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**CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA:
THE NUCLEAR ISSUE**

by

Dongjin Jeong

December 2012

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Wade L. Huntley
Christopher P. Twomey

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**CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA: THE NUCLEAR
ISSUE**

Dongjin Jeong
Major, Republic of Korea Air Force
B.B.A., Korea Air Force Academy, 1998

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2012**

Author: Dongjin Jeong

Approved by: Wade L. Huntley
Thesis Advisor

Christopher P. Twomey
Second Reader

Harold A. Trinkunas
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

China has had different reactions to North Korean nuclear provocations. When North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and provoked the first nuclear crisis in 1993–1994, China responded relatively softly and preferred to remain a bystander. However, in 2003, when North Korea withdrew from the NPT and provoked a nuclear crisis again, China reacted quite differently. The country actively intervened to settle the crisis and cooperated with the international community. This research examines what factors have affected China's foreign-policy change toward the North Korean nuclear issue.

This research argues that China's general foreign-policy change had affected China's attitude change toward the North Korean nuclear issue. Since the Tiananmen incident, China had maintained a passive attitude in international affairs, until the mid-1990s. However, China's attitude toward international affairs changed in the late 1990s. China started to resume its diplomatic relationship with the West and successful economic development gave China confidence in its comprehensive national power. While trying to limit U.S. influence in the Asian region, China has also tried to increase its influence in the region and involvement in international affairs. This precipitated change in China's attitude change in the North Korean nuclear issue.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APEC Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APT ASEAN Plus Three
ARF ASEAN Regional Forum
CASS Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
CCP Chinese Communist Party
CICIR China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations
CNP Comprehensive National Power
CTBT Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
CVID Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement
EAS East Asia Summit
ETIM East Turkestan Independence Movement
GDP Gross Domestic Product
HEU Highly Enriched Uranium
IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency
IMF International Monetary Fund
KEDO Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
NPT Non Proliferation Treaty
NSC New Security Concept
NSG Nuclear Suppliers Group
PSI Proliferation Security Initiative
ROC Republic of China
SCO Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SEZ Special Economic Zone
UN United Nations
WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO World Trade Organization

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

China has had different reactions to North Korean nuclear provocations. When North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and provoked the first nuclear crisis in 1993–1994, China responded relatively softly and preferred to remain a bystander. However, in 2003, when North Korea withdrew from the NPT and provoked a nuclear crisis again, China reacted quite differently. The country actively intervened to settle the crisis and cooperated with the international community. This research will examine what factors affected China’s foreign-policy change during the North Korean nuclear issue.

B. IMPORTANCE

North Korea’s nuclear weapons are a big threat, not only to East Asian regional security, but also to the international nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and related efforts. Since North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 1993, the international community—especially the U. S.—has made various efforts to prevent the country from having nuclear weapons. However, the efforts have failed to achieve their goal. North Korea is now believed to possess several nuclear weapons and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, who succeeded to power after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in 2011, recently raised tensions in the region by launching a long-range rocket—although Pyongyang insisted that it was for the peaceful purpose of launching a satellite.¹ In order to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions and reduce related threats, international cooperation—especially involving China—is very important.

North Korea matters to China as part of the latter’s broader international behavior. Traditionally, China has considered North Korea a buffer zone for Chinese national security. Without North Korea, China has to directly confront a border with South Korea, in which territory there are U.S. military bases. Since China is concerned about U.S.

¹ Sung-yoon Lee, “Why North Korea’s Rocket Mattered,” *New York Times*, April 14, 2012: A.19.

influence in the Asian region, U.S. forces in the border area are a burden for China. Furthermore, a regime collapse or instability in North Korea could lead to a massive refugee influx from the country. This would impose unrest on Chinese society. China also needs regional stability to maintain its trade and economic development.

Although North Korea has not always followed China's requests, China is the country with most influence on North Korean decision-making. North Korea has often had dissension with China, and some Chinese advocate a strong line against North Korea. Especially, the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, seems determined to set a course for political independence from Beijing, and since he succeeded to power in 2011, the political relationships between China and North Korea have been frequently at odds.²

However, despite Beijing's frustration and fears about North Korea's behavior, China's economic support for North Korea continues. In June 2012, Beijing allowed 20,000 North Koreans to work in the northeastern province of Jilin, and China has undertaken a \$10 billion infrastructure project on the North Korean border to improve its access to an estimated \$6 trillion worth of North Korean mineral reserves recently.³ Beijing also stretched out its hand to North Korea with a significant portion of fuel and food aid.

Geopolitically, China is a neighboring country of North Korea and saved the North Korean regime from UN forces during the Korean War. China also is the host country of the Six-Party Talks, which can play a crucial role in solving the North Korean nuclear issue. Therefore, understanding Chinese foreign policy toward the North Korean nuclear issue is important for cooperation among the international community and for coming up with a proper solution to this issue.

² Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "The Diminishing Returns of China's North Korea Policy," 16 Aug 2012, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/north-east-asia/north-korea/op-eds/kleine-ahlbrandt-the-diminishing-returns-of-china-s-north-korea-policy.aspx>.

³ Ibid.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

One needs a better explanation for the changing Chinese behavior toward North Korea, because China can play a crucial role in solving the North Korean nuclear issue. Furthermore, with such an explanation, one can better predict China's future response and influence it at the margins when North Korea gives another provocation. Therefore, it is necessary to understand China's foreign-policy change toward North Korea. China preferred to remain a bystander in the first North Korean nuclear crisis, but it actively intervened in the second crisis and played a crucial role in setting the table for negotiations. Senior Chinese officials have increased their "shuttle/visitation diplomacy on a quarterly basis" from early 2003 to late 2005.⁴

What drives China's foreign-policy change toward North Korea? Various factors might affect this change. For example, China might consider the second North Korean nuclear crisis as a good chance to improve its relationship with the U.S., or the growing trade volume with South Korea might lead China to increase its shuttle/visitation diplomacy. Also, China might be willing to develop a better relationship with North Korean midlevel officials who have gained more influence inside North Korea, so China can influence North Korea's nuclear policy in the future. However, China's foreign policy change was not a result of any single factor. While trying to maintain good relationship with other countries, China also sought to increase its influence in the Asian region. Additionally, China tried to make a balance between the two Koreas. Therefore, in order to understand the Chinese foreign-policy change in the North Korean nuclear issue, one should consider the country's overall foreign-policy change first.

Historically, China has shown dynamic foreign-policy changes since its establishment in 1949. Sometimes the country maintained good relations with the two major super powers—the U.S. and the Soviet Union—and sometimes it experienced military conflicts with them. Sometimes the country isolated itself from the international community and sometimes it actively engaged it. Major foreign-policy changes also happened in China between the mid-1990s and the 2000s. China experienced a new

⁴ Samuel S. Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 67.

security environment and position in the international community. Domestically, new fourth-generation leaders with confidence in China's development took power in the early 2000s. As a result, the country raised its voice in the international community and expanded its engagement in the regional multilateral community. Thus, this research will hypothesize that China's general foreign policy changed between the mid-1990s and the 2000s and influenced China's active involvement in the North Korean nuclear crisis in the early 2000s.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several scholars have dealt with the factors that have influenced China's foreign policy change toward the North Korean nuclear issue, and they can be separated into three major camps, focused on the following factors: a growing security concern, a changing perception of other countries, and changes in domestic factors. There is also a school of thoughts that China's foreign policy toward the North Korean nuclear issue has not changed.

In the first camp, some scholars claim that a growing security concern made China change its foreign policy. Ok-joon Kim argues that China was worried that the North Korean nuclear program caused instability in Northeast Asia, which gave an excuse to Japan, South Korea, and even Taiwan to develop their military power. Thus, China realized that it had to take some measures to stop North Korea's nuclear testing.⁵

Hong-seo Park analyzes China's policy change from a perspective of alliance. He argues that China sought to achieve a balance between entrapment and abandonment. To avoid the abandonment of North Korea, China kept objecting to "Washington's willingness to take more assertive measures, economic sanctions and military action." However, when the possibility of "entrapment caused by the conflict between its weak ally [North Korea] and strong adversary [the U.S.]" increased in the second North Korean

⁵ Ok-joon Kim, "The Major Reasons of China's Active Role in North Korea Nuclear Issue," *The Korean Journal of Unification affairs* vol.16, no. 1 (2004): 313.

nuclear crisis, China pressured North Korea and improved relations with the U.S. to prevent unwanted entrapment.⁶

Ki-jung Kim and woong-ha Na considers two variables in analyzing the change: “Cohesiveness in the Chinese-North Korean alliance, and a Chinese sense of ‘fear of entrapment’ which assumingly resulted from the changes of the Third Party (the U.S.).” They explain that “a combination of those two variables caused a changing degree of ‘security sensitivity’ that China might have regarding the North Korean nuclear crisis.”⁷

In the second camp, some parts of the literature insist that China’s changing perception of other countries was the main cause of the policy change. You-en Kim points out that the relationship between China and North Korea influenced the policy change. The relation of China and North Korea was often described with the expression “as close as lips to teeth.” However, the new generation of Chinese leaders has started to see North Korea in a different perspective. The provocation of North Korea’s threat to regional security made some in China’s new generation start to view North Korea as a burden rather than a buffer zone. Thus, the perspective of this “liability school” rather than the “buffer-zone school” in China was reflected in the policy toward the North Korean nuclear crisis.⁸

Some others in the second camp conclude that the change can be explained by the relationship between the U.S. and China. Suk-hee Han contends that both internal (new-generation leaders) and international factors (the U.S.) made China change its policy. He claims that China considered friendly relations with the U.S. as beneficial for its activity in the international community, so China got involved in the North Korean nuclear crisis

⁶ Hong-seo Park, “China’s Management of Alliance Dilemma over the Nuclear Crisis in the Korean Peninsula: Its Theory and Practice,” *The Korean Journal of International Relations* 46, no. 1 (Apr 2006):122.

⁷ Ki-jung Kim and Woong-ha Na, “Observation and Intervention : the Changing Pattern of Chinese Foreign Policy toward the First, and the Second Crisis of North Korean Nuclear Problem,” *중소연구* 33, no. 1 (2009): vii.

⁸ You-en Kim, “Understanding China’s calculus of Nuclear Issue in North Korea: Focused on the Six-Party Talk,” *중소연구* 28, no. 3 (2004): 185.

to reinforce U.S.–Chinese relations.⁹ David M. Lampton claims that after September 11, 2001, when Washington became more preoccupied with terrorism than a rising China, Beijing saw a “window of opportunity to pursue its goals for domestic development without excessive threat from the United States” and tried to improve cooperation with Washington (“including an affirmative vote for UN Resolution 1441 in November 2002 concerning Iraq”).¹⁰

Kwan-ok Kim argues that China adopted “both balancing and bandwagoning policies” under the U.S. unipolar system. As a part of bandwagon policies, China cooperated with the U.S. in dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue.¹¹

In the third camp, some of the literature examines the change based on Chinese domestic factors. Ae-gyeong Kim insists that since the mid-1990s, China’s national identity has changed from that of a third-world country to that of a great responsible power. When North Korea provoked the first nuclear crisis, China emphasized absolute national sovereignty and was biased toward North Korea. However, in the second crisis, China highlighted the importance of nuclear non-proliferation and regional security, actively mediating between the U.S. and North Korea in the role of a great responsible power. These different responses were based on China’s national-identity change.¹²

Ok-joon Kim and Suk-hee Han also believe that “reform policy and new leadership of the Chinese government” are the main domestic factors of China’s foreign policy change toward the North Korean nuclear issue.¹³

In sum, the literature that analyzes the factors influencing China’s foreign policy change toward the North Korean nuclear crisis can be categorized in three ways: a

⁹ Suk-hee Han, “Six-Party Talks and China’s Diplomatic Dilemma.” *The Korean Journal of International Relations* 45, no. 1 (Apr 2005):179–183.

¹⁰ David M. Lampton, “The Stealth Normalization of U.S.-China Relations,” *The National Interest* no. 73 (Oct 2003): 39.

¹¹ Kwan-ok Kim, “U.S. Unipolarity and Change of Chinese Foreign Policy,” *The society of China Culture in Korea* vol. 27 (2009):234.

¹² Ae-kyung Kim, “The change in China’s Perception of Identity,” *National Strategy* vol. 10, no. 4 (Winter 2004):33.

¹³ Kim, “Major Reasons of China’s Active Role,” 53; Han, “Six-Party Talks and China’s Diplomatic Dilemma,” 179–183.

growing security concern, a changing perception of the U.S. and/or North Korea, and changing domestic factors, such as new leaders in government or national identity.

Contrary to these three camps, some scholars argue that China's foreign policy toward the North Korean nuclear issue did not change between the first and second nuclear crisis. Heung-kyu Kim contends that, unlike the passive-attitude image, China played a constructive role in the first North Korean nuclear crisis.¹⁴ While emphasizing a peaceful solution to the issue, China asserted the principle of a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. Thus, China joined the international pressure on North Korea by not opposing the adoption of a Security Council resolution calling for denuclearization of North Korea. Heung-kyu Kim also insists that China's attitude made North Korea recognize that it could be completely isolated if it worsened the situation. China led North Korea to make the transition to mitigating the provocation in the first crisis. However, evidence developed in this thesis tends to discount the "no-change" interpretation.

Analyses of the security factor fail to explain why China reacted differently between the first and second nuclear crises. When the first nuclear crisis broke out in 1993, there was also strong concern about a regional nuclear domino effect and about a U.S. attack against the North Korean nuclear reactor.¹⁵ In regards to alliances, the smaller power in an alliance usually worries about abandonment and entrapment. The difference in national power between China and North Korea made their relationship asymmetrical, so the relationship of the two countries can be described as that between a patron and a client.¹⁶ In that case, why should it matter to China if it is abandoned by North Korea?

The changing perceptions of other countries were crucial factors in determining China's foreign policy toward the North Korean nuclear issue, but they were just one of

¹⁴ Heung-Gyu Kim, "The 1st, 2nd North Korean nuclear crisis and China's policy," http://www.koreapeace.or.kr/modules/forum/forum_view.html?fl_no=377.

¹⁵ Sam Jameson, "Official Says Japan Will Need Nuclear Arms if N. Korea Threatens," *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 29, 1993; Doyle McManus, "Clinton Warns N. Korea Not to Build A-Bomb," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov 8, 1993.

