**Enmity, Appeasement and the National Interest:
The Social Construction of U.S. Foreign Policy Toward North Korea**

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the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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Abstract

The confrontation between the United States and North Korea continues not because of a security dilemma, but because the two states are enemies, as they have been for over 50 years. Operating almost entirely from within the horizons of liberalism, International Relations has traditionally done a poor job of understanding enmity. This inadequacy results from a tendency to view international politics primarily in terms of the quest for security, or self-preservation. The meaning of enmity is examined with reference to the thought of Carl Schmitt, and IR's traditional understanding of it is examined with reference to Hans Morgenthau's response to Schmitt. While Schmitt treats enmity in essentialist terms, as an irreducible structure, Morgenthau treats it as reducible to interests. Both positions are rejected in favour of a view that sees enmity as socially constructed, and thus at least potentially transformable.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Introduction

On October 4, 2002, officials of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) admitted to their counterparts from the United States that they had a program under way to produce highly enriched uranium, a potential source of nuclear weapons. Thus, the first official talks between the US and North Korea since the election of US President George W. Bush nearly two years earlier came to an abrupt end, and the world braced itself for another "nuclear crisis" on the Korean peninsula. As if to confirm the gravity of the situation, North Korea declared the 1994 US-DPRK Geneva Agreed Framework – the agreement that ended the last "nuclear crisis" in Korea – "nullified", and US officials confirmed that it was dead.¹ With the US foreign policy establishment focused on either disarming or invading Iraq, at least ostensibly over concerns about weapons of mass destruction (WMD), North Korea seemed to be taunting the United States with its unapologetic pursuit of nuclear weapons. While it gave assurances to its Southern neighbour that it had no intentions of actually building nuclear bombs, as matters between the US and Iraq continued to escalate, and the Bush

¹ A two-week period elapsed between the meetings in North Korea and the announcement by US officials of North Korea's admission. See David E. Sanger, "North Korea Says it Has a Program on Nuclear Arms," *New York Times*, October 17, 2003; and Sanger, "US to Withdraw From Arms Accord with North Korea," *New York Times*, October 20, 2002. Uranium enrichment was not specifically mentioned by the Agreed Framework, which concerned itself only with North Korea's graphite-moderated reactors. It did, however, stipulate that North Korea would implement its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, which the UE program contravened by virtue of its secrecy (though not by its existence). The UE program most directly contravened the North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, signed by the two Koreas in January 1992, article 3 of which states "The South and North shall not possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities." Document available at <http://www.armscontrol.org/documents/denuclearization.asp>.

administration tried desperately to distinguish the urgency of the two cases, North Korea seemed to up the ante. It expelled international inspectors, restarted its nuclear plant at Yongbyon, withdrew from the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and threatened to begin reprocessing the 8,000 spent fuel rods it already had in storage to extract plutonium if the United States did not begin direct bilateral negotiations.² This behaviour seemed to confirm the conventional wisdom that North Korea was not only duplicitous, but also enigmatic and unpredictable, its leader Kim Jong Il probably irrational and at the very least an egomaniac and a daredevil.³

For those who had opposed the 1994 Agreed Framework in the first place, these events seemed to confirm its inherent flaws, and to discredit those who had argued for “engagement” with North Korea. Senator John McCain had stated in 1995, “I believe this agreement will fail. I believe North Korea will renege on this agreement just as they reneged on their freely accepted treaty obligations under the Nonproliferation Treaty”. He argued that Congress should not overturn the agreement, but only because the blame for breaking it should be reserved for North Korea: “To be candid, I do not want to have Congress blamed for something that will really be the result of North Korean duplicity.”⁴ The revelation of North Korea’s uranium enrichment (UE) program seemed to vindicate

² Howard W. French, “North Korea Informs South Korea That it Doesn’t Plan to Produce Nuclear Weapons,” *New York Times*, January 23, 2003; Michael R. Gordon, “In Bush’s ‘Axis of Evil,’ Why Iraq Stands Out,” *New York Times*, September 9, 2002; Elisabeth Bumiller, “Bush Sees Korean Nuclear Effort as Different From Iraq’s,” *New York Times*, October 22, 2002; David E. Sanger, “President Makes Case That North Korea is No Iraq,” *New York Times*, January 1, 2003; and Paul Kerr, “North Korea Restarts Reactor; IAEA Sends Resolution to UN,” *Arms Control Today* (March 2003), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_03/nkorea_march03.html.

