instance, Jonathan Lim (2018) analyzed the joint statement on the following topics. First was the assurance of "security guarantees" and a set of "new U.S.-DPRK relations." The method was specified as assuring the suspension of military exercises in South Korea and exposing further sanctions. Also, the statement did not refer to previous agreements between the U.S. and North Korea but only succeeded the Panmunjom Declaration which took place on April 27, at the two Korea's summit meetings. Thirdly, the commitment to build a "peace regime" was linked to updating the armistice agreement of the Korean War. Such a phrase was analyzed as a ground for a peace treaty. Lastly, but most importantly, both parties agreed upon the expression

⁹² Uri Friedman, "Can America Live With a Nuclear North Korea?," *The Atlantic*, September 15, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/09/north-korea-nuclear-deterrence/539205/>.

⁹³ Christopher Lawrence, *A Theory of Engagement With North Korea*, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, May 2019).

of “complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.” The phrase Complete Verifiable and Irreversible Denuclearization (CVID) or the denuclearization specifically limited to North Korea, was not realized in the document.⁹⁴

One of the most empirical policies of the U.S. was the cutback of joint military exercises. Although the process of dialogue seemed to meet complications after the summit in Singapore, a clear ease in the military sector was seen throughout the year. Right before the Olympic games, on January 4, the U.S. and South Korean governments agreed upon postponing the annual Foal Eagle U.S.-South Korean joint military exercises until after the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics to “de-conflict” and “focus on ensuring the security” of the event. The Foal Eagle was taken place in April, but the scales were largely reduced by half the original time, while the drills did not involve any strategic assets.⁹⁵ Additionally, on October 19, not so long after State Secretary Mike Pompeo had a meeting with Kim Jong-Un, the U.S.-South Korean joint exercise Vigilant Ace was canceled, which was scheduled for December.⁹⁶ In total, the number of U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises decreased from 102 in 2017 to 77 in 2018.⁹⁷ Such reducing or suspension of joint training was a strong gesture of aggressive engagement.

⁹⁴ Jonathan Lim, "The Singapore Summit Joint Statement: An Incremental Movement Toward Peace on the Korean Peninsula," *North Korean review* 14, no. 2 (2018).

⁹⁵ Franz-Stefan Gady, "US, South Korea Kick Off Annual Military Drill Without US 'Strategic Assets'," *The Diplomat*, April 03, 2018, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/04/us-south-korea-kick-off-annual-military-drill-without-us-strategic-assets/>.

⁹⁶ Ankit Panda, "US Announces Suspension of Vigilant Ace 2018 Exercise With South Korea," *The Diplomat*, October 20, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/us-announces-suspension-of-vigilant-ace-2018-exercise-with-south-korea/>.

⁹⁷ 대한민국 정부, 2018 국방백서, (2018).

3. China's Interests and Policy Outputs

3.1. National Interests of China

A significant emphasis on China's foreign policy direction can be found in the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, held from October 18 to 24, 2017. Although the foreign policy itself is not detailed in a total of 13-page reports of the entire congressional event, one can find a different emphasis on the rhetoric found in previous reports.⁹⁸ The term “new major power relations (新型大國關係),” aimed at the bilateral affairs of U.S.-China was replaced with “new international relations (新型國際關係).” Jingyi Jin of Beijing University linked such a keyword to the context of prevailing protectionism and leadership vacuum in international relations.⁹⁹ This provided a ground for China's increasing exercise of responsibility as a major power and adjusting the levels of diplomacy with other states. Thus, considering such backgrounds taking place, what Beijing must avoid was international blame for regional instability—caused by the North Korea's repeating patterns of provocation.

Just in time, a series of U.S. legislation occurred to infringe China's core interests. The bill, Taiwan Travel Act, which unanimously passed the Senate in February 2018, allowed “U.S. officials at all levels to travel to Taiwan to meet their Taiwanese counterpart” and permitted “high-level Taiwanese officials to enter the U.S. under respectful conditions and to meet with U.S. officials, including officials from the Departments of State and Defense.”¹⁰⁰ Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁹⁸ 최명해, 제6장 “한반도 정책”, *시진핑 사상과 중국의 미래: 중국 공산당 제19차 전국대표대회 분석*, ed. 조영남 (서울 : 지식공작소, 2018).

⁹⁹ 김진방, “[시진핑 집권2기] ②中'신형 국제관계'는...도광양회·유소작위→분발유위,” *연합뉴스*, 2017년 10월 25일, 2017, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20171024049500083>.

¹⁰⁰ H.R.535 - Taiwan Travel Act, Pub. L. No. 115-135 (March 16, 2018 2018).

immediately condemned that this violates the principle of “One China” and claimed that the U.S. must suspend any types of cooperation with Taiwan.¹⁰¹

Another sensitive event happened—the U.S.’ secondary boycott to Chinese firms and banks claimed to be linked to North Korea. The U.S. Department of the Treasury announced that the government will sanction one individual, 13 institutions, and 20 ships in China to block the inflow of illegal funds into North Korea’s nuclear and missile development programs.¹⁰² Lu Kang (2017), the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, criticized that China “always firmly oppose the wrong act of imposing unilateral sanctions” and contradict to a “long-arm jurisdiction by any country in accordance with its own law.”¹⁰³

	17 th Congress (2007. 10. 15. ~21.)	18 th Congress (2012. 11. 8. ~14.)	19 th Congress (2017. 10. 18. ~24.)
Perception of International Relations	<i>Harmonious World</i> (和谐世界)		<i>The Community of Common Destiny</i> (人类命运共同体)
Foreign Policy Principles	Independent Foreign Policy of Peace & Peaceful Coexistence		<i>New International Relations</i> (新型國際關係) With no compromise in <i>core interests</i>
Major Power Relations (大國關係)	A long-term, stable, and healthy relations	A long-term, stable, and healthy <i>New Major Power Relations</i> (新型大國關係)	A stable, balanced, <i>Chinese type of</i> <i>New Major Power Relations</i> (中國特色大國外交)

<Table 1> Foreign Policy Keywords in the National Congress of CCP,
17~19th Congress [최명해, 2018]

¹⁰¹ The Chinese Government, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Regular Press Conference on March 16, 2018, (2018).

¹⁰² The United States Government, North Korea Ballistic Missile Procurement Advisory, (2018).; The United States Government, "Risks for Businesses with Supply Chain Links to North Korea," (2018).

¹⁰³ The Chinese Government, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Regular Press Conference on November 22, 2017, (2017).