¹⁶ Christopher C. Shoemaker and John Spanier, *Patron-Client State Relationships: Multilateral Crises in the Nuclear Age* (Praeger Pub, 1984), 13.

many factors that can explain the change. Domestic factors were important, but they also cannot alone explain a nation's foreign-policy change.

In principle, China's foreign policy in the North Korean nuclear issue has not changed. China has maintained the position that a nuclear-free Korean peninsula through peaceful means is the only solution to the problem. China also has insisted that the North Korean nuclear crisis is a product of the trouble between the U.S. and North Korea, so the two have to come up with the solution. Despite this principle, however, there were changes in China's actual response in the North Korean nuclear issue. China publicly criticized North Korea's nuclear program and took a leading role in the Six-Party Talks. China's senior officials increased their shuttle/visitation diplomacy for the successful Six-Party Talks. Sometimes, China used coercive methods to persuade North Korea. Therefore, it needs to be explained how China's general foreign policy changed, and how it affected China's attitude change toward the North Korean nuclear issue.

It is necessary to make a general point about broader changes in Chinese foreign policy that are produced by different sources and have effects on Chinese policy toward North Korean nuclear issues. Ok-joon Kim and Suk-hee Han examined both domestic and international factors, but they focused on only limited factors, such as new leaders, security concerns, and China's perception of the U.S. Thus, they fail to explain China's foreign-policy change.

To overcome these shortcomings, this thesis will improve on the explanation of Chinese policies toward North Korea by drawing more on literature explaining Chinese foreign policy in general. Therefore, this thesis will survey China's general foreign-policy change in the field of "regional stability and economic development," which is relevant to the North Korean nuclear issue. The areas I plan to survey in assessing these changes in Chinese foreign policy include the growing Chinese economy and economic diplomacy, international activity and participation in international institutions, and China's relationship with North Korea.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This paper examines what factors have affected China's foreign-policy change on the basis of China's national interest and policy toward its ally. The methods employed rely on comparative-case studies between the first and second North Korean nuclear crisis and qualitative analysis of sources. The North Korean nuclear issue is directly related with Asian regional security, and China's position toward the issue reflects China's attitude toward its neighboring countries and the international community. Thus, comparisons include Chinese foreign-policy changes toward North Korea, its security environment, and its attitude and general foreign-policy changes vis-a-vis neighboring countries and the international community. Primary sources include public speeches, and secondary sources include academic papers, journalistic sources, and scholarly books.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This study estimates how China's reaction changed between the first and second North Korean nuclear crises and what caused China to make the changes. Chapter II will discuss the North Korean nuclear crises and China, including the North Korean nuclear program, the first and second North Korean nuclear crisis, and the change in China's response. Chapter III discusses China's foreign-policy change. This includes China's national interest, security environment, and general foreign-policy changes. China's position toward North Korea and the nuclear issue are examined as well. Chapter IV discusses China's attitude change toward multilateralism and regional multilateral institutions and examines multilateral cooperation and the Six-Party Talks. Chapter V contains conclusions that the causes of China's attitude change toward the North Korean nuclear crisis.

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II. THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS AND CHINA

Despite criticism from the international community, North Korea has desired to possess nuclear weapons for a long time. During its nuclear-weapon development, North Korea has provoked international tension several times. Especially, the country provoked an international crisis in 1994 by withdrawing NPT and in 2002 by admitting the existence of a highly enriched uranium (HEU) program. The first crisis could be solved peacefully through negotiation, and North Korea seemed to give up nuclear-weapons possession. However, since the second crisis broke out, North Korea and the international community have failed to find a consensus, and North Korea conducted a nuclear test in 2006. China had shown different responses between the first and second North Korean nuclear crises. This chapter will examine how the two North Korean nuclear crises developed and China's different responses.

A. THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS

1. The North Korean Nuclear Program

Since the establishment of the country, North Korea had long desired to possess nuclear weapons. Ironically, U.S. nuclear power prompted North Korea's desire to possess nuclear weapons at the beginning. During the Korean War, faced with endless Chinese forces, the U.S. considered using atomic bombs as part of a strategy to drive Chinese forces out of the Korean peninsula. After the Korean War, the U.S. stationed several tactical nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula to prevent North Korea's invasion of South Korea. "The psychological impact of Korean War-era U.S. nuclear threats combined with the physical deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons on South Korean soil elicited a strong response from Kim Il Sung, and he reportedly began exploring prospects for a North Korean nuclear program."¹⁷

¹⁷ John S. Park, and Song Sun Lee, "North Korea: Existential Deterrence and Diplomatic Leverage," in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21st Century Asia* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2008): 272.

The North Korean nuclear program started in 1955 when Kim Il-sung ordered the establishment of a nuclear institute. The nuclear physics institute was founded in Yongbyon and brought a research reactor from the Soviet Union in 1960. The institute succeeded in extracting plutonium for the first time in 1975 and put its efforts into producing nuclear weapons during the 1980s.¹⁸ The North Korean nuclear program has grown into a “serious security concern to the surrounding countries as well as the U.S.,” since a U.S. satellite found construction of new reactor facilities at Yongbyon in 1982.¹⁹ Although North Korea joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985, as a result of pressure from the Soviet Union, North Korea did not intend to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

2. The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis

North Korea declared its withdrawal from the NPT and provoked the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1994. Despite the suspicion of North Korean nuclear ambition, there were some peaceful movements in the Korean peninsula in the early 1990s. However, this peaceful atmosphere did not last long. In 1991, President George H.W. Bush announced the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea. The two Koreas also signed the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which declared they would not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy, or use nuclear weapons.²⁰ Following that, North Korea concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in January 1992. North Korea declared seven nuclear sites and 90 grams of plutonium subject to IAEA inspection, and the IAEA conducted inspections at those sites from 1992–1993. However, the IAEA inspectors found problems with the amount of plutonium declared in North Korea’s initial report and demanded special inspections. North Korea rejected the IAEA’s request to inspect two suspicious sites, and the U.S. tried to impose economic sanctions on North Korea through the UN Security Council.

¹⁸ Dae-kyu Kim, “The Role of China in the North Korea’s Nuclear Issue,” *Korean Journal of Political Science*, vol.13, no. 2 (2005): 268.

¹⁹ Uk Heo and Jung-yeop Woo, “The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Motives, Progress, and Prospects.” *Korea Observer* 39, no. 4 (Jan 2008): 491.

²⁰ Joint Declaration on The Denuclearization of The Korean Peninsula, <http://www.fas.org/news/dprk/1992/920219-D4129.htm>.

Confronted with this brinkmanship strategy, in 1994, North Korea declared that the country would withdraw from the NPT and considered the sanction an act of war. Furthermore, the country took a very bellicose posture by unloading enough nuclear fuel rods to make five nuclear weapons. In response to these provocations, the U.S. considered military action against the nuclear facility and the tension reached a peak.²¹

The dramatic settlement of the first North Korean nuclear crisis came when former U.S. president Jimmy Carter visited Pyongyang and met with North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung. Since the meeting, the two countries have had several high-level talks and signed an agreed-upon framework in 1994. In the framework, North Korea agreed to observe the NPT and the safeguards agreement. As a reward of this, the U.S. agreed to provide two 1,000MWe-level light-water nuclear reactors by 2003 and 500,000 tons of heavy oil annually until the reactor was provided.

3. The Second North Korean Nuclear Crisis

The second North Korean nuclear crisis started in 2002. When James Kelly—assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs—visited Pyongyang in 2002, North Korea admitted the existence of the HEU program.²² However, a severe worsening in relations between the U.S. and North Korea emerged when new-president George W. Bush took power in 2001. Unlike the Clinton administration, the Bush administration took a strong attitude toward North Korea. President Bush and his staff judged that the Clinton administration’s policy toward North Korea was a failure. Furthermore, the president revealed his abhorrence of North Korean leader Kim Jung-il. He described North Korea as one part of an “axis of evil” in his first state-of-the-union address and refused to negotiate with the country.²³

²¹ Heo and Woo, “The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Motives, Progress, and Prospects,” 493.

²² According to Mike Chinoy, it is not clear whether Pyongyang actually admitted or not. See Mike Chinoy, *Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (New York: St Martin’s Griffin, 2009).

²³ Amy Goldstein and Mike Allen, “Bush Vows to Defeat Terror, Recession,” *The Washington Post*, Jan 30, 2002.

While the construction of the two 1,000MWe-level light-water nuclear reactors was delayed, and the U.S. increased pressure, North Korea refused to allow IAEA inspection and requested bilateral talks with the U.S. However, Washington rejected dialogue with North Korea until the country abandoned its nuclear program and committed to complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement (CVID).

As North Korea continued rejecting the abandonment of its nuclear ambition, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) stopped the oil supply to North Korea in November 2002. In response to this, North Korea removed the surveillance camera from the Yongbyon nuclear site, expelled every IAEA inspector, and declared withdrawal from the NPT in January 2003. After Pyongyang withdrew from the NPT on 10 January 2003, the possibility of U.S. military action against North Korea increased. In March 2003, the U.S. dispatched the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* to South Korea and deployed a dozen B-52 and B-1 bombers to Guam to pressure the North Korean regime.²⁴ As the tension grew, there were strong concerns in the region of “the Bush doctrine of preemptive strike becoming reality.”²⁵

B. CHINA’S CHANGE IN RESPONSE DURING THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS

1. The First Crisis

When the first crisis happened, Washington realized that it had to seek China’s help in settling the crisis. A senior government official said that “The consensus [within the Clinton Administration] is that China is the key to solving the North Korea crisis.”²⁶ Thus, Washington and Seoul requested that China cooperate in solving this issue. However, Beijing kept repeating the principle that China supports the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, but there is also a national-sovereignty issue, and it refused to take any role or responsibility in this situation. In June 1993, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian

²⁴ B. Demick, “THE WORLD; U.S. flexes muscles before the Koreas; scheduled war games with South Korea apparently are meant to impress the North” *Los Angeles Times*, Mar 21, 2003, A.26.

²⁵ Chinoy, *Meltdown*, 164.

²⁶ Douglas Jehl, “U.S. Agrees to Discuss Arms Directly with North Korea,” *New York Times*, Apr 23, 1993.

Qichen, while on a visit to Seoul, told South Korean officials that “China has very little leverage with Pyongyang, despite the North’s economic dependence on China.”²⁷ He has also made it clear on many occasions that Beijing is “not only opposed to economic sanctions [on North Korea] but also against bringing up the issue at all in the IAEA and the Security Council.”²⁸ Thus, when the IAEA asked the UN Security Council to enforce on North Korea the April 1993 provisions of international agreements controlling nuclear arms, China opposed the sanction.²⁹ Prime Minister Li Peng told the United Nations secretary general in a meeting in December 1993, “China favors a proper settlement of the issue through dialogue and consultation, instead of imposing pressure and sanctions.”³⁰ Furthermore, despite many countries’ opposition, China conducted an underground nuclear test in October 1993 which could negatively affect the North Korean nuclear crisis. The White House issued a written statement that it “deeply regretted the test and urged China to refrain from others.”³¹ China’s nuclear test could negatively affect the North Korean nuclear crisis by giving the impression that sovereign nations should not surrender to foreign pressure. Pyongyang might consider that if China could do nuclear tests despite Western opposition, why shouldn’t North Korea?

There were several reasons that China maintained this passive and uncooperative attitude toward the U.S. in the crisis. First, China believed strongly in national sovereignty and thought that the U.S. tried to interfere in socialist countries’ sovereignty. Samuel S. Kim argues that after the Tiananmen incident that “twin legitimization crises at home (the Tiananmen carnage of June 1989) and abroad (the collapse of transnational communism at its epicenter), international sanctions, especially U.S.-sponsored sanctions

²⁷ “U.S. Aims with Talks to Keep N. Koreans in Nuclear Arms Pact Containment in Asian,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, Jun 1, 1993.

²⁸ Samuel S. Kim, “The Dialectics of China’s North Korea Policy in a Changing Post-cold War World,” *Asian Perspective*, vol.18, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1994): 27.

²⁹ David E. Sanger, “Atomic Energy Agency Asks U.N. to Move against North Korea,” *New York Times*, Apr 2, 1993.

³⁰ “China says it opposes steps against North Korea,” *New York Times*, Dec 27, 1993, A3-A3. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/429397887?accountid=12702>.

³¹ Lena H. Sun, “China Resumes Nuclear Test; U.S. Prepares to Follow Suit,” *The Washington Post*, Oct 6, 1993.

against a socialist regime, trigger the sound and furious response of state sovereignty.”³² If the U.S.-led international community succeeded in oppressing a socialist regime, this precedent would also be imposed on China later. Chinese representatives decided “If you [the U.S.] can’t force the North Koreans to do what you want, how do you imagine you could ever force the Chinese to do anything?”³³ Thus, China considered the North Korean nuclear issue related to national sovereignty and remained passive in its attitude against the U.S.-led international movement.

Second, Beijing considered that they needed to check U.S. influence in the Asian region. Some Chinese emphasized the need to build a new type of relations with other countries “as a new strategic move to prevent U.S. hegemonies from subverting China and intervening in the internal affairs of other Asian countries.”³⁴

Chinese leaders considered that the U.S. was the only country that could pose a threat to China’s future security and “they saw U.S. policy in Asia and world affairs as adverse to Chinese interests.”³⁵ Thus, Beijing opposed U.S. policies in Asia. Robert G. Sutter argues that “In response to U.S.-led sanctions and criticisms in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Chinese government and Chinese Community Party (CCP) endeavored to use foreign affairs to demonstrate the legitimacy and prestige of China’s communist leaders.”³⁶ Patterns of behavior reflecting this tendency were seen repeatedly in “Chinese leaders’ policies and behavior toward the United States and U.S. interests in Asia in the post-cold war period.”³⁷ Through commentary and official pronouncements, Beijing also expressed its perception that international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) were becoming increasingly important to its interests of economic

³² Kim, “The Dialectics of China’s North Korea Policy in a Changing Post-Cold War World,” 27.

³³ Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers*, 64.

³⁴ Kim, “The Dialectics of China’s North Korea Policy in a Changing Post-Cold War World,” 29.

³⁵ Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations Power & Policy since the Cold War* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2007), 23.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

development and political stature, but remained dominated by the United States and other Western powers.”³⁸

Third, China calculated that although North Korea possessed nuclear weapons, it did not represent serious damage to China’s national interest. The North Korean nuclear program is a threat to the U.S., not to China. China’s most important concern is economic growth and the Taiwan issue. Since the issue is not “China’s core national security interest” China did not need to be actively involved in this issue.³⁹ Thus, China judged that supporting North Korean regime stability was better for China’s national interests than imposing international sanctions on North Korea.