³ In the words of columnist Charles Krauthammer, “unpredictable, possibly psychotic, [Kim Jong Il] would be the closest thing to Dr. Strangelove the nuclear age has seen.” See Krauthammer, “North Korea’s Coming Bomb: It’s Clinton’s Crisis, and He’s Not Ready To Lead,” *Washington Post*, November 5, 1993, A27.

⁴ Quoted in Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 198, from US Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, *Security Implications of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Agreement with North Korea*, 104th Congress, 1st Session, January 26, 1995.

McCain's position, and while the administration expressed hope that the situation could be addressed through diplomacy, it gave plenty of indications that it would not repeat the "mistakes" of the last one; it would not be "blackmailed" into paying North Korea "to live up to its obligations".⁵ For the US President, the facts of the case were simple: "The United States honored its side of the agreement; North Korea didn't."⁶ To many, the lesson also seemed clear: the way to deal with "rogue states" is not to give in to their demands – to "appease" them – but to isolate and coerce them into doing the right thing. A former Secretary of State called the current situation "the natural and foreseeable result of the [Agreed Framework]," an agreement that "turned a policy based on strength into one based on accommodation, compromise and appeasement." The only thing the government of North Korea understands, he argued, is "force, strength and resolve."⁷ While the world waits for the outcome of the current "nuclear crisis", however, it is worth re-examining these assumptions and, most importantly, what went wrong with the Agreed Framework. I would submit that any resolution to the current situation that does not involve a nuclear-armed North Korea is likely to involve an agreement that looks a lot like it.⁸

This thesis takes as its subject matter a critical re-examination of the failure of the Agreed Framework in the broader context of US–North Korean relations. The paper is written from the perspective of foreign policy analysis, and as such it focuses on United

⁵ See, for example, David E. Sanger, "Bush and Jiang Vow to Cooperate on North Korea Issue," *New York Times*, October 26, 2002.

⁶ White House, "President George Bush Discusses Iraq in National Press Conference," press release, Washington, D.C., March 6, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030306-8.html>.

⁷ James A. Baker III, "No More Caving on North Korea," *Washington Post*, op-ed, October 23, 2002, A27. Baker was Secretary of State from 1989 to 1992.

⁸ There are two probable departures: If such a deal is reached, it is likely to be multilateral rather than bilateral, or at least include multi-lateral components, and the provision of energy which it is sure to include is not likely to be in the form of nuclear reactors supplied to North Korea. See Chapters 2 and 3 below.

States foreign policy toward North Korea in the post Cold-War period. It addresses the question of how US policymakers should “deal with” North Korea, in light of what can and cannot be known. Most of the English language literature on the subject is written from that perspective, and so an immanent critique of that literature, which is one objective of this thesis, should adopt that perspective as well. This perspective also imposes a certain discipline on the analyst, because it requires him/her to accept both the limits of imperfect knowledge and the limits of the possible that policymakers must accept simply by virtue of their position.

The central argument of the paper is that Washington’s “North Korea problem” continues not because North Korea is a “rogue state”, but because the United States and North Korea are enemies, as they have been for more than 50 years. In the early 1990s, North Korea’s advances in nuclear and missile technology introduced a fundamentally new factor into this equation. North Korea was within close reach of nuclear weapons technology, and the US was faced with a difficult choice between its traditional objective of “containing”, and hopefully transforming North Korea, and a new objective of preventing it from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It was not a choice the United States was prepared to make in a decisive fashion. Washington’s objective during most of the period since 1991 has been to disarm North Korea without abandoning its enmity for that state – embodied in the containment policy – in a decisive fashion. The attempt to pursue both objectives simultaneously, combined with North Korea’s insistence that the choice was one or the other, led to the “nuclear crisis” of 1993-94, and continues to be at the heart of the conflict. North Korea’s objective, since at least 1991, has been to end its lifelong enmity with the United States without capitulating; that is, without

undertaking wholesale “reform and opening” along Western lines, and ceding decision-making authority regarding its government and economy to outside powers.⁹ Because many aspects of that government and economy are reprehensible to it, the United States has generally seen their transformation as a pre-requisite for the cessation of enmity.