However, it was clear that the major trigger was the initiation of the trade war. The U.S.-China deterioration met its peak as the U.S. announced to implement the “safeguard tariff” against China. Especially, in the early months of 2018, the U.S. proposed and started to impose high tariffs in Chinese goods. On March 3, the U.S. Trade Representative announced the lists of 1,300 items, in worth of 50 billion dollars, which high tariffs of 25% will be imposed. The items mainly targeted the areas included in China’s top 10 core industry development projects, known as the “Made in China 2025.” The series of tariff imposing, and retaliatory actions followed throughout 2018 to 2019.¹⁰⁴

As the trade war seem to intensify, China had to evaluate the pros and cons of maintaining hardline policies in North Korean affairs. Accordingly, the U.S.’ shift of 2018 made Beijing react in a very different manner. Hee Ok Lee (2018) claimed that China has been managing the card of abandonment and entrapment of North Korea as a balancing method against the United States.¹⁰⁵ This could be interpreted as when the pressuring policy seemed to result in a China-passing phenomenon in North Korean affairs, Beijing decided to prioritize a different interest in the projection of the North Korea policy—in an engaging manner.

3.2. *China’s North Korea Policy Outputs: Reactive Engagement*

It is often regarded that China’s North Korea policy has always been an engagement in a comprehensive manner.¹⁰⁶ Considering the rhetoric of “the bloodshed

¹⁰⁴ James Politi, Fan Fei, and Adrienne Klasa, "Timeline: No end in sight for US-China trade war," *Financial Times*, June 1, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/d1c41952-83ad-11e9-9935-ad75bb96c849>.

¹⁰⁵ 이희옥, "중국의 대북한 영향력과 북중관계의 '재정상화'," *중소연구* 42, no. 3 (2018).

¹⁰⁶ Wenzhi Song and Sangkeun Lee, "China's Engagement Patterns towards North Korea: China's Engagement with North Korea," *Pacific focus* 31, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1111/pafo.12063>.

(鮮血凝成)” since the Korean war and the Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Aid, and Cooperation of 1961, the prevailing perspective was that North Korea had a major role as China’s buffer zone and that the relationship was constantly intimate. However, according to Michael Swaine (2018), the relations have been always changing, and especially since the Xi Jinping era and more assertive China, Beijing has become far less supportive of Pyongyang.¹⁰⁷ Yet, as of 2018, China’s radical shift of attitude toward North Korea started to call attention and began to be evaluated from a different perspective.¹⁰⁸ Especially, such period was unusual enough to be studied as the juncture of “re-normalization” of the relationships.

Before 2018, China-North Korea relations could not have been more strained. In the process of approving their new leader Kim Jong-Un, the new regime emerged from the execution of Jang Song-Thaek—who had a close bond with Beijing.¹⁰⁹ North Korea conducted its 3rd nuclear test during China’s Lunar New Year holiday on Feb. 12, 2013, and on March 13, 2013, the party’s Central Committee officialized the “path of economic construction and nuclear power construction.” Beijing was deeply irritated with such provocations. Xi Jinping, as a new general secretary of CCP, was inaugurated in October 2012 and was scheduled to be inaugurated as the president in March 2013. China strongly criticized the 3rd nuclear test as “damaging the stability of the Korean Peninsula,” protested North Korean Ambassador to China Ji Jae-Ryong, and approved the UNSC resolution imposing sanctions on North Korea. Moreover, as mentioned

¹⁰⁷ Michael Swaine, John Park, and Daniel Russel, "Bitter Allies: China and North Korea," *Asia Society*, January 25, 2018, 2018, <https://asiasociety.org/new-york/events/bitter-allies-china-and-north-korea>.

¹⁰⁸ Tat Yan Kong, "China's engagement-oriented strategy towards North Korea: achievements and limitations," *Pacific review* 31, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2017.1316301>.

¹⁰⁹ Jeremy Page, "North Korea Execution Confounds China," *Wall Street Journal*, December 17, 2013, 2013, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304403804579263801761078622>.

earlier, the escalation of Pyongyang's provocation against the U.S. from 2016 to 2017 made China alleviate the pressure.

China-North Korea Summit	2018 March 25~28 (Beijing)		May 7~8 (Dalian)			June 19~20 (Beijing)		2019 January 8~12 (Beijing)		June 20 (Pyongyang)
South-North Korea Summit		April 27 (Panmun-jom)		May 26 (Panmun-jom)			September 18~20 (Pyongyang)			
The U.S.-North Korea Summit					June 12 (Singapore)				February 27~28 (Hanoi)	

<Table 3> Summit Meetings of China, North Korea, South Korea, and the U.S. in 2018~2019 [조성렬, 2021]

Comparatively, the most vibrant reaction in China's North Korea policy happened in 2018. As soon as the South Korean delegation, including the South Korean president's National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong and the Director of National Intelligence Agency Suh Hoon, visited Pyongyang and met Kim Jong-Un on March 5, Xi Jinping accepted the North Korean leader come to Beijing, from March 25 to 28.¹¹⁰ This three-day schedule was Kim Jong-Un's first trip abroad and first summit meeting with another state's leader, since taking power in 2011.¹¹¹ In other words, Xi Jinping did not meet Kim Jong-Un for over seven years, until he welcomed Kim's visit to Beijing as soon as the U.S.-North Korean dialogue happened to be.

¹¹⁰ 조성렬, *김정은 시대 북한의 국가전략: DIME 분석과 삼벌(三伐) 구상* (서울 : 백산서당, 2021).

¹¹¹ Steven Lee Myers and Jane Perlez, "Kim Jong-un Met With Xi Jinping in Secret Beijing Visit," *The New York Times*, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/27/world/asia/kim-jong-un-china-north-korea.html>.

Not only the first meeting took place before the inter-Korean summit in Panmunjom, but soon another meeting was realized in Dalian. Zhao Tong (2018) explained that “Beijing likely would want to ensure that Pyongyang would not develop a closer relationship with Washington than Beijing.”¹¹² The third meeting on June 20, was a formal acknowledgement as a summit meeting accompanied with fast press release. It was stated that China welcomes the successful U.S.-North Korea summit in Singapore and appreciates the accomplishments. Also, with the celebration of restoring the relationship with North Korea, it was claimed that “keeping the stability in the front door of the house well helps promote the “international order and peace stability in the region.”¹¹³ Though China maintained its principle of “no nuclear in the Korean peninsula (無核化),” “no war (不能戰),” and “no confusion (不能亂),”¹¹⁴ the message was not only aimed to Pyongyang but also clearly toward Washington.

The main method of engagement toward North Korea has been economic development with reform. In the first summit meeting in March 25 to 28, the North Korean leader was invited to look around the China’s Silicon Vally, Zhongguancun. Opened in 1988, amid the Deng Xiaoping’s reform and opening policy, the place was established as the first high-tech focused city with top ranking institutions and multinational corporations. Accordingly, the reason for having Dalian as a venue for the

¹¹² Jane Perlez, "China Moves to Steady Ties With North Korea Before Trump-Kim Meeting," *The New York Times*, May 4, 2018, <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/china-moves-steady-ties-with-north-korea-before/docview/2034381980/se-2?accountid=6802>.