These factors were largely influenced by China’s foreign policy in general. While China did not much care about the North Korean nuclear threat, Chinese viewed “the post–Cold War U.S. global strategy as expansionist in nature due to its superior comprehensive power (*Zonghe guoli*).”⁴⁰ Since there was little to gain in China’s national interest, Chinese worried that cooperation with the U.S.-led international order would infringe upon its sovereignty and impose negative effects on China. While there was little motivation to improve relations with the U.S. since the Tiananmen incident, the wariness toward U.S. hegemony strongly influenced China’s foreign policy and hindered cooperate with the U.S. during the first nuclear crisis.

2. The Second Crisis

In contrast to the first North Korean nuclear crisis in the early 1990s, China changed its attitude to active involvement in the second crisis in 2002. The second North Korean nuclear crisis threatened the stability of Northeast Asia, contrary to China’s national interest. Thus, China’s initial response toward North Korea was not favorable. If China played a crucial role to solve the problem, however, the country could improve its image as a responsible superpower in the international community. Although the

³⁸ Ibid., 40–41.

³⁹ Yiwei Wang, “China’s Role in Dealing with the North Korean Nuclear Issue,” *Korea Observer* 36, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 469.

⁴⁰ Jianwei Wang and Zhimin Lin, “Chinese Perceptions in the Post-Cold War Era,” *Asian Survey* vol.32 no. 10 (1992): 908.

relationship between the U.S. and China had improved since September 11, 2001, the U.S. considered China a strategic contender and potential threat. Against this Chinese-threat theory, Beijing tried to impose the image of China as a peaceful and harmonious country. Thus, China saw that displaying a peaceful and responsible attitude during the second North Korean nuclear crisis was an opportunity to pursue a broader agenda of engagement with the U.S. and enhance its reputation for responsible behavior in the eyes of other states.

From the beginning, China made it clear that the country opposed North Korea's nuclear possession. At first, China reemphasized its principle goals of denuclearization of the peninsula, maintaining stability and peace, and solving problems with peaceful negotiation. After North Korea withdrew from the NPT, China's leader, Jiang Zemin, telephoned U.S. president George W. Bush and denounced North Korea. He emphasized "the importance of safeguarding the international nuclear nonproliferation system and promised to work with all parties concerned to promote an early peaceful settlement of the DPRK nuclear issue."⁴¹

China also hoped the U.S. and North Korea could solve the problem through bilateral negotiation. However, when the U.S. rejected bilateral negotiation with North Korea strongly, China tried to relieve the crisis through a multilateral framework. China convened the Three Party Talks in 2003 as a precursor to the Six-Party Talks and tried to persuade North Korea to come up to the talks. In mid-July 2003, deputy minister of foreign affairs Dai Binggou carried a letter from president Hu Jintao to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, again urging the North to resume talks with Washington.⁴²

For successful six-party talks, China designated Ning Fukui as a Chinese special envoy for the North Korean ambassador. Beijing also strengthened its governmental structure about North Korean nuclear issue by mobilizing "a professional work force of about two hundred experts from nine departments or bureaus in the Ministry of Foreign

⁴¹ "U.S. Aims with Talks to Keep N. Koreans in Nuclear Arms Pact Containment in Asia," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Jun 1, 1993.

⁴² David M. Lampton, "China and the Crisis in Korea," <http://nationalinterest.org/article/china-and-the-crisis-in-korea-2395>.

Affairs.”⁴³ When the claims of the U.S. and North Korea were in direct opposition, senior Chinese officials increased shuttle diplomacy between the two countries to bring them to the negotiating table. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi has described its role as “active mediation.”⁴⁴

In contrast to the first North Korean nuclear crisis, Beijing also put more pressure on North Korea to solve the crisis. On 12 February 2003, China voted for an “IAEA resolution to refer North Korea’s nuclear noncompliance for discussion at the UN Security Council.”⁴⁵ This was a quite different reaction compared to the previous case in the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993, when China gave up its vote in the same resolution.

China also sent various signals to North Korea regarding the nuclear issue.⁴⁶ These signals varied from tacit warning, such as declaratory statements and hints through public media, to tangible policies, such as China’s North Korean refugee policy, counter-proliferation exercise participation, and border-region military deployment.

Since 2002, China’s officials and media used unprecedented phrases of warning to North Korea in statements regarding the North Korean nuclear issue. For example, prior to the test in 2006, China’s ambassador to the UN warned North Korea that “no country is going to protect North Korea” if North Korea continued provocative behavior.⁴⁷ After the test, Xinhua news criticized North Korea, in that the country “ignored universal opposition of the international community and flagrantly conducted the nuclear test on Oct. 9” and “the Chinese government is resolutely opposed to it.”⁴⁸

⁴³ Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers*, 68.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁵ Scott Snyder, “Regime Change and another Nuclear Crisis,” *Comparative Connections: A Quarterly E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations* 5, no. 1 (Apr 2003): 93.

⁴⁶ Christopher Twomey, “Explaining Chinese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea: Navigating between the Scylla and Charybdis of Proliferation and Instability,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 17, no. 56 (Aug 2008): 414.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 415.

⁴⁸ ‘China resolutely opposes DPRK’s nuclear test’, *Xinhua* (Beijing), (9 October 2006).

China also sought to pressure North Korea through its diplomatic policies were related to North Korea.⁴⁹ Prior to the test, China had repatriated North Korean refugees to the country. After the missile test, however, Beijing allowed a number of North Korean refugees to go to the U.S. or South Korea. China used this refugee issue as a way to warn North Korea regarding their nuclear testing.

China's pressure in North Korea's nuclear issue has also included military exercises. "Since many regard Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) as primarily aimed at North Korea," China's participated in the multilateral counter-proliferation cooperation which "mirrored the Bush Administration's PSI in all but name" was an obvious warning signal toward North Korea.⁵⁰

China also wielded coercive methods in the economic field. Although it was described as a technical problem, China halted the oil flow to North Korea for three days in February 2003. This could be interpreted as a "message from China designed to remind North Korea of its economic dependence on Beijing."⁵¹ China's efforts have succeeded in establishing six-party talks, which include the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, and the two Koreas.

In sum, China's response toward the North Korean nuclear issue during the mid-2000s was different from its previous position that the country would not interfere in other countries' domestic affairs. China used both sticks and carrots to persuade North Korea to come to negotiation. Although the six-party talks failed to achieve their goal—denuclearization of the peninsula—China did succeed in using the crisis to improve its position in the international community and show its influence as a regional power.

⁴⁹ Twomey, "Explaining Chinese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea," 415.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵¹ Snyder, "Regime Change and another Nuclear Crisis," 93.

III. CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

There have been a lot of changes between the early 1990s and the early 2000s in the Northeast Asian security environment. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. became the sole superpower in the world. As China no more needed to worry about foreign invasion, economic development, national sovereignty and internal stability became China's main interest. China's rapid economic development also brought changes in foreign policy. China's fourth-generation leaders—represented by Hu Jintao—have shown their confidence in China's national power and presented themselves as a responsible superpower in foreign affairs. On the other hand, as the country's power has risen, the perception of China as a threat has gained strength in the international community. Thus, China also has emphasized its intention to rise peacefully in the international community. With the change of security environment, a new security concept has emerged, and has started to pay attention to regional multilateral institutions in the mid-1990s. This chapter will survey how China's foreign policy changed between the 1990s and 2000s.

A. CHINA'S NATIONAL INTEREST

China's leaders have considered sovereignty and economic development as their most important national interests. The Chinese have considered the period from the Opium War in 1842 to the foundation of PRC in 1949 as a hundred years of suffering and humiliation. Thus, Chinese nationalism is strongly embedded in sovereignty issues, and is furthermore connected with political stability. The core of sovereignty is that political authority lies exclusively in the hands of spatially differentiated states.⁵²

Especially, China shows very sensitive response in Taiwan issue. The Chinese have considered reunification with Taiwan a matter of national sovereignty. Because of this, Beijing shows a very adamant attitude and sometimes does not hesitate to use military action toward the Taiwanese independence movement. Beijing continues to

⁵² Yong Deng, "The Chinese Conception of National Interests in International Relations," *China Quarterly* no. 154 (Jun 1998): 311.

insist that “Taiwan is where China’s core interest lies, . . . and there is no room for compromise on that issue. . . . Our nation’s long-term diplomatic goal is clear, i.e., to realize a national rejuvenation.”⁵³ However, whenever there was tension in the Taiwan Strait, the U.S. has intervened and supported Taiwan. Thus, China considers that the U.S. still infringes on the sovereignty of China. In this respect, China seeks to restrict the influence of the U.S. in the region.

Continuous economic development is also important to China’s national interest. Unlike Western realists who focus on military security, Chinese leaders believe that international politics is the area of competition for attaining comprehensive national power (CNP), which refers to the combined overall conditions and strengths of a country in numerous areas. During the Cold War and the U.S.–Soviet confrontation, national power was largely determined by a country’s military force.⁵⁴ However, as the world moves toward multipolarity, other elements such as economy and technology have become increasingly important. Thus, most Chinese analysts believe that, with the end of Cold War, economic interests are more important than ideological differences. China’s economic development has a strict connection with Communist regime survival. In order to accomplish both undistracted economic development and political stability, China emphasizes “the need to maintain and promote stability and prosperity in Asia.”⁵⁵

In sum, sovereignty and economic growth are China’s most important national interests. To achieve these goals, China needs to limit U.S. influence in the Asian region. China also tries to increase its influence in the region through cooperation with neighboring countries.

⁵³ Fei-Ling Wang, “Preservation, Prosperity and Power: what motivates China’s foreign policy?” *Journal of Contemporary China* (2005 Nov): 675.

⁵⁴ Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment*, National Defense University Press (January 2000), <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/pills2/part08.htm>.

⁵⁵ Michael D. Swaine, “Making China as a Strategic Challenge,” *Strategic Asia 2008–09: Challenges and Choices*: 75.

B. THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

1. Before the mid-1990s

During the mid-1990s, China still considered the international community to be hostile to China. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the security environment of China had changed substantially. Until the late 1960s, China was primarily concerned with "the safety of its territory," and therefore, the security concept was dominated by "ideological competition and the threat of war."⁵⁶ Although Chinese communists expelled the Koumintang to Taiwan, the country was still in civil war with the Republic of China (ROC); to make matters worse, the United States hindered China's military action by supporting the ROC (such as sending the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait). Because China was concerned about the threat of the U.S., it was forced to rely on its neighboring powerful communist country—the Soviet Union. Beijing's policy of leaning to one side—the Soviet—was codified in 1956 at the first national congress of the CCP. Party statesman Liu Shaoqi announced that "Chinese foreign policy priorities included strengthening linkages with the USSR and her allies as well as opposing imperialist practices while supporting the growing trend in the developing world towards de-colonization and independence."⁵⁷ By the late 1950s, however, relations with Moscow became aggravated, eventually leading to armed conflict between the two countries. Therefore, China had to confront two superpowers—the U.S. and the Soviet Union—simultaneous. To avoid isolation, given their relations with both superpowers, China tried to cooperate with third-world countries and focused on war preparation rather than economic development.⁵⁸

In the 1970s, China normalized its relations with Western countries and implemented free-market reforms, therefore greatly improving their security environment. The U.S. needed China to check Soviet expansion, so the U.S. and China tried to improve

⁵⁶ Baiyi Wu, "The Chinese Security Concept and its Historical Evolution," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 27 (May 2001): 276.

⁵⁷ Marc Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction* (New York: Taylor & Francis Books, 2009), 3.

⁵⁸ Wu, "The Chinese Security Concept and its Historical Evolution," 277.

their ties during the 1970s, leading to the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1979. By the 1980s, reconciliation with the Soviets was also accomplished; thus, China could focus on its domestic stability and economic growth without any threat of foreign invasion. Since the end of the Cold War, there was no serious security threat to China, and the country could enjoy a peaceful international environment.

This period of relative international security was cut short due to the Tiananmen incident in 1989, which once again put China back in international isolation. Typically, during Jiang Zemin's regime (1989–2001), the West, headed by the U.S., "had submitted anti-China motions to United Commission on Human Rights for eleven times" and "took a series of sanctions towards China."⁵⁹ Domestically, the Tiananmen incident "almost made the Chinese Communist Party lose her authority," so "domestic security played more important role on China's national security" during the early 1990s.⁶⁰

Additionally, China's growing economic and military power increased perceptions of it as a potential threat. Especially in the U.S, the "China-threat theory," that a rising China would inevitably conflict with the U.S., was widespread among experts.⁶¹ In Washington, "Policymakers, strategic thinkers, academics, and pundits have started exploring strategies of containing China, and rejecting the concept of peaceful rise."⁶² Furthermore, the Taiwan issue is the most sensitive matter in the U.S. and Chinese relationship. China considers reunification with Taiwan as a matter of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thus, China has shown a very aggressive attitude towards the independence movement in Taiwan. Although China prefers a peaceful solution in the reunification with Taiwan, the country has never given up the possibility of using force to achieve unification. "The Taiwan strait crisis in 1996 was the greatest

⁵⁹ Ou Chen, "The Characteristics of China's National Security," *Journal of Politics and Law* 4, no. 1 (Mar 2011): 89.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶¹ Paul Wolfowitz, "Bridging Centuries: Fin de Siecle All Over Again," *National Interest* vol.47 (1997): 6; Nicholas Kristor, "The Rise of China," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72 no. 6 (1993): 59–74.

⁶² Khalid R. Al-Rodhan, "A Critique of the China Threat Theory: A Systematic Analysis," *Asian Perspective* 31. 3 (2007): 42.

challenge to Sino-American relations in several decades.”⁶³ In order to send a strong signal to Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui, who had a pro-independence tendency, China conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait from July 21, 1995 to March 23, 1996. The U.S. sent two aircraft-carrier battle groups to the region to prevent China’s further provocation. China’s aggressive behavior during the crisis intensified the rising threat perception in Asia and the U.S.