The Agreed Framework that ended the 1993-94 “nuclear crisis” appeared to be a distinct break from this pattern. As I will argue in Chapter 2, it was not a contract or treaty, but a framework for the abandonment of enmity, signed by two parties on the path toward a war that neither wanted to fight. As such, any force or effectiveness it was to have resided not in legal obligation, which it did not confer, but in the perception of the parties that it was in their interests to implement it.¹⁰ The failure of the United States to take decisive steps in that direction, despite North Korea’s implementation of the nuclear freeze, indicates that the decision to abandon enmity, made seemingly overnight by a US administration out-foxed by a former President, did not enjoy sufficient support in the seats of power. In other words, it conflicted with the (then and now) dominant definition of the national interest with respect to North Korea.

⁹ The choice of the date 1991 is not arbitrary, though it may not be exact either. Leon Sigal reports that US visitors to Pyongyang in 1990 were being told that Kim Il Sung had made three watershed decisions: 1) to begin slowly and partially opening the economy to the outside world; 2) to normalize relations with the United States, the one country that could restrain South Korea; and 3) to abandon efforts to destabilize the South. Sigal, (1998), 24. Selig Harrison reports that in December 1991, reformers in the DPRK, sensing the nuclear issue was the key to achieving normalization of relations with the US, forced a showdown in the party’s Central Committee, and won approval to allow IAEA inspections. Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and US Disengagement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 34. Two State Department analysts argued in 1991 that “The North Koreans have worked assiduously to engage the United States over the past five or six years. It must strike them as terribly slow going. Yet, they have kept at it, and it is worth asking why.” See Robert L. Carlin and John Merrill, “North Korea’s Relations with the United States and Japan,” in Michael J. Mazarr *et. al.*, eds., *Korea in 1991: The Road to Peace* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 122. As outlined below, the shift became apparent in the fall of 1991.

¹⁰ See comments by Robert Gallucci in Arms Control Association, “Progress and Challenges in Denuclearizing North Korea,” press conference, May 2, 2002, transcript in *Arms Control Today* (May 2002), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002_05/pressmay02.html.

The critical re-examination of US – North Korean relations undertaken here is important for several reasons. First, in an immediate sense, the search for a negotiated solution to the conflict between the United States and North Korea is ongoing, and so it is imperative to consider what the possible basis of such a settlement might be. Furthermore, the history of the Agreed Framework suggests that even if a new agreement is reached in the near future, the real test will be in the implementation, and that successful implementation depends upon an accurate understanding of what the agreement “means” in its particular historical circumstances. Second, the closer one looks at the terms of the Agreed Framework and the historical circumstances surrounding it, the more one is struck by the inadequacy of standard accounts of why North Korea has presented such a persistent foreign policy problem for the United States. This may point to serious flaws in the way we are used to thinking about conflict in International Relations. In particular, I will argue below that it points to the inadequacy of the way we think about *enmity* in international politics. Thirdly, the conflict between the United States, the world’s most powerful liberal democracy, and North Korea, a “rogue state” pursuing weapons of mass destruction (WMD), constitutes an iteration of what has become one of the most volatile and contentious fronts of interaction between the “liberal” West and the “illiberal” rest – between what some writers have called the “historical” world and the “post-historical” world.¹¹ I make no claim that the findings of this thesis are generalizable to other cases, and in fact the dangers of thinking in terms of categories such a “rogue state” about situations that have distinct historical roots should be evident from the discussion that follows. What is common to these situations,

¹¹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992); and Max Singer and Aaron B. Wildavsky, *The Real World Order: Zones of Peace, Zones of Turmoil* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1996).

however, is the clash of “liberal” states with states considered by most to be both repressive and dangerous. The mounting record of conflict in such situations prompts careful thought not only about the place of “liberal” states in the world, but also about the nature of the categorization itself.

Of the preceding three points, this thesis will focus primarily on the second – the inadequacy of the way enmity has been conceptualized in IR theory, and the implications of a fuller understanding of enmity for the case at hand. As will be outlined below, the long-established dominance of the concept of “security” in IR has led theorists to treat enmity as little more than an adjunct to that concept. I will argue that the concept of security, or “self-preservation”, does a relatively poor job explaining persistent, or “intractable” conflicts like that between the United States and North Korea.¹²

Conversely, treating enmity as *more than* insecurity seems to explain elements of the US – North Korea relationship that are otherwise difficult to understand.