¹¹³ ““三个不会变”，这是习近平的坚定态度 (Xi Jinping says, “Three Things won’t Change”),” 2018, https://www.sohu.com/a/236739701_551709.

¹¹⁴ The Chinese Government, 王毅在美国战略与国际问题研究中心发表演讲 (Speech by Wang Yi at the American Center for Strategic and International Studies), (2016).

second summit, can be explained with the linkage of economic reform.¹¹⁵ Dalian, a port city in northeast province of Liaoning, is a core city of economic development. The city also has a history of being visited by Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il, while examined as a successful case of driving the region's economic development with opening and reform.

In exchange of China's promise to lower the sanctions, North Korea satisfied Beijing by carrying out the China's requirement of "double suspension (双暂停)" of North Korea's WMD tests and the U.S.-South Korea joint military exercise. In similar periods, the effort of China to ease sanctions started. One was the coordination with Russia, a core member of the UNSC. In the UNSC meeting held on September 27, Wang Yi, the Chinese Foreign Minister, claimed that recent North Korea has shown meaningful actions on denuclearization and such positive outcomes deserve more encouragement.¹¹⁶

4. Distinct Levels of *Engagement*

What it means by engagement was defined by many scholars. For instance, Evan Resnick (2001) conceptualized the word as:

¹¹⁵ Jiangtao Shi and Jeong-ho Lee, "Why a booming Chinese port was the ideal venue for Kim Jong-un's latest visit," *South China Morning Post*, May 9, 2018, 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2145428/why-booming-chinese-port-was-ideal-venue-kim-jong-uns?utm_source=copy_link&utm_medium=share_widget&utm_campaign=2145428.

¹¹⁶ Julian Borger, "China and Russia call on UN to ease North Korea sanctions," *The Guardian*, September 27, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/27/un-security-council-north-korea-sanctions-china-russia-pompeo>.

“An attempt to influence the political behavior of a target state through the comprehensive establishment and enhancement of contacts with that state across multiple issue areas (i.e., diplomatic, military, economic, cultural).”¹¹⁷

In the diplomatic sector, engagement includes the extension of state recognition, normalization of diplomacy, summit meetings and high-official visits, and promotion of membership to an international institutions and regimes. In military, the engagement policy involves the exchange of confidence and security measures, visits of military or intelligence officials, and other military contacts. Economic engagement incorporates promotion of trade, exchange of foreign aid in forms of loans/grants or humanitarian aid, and a campaign of development through reformation. Also, Resnick pointed out that the term was often confused with the concept of appeasement, although it should be distinguished.¹¹⁸

Considering such terminology of a bilateral policy, characterized by the conditional provision of concessions to a target state, both the U.S. and China showed the method of engagement during the period. The U.S. gave the favor of reducing the tension in military and realized the first-ever U.S.-North Korea summit meetings. China also provided an opportunity of re-normalizing the Sino-North Korea relations which were strained for years and offered a possibility of economic development through suggesting the reform and opening-up. Yet, the national interest involved in such foreign policy was complex, particularly intertwined to China-U.S.’ escalating contestation.

¹¹⁷ Evan Resnick, "Defining Engagement," *Journal of international affairs (New York)* 54, no. 2 (2001).

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

This is the reason why the level of engagement must be distinguished in this period. Especially, many agree that the engagement of the Trump administration was very progressive and radical compared to previous governments. Yet, there are lack of inspections on China's change of North Korea policy amid such U.S.' transition. Thus, the engagement of China during this period could be characterized as reactive engagement, which involves the context of deterioration of U.S.-China relations, especially due to the clash of similar national interests. Joseph Yoon (2018), a former special representative to North Korea of the State Department, claimed that such series of trade war between the U.S. and China is not limited to the two countries, but is closely entangled with the North Korean issue. Yoon added that China's sanctions on North Korea have been eased, and Russia is taking a similar step. In other words, as the trade dispute intensifies, China's individual sanctions will be lifted, which will greatly reduce the U.S. bargaining leverage with North Korea.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ 권용욱, "조셉 윤 "미·중무역전쟁, 대북 문제와 얽혀 있다"," 연합인포맥스, 2018, <https://news.einfomax.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=3463849>.

Chapter 6. Policy Divergence

1. The U.S.-North Korea Hanoi Summit

North Korea's 2019 New Year Address emphasized the establishment of new U.S.-North Korea relations, the road toward "durable peace" and "complete denuclearization." Also, it was stated that North Korea "would neither make and test nuclear weapons any longer nor use and proliferate them." Yet, the phrase of provisional doubt was added: "But if the United States persists in imposing sanctions and pressure against our Republic, we may be compelled to find a *new way* for defending the sovereignty of the country." The message was holding an urge for both the U.S. and China, to show more devoted actions on the negotiation.

Soon after, the fourth China-North Korea summit meeting was realized on January 8, in Beijing. The two leaders discussed about the Kaesong industrial complex and tourism in Kumkang mountain, pointing out that the places are ready for resuming operation. Also, the mentioning of sanctions was that Pyongyang will cooperate fully on lifting them.¹²⁰ Accordingly, the U.S. state department announced that the government will soon lift aid sanctions regarding non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It was noted that a special permission for the U.S. citizens requesting to travel to North Korea to handling humanitarian effort will be granted.

The U.S. government stated that the second U.S.-North Korea summit meetings are planned to be held on February and the venue is Hanoi, Vietnam.

¹²⁰ BBC, "Xi Jinping visits N Korea to boost China's ties with Kim," *BBC*, January 10, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-46819018>.

Correspondingly, the U.S. Special Envoy for North Korea Stephen Biegun, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui, and South Korean delegations met in Sweden to discuss the content of the meeting. The forward deployment of Biegun seemed to show the U.S. government's positive attitude toward North Korea. At a speech in Stanford university, on January 31, Biegun (2019) heavily emphasized the issue of trust building:

“We are prepared to discuss many actions that could help build trust between our two countries and advance further progress in parallel on the Singapore summit objectives of transforming relations, establishing a permanent peace regime on the peninsula, and complete denuclearization.”¹²¹

Also, the Asia and the Pacific and Nonproliferation subcommittee, affiliated in the House Committee of Foreign Affairs, holds a hearing on the theme of “On the Eve of the Summit: Options for U.S. Diplomacy on North Korea.” These series of gestures gave a strong notice of success in engagement, in the forthcoming Hanoi summit.