In Asia, when China built a military facility on Mischief Reef in 1995, ASEAN members came up with a strong reaction, worried about the ambition of China’s increasing military power.⁶⁴ There also was a tug of war and territorial dispute between Japan and China in Asia, so Japan kept suspicious eyes on rising China. Shintaro Ishihara, a Japanese politician, warned in an article that

In light of China’s rising economic and military might, as well as its territorially expansionist policies that directly threaten this island nation, Japan can no longer risk placing its security entirely in the hands of another power. As a sovereign nation, we must develop an autonomous defense capacity of our own.⁶⁵

Additionally, internal affairs, such as a growing democratic movement and ethnic independence movements in Tibet and Xinjiang begin to threaten China’s development and stability.

In sum, although there was no serious security threat to China from abroad, China perceived the security environment as unfavorable during the 1990s. Especially after the Tiananmen incident, the country had to confront Western pressure while calming domestic dissent.

⁶³ Dennis Van Vranken Hickey, “The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996: Implications for U.S. Security Policy,” *Journal of Contemporary China* (Nov 1998): 405.

⁶⁴ Leni Stenseth, “The Imagined Threat of China in the South China Sea,” *Security Dialogue* 30. 3 (September 1999):347.

⁶⁵ Shintaro Ishihara, “Chinese Threat is Axis around Which U.S.-Japan Relations Will Turn in the Future,” *Global View point* 2001, http://www.digitalnpq.org/global_services/global%20viewpoint/10-08-01.html.

2. After the mid-1990s

During the 2000s, China's security environment became more favorable. This was due to China's foreign-policy change toward the international community and cooperation with the U.S. Chinese leaders understand that "maintaining peace and stability and promoting economic development" are critically important to enhancing "the legitimacy and standing of the CCP administration."⁶⁶ The more China's economy participates in the international market, the more "pressure for Beijing to emphasize compromise and diplomacy rather than threat and conflict."⁶⁷ This explains why Beijing frequently tries to maintain the regional status quo and "avoids *unnecessary* provocation."⁶⁸

Since the mid-1990s, China has improved its relationship with the U.S. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the U.S. stands as a sole superpower in the world. The U.S. became the most important country thereby, affecting and influencing China's security. Beijing considered that "the radicalization of the Sino–American structural and strategic conflicts" were "the fundamental cause for the deterioration of China's security situation."⁶⁹ China developed a dilemma in its dealings with the U.S. On one hand, the U.S. was a threat to China, with the potential to limit its sovereignty. On the other hand, China wanted stability in the Northeast Asian region, in addition to good relations with the U.S, to maintain its economic growth. Thus, China wanted to check U.S. influence in Asia while improving relations between the two countries.

Jiang Zemin's visit to the U.S. in 1997 gave impetus to the improvement of the uncomfortable relationship between the two countries since the Tiananmen incident. The countries reached an agreement to build a constructive strategic partnership toward the 21st century. They also announced that they agreed to regular mutual visits, establishing a direct phone line between the leaders, expanding economic exchanges, and cooperating

⁶⁶ Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations Power & Policy since the Cold War*, 3.

⁶⁷ Loren Brandt, Thomas G. Rawski, and Xiaodong Zhu, "International Dimensions of China's Long Boom," University of Pittsburgh, Department of Economics, Working Papers (2006): 15.

⁶⁸ Twomey, "Explaining Chinese Foreign Policy Toward North Korea," 406.

⁶⁹ Wang, "Preservation, Prosperity and Power: what motivates China's foreign policy?" 674.

on nuclear nonproliferation. President Clinton also visited China in 1998 and further consolidated the ties between the two countries. During his visit, the president said that “the United States will not support independence for Taiwan; any solution that creates two Chinas—or one China and one Taiwan; or its admission to organizations, such as the United Nations.”⁷⁰ The mutual visits of these two leaders meant that the relationship between the two countries was finally on a positive track for the first time since the 1989 Tiananmen incident.

The September 11, 2001, attack also became a catalyst to improve the relationship between the two countries. Since September 11, terrorism has become the main threat to U.S. security, and China also started to consider terrorism a national-security threat. Some secessionist groups are working in rural areas of China for independence; some of them belong to radical terrorist groups, such as the East Turkestan Independence Movement (ETIM). Therefore, “counterterrorism has become an important element in China’s national security strategy and China has been a constructive participant in the international war on terrorism.”⁷¹

By China’s supporting the U.S. war on terrorism, the relationship between the two countries has improved, and Colin Powell asserted the relations between the two countries were the best ever in 2001. Although there have been some minor conflicts, the two countries have achieved mutual benefits through cooperation.

China’s efforts to cooperate with neighboring countries and the New Security Concept (NSC) also contributed to improving the security environment. As a reaction to the recognized failures of the 1995/1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences started studying “international security in the post–Cold war period,” and foreign minister Qian Qichen first introduced the NSC in 1997 at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).⁷² The NSC includes all security area, such as politics, economy, military,

⁷⁰ Jim Mann, “Clinton 1st to OK China, Taiwan ‘3 No’s,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 08, 1998, <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/jul/08/news/mn-1834>.

⁷¹ David Shambaugh, “China’s National Security Strategy Since 9.11,” *Strategy Study* vol. 10 no. 2 (2003):69.

⁷² Won-bong Lee, “Chinese National Strategic Ideology and Multilateralism,” *Political Information Studies*, vol.11, no. 1 (2008): 331.

science, technology, and social issues. The contents of the NSC are the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, mutual interest and cooperation in the economy, multilateral cooperation through dialogue and collaboration, and the expansion of strategic partnership.⁷³ Namely, the cores of NSC are mutual trust, equality, non-intervention, cooperation, and sovereignty. This revealed China's intention that the country would respect and cooperate with neighboring countries to encourage peace and development.⁷⁴ Since the NSC appeared, Jiang Zemin has especially emphasized that China would implement a more active policy toward neighboring countries.⁷⁵

China's response in the Asian financial crisis of 1997/1998 was a good example of China's efforts to cooperate with neighboring countries. When many Asian countries were suffered from the financial crisis of 1997, China showed a responsible attitude toward neighboring countries. China chose not to get a competitive edge on their suffering neighbors by maintaining the currency peg, and contributed an IMF package to help Thailand recover.⁷⁶ In contrast to the IMF, which imposed coercive reform to suffering countries, China's actions were welcomed by neighboring countries in the region. These initiatives reassured many Asian states that "China's growing power and influence does not pose a threat to the interests of these states."⁷⁷ It also led to a change in the prevailing image of China in the region from hegemon or threat to responsible power.⁷⁸

In sum, China had a more favorable security environment during the 2000s. Although there still was a Chinese threat perception, China started to being perceived as a

⁷³ The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefits; and peaceful coexistence. See Bate Gill, "China's new security multilateralism and its implications for the Asia-Pacific region," *Security and Conflicts* (2003):208; Kim, "Understanding China's Calculus of Nuclear Issue in North Korea," 189.

⁷⁴ Lee, "Chinese National strategic Ideology and Multilateralism, 332.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford press university 2007), 119.

⁷⁷ Swaine, "Making China as a Strategic Challenge," 83.

⁷⁸ David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order," *International Security* (Winter 2004): 68.

responsible superpower in the international community. While checking U.S. hegemony in the region, China also could improve its relationship with the U.S.

C. GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY

1. Before the mid-1990s

China's foreign policy well reflects the country's perception of its security environment. During the 1990s, China considered that the security environment unfavorable for the country. Thus, China maintained a passive attitude in its foreign policy.

China's foreign policy has changed several times in regard to security-environment changes. During the early Mao Zedong era, China's foreign relationships were limited to communist countries. China started with good relationships with the Soviet Union when Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the country in 1949. After ideological and territorial conflicts with the Soviet Union, however, China increased its contact with the U.S. in the early 1970s. "With the recovery from the Second World War of Europe and Japan and the growth of other large developing states," China also expanded its foreign engagement with the international community.⁷⁹

Since 1978, when Deng Xiaoping took the reins of power, economic growth has been important in China's national objective, and Deng set a national strategy for reform and opening up. Deng's plan called for four modernizations (in the economy, agriculture, scientific and technological development, and national defense) in addition to the liberalization of the economy. To achieve this, China did not concern itself with ideology and tried to improve cooperation with developed Western countries. Deng's famous pronouncement "Do not care if the cat is black or white, what matters is it catches mice," represented China's strategy. Among Western countries, China understood that rapprochement with the U.S. could lead other Western countries to invest in China, so the country focused their energy on improving their relationship with the U.S..⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, 6.

⁸⁰ Lee, "Chinese National strategic Ideology and Multilateralism," 326.

The opening-up policy in late 1970s also affected China's interaction with the international community in the nonproliferation issue. Until 1970, China considered that superpowers used nuclear nonproliferation as a way to monopolize nuclear weapons. Thus, in 1963, when three superpowers—the U.S., the Soviet, and the U.K—joined the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, China announced a statement against the treaty that it fools the world by legalizing their nuclear-weapon manufacturing, storage, and use. China's attitude toward international nonproliferation has changed since the late 1970s. China started to participate in the nonproliferation regime by joining IAEA in 1984. The country also announced that it would not test nuclear weapons in the atmosphere in 1986. However, China still provided little support for the existing nonproliferation regime and preferred its own proposal.⁸¹ Furthermore, "China was itself the subject of considerable nonproliferation concern for many years" due to its willingness to export arms and nuclear technology to third-world countries.⁸²

The growing rapprochement with the West met a big barrier in the Tiananmen incident of 1989. Western countries, including the U.S., condemned human-rights abuses at the hand of the Chinese government and imposed sanctions on the country. In order to cope with this difficulty, Deng came up with a strategy that avoided confrontation with the West and concentrated on domestic matters. During this period, the words that can best describe China's national strategy was Deng Xiaoping's aphorism "hide our capabilities and bide our time" (*tao guang yang hui*). China also emphasized that every country should not intervene in any other country's internal affairs regardless of the system, ideology, or values.⁸³ China tried to adhere to an aloof position without any intervention in international and local issues that are not directly related to China's national interest. Also, China had a tendency to to maximize its own interests only. This keeping-a-low-profile strategy was maintained until the mid-1990s.

⁸¹ Guoguang Wu, *China Turns to Multilateralism: Foreign Policy and Regional Security* (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2008), 56.

⁸² J. D. Kenneth Boutin, "Changing the Guard? China and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime," *Asian Politics & Policy* (July 2011): 353.

⁸³ Won-kon Kim, "Consideration of the process of China's foreign policy development," *Chungcheong society of Chinese studies in Korea* vol.8 no. 1 (1999): 268.

In sum, when the first North Korean nuclear crisis happened in the 1990s, China was still reluctant to raise its voice in international affairs. The country neither wanted to be intervened in by other countries, nor wanted to take a leading role in other's affairs. After the opening and reforms in 1978, China increased its interaction with the international community. However, the country still hesitated to take part in international affairs and kept a low-profile strategy.

2. After the mid-1990s

Since the mid-1990s, China has shown a different attitude toward international affairs. Improvements in its security environment and China's self-confidence as a national power contributed to this change. "In the late 1990s, Beijing began to encourage Chinese firms to go out (*zouchuqu*) and join the international market, creating global brands and joining with foreign partners."⁸⁴ Additionally, China became a full member of the WTO in 2001, and it left a great impact on China's economy. Many Chinese businessmen recognize that "entry in the WTO has been a focal points that China getting on track with the international community."⁸⁵ China's huge market and unlimited potential allowed the country to be one of the largest economic performers in the world. At the sixteenth national congress in 2002, Jiang showed confidence in China's economy and emphasized continuing efforts toward economic development. He said that "China already accomplished *xiaokang* [a well-off] society" and should keep putting its effort to attain "U.S. \$3,000 per capita gross domestic product by 2020."⁸⁶

China's fourth-generation leaders, who succeeded to power in the early 2000s, have also maintained these tendencies. In 2002–2003, "many top leaders retired and passed power to the next generation."⁸⁷ In October 2002, Jiang Zemin passed power to Hu Jintao in the sixteenth central committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Also, Hu

⁸⁴ Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, 10.

⁸⁵ Doug Guthrie, *China and Globalization: The Social, Economic and Political Transformation of Chinese Society* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 299.

⁸⁶ Kwang-deuk Park, "Analysis of China after the 16th Chinese Communist Party congress," *Korean Journal of Political Science* vol. 10, no. 3 (2003):5.

⁸⁷ Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations Power & Policy since the Cold War*, 33.

Jinato was formally elected as Chinese president in the tenth National People's Congress, and new Chinese premier, Wen Jiabao, formed a fourth-generation cabinet in 2003. The new Hu Jintao regime placed considerable emphasis on China's economic development and national power, so to show confidence in China's future. Right after election as president of China, Hu Jintao visited neighboring countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia) and took part in a G8 summit in France from 26 May to 5 June to show China's volition that the country would actively engage with neighboring countries and in the international community. Premier Zhu Rongji also expressed the confidence during the 10th National People's Congress opening address in March 2003 by saying that China will stand shoulder to shoulder with great powers such as the U.S. and the European Union in the near future.⁸⁸

Since 1980s, the words that best describe China's foreign policy are Deng Xiaoping's aphorism "hide our capabilities and bide our time." However, in the early 2000s, Hu Jintao emphasized the need to "to do some things" (*you suo zuo wei*) and "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*)—later "peaceful development" (*heping fazhen*)—in foreign affairs. The *tao guang yang hui* and *heping jueqi* have similarities, in that their key goals are maintain China's continued economic growth and development and mitigate the Chinese threat that is increased with the rise of China. However, in the process of achieve key goals, *tao guang yang hui* tries a passive approach, whereas *heping jueqi* tries an aggressive approach. The former emphasized that in order to ensure continued growth, China should avoid unnecessary conflict with another countries. It also expressed that the way to be a superpower in the U.S.-centric international system is to cooperate with other countries through multilateral institutions, rather than challenge U.S. hegemony. On the other hand, *heping jueqi* reflects China's position that China should have a reasonable position and influence in the international community with the country's national-power growth. China's new leadership has emphasized that China's development does not pose a threat to regional safety and it would rather contribute to peacekeeping in the region. Thus, after domestic debates on terminology, China's leaders

⁸⁸ Woo-gill Choi, "Chinese Perspective to Korean Nuclear Crisis," *North Korean studies review* vol.7 no. 2 (2003):131.

have used “peaceful development” (*heping fazhan*) rather than *heping jueqi* to offer a reassuring, peaceful image to other nations. The country also has emphasized that it would be a responsible great power that plays a leading role in regional security affairs.⁸⁹ Therefore, China has approached the North Korean nuclear issue and the six-party talks in terms of a peace-oriented, responsible power. China also realized that being recognized as a regional power should precede becoming a world power.⁹⁰ The Chinese government believes that “it should play an active role in the negotiations to achieve a dominant position in the North East Asian area.”⁹¹

China’s active involvement in international affairs also brought positive change in China’s attitude toward nonproliferation. There is still a “gap between Beijing’s public pronouncement on nonproliferation and its reported proliferation activities, raising questions about China’s commitment and intentions.”⁹² China is still a key supplier of weapons-of-mass-destruction technologies and their delivering systems. However, to cooperate with the international community, China needed to follow international regulations. Thus, China agreed to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, joined the Zangger Committee in 1997, and became a member of the NSG in 2004.