Toward an Understanding of Enmity

In recent years, IR has begun to draw on the insights of sociology and social psychology in an attempt to gain a better understanding of enmity, or at least of realities that will be described as enmity here. At the same time, it has made surprisingly little use of the resources already extant in the Western tradition of political theory, with the exception of a growing literature drawing on the work of Nietzsche and Foucault.¹³ This

¹² Louis Kriesberg et al., eds., *Intractable Conflicts and their Transformation*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989; and Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 277-78.

¹³ For good examples of the latter, see Jef Huysmans, “Security! What do you mean? From concept to thick signifier,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 4:2 (1998), 226-55; and David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, revised edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) respectively. I distinguish these approaches from my own below. Sociological approaches include Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics,” *International Organization*, 46:2 (Spring 1992), 391; Wendt (1999); and Jonathan Mercer,

is regrettable for two reasons. First, while they may not be mutually exclusive, the different types of explanations are in some ways competing, and IR would benefit from discussions and comparisons between them. In order for this to occur, neglected perspectives have first to be clearly articulated. This thesis proposes a starting point, though certainly only a starting point, in that regard. Secondly, and equally important, IR has had previous encounters with political theories about enmity, including the one examined here, found in Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*. Unfortunately, the field seems collectively unaware not only of the results of those encounters, but of the fact that they ever took place. As such, "remembering" them serves the crucial purpose of understanding the development of our field, with the important result that we may also come to better understand the limitations of the ways we have come to think about international politics. In particular, I want to argue that IR's response to ideas about enmity has been heavily conditioned by its pervasive *liberalism*, and that this liberalism continues to dominate the way we think about enmity. This imposes certain limitations on our understanding of international politics that I hope to bring to the surface.

It is necessary to be clear what I mean by "liberalism" here, because it is not what IR theorists typically mean when they use that word.¹⁴ While the specific denotations of

"Anarchy and identity," *International Organization*, 49:1 (Spring 1995), 229-253. For approaches drawing on psychoanalytic theory, see Vamik Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies*, Northvale (NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1988); Fred C. Alford, *Group Psychology and Political Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); and Mira Sucharov, "The international self: Israel and the Palestinians, 1948-1995," Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 2000.

¹⁴ It is surprisingly difficult to pin down what IR theorists *do* mean by the term. For two discussions of its meaning and variations, see Mark W. Zacher and Richard A. Matthew, "Liberal International Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands," in Charles W. Kegley, ed., *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 107-140; and James L. Richardson, "Contending Liberalisms: Past and Present," *European Journal of International Relations*, 3:1 (1997), 5-33.

the term are elusive,¹⁵ it is usually treated as a type of explanation of international politics that is distinct from, and competes with other forms of explanation such as “realism” and “Marxism”. Alexander Wendt has pointed out that there is a new iteration – a new axis – of the realist-liberal debate in IR. This new debate centres on the relative importance of “process” and “structure” in international politics, rather than, as previously, on competing theories of human nature.¹⁶ The central question is whether process changes identities and interests, or just behaviour. In essence, it boils down to a debate about the role of “learning” in international politics. Wendt and other constructivists criticize neo-liberal International Relations theorists for accepting realism’s individualist (or rationalist) ontology, which allows only very narrow scope for learning because it takes the identities of actors, and thus their interests, as exogenously given.¹⁷ As Wendt argues, it permits only “simple learning”, or behavioural adaptation, not “complex learning”, which involves the redefinition of identity and interest.¹⁸ Wendt seeks to redress this situation by “developing a constructivist argument” (an argument for the

¹⁵ Michael Doyle points out that “there is no canonical description of liberalism,” and Arthur Stein argues that “liberalism is multifaceted, and what is or is not at its core can be disputed.” See Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, 80:4 (December 1986), 1152; and Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate: Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1990), 7, nt. 6, quoted in Zacher and Matthew, *Ibid*, 107-8. Harold J. Laski calls liberalism “hardly less a habit of mind than a body of doctrine,” and John Dunn says it is “often a matter of broad cultural allegiance and not of politics at all.” See Laski, *The Rise of European Liberalism: an Essay in Interpretation* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1936), 15; and Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 30, quoted in Richardson, *Ibid*, 7. For differing accounts of the central liberal values, see John Gray, *Liberalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), x; and Anthony Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 55-91.