However, the second U.S.-North Korea summit, which drew global attention, ended in a rupture without an agreement. At the Hanoi meetings, which was held eight months after the first summit, the focus was on whether the agreement on a specific roadmap for denuclearization and corresponding measures by the U.S. will be taken. Contrasting to the Singapore summit meetings, which had an implication on the symbolism of the historic first meeting, the second meeting was dominated by the atmosphere of asking for an actual progress in North Korea's denuclearization

¹²¹ Stephen Biegun, *Remarks on the DPRK* (Stephen Biegun, U.S. Special Representative for North Korea), Stanford University (January 31 2019).

measures. Comparatively, the Singapore summit was able to adopt a joint declaration between North Korea and the U.S., but the Hanoi summit was discouraging in that it failed to narrow differences on the subject and scope of denuclearization.

There are various diagnoses on why the procedure ended up in failure. Some claim that the practice cannot be qualified as total breakdown, but a meaningful step for the U.S.-North Korea relations. Yet, in general, many agree upon the reality of different perception between the U.S. and North Korea, with the method and scope of denuclearization and easing of international sanctions.¹²² The U.S. pushed for negotiations based on a comprehensive method of collective settlement, while North Korea adhered to the step-by-step method. Also, the U.S. demanded a *big deal* to implement a wide range of and concrete measures, including the disposal of the main nuclear facilities, nuclear weapons-level programs (missile, nuclear warhead, nuclear material) and biological and chemical weapons facilities, and a permanent discarding of all future nuclear and long-range missile tests. In addition, regarding the lifting of critical sanctions on North Korea, the U.S. claimed it could not accept such demand but expressed its abstract position that “North Korea would have a bright economic future” because of that big deal.

Since the Hanoi summit, follow-up measures for practical denuclearization have not been carried out. The changing of tone was delivered in Kim Jong-Un’s speech to the Supreme People’s Assembly, on April 12. It was stated that North Korea “will be patient and wait till the end of this year to see whether the United States makes a

¹²² Leon V. Sigal, "Paved with Good Intentions: Trump's Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea," *Journal for peace and nuclear disarmament* 3, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2020.1751549>.

courageous decision or not,” but at the same time, claimed that the existing U.S. demands were “running counter to the *fundamental interests* of our country.”¹²³ Since then, the leaders of the U.S. and North Korea remained open to the possibility of a third U.S.-North Korea summit while maintaining the momentum of dialogue, but no actual progress between the leaders and working-level officials continued.

2. The U.S.’ Interests and Policy Outputs

2.1. *National Interests of the U.S.*

The national interests of America were shown vividly through legislative and international actions. Especially, the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) was approved by the U.S. president on December 31, 2018. The legislation provided a basis of U.S. foreign policy for the Indo-Pacific region and seeks to reassure the American allies, strategic partners, and other countries’ commitment toward the U.S. engagement of the region. It included the emphasis of existing conventional alliance and the need for extending the security partnerships with Southeast Asia. Also, it concluded the commitment to Taiwan.¹²⁴

Linked to such grounds, the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” was placed forward, as a strategic principle of the U.S. foreign policy. The term, originally proposed by the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe, worked as a catchphrase of the U.S. and its allied states responding to a tacit counterpart—China. Lindsey Ford (2020) analyzed that the administration’s advocacy of FOIP was a paradox of multilateralism, which

¹²³ Jong-Un Kim, *On Socialist Construction and the Internal and External Policies of the Government of the Republic at the Present Stage*, The National Committee on North Korea (April 12 2019), https://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/kju_april2019_policy_speech.pdf/file_view.

¹²⁴ The United States Government, Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018, (2018).

could be differentiated from that of the former administration's "Pivot to Asia."¹²⁵ Yet, the aim was clearly identical—to balance against China and to secure the national interests of America.

The assembling of ally countries in the Indo-Pacific region was presented. One was the extension of the "Five Eyes." The Five Eyes refers to a collective intelligence alliance of the U.S., United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, rooted in the UKUSA Signals Intelligence Agreement of 1946.¹²⁶ These countries cooperate closely on intelligence and with the matter of cyber security. On December 7, Canada arrested Huawei's CFO, Meng Wanzhou, on behalf of the U.S. government. Also, the Five Eyes publicized that its intelligence agencies will extend ties with Germany, France, and Japan, for countering China's "backdoor." Especially, Japan announced governmental plans to build up its servers and take appropriate countermeasures.¹²⁷ Also, these five countries announced that they will not use China's Huawei in "sensitive" parts of their telecom networks, from April. Rob Joyce (2019), a senior official of the U.S. National Security Agency, claimed that the Huawei technology causes critical threat to national infrastructures.¹²⁸

Also, the revitalization of the "Quadrilateral Dialogue (QUAD)" between the United States, Australia, India, and Japan was accelerated. Originally the concept was

¹²⁵ Lindsey Ford, "The Trump Administration and the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'," *Foreign Policy at Brookings* (2020).

¹²⁶ The United Kingdom Government, A Brief History of the UKUSA agreement, (2022).

¹²⁷ Kenji Wada and Shinichi Akiyama, "Five Eyes intel group ties up with Japan, Germany, France to counter China in cyberspace," *The Mainichi*, February 4, 2019, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20190204/p2a/00m/0na/001000c>.

¹²⁸ Reuters, "Five Eyes will not use Huawei in sensitive networks: senior U.S. official," *Reuters*, April 24, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-huawei-ncsc-usa-idUSKCN1S01CZ>.

also suggested by Abe, derived from the “democratic Asian security diamond.”¹²⁹ Derek Grossman (2019) claimed that QUAD is a “signal unified resolve against China’s growing assertiveness.” Though it shows efforts particularly to avoid giving the impression of containing China, there is a possibility of reaching the area of military if the U.S.-China contestation intensifies.¹³⁰

Meanwhile, the trade war between the U.S. and China worsened. The total trade deficit of U.S. in 2018 was revealed as 419 billion dollars. It reached its peak ever since the trade gap soared since 1985. In detail, the total amount of Chinese goods imported to U.S. was 539 billion dollars, while the U.S. goods imported to China was only 120 billion dollars.¹³¹ The negotiation seemed to show improvement on the early weeks of 2019, but the situation intensified since May. The two leaders of the U.S. and China met in the G20 summit meetings in Osaka, June and agreed on resuming the negotiation. The “Phase One” trade agreement was realized on December. The agreement, ratified on January 15, 2020, included articles on intellectual property, technology transfer, agriculture, financial services, and expanding trade.¹³² In conclusion, the trade deficit seemed to narrow for the first time in 6 years, with the drop of 1.7%.¹³³ However, the U.S. government’s claim, that China must buy more amount

¹²⁹ Yuichi Hosoya, "FOIP 2.0: The Evolution of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy," *Asia-Pacific review* 26, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2019.1622868>.