A number of bureaucracies in China also expanded their participation in international arms control and nonproliferation.⁹³ Additionally, China established the department of Arms Control and Disarmament, which is exclusively devoted to the issue, in 1997. Although China’s changing attitude toward the nonproliferation regime was the result of foreign pressure, the country considered a constructive role in CTBT as important to achieving international status as a responsible great power.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Han, “Six-Party Talks and China’s Diplomatic Dilemma,” 181; Liping Xia, “China: A responsible great power,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 10. 26 (2001): 22.

⁹⁰ Lee, “Chinese National strategic Ideology and Multilateralism,” 340.

⁹¹ Kim, “The Major Reasons of China’s Active Role in North Korea Nuclear Issue,” 53.

⁹² Jing-Dong Yuan, “The Evolution of China’s Nonproliferation Policy Since the 1990s: Progress, Problems, and Prospects,” *Journal of Contemporary China* (2002): 220.

⁹³ Bates Gill and Evan S. Medeiros, “Foreign and Domestic Influences on China’s Arms Control and Nonproliferation Policies,” *The China Quarterly* no. 161 (March 2000): 66.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

Mostly, China's active involvement in international affairs could be found in its increasing engagement in multilateral institutions. With the emergence of NSC in the mid-1990s, China's attitude toward multilateralism changed from passive observer to active participant., China showed an especially active attitude toward regional multilateral institutions and emphasized the need to "strengthen regional cooperation and push interaction and cooperation with neighboring states to a new horizon" in the report of the sixteenth CCP Congress."⁹⁵ China realized that it could play a leading role in regional institutions, and that that would be beneficial to China's national interest. It also "demonstrates its high comfort level in interaction with like-minded neighboring countries and desire to cement a web of multilateral relations with them."⁹⁶ With the foreign-policy change toward multilateral institutions, China became more involved with neighboring countries in economy and security affairs. By the mid-1990s, China had joined 80% of international organizations.⁹⁷

In sum, China's engagement in international affairs has increased since the mid-1990s. China's leaders started to have confidence in their comprehensive national power and tried to act as a responsible superpower. These changes were expressed as China's active involvement in multilateral institutions. China has played an especially crucial role in regional multilateral institutions.

D. RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND NORTH KOREA

The Korean peninsula, which still experiences military tension and confrontation between two the Koreas, is closely associated with the security of Northeast Asia. The deterioration in stability of the Korean peninsula could develop into cross-checks and an arms race among the countries of Northeast Asia and threaten the overall security of the region. Additionally, the influence of the U.S. and China has been felt acutely in the peninsula. China, which borders with North Korea, is well aware of the importance of the peninsula.

⁹⁵ Chien-peng Chung, *China's Multilateral Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific* (Routledge, 2011), 19.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is China Status Quo Power?" *International Security* (April 2003):12.

The relations between China and North Korea are often called “close as teeth and lips,” and have conflicted or developed depending on historical circumstances, the international situation, and mutual interests. Since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1949, they have maintained close relations politically, economically, and militarily. China and North Korea are bound by ideology and geography, and their brothers-in-arms relationship was in evidence during the Korean War. However, since North Korea has failed to manage its economy and has caused some troubles, some Chinese have started to see North Korea from a different perspective, and there have been some changes in their relationship.

1. Before the mid-1990s

From the start, the two countries have maintained a closed relationship based on communist ideology. Kim Il-sung and many North Korean leaders cooperated with China and fought together against Japan during the colonial period. The strong relationship between China and North Korea was further reinforced during the Korean War. “China’s sense of vulnerability along the Korean Peninsula was reinforced by swift United States intervention, especially when General Douglas MacArthur’s forces crossed the Thirty-Eight Parallel and approached the Chinese border.”⁹⁸ Despite many Chinese leaders’ opposition, Mao dispatched 850,000 soldiers to North Korea to defend the country. Furthermore, “while the hot phase of the Korean War lasted three years, Chinese forces remained on the peninsula for an additional five years (until 1958), many assisting in national reconstruction projects.”⁹⁹ The two countries with same communism ideology stood against the West during the Cold War. Their geographic position intensifies the importance of North Korea. China considers North Korea a buffer zone that prevents direct confrontation with the U.S. In the early 1960s, the Sino–Soviet conflict increased the importance of North Korea. While China was struggling with the Soviet Union over ideology and borders, North Korea’s support was very important. The two countries

⁹⁸ Andrew Scobell, “China and North Korea: The Close but Uncomfortable Relationship,” *A Journal of Contemporary World Affairs*, vol.101 (September 2002): 279.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 278.

allied with a mutual defense treaty in 1961. According to the treaty, if North Korea were attacked by others, China was supposed to intervene automatically.

Since Deng Xiaoping adopted reform and opening up policy, however, China's foreign policy toward North Korea is no longer restricted by ideology. Thus, the relationship between the two countries has been transformed from blood alliance to a realistic one that has emphasized national interest, and there have been some growing discrepancies in their relationship. While China improved its relationship with Western countries, North Korea only focused on its relationship with socialist countries. North Korea relied on, and got substantial aid from, the Soviet Union more than China.

The normalization of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea also temporarily worsened Sino–North Korea relationships. The relationship between China and South Korea has greatly improved since the two countries established diplomatic ties in 1992. The increasing trade volume between them was the leading incentive for the relationship's development. "Between 1989 and 2001, for instance, Korea's merchandise exports to China grew from \$1.3 billion to \$18.2 billion while China's merchandise exports to Korea grew from \$472 million to \$12.5 billion."¹⁰⁰

The tension between China and North Korea, which was caused by South Korea, however, did not last long. Despite Sino–South Korea diplomatic ties, North Korea still needs China's diplomatic support. With the worsening situation in food and energy supplies, North Korea also needs China's aid. Thus, North Korea refrained from deteriorating its relationship with China, and China also tried to maintain close ties with North Korea.

2. After the mid-1990s

Since the mid-1990s, China's general foreign-policy change also affected its policy toward North Korea. By solidifying its position as a responsible superpower, China would draw international support and cooperation, which are important for continuous economic development. This aspect limited China's support for North

¹⁰⁰ Joon-Kyung Kim; Yang-Seon Lee; Chung H Lee, "Trade, Investment and Economic Interdependence between South Korea and China," *Asian Economic Journal* (Dec 2006):98.

Korea's military adventurism, terror activities, and development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In contrast, China increased its influence toward North Korea in the areas of economic aid and trade.

In 1996, China decided to give North Korea 500,000 tons of food per year until 2000 and loaned North Korea 40 to 60 million dollars per year. China became the most important trading partner to North Korea. In 1990, China shared only 11.6% of North Korea's total trade, but the share increased 25–30% during the 1990s.¹⁰¹ After Kim Jong-il and Jiang Zemin exchanged visits in 2001, the trade between the two countries increased 51.6% over the previous year. As of 2004, among the total North Korean trade volume, 30% of food and almost 100% of oil were imported from China. North Korea's economic dependency on China has continued to increase. According to the Korean Trade-Investment Agency, North Korea relied on China for 89% of its total trade in 2011.¹⁰² North Korea's economic dependency on China has prevented its collapse. Although North Korea has tried to establish a self-reliant economic structure, international trade is very important in North Korea's economy. Sixty percent of North Koreans live in urban areas, and the country has an industrialized economy in which the mining and manufacturing industries share 35% of the total economy.¹⁰³ In order to maintain this economic structure, North Korea must import natural resources, machines, and high technology from abroad. Food shortages are also a very severe problem in North Korea. Thus, North Korea needs foreign sources that can supply those items, and China is the country that can play that role. Although China's influence over North Korea was still limited, North Korea became heavily reliant on Chinese trade and food aid.

China also tries to encourage North Korea to involve them more in economic reform. Since the 2000s, many North Korean senior delegations have visited China's special economic zone and concluded with a positive assessment of China's economic reform. Additionally, China supported the development of special economic zones (SEZ)

¹⁰¹ Seong Bong Lee, "Study on China and South Korea's Economic Influence toward North Korea: Focusing on North Korea's Export Structure," *North Korean studies Review* (2001): 223.

¹⁰² *2011 North Korea's Foreign trade trends* (KOTRA: May 2012), 1.

¹⁰³ Lee, "Study on China and South Korea's Economic Influence toward North Korea," 222.

on Rajin-Sonbong, Hwanggumpyong Island, and Wihwa Island in connection with the northeastern provinces development plan in China. Thus, “North Korea’s economic dependencies on China will likely increase with more and more Chinese companies advancing into the SEZ on the back of government support.”¹⁰⁴

China’s increasing influence over North Korea has not only been confined to friendly ways. China stands its ground that the country will not sacrifice its national interest to North Korea’s. Thus, China pressured North Korea indirectly by letting scholars’ argue whether the relationship between the two countries should be reestablished. Traditionally, China has considered North Korea a crucial buffer state, but some experts started to insist that North Korea is more a threat than buffer zone in China’s stability. North Korea’s failed economy and large number of refugees impose a burden on China. Some experts even suggest that North Korea cleverly uses this “threat to collapse” as leverage to limit China’s influence. Thus, “the liability school” criticized North Korea that “while China carries a heavy economic burden in aiding North Korea on a permanent basis, Pyongyang has shown little gratitude in return.”¹⁰⁵

Some Chinese scholars presented a very antagonistic attitude toward the North Korean regime. Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations and director of the Center on American Studies at Renmin University of China, claimed that “China could benefit in the long term from North Korea’s collapse.” If North Korea were to collapse, South Korea would “take over the country” and would “naturally gravitate toward Beijing and away from Japan and the United States.” Thus, he argues that “the collapse of North Korea would lead U.S. troops to leave the peninsula and China’s influence over northeast Asia would rise.”¹⁰⁶ Although China did not allow the scholars to be extremely hostile toward North Korea, the liability school’s claim reflected China’s attitude that it is possible to abandon North Korea if the country does not follow China’s opinion.

¹⁰⁴ Soo-Ho Lim, “China-North Korea Relations and Rajin-Sonbong Special Economic Zone,” *SERI Quarterly* (July 2010): 126.

¹⁰⁵ Lee, “Study on China and South Korea’s Economic Influence toward North Korea,” 222..

¹⁰⁶ John Pomfret, “As Talks Begin, China Views N. Korea as Risk,” *The Washington Post*, August 27, 2003, <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/409525534?accountid=12702>.

In some ways, China showed an aggressive attitude in forcing their will on North Korea. In 2002, North Korea decided to turn Sinuiju city, which is the capital of North Pyeongan Province, into a special administrative region and chose Yang Bin, a Chinese-Dutch businessman who was listed as the second richest man in China, to govern and lead the economic development of the city. However, shortly after his appointment, China arrested him on charges of tax evasion and it caused a setback in North Korea's Sinuiju project.¹⁰⁷ This incident well reflected China's position that China would not allow North Korea to undermine its interest.

Despite some uneasy relationships between the two countries, however, China still recognizes the strategic importance of North Korea. China considers that if North Korea's regime collapsed, the U.S. would take the hegemony on the Korean Peninsula. Since China still considers the U.S. a potential threat, China does not want to confront the U.S. on the border. Thus, although North Korea condemned China's reform and provoked instability on the Korean peninsula, China opposed sanctions that could collapse the North Korean regime, supported North Korea with energy and food, and advocated North Korea's position in the international community.¹⁰⁸ Normally, China's foreign policy toward North Korea is based on national interest. However, when an important issue related to national security happens, the two countries cooperate and support each other as a unit bound together by a common destiny.

In conclusion, since the mid-1990s, China's attitude toward North Korea coincided with China's general foreign policy. China tried to be a responsible super power and increase its influence in the region. Thus, while limiting its support of North Korea's provocation, China increased its influence over North Korea in the economic field. As China increased its aid and trade with North Korea, it became the number-one aiding country and trading partner to North Korea, making North Korea dependent on China in their relationship.

¹⁰⁷ Peter S. Goodman, "China Arrests Head of N. Korean Project," *The Washington Post*, November 28, 2002, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>.

¹⁰⁸ Jin-young Seo, "China under Hu Jintao and North Korean Nuclear Issue," *East Asian Studies*, (2003): 28.

E. CHINA'S POSITION TOWARD THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE

China has advocated three basic principles—maintaining peace and stability, denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and peaceful solutions through negotiation—about the North Korean nuclear issue. This is not just because of other countries' requests or a pure desire for peace. It reflects China's strategy for its national interests.

First, “maintaining peace and stability” shows China's basic perception toward the North Korean nuclear issue. In order to achieve continuous economic growth, China needs peace and stability in the region. The crisis caused by North Korea's provocation would bring nothing beneficial to China's national interest. Thus, China emphasized peace and stability during the nuclear crisis.

Second, denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is important for China's national security. China considers that the North Korean nuclear program would gradually become a threat to China's security. North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons could lead to nuclear proliferation in East Asia. If South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan seek to possess nuclear weapons, China's national objective, which is economic development in peace and stability, confronts big challenges. Especially since China has emphasized that it will use military force in unification with Taiwan, Taiwanese possession of nuclear weapons is unacceptable to China.

If North Korea provokes tension in the region with nuclear weapons, it would definitely lead to U.S. intervention, and China would directly confront the U.S. Additionally, if North Korea fails to control its nuclear weapons, separatists in China could obtain the weapons and use them for terrorism. North Korean nuclear weapons are basically aimed to counter the U.S. threat, but they can be a danger to China if the relationship with Korea deteriorates in the future. Some Chinese scholars even point out that China may consider “the element of nuclear weapon diplomacy” with North Korea or a reunified Korea in the future.¹⁰⁹ For these reasons, China has objected to North Korea's nuclear possession.

¹⁰⁹ Dingli Shen, “North Korea's Strategic Significance to China,” *China Security*, (Autumn 2006): 27.