¹³⁰ Derek Grossman, "How the U.S. Is Thinking About the Quad," *RAND*, February 7, 2019, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/02/how-the-us-is-thinking-about-the-quad.html>.

¹³¹ Daniele Palumbo and Ana Nicolaci da Costa, "Trade war: US-China trade battle in charts," *BBC*, May 10, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-48196495>.

¹³² The United States Government, Economic And Trade Agreement Between The Government Of The United States Of America And The Government Of The People’s Republic Of China, (2020).

¹³³ Lucia Mutikani, "U.S. trade deficit narrows in 2019 for first time in six years," *Reuters*, February 5, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-economy-idUSKBN1ZZ1WP>.

of 200-billion-dollar American goods, was never realized.

2.2. *The U.S.' North Korea Policy Outputs: Neglective Management*

The section 210 of Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) included that “it is U.S. policy to continue to impose sanctions on North Korea” and “it is U.S. policy that the objective of nuclear and missile negotiations with North Korea is the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of such [nuclear and ballistic missile] programs.” On March 21, the Department of the Treasury announced that the U.S. government will add two more sanctions on Chinese shipping companies, regarding its involvement with North Korea.

However, referring to North Korea’s resuming of missile tests, the U.S. was comparatively persisted in indifference during the period. On April 18, North Korea conducted a test launch of “tactical guided weapon.” The Acting Secretary of Defense, Patrick Shanahan dismissed that it was not a ballistic missile.¹³⁴ However, the testing of ballistic missiles followed next month. On May 4, two solid-fueled short-range ballistic missiles were launched. Another two ballistic missiles were shot four days later. Such testing of ballistic missiles was first since November 2017. John Bolton, the National Security Advisor to President Trump, claimed that North Korea violated the UNSC resolutions.¹³⁵ On July 25, two more launches occurred and followed on July 31, the test launching of the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) was publicized.¹³⁶ Since

¹³⁴ Rebecca Kheel, “Acting Pentagon chief: North Korea weapon test was ‘not a ballistic missile,’” *The Hill*, April 18, 2019, <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/439597-acting-defense-chief-north-korea-weapon-test-was-not-ballistic-missile/>.

¹³⁵ Reuters, “North Korean missile tests violated UN resolutions, says John Bolton,” *Reuters*, May 25, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/25/north-korean-missile-tests-violated-un-resolutions-says-john-bolton>.

¹³⁶ Vann H. Van Diepen, “North Korea Unveils New “Multiple Launch Guided Rocket System,”” *38North*, August 6, 2019, <https://www.38north.org/2019/08/vvandiepen080619/>.

then, series of ballistic missile tests occurred throughout the year.

Date	North Korea's Testing of Missiles in 2019
May 4	Two solid-fueled short-range ballistic missiles (KN-23)
May 9	Two short-range ballistic missiles (KN-23)
July 25	Two short-range ballistic missiles (KN-23)
July 31	Two guided rockets from the KN-25 with the new <i>Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS)</i>
August 2	Two guided rockets from the KN-25, <i>MLRS</i>
August 6	Two short-range ballistic missiles (KN-23)
August 9	Two short-range ballistic missiles (KN-24)
August 15	Two short-range ballistic missiles (KN-24)
August 23	Two guided rockets from the KN-25, <i>MLRS</i>
September 9	Two guided rockets from the KN-25, <i>MLRS</i> <i>*Test launch with Kim Jong-Un's attendance</i>
October 2	New sea-launched ballistic missile (<i>Pukguk-song-3</i>) from a submerged test stand barge
October 31	Two guided rockets from the KN-25, <i>MLRS</i>
November 28	Two guided rockets from the KN-25, <i>MLRS</i>
December 7	Liquid-fueled missile engine test at the Western Sea Satellite Launching Ground facility
December 13	Liquid-fueled missile engine test at the Western Sea Satellite Launching Ground facility

<Chart 4> Lists of North Korea's Missile Tests in 2019 [CFR, 2020]

Yet, the U.S. lacked empirical actions toward the tests, but mere warning signals and rhetoric of denial were shown. Since the no deal at the Hanoi summits, the negotiations met a deadlock situation. Although there were impromptu occasions such as the DMZ meeting in June 30, yet actual progress of tangible content was undetectable. Afterward, this trilateral meeting of the U.S. President Trump, South Korean President Moon, and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, was evaluated more as an improvise event which did not have any further momentum. In sum, the

policy during this period could be described as neglective management, since the administration did not go back to the method of pressure—considering the fact that there were expulsions of hardliners such as the National Security Advisor John Bolton and Director of CIA Dan Coats. Yet, the policy was neither a continuing of engagement because the fizzle out of dialogue was vibrant.

3. China's Interests and Policy Outputs

3.1. National Interests of China

The U.S. legislation of Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) severely challenged the core interests of China. The bill claimed that China was trying to “undermine the international system” and it was proliferating harmful actions with other rogue states. Especially, an emphasis of the U.S. commitment to Taiwan in ARIA was a serious matter to Beijing. In Section 209, it was approved that the U.S. can conduct arms sales in Taiwan, for counteracting the “existing and likely future threats from the People’s Republic of China.” Also, it was repeated that the U.S. encourages its high-level officials’ travel, in accordance with the Taiwan Travel Act. Also, with the South/East China Sea, the bill referred to the freedom navigation and over-flight, international law, and the rule-based international order. China’s position was claimed as “China’s illegal construction and militarization of artificial features in the South China Sea and coercive economic practices.” The bill added that ASEAN countries should adapt “code of conduct in the South China Sea to further promote peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.”¹³⁷

¹³⁷ The United States Government, Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018.

The contestation did not happen only in legislations but also on both waters and air. Throughout the early 2019, U.S.-led joint military exercises in South China sea were shown. From January 11 to 16, the U.S. Navy's McCampbell (DDG 85) and Royal Navy of Britain's HMS Argyll (F231) sailed together in the region and conducted drills.¹³⁸ On February 18, another joint exercise was shown, with adding the destroyer ship HMS Montrose (F236) of the Royal Navy of Britain.¹³⁹ As soon as the Hanoi summit went into failure, the U.S. reassembled its Coast Guardship Bertholf (WMSL-750) to the seventh fleet, a station which covers the South China sea. Throughout March, the U.S. Air Commands released its B-52 bomber's track through Aircraft Spots.¹⁴⁰ It was analyzed as an intentional exposure of missions and called China's counteractions.

In accordance with the U.S.' military actions, China reallocated its assets in the region. One was the deployment of anti-ship ballistic missile DF-26. According to the broadcast of CCTV, People's Liberation Army conducted a test launch of two DF-26 missiles, claimed to have accurate capability of disabling aircraft carriers within the range of 4,500km.¹⁴¹ Also, the Coast Guard, which have been under the Command of the

¹³⁸ Commander U.S. 7th Fleet Commander Task Force 70 Public Affairs, "American, British Navies Sail Together in South China Sea," news release, 2019, <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/1732757/american-british-navies-sail-together-in-south-china-sea/>.

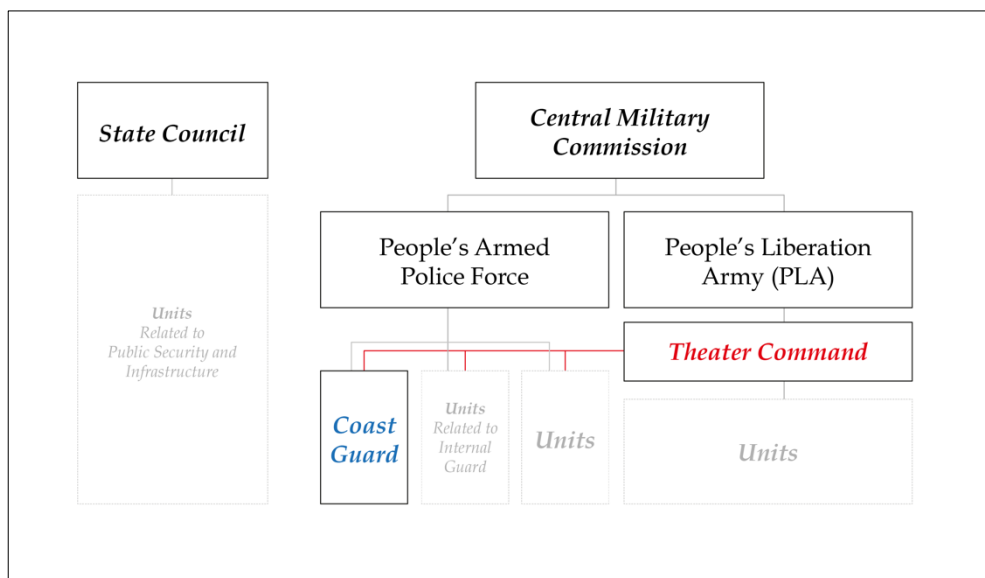
¹³⁹ Navaltoday, "Royal Navy frigate joins US Navy oiler for South China Sea drills," *Navaltoday*, February 20, 2019, <https://www.navaltoday.com/2019/02/20/royal-navy-frigate-joins-us-navy-oiler-for-south-china-sea-drills/>.

¹⁴⁰ Ryan Pickrell, "The US sent a B-52 bomber through the South China Sea for the first time in months," *Business Insider*, March 6, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-b52-bombers-fly-over-contested-east-and-south-china-seas-2019-3>.

¹⁴¹ Liu Xuanzun, "Missile launch shows China's DF-26 able to adjust position mid-flight, attack moving aircraft carriers: expert," *Global Times China*, January 27, 2019, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/201901/1137152.shtml>.

State Council, was relocated to People's Armed Police Force under the unified Command of the Central Military Commission. In January 2019, the Chinese government assembled a taskforce working group to draft the Coast Guard Law.¹⁴² The design of the legislation was aimed to enable the Coast Guard in wartimes, under the Theater Command.¹⁴³

Also, China regarded the U.S.' containment of Huawei and ZTE as a serious invasion of interests in the economic and technology sector. On March 8, Wang Yi (2019) stated that Beijing supports Huawei's lawsuit against the U.S. government and claimed that Chinese firms should not be "silent lambs."¹⁴⁴ In fact, on February,



<Figure 1> Reorganization of the Chinese Coast Guard [Japanese Ministry of Defense, 2020]

¹⁴² Ying Yu Lin, "Changes in China's Coast Guard," *The Diplomat*, January 30, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/changes-in-chinas-coast-guard/>.

*The law was concluded the legislation at the 25th session of 13th National People's Congress Standing Committee, in January 2021 and enacted in February.

¹⁴³ The Japanese Government, The Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China, (2021).

¹⁴⁴ Ben Westcott and Yong Xiong, "Chinese foreign minister says Huawei right to not be 'victimized like silent lambs'," *CNN*, March 8, 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/08/politics/huawei-wang-yi-china-us-intl/index.html>.

Huawei ran a full-page advertisement on the Washington Post and Wall Street Journal, with the title of “Don’t believe everything you hear. Come and see us: An open letter to the U.S. media.” It was a form of invitation to the U.S. media, offering to come visit the firm and adjust the “misunderstandings” of Huawei, which was claimed to be counterfeited by the U.S. government.¹⁴⁵ Since the arresting of Ms. Wanzhou, through the joint investigation of Canada and the U.S., Huawei has been steadily denying the charge and has claimed that the situation was politically motivated. In the interview with BBC, Ren Zhengfei, the founder of Huawei asserted that “There is no way the U.S. can crush us” and that “the world cannot leave us because we are more advanced.”¹⁴⁶

3.2. China’s North Korea Policy Outputs: Proactive Engagement

The relations with North Korea deepened since the year 2019. Firstly, the China-North Korea summit meeting was realized twice on January and June. Kim Jong-Un’s trip to Beijing from January 8 to 10 was invited by China, amid the North Korean



<Figure 2> Correlations of Summit Meetings in 2019

leader’s birthday. Many experts analyzed such favor of Beijing as an intended pre-discussion before the U.S.-North Korea summit took place. Lu Chao (2019) pointed

¹⁴⁵ BBC, "Huawei’s full-page WSJ advert: 'Don't believe everything you hear'," *BBC*, March 1, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-47411180>.

¹⁴⁶ BBC, "The US cannot crush us, says Huawei founder," *BBC*, February 18, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-47274679>.

out that Kim's visit was aimed at discussing the agenda of the upcoming U.S.-North Korea summit beforehand with China.¹⁴⁷

The main content of China's North Korea policy was to maintain the status of reducing the level of U.S.-led military exercise in the Korean peninsula. Though North Korea have been shooting short range missiles, Beijing did not show any warning signs nor actual pressure tactics. Meanwhile, Beijing counted North Korea's strategic value high amid the contestation with Washington. Bonnie Glaser (2019) noted that both China and North Korea value the prior coordination and this became a pattern.¹⁴⁸ Also, even after the Hanoi meeting ruptured, the Chinese president visited Pyongyang on June 20. It was the first time for Xi Jinping to visit North Korea since he took presidency.¹⁴⁹ The June summit cannot be interpreted as China's move solely aimed at North Korea, since there was a G20 event coming up only a week after in Osaka. Joseph Siracusa (2019) said that in the G20 summit, the U.S.-China clash in trade issues were inevitable and added that North Korea issue could be claimed as a leverage in this sense.¹⁵⁰ During the meeting with Kim, every schedule of Xi was broadcasted on live, at the main program of CCTV (新聞聯播). This was an unusual case since both countries mostly have been releasing the content after the meeting ended.