Third, negotiation is the best way to solve the crisis while maintaining peace and stability. North Korea's nuclear ambition has led to sanctions from the international community and imposes a big burden on North Korea's regime. Furthermore, China is concerned that the U.S. could use military force to solve the North Korean nuclear crisis fundamentally. If this happens, North Korea may not maintain its current regime. Although a few scholars present different opinions, the regime collapse of North Korea is "the last thing the Chinese want."¹¹⁰ It would lead to a massive refugee influx to China, civil war within North Korea, or arms conflicts between the two Koreas. These instabilities would lead to serious harmful effects on China's national interests, so China has stressed a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue.

¹¹⁰ Chinoy, *Meltdown*, 170.

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IV. CHINA ENGAGES IN MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

Since the mid-1990s, China's attitude toward multilateralism has changed. China started to have confidence in its growing comprehensive national power, and expanded its engagement with the international community. The New Security Concept, which emphasizes mutual cooperation with neighboring countries, made China play a leading role in regional multilateral institutions. Notably China has increased its cooperation with ASEAN Plus three and Central Asian countries. These changes also affected China's attitude toward the North Korean nuclear issue. China not only was involved in the Six-Party Talks, but also has hosted them and put effort into their success. This chapter will examine what factors have affected China's attitude change toward multilateralism, China's involvement in regional multilateral institutions, and China's goals in the six-party talks.

A. FACTORS THAT AFFECTED CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE

1. The Relationship with the U.S.

Cooperation with the U.S. is important for China to maintain continuous development. As its double-digit economic growth in the past 20 years shows, China is the main beneficiary of globalization and international free trade. Thus, in order to maintain a high level of economic growth, China needs to collaborate with the U.S.-led world economic order.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the U.S. considered China a new rival. The U.S. had doubts about China's military expansion, and the Bush administration designated China as a strategic competitor. Additionally, China's human-rights issues led the two countries into conflict. Since September 11, however, the relationship between the U.S. and China has improved. China has showed willingness in maintaining a stable relationship with the U.S. by joining the international anti-terrorism coalition led by the U.S.

This also affects China's attitude toward North Korean nuclear provocation. China does not want North Korea to provoke trouble that can cause conflicts with the U.S. However, China has also tried to limit U.S. influence in the region. Furthermore, with its growing economy and national power, China has tried to increase its own influence in the region. The China-led Shanghai Cooperative Organization is a good example of China's intention. Through this organization, China could check U.S. influence and increase China's influence in the Central Asian region. Therefore, the improving relationship with the U.S. is not the most important reason for China's attitude change in the North Korean nuclear issue.

2. The Expanding Trade with South Korea

China's improving economic cooperation with South Korea might provide a positive effect in China's efforts to solve the North Korean nuclear crisis. During the 2000s, the trade volume between China and South Korea increased greatly. China and South Korea normalized their diplomatic relationship in 1992, and since then the two countries have maintained good relations. Thus, there are few differences in their relationship between the first and second North Korean nuclear crises.

Furthermore, China tries to maintain a balance between the two Koreas. While focused on economic cooperation with South Korea, China still places great importance on North Korea in the political field. Thus, since the mid-1990s, China and North Korea had increased their mutual high-official visits. Zhang Zemin's visit to North Korea in 2001 was an especially important event that proved the reconciliation of the two countries' relationship. That was the first visit of a Chinese top leader since 1992, and the two countries agreed to upgrade their mutual cooperation.¹¹¹

Thus, the improving trade between China and South Korea is not crucial to explaining China's foreign-policy change on the North Korean nuclear issue.

¹¹¹ So-Jung Kim, "China's Policy on Korean Peninsula," *Chungcheong Society of Chinese Studies in Korea* vol.14 no. 1 (2002): 270.

3. China's Attitude toward the Nonproliferation Regime.

Since the mid-1990s, China has shown an active attitude toward the nonproliferation regime. China agreed to take part in CTBT and established institutions exclusively for nonproliferation. These changes were related to China's national interest. When China tested nuclear weapon during the 1990s, neighboring countries criticized them and pressured them not to test. For the sake of China's international image and long-term gains in Chinese security, China needed to response neighboring countries' claims and follow the nonproliferation rule. Therefore, China's attitude change toward the nonproliferation regime was the result of China's efforts to improve its image.

In conclusion, various factors might have influenced China's attitude change toward the North Korean nuclear issue. While maintaining a good relationship with the U.S. and neighboring countries, China tried to limit U.S. influence and increase its leverage in the Asian region. This led China's active involvement in regional multilateral institutions.

B. CHINA'S ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARD MULTILATERALISM

During the 2000s, China actively engaged in multilateral institutions and came up with the six-party talks in the second North Korean nuclear crisis. What, then, is multilateralism, and how has China's perception toward multilateralism changed?

Robert O. Keohane defines multilateralism nominally as "the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangement or by means of institutions."¹¹² John Gerard Ruggie offers a qualitative definition of that "institutional form which coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct."¹¹³ Miles Kahler defines multilateralism as "international governance of the many" with a central principle of "opposition to bilateral discriminatory arrangements that were believed to enhance the

¹¹² Robert O. Keohane, "Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research," *International Journal* vol. 45 no. 4 (1990): 731.

¹¹³ John Gerard Ruggie, "Multilateralism: the Anatomy of an Institution," *International Organization*, vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer, 1992): 571.

leverage of the powerful over the weak and to increase international conflict.”¹¹⁴ In other words, multilateralism means more than three countries that have different national interests coordinating and pursuing international order based on principles and norms.

China’s perception toward multilateralism has changed over time. China’s perspective on multilateral frameworks has four principles: 1) no targeting of other countries, 2) noninterference in other nations’ domestic affairs, 3) peaceful dispute resolution, and 4) consultation among nations as equals.¹¹⁵ China’s multilateral diplomacy started in 1971, when the country entered into the UN and became recognized as a sovereign country in the international community. However, Beijing took a stance against international cooperative institutions, because Chinese leaders believed that a few Western countries dominated the power in international institutions and controlled them in favor of their preference. Thus, the Chinese believed that their country had been taken advantage of by international institutions, and Chinese elites were hostile to liberalism and international organizations which try to solve international affairs through interdependence and multilateralism.¹¹⁶

Some regional conflicts also hindered China’s active participation in regional multilateral institutions. Beijing worried that “ASEAN might use the forum to internationalize the Spratly Islands dispute and take a united stance against China.”¹¹⁷ Also, Beijing was uneasy about the possibility that “the Taiwan issue might be included in the ARF agenda.”¹¹⁸ Thus, China had a very negative feeling toward multilateral international organizations and preferred bilateral diplomacy, as compare to multilateral. The country adopted partial multilateralism when needed and took a passive position,

¹¹⁴ Miles Kahler, “Multilateralism with Small and Large Numbers,” *International Organization*, 46, 3 (Summer 1992): 681.

¹¹⁵ Chang-hoon Cha, “China and Multilateral Security Institutions: Perspective, Process, and Progress,” *Korea Observer* 35. 2 (July 2004): 320.

¹¹⁶ Suk-hee Han, “China’s Korea Policy during the Post - Cold War era ; China’s National Interests , Peaceful neighbor environment and Policy toward Korea,” *Yonsei Journal of Social Science*, vol.7 no. 1 (2001): 73.

¹¹⁷ Cheng-Chwee Kuik, “Multilateralism in China’s ASEAN Policy: Its Evolution, Characteristics, and Aspiration,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27. 1 (Apr 2005): 106.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

especially in security multilateralism. The country also maintained non-alliance as the cornerstone of its foreign policy, and therefore did not become actively involved in multilateral cooperation.¹¹⁹ Thus, the pattern of China's attitude toward multilateral institutions was passive and reactive.

With the advent of a new security concept that emphasized mutual cooperation with neighboring countries, however, China changed its attitude toward international institutions and started to deal with various issues through multilateral institutions. China joined with ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea to create a new regional institution called ASEAN Plus Three (APT). Namely, China realized that multilateral diplomacy is beneficial to China's national interest. One Chinese analyst argues that "China can free ride on the provision of certain international and regional public goods."¹²⁰ Another concluded that "China is by no means a challenger to the current international order. Under the current international system and norms, China can ensure its own national interests."¹²¹ The problems that occurred during continuous development and reform could be solved more easily through international cooperation.¹²²

The 15th national congress of the Communist Party of China in 1997 well reflected China's change in perception towards multilateral cooperation. Jiang Zemin considered that economic growth is the prime national objective to China. Throughout the congress, he emphasized multilateralism as a way to increase China's external economic growth.¹²³

Table 1. China's position changes on multilateral diplomacy (From 12th to 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China)

¹¹⁹ Jae-woo Choo, "China's Changing Attitude and Policy towards Multilateral Cooperative Organization: An Assessment of Its Role in "SCO" and "10+1" Scheme," *The Journal of Modern China Studies*, vol.4, no. 2 (2002): 189-190.

¹²⁰ Johnston, "Is China Status Quo Power?" 32.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Choo, "China's Changing Attitude and Policy towards Multilateral Cooperative Organization," 197.

¹²³ Jae-woo Choo, "Five Variables in Chinese Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process: Their Importance and Leadership's Disposition," *Chinese Studies*, vol.34 (2004):380.

	Mention about Multilateral diplomacy
12th (1982)	Not mentioned
13th (1987)	Not mentioned
14th (1992)	Support world peace and development, and international dispute resolution by UN security council
15th (1997)	Actively participate in multilateral activities, and play an active role in international organizations.
16th (2002)	Actively participate in multilateral activities, and play an active role in international organizations.

Source : Tae-hwan Lee, "China on Northeast Asian Multilateral security," *The Sejong Institute Policy Reports* vol.67 (2006): 8.

C. REGIONAL MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS AND CHINA

China uses multilateral institutions "as mechanisms for reassurance, gaining access to key economic inputs, limiting U.S. influence in certain regions, and expanding China's regional influence in general."¹²⁴ Thus, since the mid-1990s, China has joined "various trade and security accords deepened its participation in key multilateral organization."¹²⁵ China not only takes part in various multilateral institutions, but also plays a crucial role in creating new institutions. China's involvement in multilateral institutions in Asia includes the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (1991), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) (1994), ASEAN+1 (ASEAN plus China) (1996), ASEAN+3 (1997), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (2001), and the East Asia Summit (EAS) (2005). Among those institutions, ARF and SCO well reflect China's position on regional multilateral security cooperation.

¹²⁴ Evan S. Medeiros, "China's international behavior: activism, opportunism, and diversification," *RAND Project Air Force* (2009): 77.

¹²⁵ Evan S Medeiros and Taylor M. Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* (Nov 2003): 23.

1. The ARF

China's attitude change toward multilateral security institutions was first noticed when Beijing showed its confidence in the ARF.¹²⁶ Unlike APEC, the ARF is focused on promoting regional security cooperation and reflects China's strategy in the East Asian region. The inaugural meeting of the ARF was held in Bangkok on 25 July 1994, with the objective to "foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern" and "to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region."¹²⁷

At first, China had some suspicions about security institutions, whether they could undermine China's sovereignty. When China joined the ARF in 1994, the country had to confront two serious concerns. One was the worry about the "China threat" sentiment among the member nations. Against the background of China's rise, "the U.S., Japan, and even Southeast Asian countries might employ the ARF to check and contain a stronger China."¹²⁸ By entering this regional multilateral institution, China also worried about the possibility of confronting objections about their military modernization. Thus, China had some suspicions about the institution.

The second worry was related to territorial disputes in the South China Sea. China did not want to put the territorial dispute issue on the agenda because it might lead Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam to "form a united front against China with the support of other Southeast Asian countries and possibly the United States and Japan."¹²⁹ By entering this regional multilateral institution, China has could confront objections about their military modernization and South China Sea territorial dispute with other member nations. Rather than territorial dispute, China wants the cooperation of non-traditional security arenas to be the main agenda for this institution.

¹²⁶ Kent E. Calder and Francis Fukuyama, *East Asian Multilateralism: Prospects for Regional Stability* (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 110.

¹²⁷ <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/about.html>.

¹²⁸ Michael J. Green and Bates Gill, *Asia's New Multilateralism* (Columbia university press 2009), 56.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

After attending the forum several times, however, China realized that “these forums, which feature a consultative mode of interaction and are led by the ASEAN states rather than the United States and Japan, might not be harmful to its national interests.”¹³⁰ China even has used the ARF as a means to “question U.S. bilateral alliances in the region” and “counter the perceived U.S. containment strategy.”¹³¹ “China’s desire to hedge against a perceived U.S. encirclement campaign further increased its resolve to promote these policy goals.”¹³²

Beijing concluded that the institution is beneficial for promoting China’s foreign-policy objectives, peaceful-rise image, and stable security environment. Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing mentioned “cooperative security” at the ARF speech in July 2005, namely, that to achieve the goal of joint security, the international community should respect the diversity of each other, build mutual trust, and secure each other through dialogue and negotiation.¹³³ These judgments have led China’s attitude toward multilateral institutions to change from passive observer to active participant. By emphasizing dialogue and cooperation, China’s rise would be an opportunity rather than a threat to neighbouring countries.¹³⁴

China also played a role in setting up the East Asia Summit (EAS). The U.S. has not played a role in establishing the summit, nor was it invited to attend. When the ASEAN Plus three countries agreed in November 2004 to convene the EAS, it was seen as “evidence that China was taking advantage of regionalism to dominate the region.”¹³⁵ Bruce Vaughn, an analyst of Southeast and South Asian affairs, reported in the

¹³⁰ Calder and Fukuyama, *East Asian Multilateralism*, 110.

¹³¹ Jian Yang, “Sino-Japanese Relations: Implication for Southeast Asia,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol.25, no. 2 (2003), 315.

¹³² Calder and Fukuyama, *East Asian Multilateralism*, 110.

¹³³ O-Yoon Kwon and Ding-Chang Shen, “Preconditions for a Cooperative Security Regime in Northeast Asia,” *Peace Studies* vol.15 no. 1 (2007): 71.

¹³⁴ Jong-ho Shin, “China’s Multilateral Security Cooperation Strategy and U.S.-China Relationship: Focused on the analysis of ARF, SCO and Six-party Talks,” *중소연구* vol.31, no. 4 (2008): 158.

¹³⁵ Jae-Cheol Kim, “Politics of Regionalism in East Asia: The Case of the East Asia Summit,” *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2010): 114.