¹⁴⁷ Lily Kuo, "Kim in Beijing for Xi meeting as second Trump summit looms," *Guardians*, January 8, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/07/special-north-korean-train-reportedly-crosses-chinese-border>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ 구갑우, "한반도 평화체제의 역사적, 이론적 쟁점들-2019년 북중정상회담에서 북미정상 회담으로," *사단판세계* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.35548/cw.2019.06.34.309>.

¹⁵⁰ Bill Ide, "Pyongyang Meeting Seen as Bolstering Xi Ahead of Trump Talks," (June 21 2019), https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia_pyongyang-meeting-seen-bolstering-xi-ahead-trump-talks/6170402.html.

In sum, Beijing showed active engagements on summit meetings and promising that China will try to ease sanctions at the UNSC. Also, the resuming of tourism since the summit meeting in Dalian steadily increased¹⁵¹ and supported North Korea's funding of foreign currencies.¹⁵² Accordingly, Pyongyang claimed that it sincerely celebrates the 70th anniversary of Sino-North Korea relations and hoping that such friendship develops as time goes by. While Washington left the North Korean issue aside, Beijing clearly emphasized and deepened the relationship with Pyongyang.

4. Divergence of Policy

In comparison with the previous periods, the policy outputs of the U.S. and China diverged since 2019. According to the history of American policy, the intentional ignorance of activating further procedures was described as “neglect.” For instance, the G. W. Bush administration claimed that it will proceed a “malign neglect” for leaving aside North Korea to dismantle the nuclear programs first and then talk later.¹⁵³ On the other hand, the Obama administration characterized its “strategic patience” as a part of “benign neglect,” which was based on a tolerative manner on Pyongyang to show certain consolidation of denuclearization as a precondition of negotiation.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ 심재훈, "북중 관계 개선에 중국인 북한 관광 최대 50% 급증," *연합뉴스*, 2019, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20190716058200083?>

¹⁵² 최장호, 이정균, and 민지영, *북한의 대외관계 평가와 2020년 전망: 북중·북러를 중심으로*, 대외경제정책연구원 (2월 20일 2020).

¹⁵³ Jennifer Doak and John Feffer, "North Korea and Malign Neglect," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, May 22, 2009, https://fpif.org/north_korea_and_malign_neglect/.

¹⁵⁴ Sheen Seong-Ho, "U.S. Coercive Diplomacy toward Pyongyang: Obama vs. Trump," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* Vol. 32, No. 4 (December 2020).

Since the Hanoi no-deal, Washington displayed passiveness, by neither engaging in progressive manners nor degenerating the status quo by threatening possibility of punishment. The U.S. still left the room for talks while actual improvement of engagement was not realized. Especially, the continuance of passing the ball to North Korea and other actors was detected. In sum, the U.S. policy during this period could be characterized as neglective management, by supervising the situation at the minimum level. On the other hand, China displayed proactive engagements toward North Korea. The most important signal was Xi Jinping's visit to Pyongyang. Realtime live broadcasts of the summit meeting was unprecedentedly shown. Also, Beijing kept delivering messages on easing sanctions on North Korea and developing economic cooperation.

Such divergence of policy is due to different organizations and prioritizations of national interests. Hak Soon Paik (2020) pointed out that North Korea wanted to bring the U.S. and China to the Korean Peninsula, as a counter force to each other as a sort of balancing strategy.¹⁵⁵ Yet, the irony was that the U.S. lost the prioritization in the North Korea issues. For the U.S., the mobilization of state power was centralized in trade disputes, technology and cyber security, and the military aggression in the South/East China sea. This led to managing the North Korean affairs at the minimum level. On the other hand, China embraced North Korea as an important bargaining card against the U.S., and took precaution of Pyongyang tilting to Washington excessively.

¹⁵⁵ Council on Foreign Relations, "The Future of U.S. Policy Toward North Korea," (September 22, 2020). <https://www.cfr.org/event/future-us-policy-toward-north-korea>.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

There are numerous discussions on the dynamics of changing world order and what defines the international system of today. Though, it seems indisputable that the U.S.-China relations are at the core. Many scholars debated the circumstances from different perspectives. It was revealed to be very challenging and evolving. Meanwhile, there are certain areas that are expected to be collaborative. One challenge in common is the matter of nuclear non-proliferation and regional security.

The problem of North Korea's WMD, specifically, is one of the prior security issues remaining volatile until today. Since the early 1990s, when North Korea had quit the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the problem was considered an intertwined matter for both the U.S. and China. In general, the two countries broadly agreed upon securing the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula. Yet, it was revealed that both countries' national interest involved in the issue was different, leading to diverging perspectives and manners. In other words, the enthusiastic cooperation of the two major countries was hardly seen in North Korean affairs.

The latest critical juncture was detected with the intensifying crisis in 2017, triggered by North Korea's offensive testing of ICBM and thermonuclear weapons, also well known as the hydrogen bomb. Remarkably, there were vivid U.S. policy transitions within a few years, displaying an extensive range from pressure to engagement. It was like compression of 30 years of the U.S.' North Korea policy. Nevertheless, it was not only Washington but also Beijing which presented unwavering shifts in its position with Pyongyang. Therefore, the initiative puzzle of starting this research was, "why are there

distinctive fluctuations shown simultaneously on both the U.S. and China's North Korea policy during the years from 2017 to 2020," and "what accounts for such behaviors of the U.S. and China?"

Through the analysis of the U.S. and China's North Korea policy during the related period, the research expected to unveil the national interests of the two countries, resulting in some form of foreign policy, specifically in North Korean affairs. The essential argument of this paper is that the interacting two major powers shaped a certain behavior in their North Korea policies, while influenced by diverse national interests—even if there are circumstances when their interests target one another.

The period from 2017 to 2018, covered by chapter 4, reviewed the rise of tensions due to North Korea's testing of ICBM and thermonuclear weapons. Accordingly, the U.S.' national interest involved on the matter was the tactical possibility of an intercontinental strike from North Korea which raised a serious threat to its homeland security. Also, it invaded the redline of tolerating previous provocations, as it displayed an offensive capability reaching over the Pacific. Also, the national interest of China was tangled with such series of tests. As the emphasis of China's mentioning of its core interests have been actively raised since 2008, any action which breaks the regional security was regarded as a threat to its rising status. One critical issue was the South Korea's deployment of THAAD, which was claimed to severely assault China's security interests. North Korea's crossing over the red line made a legitimate reasoning for the U.S.-ROK alliance to build up their arms in the Korean peninsula. Though both countries had their own national interests involved, the policy outcomes were revealed to be pressure, not only in the military but also in the economic sectors.