Congressional Research Service, for example, that “The EAS is viewed as important . . . for its potential importance as an indicator of China’s raising geopolitical importance.”¹³⁶

China’s engagement in the ARF shows that China is willing to increase its influence in the East Asian region through a regional multilateral institution. Since the North Korean nuclear crisis would undermine the stability of the Asian region, China also needed to settle down the crisis. Thus, China also increased its engagement in the North Korean nuclear issue through the six-party talks.

2. The SCO

The SCO reflects China’s interest in the Central Asian region. The SCO was founded in 2001 to increase cooperation among six countries (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), and China played a crucial role in its establishment. The SCO covers “a total area of more than 30 million square kilometers, or three-fifths of Eurasia, with a population of 1.455 billion, almost a quarter of the world’s human beings, and \$1.57 trillion of GDP.”¹³⁷ Geographically, China shares over 3,300-kilometer of its western border with Central Asian countries, so it acknowledges the importance of the relationship with these countries.

Since the five Central Asian countries gained their independence from the former Soviet Union, China has maintained a strategy toward those countries that sustains friendly, neighborly relations and expands economic ties. In 1994, Chinese premier Li Peng suggested four principles to manage Chinese–Central Asian relations: “(1) peaceful coexistence and good-neighborly relations; (2) promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation; (3) non-interference in domestic affairs; and (4) respect for one another’s independence and sovereignty.”¹³⁸ In this respect, China has been active supporter of the SCO.

¹³⁶ Bruce Vaughn, “East Asia Summit: Issues for Congress,” *CRS Report* (Dec 2005): 2.

¹³⁷ Wu, *China Turns to Multilateralism*, 104.

¹³⁸ Jing-Dong Yuan, “China’s Role in Establishing and Building the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),” *Journal of Contemporary China* 19. 67 (Nov 2010): 857.

Unlike the European Union, in which cooperation in “economic integration gradually spilled over to political and security area,” the SCO was originally established to solve border conflicts among China, Russia, and Central Asian countries, and has expanded its field to political diplomacy, economy, and security issues.¹³⁹ Since China is eager to secure its imports of energy resources, the Central Asian region has become important due to its large amount of oil and natural gas.¹⁴⁰ The area also has the potential to grow as a useful market. Thus, Jiang Zemin described “security cooperation and economic cooperation as two indispensable wheels of SCO.”¹⁴¹ Additionally, to suppress Islamist separatism in Xinjiang Uygur and maintain the integrity of the nation, China is actively involved in SCO antiterrorism cooperation.¹⁴² In order to improve antiterrorism cooperation, “China pioneered a joint military exercise among SCO members.”¹⁴³ In sum, the SCO advanced from a “one-dimensional security-consulting mechanism to a comprehensive formal regional organization.”¹⁴⁴

China’s engagement in the SCO shows that China is willing to increase its influence in Central Asian through a regional multilateral institution. China played a leading role in establishing the SCO from the beginning and succeeded in developing it as a regional security and economic multilateral institution. This successful case would give confidence to China in regard to a leading role in regional multilateral institutions and give positive impetus to China’s leading role in the six-party talks.

3. China’s Goals

The goals of China’s regional security policy are as follows: maintain the equilibrium of strategic capabilities while avoiding a full-scale confrontation and arms race with the United States, prevent military conflicts and promote the status of China in

¹³⁹ Wu, *China Turns to Multilateralism*, 106.

¹⁴⁰ Yun-ju Do, “China’s Strategic Interest toward the SCO,” *The Journal of Modern China Studies*, vol.11 no. 2 (2010): 65.

¹⁴¹ Wu, *China Turns to Multilateralism*, 106.

¹⁴² Do, “China’s Strategic Interest toward the SCO,” 74.

¹⁴³ Wu, *China Turns to Multilateralism*, 109.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

the region, and strengthen China's leading role in regional security through the establishment of a new cooperative-security regime.¹⁴⁵

First, China can hedge against the U.S. through multilateral institutions in the Asian region. After the Soviet Union collapsed and Cold War ended, the U.S. became the unipolar power in the world and has increased its influence in Asia. Chinese analysts characterized the world-power configuration as "one superpower (the United States), many great powers (Europe, Japan, China, and Russia)."¹⁴⁶ China is not strong enough to counter the U.S. by herself, so Beijing has realized that direct confrontation with the U.S. does not meet its national interest. However, China confronts many issues with the U.S. in the region. China is concerned with its growing insecurity in peripheral areas due to U.S. support to Taiwan, the U.S.–Japan security alliance, and missile-defense systems. Thus, China gives importance to multilateral security cooperation as an effective means to counter U.S. pressure or military alliances and lessen American status in the region.¹⁴⁷

Beijing tries to avoid confrontation and an arms race with the U.S., but condemned U.S. hegemony and unilateralism by checking the through regional cooperative institutions. "China's desire to hedge against a perceived U.S. encirclement campaign further increased its resolve to promote these policy goals."¹⁴⁸ As Thomas J. Christensen insists, "China has been encouraged to improve relations with its neighbors diplomatically and economically at least in part as a hedge against U.S. power and the fear of encirclement by a coalition led by the United States."¹⁴⁹ As a result, multilateralism became a main direction and goal in Chinese diplomacy.

Second, China tries to establish its own image as a "peaceful rise" by participating in multilateral institutions. Yiwei Wang argues that China's new strategic thinking, what

¹⁴⁵ Ke-hee Lee, "China's Global Strategy and National Security Policies," *The Korean Journal of Unification Affairs* vol.14 no. 1 (2002): 44.

¹⁴⁶ Yong Deng, "Hegemon on the Offensive: Chinese Perspective on U.S. Global Strategy," *Political Science Quarterly* 116 (2001): 346.

¹⁴⁷ Shin, "China's Multilateral Security Cooperation Strategy and U.S.-China Relationship," 156.

¹⁴⁸ Calder and Fukuyama, *East Asian Multilateralism*, 110.

¹⁴⁹ Thomas J. Christensen, "Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy toward East Asia," *International Security* 31(Summer 2006): 83.

is called “China’s peaceful rise,” is the factor that determines China’s foreign policy toward North Korea.¹⁵⁰ The security element of the peaceful rise asserts that China would endeavor to promote security cooperation in the East Asian region because stability in this region and cooperation with neighboring countries are important for the continuous development of China.¹⁵¹ Basically, multilateral institutions seek to avoid international conflict and attempt to come up with peaceful solution. Thus, by actively participating in multilateral institutions, China can calm neighboring countries’ concerns over the rising Chinese threat. At a press conference during the annual session of China’s national legislature in 2004, Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing said that “China supports multilateralism and is committed to multilateral cooperation,” because “multilateralism is an effective way to deal with common challenges for humanity, while unilateralism proves to be not popular.”¹⁵²

As the interdependent relationship between the countries in the region has grown, the need for mutual-security cooperation for coordinated response to various problems such as drugs, environment, and resource problems has increased.¹⁵³ Swaine argues that Beijing recognized that “multilateral initiatives can facilitate efforts to deal with common problems and opportunities (for example, domestic terrorist activities, nontraditional security concerns, and resource and territorial disputes).” These initiatives also can “reassure many Asian states that China’s growing power and influence does not pose a threat to the interests of these states.”¹⁵⁴

The third goal is promoting the status of China by actively participating in regional institutions. With its growing comprehensive national power, China also needs to increase its power in the region. Furthermore, based on economic development, China can expand its influence and lead the institution to the country’s favor. Avery insists that

¹⁵⁰ Wang, “China’s Role in Dealing with the North Korean Nuclear Issue,” 467.

¹⁵¹ Lee, “Chinese National strategic Ideology and Multilateralism,” 340.

¹⁵² “Chinese FM denounces unilateralism, favors multilateralism,” *Xinhua News Agency*, March 6, 2004, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-03/06/content_1349021.htm

¹⁵³ Tae-woon Kim, “A Search of Contact Point for Coexistence between Bilateral and Multilateral Security Cooperation Systems in Northeast Asia,” *Discourse 201*(2007): 216.

¹⁵⁴ Swaine, “Making China as a Strategic Challenge,” 83.

China is actively pursuing multilateralism as a tool to perform a grand strategy that is designed to “engineer the country’s rise to the status of a true great power that shapes, rather than simply responds to, the international system.”¹⁵⁵ This point makes China play a leading role in regional multilateral institutions.

China realized that multilateral diplomacy is beneficial for China’s national interests, and problems that occurred during continuous development and reform could be solved more easily through international cooperation.¹⁵⁶ Thus, since the mid-1990s, China has joined “various trade and security accords [that have] deepened its participation in key multilateral organization.”¹⁵⁷

D. THE SIX-PARTY TALKS

China came up with the six-party talks as a solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis. The six-party talks well reflect China’s intention to participate in Northeast Asian security cooperation.

During the first North Korean nuclear crisis in the early 1990s, China did not put efforts towards settling the crisis and only declared its principles, such as denuclearization of the peninsula and a peaceful solution. China also insisted that the U.S. and North Korea should solve the problem through bilateral negotiation. The country did not put effort into solving the problem in conjunction with multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia.¹⁵⁸

During the second North Korean nuclear crisis, however, China’s attitude toward the crisis had changed from bystander to main participant. China tried to settle the crisis through multilateral security cooperation. China realized that the North Korean nuclear issue is the most difficult and complex problem among many issues, so if China could

¹⁵⁵ Goldstein Avery, “The Diplomatic Face of China’s Grand Strategy: A Rising Power’s Emerging Choice,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 168 (2001), 836.

¹⁵⁶ Choo, “China’s Changing Attitude and Policy towards Multilateral Cooperative Organization,” 197.

¹⁵⁷ Medeiros and Fravel, “China’s New Diplomacy,” 23.

¹⁵⁸ Tae-hwan Lee, “China on Northeast Asian Multilateral security,” *The Sejong Institute Policy Reports* vol.67 (2006): 20.

solve this problem properly, other problems in Northeast Asia could be solved more easily. The Six-Party Talks include all major countries in the region, and they try to reflect their security interest through cooperation. Thus, China expected that if the talks settled the North Korean nuclear crisis, the countries would increase their mutual trust.

To solve North Korea's nuclear issue, six nations—the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, and two Koreas—constitute the Six-Party Talks. Although the U.S. first proposed multilateral cooperation in North Korea's nuclear issue, China is the host country of the Six-Party Talks. Through the Six-Party Talks, China can share the burden with other countries and balance U.S. unilateral influence. Furthermore, by leading the Six-Party Talks, China can promote its peaceful image and increase its influence in Asia. Emerging as a great power while neighboring countries has worried about the China threat, the country has emphasized that China is promoting security and peace in the region. Thus, the Six-Party Talks are a good way to show that China can promote its role as a great, responsible power.

1. The Beginning of the Six-Party Talks

Unlike the first North Korean nuclear crisis in the early 1990s, the U.S. and North Korea could not find a consensus in the second crisis in the early 2000s. The U.S. refused to have bilateral talks with North Korea until the country completely abandoned its nuclear program. In response to this hardline stance, North Korea came up with every strong provocation, such as withdrawing from NPT, expelling IAEA inspectors, and producing plutonium.

While tension persisted, the U.S., North Korea, and China held trilateral talks in Beijing on April 23, 2003. China played a crucial role in convening the trilateral talks. China worried that if the U.S. tried to solve the crisis through military means or economic sanctions, the situation surrounding the Korean peninsula in Northeast Asia could worsen seriously. It would also undermine China's economic development and social stability. By arbitrating the differences between the U.S. and North Korea, China tried to increase its influence over North Korea and improve relations with the U.S. Resolving the North

Korean nuclear issue through dialogue also could be beneficial to China because it makes the country be seen as a responsible great power in the international community.

To prevent aggravation of the situation and induce North Korea to participate in the talks, China used pressure and incentives at the same time. In early 2003, North Korea adhered to its position of participating in bilateral talks with the U.S. and rejected trilateral talks. Then China cut off the crude-oil pipeline to North Korea for three days. China announced officially that the pipeline cutoff was a technical problem, but some experts believe that China used the oil to pressure North Korea.¹⁵⁹ China next sent Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, and the director general of the department of Asian affairs, Fu Ying, to Kim Jong-il to persuade North Korea to come to the table. Since North Korea depends on China for most of its oil supply, it would be hard for North Korea to ignore China's pressure.

During the trilateral talks, the U.S. and North Korea failed to narrow their differences on the issue. North Korea told the U.S. delegation for the first time that the country possesses nuclear weapons. Pyongyang called for "a U.S.–North Korean nonaggression treaty, U.S. respect for North Korea's sovereignty, and U.S. willingness not to obstruct the North's economic relations with other countries and relevant international financial institutions."¹⁶⁰ North Korea insisted that if the U.S. switches its hostile policy toward North Korea, Pyongyang would cooperate with the U.S. by abandoning its nuclear program. However, the U.S. delegation clarified that it would not make any concession until North Korea first abandoned its nuclear program completely.

Although the U.S. and North Korea did not concede their positions, the trilateral talks succeeded in getting North Korea to the table for the Six-Party talks. The U.S. proposed a multilateral solution to the North Korean nuclear issue with major Northeast Asian countries. Neighboring countries also wanted to maintain stability in the Korean peninsula, and so agreed to participate in multilateral talks. North Korea wanted Russia to be a member of the talks to check China, and China requested that Japan take part. Japan

¹⁵⁹ Sang-Jin Shin, "China's Six-Party Talks Strategy," *National Strategy*, vol.12, no. 2 (2005): 38.

¹⁶⁰ Alan D. Romberg and Michael D. Swaine, "The North Korea nuclear crisis: A strategy for negotiation," *Arms Control Today* 33. 4 (May 2003): 5.

was necessary to share the burden of North Korean aid and to upgrade the talks as Northeast-Asian, multilateral security cooperation. Finally, China convened the first round of Six-Party talks in Beijing on August 27, 2003 with the U.S., Russia, Japan, and the two Koreas.