During the period of 2018 to 2019, investigated in chapter 5, the strains were eased with the opening of conversations and summit meetings. The triggering event was the PyeongChang Winter Olympic games. Through multiple discourses, the U.S. evaluated the cost of preemptive/preventive strikes and concluded that it was too much of a jeopardy to gamble in risking a war in the Korean peninsula. Also, China, who had assembled military near the borders in case of massive refugee crisis, had to consider the next move when U.S. open an offensive move. The plan of China was to be an alternative, if not replace, to the down falling U.S. hegemony and have been promoting its role as responsible stockholder in international affairs. Yet, if North Korea brings a war contingency and if the U.S. blames China, then it will be a massive hurt in its interests. Surprisingly, both the U.S. and China showed a rapid shift to the policy of engagement. As an aggressive engagement, the U.S. recognized North Korea as a state for the first time, by holding a summit meeting. Also, the U.S. offered a guarantee of its regime and discussed about economic development. On the other hand, China showed a reactive engagement amid the fast transitions of state diplomacy. The Chinese President Xi Jinping met the North Korean leader for the first time ever since he obtained power in 2011. The point was that the China-North Korea summit meetings were discovered right before North Korea's meeting with South Korea or the United States. Since then, China claimed for the easing of UNSC sanctions.

In the period from 2019 to 2020, unveiled in chapter 6, the clash of U.S. and China's national interests intensified in the sector of trade, technology, and territory. Firstly, both states' deployment of strategic assets in the South/East China sea were detected. The number of joint military exercise on water and air increased rapidly in the region. Beijing responded with retaliatory actions, including the new interceptor missiles

and aircraft carriers. Also, the U.S.' reassurance in Taiwan triggered Beijing's anger. Second was the confrontation of the U.S.-led alliance against China's technology firms, especially Huawei. A definite pattern of hostility was recognized through the Five Eyes and QUAD. Lastly, the trade war between two countries reached its peak. Since the "no deal" of Hanoi meeting, the U.S showed its interest to North Korea at the least level. Especially, Washington completely lost its driving force to continue the negotiations, under the circumstance that it confirmed that the concept of denuclearization and the schedule for obtaining verifiable results were different to that of Pyongyang's. On the other hand, Beijing deepened its levels of engagement and continued positive gestures toward Pyongyang. Such manners deeply involved the objective for expending the North Korea issue as a bargaining card in the disputes with the United States.

In conclusion, this paper was initialized to explain the rapidly changing North Korea policies of the U.S. and China from 2017 to 2020. The research involves the intervening variable at the domestic level, claimed by neoclassical realism. The national interest includes the securing of political power to reach certain foreign policy goals and assure its state role in great power politics. With such theoretical features, the paper pursues to deliver a new outlook on North Korea policies during the relevant periods. This paper takes an opinion that the coordination of the U.S. and China in North Korea affairs does not necessarily happen with conscious and explicit agreements, rather realized when the priority of national interests meet upon loose expectations on certain regional security challenges.

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국문 요약

Abstract in Korean

역동하는 세계 질서를 설명하고 국제체계(international systems)를 명확히 규정하는 데에는 다양한 관점이 공존하고 있다. 그럼에도 불구하고, 오늘날 그 논의의 핵심부에 미중 관계가 있음은 많은 이들이 부정하지 않는 사실이다. 한편, 현재까지도 많은 국가들의 안보와 직결되는 사안들이 존재하고 있는데, 그 중의 하나가 북한의 핵무기 보유와 관련 프로그램의 다변화이다. 북한이 핵확산방지조약(NPT)을 탈퇴한 이래로, 이는 미국과 중국 모두에게 얽혀 있는 난제로 여겨져 왔다. 포괄적으로는, 양국 모두가 한반도의 평화와 안정에 보편적인 공감을 보이고 있다. 그러나 그 과정에 있어 행위자들이 어느 수준까지 도달했는지, 앞으로 어떤 방식으로 접근해야 하는지 등에 있어서 두 국가가 상당히 다른 관점을 갖고 있다. 이는 각국의 이익(national interest)이 다르기 때문이다.

가장 최근, 선명한 정책 발현의 계기가 된 것은 분명 2017년 전반에 걸쳐 북한이 대륙간탄도미사일(ICBM)의 시험 발사를 감행하고 제6차 핵실험을 통해 수소탄을 선보인 것이었다. 놀랍게도, 해당 시기를 기점으로 불과 몇 년에 이르는 시간동안 지난 30년의 미 대북정책의 양상이 압축적으로 나타났다. 압박에서 관여까지, 매우 빠른 정책 전환이 이루어졌다. 그러나 흥미로운 것은, 대북정책의 변화가 미국에서 뿐만 아니라 중국에서도 관찰되었다는 점이다. 따라서 본 연구는 “왜 미국과 중국의 대북정책에 있어서 비슷한 시점과 양상의 정책 전환이 분명하게 이루어졌으며,” 또한 “무엇이 그러한 행동 양식의 원인이 되는가?”에 대한 답을 구하고자 한다.

관련 시기 두 국가의 대북정책을 살펴봄으로써, 본 연구는 북한 문제에 있어 궁극적으로 두 국가가 일종의 조정 상태에 놓이는 양상을 드러내고자 한다. 본 논문의 핵심 주장은, 서로 상호작용하는 두 강대국인 미국과 중국이 각자의 국익에 영향을 받아 대북 정책의 발현 결과로 특정한 행동 양식을 보인다는 것이다. 더불어, 해당 상관관계에 국익이라는 매개 변수를 도입해

신고전적 현실주의(neoclassical realism)에서 강조되는 국내 정치 수준의 분석을 결부시킨다.

이러한 요소를 통해, 본 논문은 2019년에서 2020년에 이르는 시기 대북정책을 현실주의적 관점에서 해석하고자 한다. 궁극적으로, 미국과 중국의 대북정책 조정은 의식적인 협의나 분명한 합의사항에 의한 것이 아니며, 되려 국익에 따른 대외정책 결정 과정에서 우선순위가 수렴(converge)될 때 이루어진다는 결론을 내린다. 따라서 해당 연구는 북한 문제와 지역 안보에 관한 양국의 느슨한 기대에 대해 체계적이고 합리적인 설명을 제공하는 데에 의의가 있다.

핵심어: 미중 관계, 미국과 중국의 대북정책, 현실주의(realism),

신고전적 현실주의(neoclassical realism), 국익(national interest)

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