2. The Progress and the Results of the Six-Party Talks

A total of six rounds of Six-Party Talks were held in Beijing from 2003 to 2007. The first round of talks was held from 27 to 29 August 2003. It was meaningful that six countries started negotiation through multilateral dialogues to come up with a peaceful solution to the North Korean nuclear issue. China, as the chairman of the six-party talks, put much effort into preventing the talks' ending in catastrophe. During the talks, however, the U.S. insisted that the North Korean nuclear program be dismantled first, whereas North Korea insisted that both nuclear dismantling and an aid project for North Korea should proceed at the same time.¹⁶¹ In the end, the talks failed to come up with a substantial agreement between parties and only announced a chairman's summary, which emphasized the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue, and the normalization of relations between the U.S. and North Korea.¹⁶²

The second round of talks was held from 25 to 28 in February 2004. The talks discussed North Korean nuclear disarmament, North Korea's security guarantees, compensation for the nuclear freeze, regularization of the meeting, and the configuration of the working group.¹⁶³ After the discussion, the chairman's statement announced that the parties expressed their willingness to accede to "a nuclear-weapon-free Korean Peninsula, and to resolving the nuclear issue peacefully through dialogue in a spirit of mutual respect and consultations on an equal basis, so as to maintain peace and stability

¹⁶¹ Tae-Woon Kim, "Review on Practicability of Multilateralism and Measures to Turn Six-Party Talks into Multilateral Cooperative Organization," *North Korean Studies Review* vol.9, no. 2 (2005):7-8.

¹⁶² Byung-Chul Koh, "Six-Party Talks: The Last Chance for Peace?" *East Asian Review* vol. 15, no. 4 (Winter 2003):8-9.

¹⁶³ Kim, "Review on Practicability of Multilateralism and Measures to Turn Six-Party Talks into Multilateral Cooperative Organization," 8.

on the Korean Peninsula and the region at large.”¹⁶⁴ The parties agreed to hold the third round of talks during the second quarter of 2004. The talks also failed to yield a substantial solution to the problem. However, it was the first Six-Party Talks that came up with a written consensus among related nations since the start of the second North Korean nuclear crisis. It was a meaningful in suggesting the principle of the solution and the future direction for the talks’ progress.

The third round of talks was held from 23 to 26 June 2004. Compared to the previous six-party talks, which only agreed on the norm of a peaceful solution, the third round of six-party talks started to negotiate the practical framework of the solution. A chairman’s statement was announced with eight articles, including: reconfirming the commitment to denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, stressing specification of the scope and time, and the interval between steps of verification and the method of verification.¹⁶⁵ The parties stressed the need for a step-by-step process of “words for words” and “action for action” in search for a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue.¹⁶⁶

At the fourth round of talks, the parties finally agreed how to dismantle the North Korean nuclear program. The first phase of the fourth round of talks was held from 26 July to 7 August 2005. The U.S. and North Korea had frequent bilateral contacts during the talks, but the first phase of talks failed to agree on the range of nuclear disarmament and the right to a peaceful nuclear program. The second phase of talks was held from 13 to 19 September 2005. After coordinating about core issues among parties, the participating countries unanimously adopted a joint statement on 19 September. The parties agreed to provide light-water reactors and a treaty of nonaggression to North Korea while North Korea dismantled its nuclear program and returned to NPT. The September 19 joint statement had the big meaning that the U.S. mapped out the Northeast

¹⁶⁴ Second Round Six Party Talks Chairman Statement February 2004, The National Committee on North Korea, accessed September 18, 2012, http://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/publications/ChairmanStatement_2ndRound_Sixparty.doc/file_view.

¹⁶⁵ Third Round Six Party Talks Chairman Statement February 2004, The National Committee on North Korea, accessed September 18, 2012, http://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/publications/ChairmanStatement_3rdRound_SixParty.doc/file_view.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

Asian order to include peaceful coexistence with North Korea.¹⁶⁷ It inherited the solution of the 1994 Agreed Framework and provided the basis of a multilateral cooperative-security regime building in Northeast Asia.

The fifth round of talks began in Beijing in November 2005. Despite the successful result of the fourth round of talks, the September joint statement confronted a crisis when the U.S. froze the funds of a North Korean account in Banco Delta Asia.¹⁶⁸ Disagreement between Washington and Pyongyang on this issue continues to block progress of the talks. North Korea judged that the U.S. is still hostile, so it pressured the U.S. with a brinkmanship strategy. North Korea test fired seven ballistic missiles in July 2006 and conducted an underground nuclear test in October 2006.

Eventually, denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula issue was faced with the worst crisis since 1994. Changes in U.S. domestic politics had become a major factor to progress in the talks. The Bush administration faced criticism that they failed to resolve the nuclear issue and only increased the crisis during the six years of the president's term.

Additionally, since the Republicans suffered major losses in the November 2006 midterm elections, hawks that affected the decisions of the Bush administration's North Korean policy weakened sharply.¹⁶⁹ As a result, the Bush administration changed its policy toward North Korea as a negotiation and resumed the third phase of the fifth round of talks on February 2007. The Six-Party Talks came up with a joint document on the first step toward the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. Under the February joint document, North Korea will "shut down and seal the Yongbyon nuclear facility, including the reprocessing facility and invite back IAEA personnel to conduct all necessary monitoring and verifications."¹⁷⁰ The parties also agreed to "the provision of

¹⁶⁷ Hyun-Ik Hong, "The Fourth Round of Six-Party Talks: Evaluation and Counterplans," *Current Issues and Policy* (October 2005): 4.

¹⁶⁸ Jong Kun Choi, "The 6 Party Talk and Change in Northeast Asia's Multilateral Cooperative Order: Dynamics of the Multilateral Negotiation and Its Impact on the Regional Order," *Journal of International and Area Studies* vol.21, no. 1 (2012): 9.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷⁰ Six-Party Talks End with Joint Document, China.org.cn, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/news/200018.htm>.

emergency energy assistance to the North Korea in the initial phase, assistance equivalent to 50,000 tons of heavy fuel, and establishment of five working groups.”¹⁷¹

During the first phase of the sixth round of talks in March and July 2007, the members reaffirmed the implementation of the September 19th joint agreement and February 13th joint document. In September 2007, the members met to discuss how to proceed with the second phase of the February 13th agreement, and the participants issued a joint statement on October 3rd. According to this statement, North Korea agreed that it would provide “complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs—including clarification regarding the uranium issue, and disable its Yongbyon nuclear facilities.”¹⁷² In return, the U.S. agreed that it would begin “removing North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and advance the process of terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act toward North Korea.”¹⁷³ However, the U.S. and North Korea again disagreed on how to verify North Korea’s nuclear activities. While Pyongyang refused to verify through scientific sampling, “the United States attempted to tie energy assistance to an agreement on verification.”¹⁷⁴ In the end, despite five years of effort, the Six-Party Talks failed to achieve its goal—the denuclearization of North Korea.

Although the Six-Party Talks sometimes succeeded in drawing up a joint statement, they had problems such as the lack of a surveillance manner and a compulsory method. It was also hard to reach an agreement since the Six-Party talks needed to meet the interests of six participants. Against the Bush administration’s hardline attitude, North Korea countered with brinkmanship tactics. During the Six-Party talks, China’s influence toward North Korea was not strong enough to persuade the country abandon nuclear weapons. However, China could get a positive response from the international community about China’s efforts in the talks.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy, Arms Control Association, <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Peter Crail, “Six-Party Talks Stall Over Sampling,” Arms Control Association, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_01-02/sixpartytalksstall.

3. Multilateral Cooperation and the Six-Party Talks

China has emphasized the principle of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and has sought to achieve this goal through the Six-Party Talks.¹⁷⁵ China's active participation in the Six-Party Talks reflects China's attitude toward multilateral security cooperation. During the second round of Six-Party Talks, China offered a configuration for a working group to regularize the talks. Although the Chinese government did not mention it publicly, the researchers from China's core national-research institutions argued that the Six-Party Talks should be the starting point of a Northeast Asian multilateral security institution.¹⁷⁶ In May 2004, Ji Zhiye, executive vice president of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), insisted that the Six-Party Talks should be developed into a regional multilateral cooperation that can guarantee security and promote development in the Northeast Asian region. Shen Jiru, a senior fellow at the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), also has insisted that government-affiliated research institutes have embarked on review of Northeast Asian security cooperation organizations. These claims showed that China considered institutionalizing the Six-Party Talks as a regional multilateral security organization.

Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through Six-Party Talks coincides with China's strategy in regional multilateral security institutions. China can expand its influence in the region and improve its peaceful-rise image by resolving the North Korean nuclear issue through the Six-Party Talks. In order to promote cooperation with the countries that are concerned to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, China has expressed its willingness to convene an international conference in Beijing. China also displayed active shuttle diplomacy among the member states. China passed on North Korea's position to the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, and then transferred their responses to North Korea. Through these efforts, China manifested its position that it wants peace

¹⁷⁵ Dan Li, "The Understanding and Strategy of China's Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Focusing six-party talks," *한국통북학* vol.55 (2010):344.

¹⁷⁶ Jung-Nam Lee, "Multilateralism in Chinese Foreign Policy after the Cold War and the Idea of Peace toward the Northeast Asia: with Special Emphasis on the Six-Party Talks," *East Asian Studies* vol.47 (2004): 134.

in the peninsula and opposes North Korean nuclear weapon development. It contributed to demonstrating China as a responsible superpower and peaceful riser.

Another beneficial aspect of the Six-Party Talks for China's interests is that China can use them to check U.S. influence in the region. Unlike the U.S., which sought the collapse of the North Korean regime, China tried to persuade the members that the North Korean regime should be maintained. The geopolitical importance of North Korea has led China to maintain its basic position toward the North Korean regime. When considering sudden events such as the North Korean refugee influx and security on its Northeastern border, China understands that maintaining North Korea's regime is beneficial for China's national interest. China succeeded in asserting this to the other Six-Party Talks member states.

On contrast, the U.S. had to adjust its own interests in the Six-party Talks, and also was under diplomatic pressure by China, Japan, Russia, and two Koreas. The fourth round of Six-Party Talks, which yield the September agreement, was the example. When the U.S. opposed provide light-water reactors to North Korea, China pressured the U.S. with its diplomatic power by persuading Japan, Russia, and two Koreas. As a result, the U.S. was under the burden of being responsible for the breakdown of the talks and had to accept a compromise that they would provide light-water reactors to North Korea in a timely manner. Within the framework of the Six-Party Talks, the U.S. was persuaded and pressured by the five other countries.¹⁷⁷

In sum, China's position toward regional multilateral institutions was projected through the Six-Party Talks, and China could achieve some benefit through the Talks. China's active role in the Six-Party Talks represents that China is moving toward multilateral community. During the Six-Party Talks, China made efforts to solve the problem through peaceful negotiation. China increased its shuttle diplomacy when disagreement occurred, and these efforts got positive responses from the international community. While promoting its responsible-power image through the international community, China could also check U.S. influence in the Northeast Asian region. Overall,

¹⁷⁷ Choi, "The 6 Party Talk and Change in Northeast Asia's Multilateral Cooperative Order," 17.

China's image during the Six-Party Talks was as the active participant among the multilateral institutions, and this was beneficial for China's national interest.

V. CONCLUSION

North Korean nuclear weapons are a dangerous factor that can threaten the security of Northeast Asia. Among the countries in this region, China has maintained close relations with North Korea—although there are some limitations in China’s influence. Thus, China’s role is important in the North Korean nuclear issue. China has maintained its principles—denuclearization of the peninsula and peaceful solutions through dialogue and negation—but has changed its attitude, from passive bystander to active participant, toward the nuclear issue. Although the ideological bond between China and North Korea has weakened over time, China still understands the strategic importance of North Korea. Thus, the relationship between the two countries has not changed a lot. In this regard, one must understand China’s general foreign-policy change to understand China’s attitude change in the North Korean nuclear issue.

The main change in China’s foreign policy between 1990 and 2000 consisted of China’s engagement in international affairs and regional multilateral institutions. Since 1978, China has adopted a reformed and open policy and has increased its engagement with Western countries. However, the country maintained a passive attitude in international affairs during the 1990s. The U.S. was the sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union and had posed an antagonistic attitude toward China since the Tiananmen incident. While dealing with sanctions from the West, China tried to avoid conflicts with Western powers and showed a passive attitude in international affairs. China was not willing to confront or to actively cooperate with the U.S. in international affairs. The country also worried that engagement in regional multilateral institutions would infringe upon China’s national interest.

During the 2000s, China’s attitude toward international affairs changed. China started to resume its diplomatic relationship with the Western show confidence in its comprehensive national power. With its successful economic development, China’s leaders had confidence in its national power. The country increased its engagement in international affairs.

China's fourth-generation leaders, who succeeded to power in early 2000s, also maintained this tendency. They showed their confidence in China's national power and tried to act as a responsible superpower. China emphasized its peaceful rise and increased its active involvement in international affairs. China has good connection to the other five parties in the six-party talks, and international society urges China to take a leading role. While China maintains its economic development and growing comprehensive national power, China's fifth-generation leader Xi Jinping, who was elected leader of the Communist Party of China, will continue this foreign policy.

China's foreign-policy change toward the international community has been expressed its active engagement in regional multilateral security institutions. Traditionally, China had suspected that international institutions were under the influence of U.S.-led Western countries. Thus, China hesitated to take part in multilateral security cooperation and focused on bilateral relations with other countries. However, China's growing national power and interdependency with the international community led the country to change its position on multilateralism. China has realized that participating in regional multilateral security institutions such as the ARF and SCO is beneficial to China's national interest. By participate those institutions, China can increase its influence in the Asian region, promote its peaceful-development image, and check U.S. hegemony in the region.

China considers that the denuclearization and stability in the Korean peninsula is important to its national interests. Thus, unlike the early 1990s, China played a leading role in the talks and cooperated with other member nations. The Six-Party Talks still have many limitations in their function as a regional multilateral security institution. The mistrust between the U.S. and North Korea is too big to overcome, and China's influence toward the U.S. and North Korea is limited. Additionally, each participant has his own interest, which can hinder the progress of the talks. For these reasons, the Six-Party Talks have failed to prevent North Korea's nuclear weapon possession. However, China has shown its position in the North Korean nuclear issue through the talks. Since China is the most influential country over North Korea, the international community was positive about China's efforts. Although the Six-Party Talks themselves are not a formal

multilateral security institution, China considered institutionalizing a regional multilateral security organization based on the frame of the talks.¹⁷⁸ It showed China's confidence of power as the leader of the regional multilateral institution.

Finally, China's general foreign-policy change affected its attitude change toward the North Korean nuclear issue. Since the mid-1990s, China had increased its involvement in international affairs and multilateral institutions, an encouraging phenomenon. Although China has conflicted with the U.S. and neighboring countries on many issues, the country cooperated fully with the international community and the U.S. to come up with a peaceful solution in the North Korean nuclear issue.

¹⁷⁸ Seongyeol No, "China considers to establish a new security consultative institution that can succeed the Six-Party Talks," *Munhwa Ilbo*, February 25, 2004.

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