¹⁶ Wendt (1992), 391. In actual fact, social science, unable to resolve the very old debate about human nature, has in many ways subsumed it under the new debate about structure and process. See the discussion in chapter 4 about the relationship between nature and culture.

¹⁷ Wendt (1992), 392-393; and Friedrich Kratochwil and John Ruggie, “International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State,” *International Organization* 40:4 (Autumn 1986), pp. 753-75.

¹⁸ Wendt, *ibid*; Philip Tetlock, “Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy,” in George Breslauer and Philip Tetlock, eds., *Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991), 20-61; Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Nuclear Learning and US-Soviet Security Regimes,” *International Organization* 41:3 (Summer 1987), 371-402; and Ernst Haas, *When Knowledge is Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 17-49.

possibility of learning in the strong sense) based on structurationist and symbolic interactionist sociology and “on behalf of the liberal claim that international institutions can transform state identities and interests”.¹⁹

While Wendt has outlined the terms of this new debate with admirable clarity, the debate itself has obscured the nature of liberalism in a manner that Wendt fails to clarify. Specifically, it reduces liberalism to an ontological position on the importance of process and the possibility of “learning”. This is to miss the heart of liberalism, which is first and foremost a *normative commitment* to peace, as both the symbol and objective of social progress. It is not just about *how much* states *can* learn, but *what they should* learn. Secondly, and of almost equal importance, as a (perhaps the) thoroughly modern political theory, liberalism assumes that progress is to be achieved through the incremental approximation of *rational* social relations.²⁰ It is this assumption of an inextricable connection between peace and rationality that has, from the beginning, given liberal political theory its particular essence, and which ties together its “divergent strands”.²¹ As will be seen below, most forms of liberalism presuppose (albeit to varying degrees) the constructivist position on learning,²² but liberalism is also more than that, and to miss this point is to misunderstand its essence.

¹⁹ This is “Constructivism’s potential contribution to a strong liberalism.” More specifically, Wendt argues that “self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure”; that “*Anarchy is what states make of it.*” Wendt, *ibid*, 393-4. Emphasis in original.

²⁰ The element of freedom, or liberty, which most descriptions of liberalism emphasize, is largely derivative of these two more fundamental characteristics, and is subservient to them. The derivation is relatively straightforward: the formula for peaceful (and thus rational) social relations is “live and let live” - the reciprocal recognition of liberty.

²¹ On liberalism’s “divergent strands”, see Zacher and Matthew (1995).

²² This was true even of Thomas Hobbes, who (recalling the “old” realist-liberal debate) is typically held up as the paradigmatic example of the belief in nature *to the exclusion* of learning. See Chapter 5.

Conversely, while constructivists often concede that actors can be educated for worse as well as for better (witness Wendt's contention that the current dominance of self-help and power politics is the result of process),²³ to the extent that they believe in *progress* through learning it is a result of a commitment to the notion of increasingly *rational* social relations. For liberals, the possibility of learning equals the possibility of progress equals the possibility of peace, or rational social relations. For constructivists, the importance of process equals the possibility of learning. To the extent that constructivism also involves some commitment to the notion of progress defined in terms of peace, which is almost universally the case, constructivists are strong liberals.²⁴ Most realists are liberals as well (though in a weaker sense because of their weaker conception of learning, and thus of progress), because they too accept the connection between rationality and the pursuit of peace, and translate it into an assumption that rational actors seek security above all else. That is, realists still believe that rational social relations are identical with peaceful social relations, but they are less optimistic about the prospects for approximating rational social relations. In fact, it is arguably the case that the primary vehicle through which liberal assumptions have become entrenched in International Relations theory has been IR's historically dominant paradigm, realism.

It might be objected that, as conceived above, the term "liberal" would apply to almost every writer in International Relations today. The point must be conceded, and in

²³ He contrasts his position on this with that of Hedley Bull, whom he says treats conflictual anarchies as the result of an absence of shared ideas (i.e. a natural condition), with anarchy becoming inevitably more cooperative (more of an "anarchical society") as shared ideas increase. See Wendt (1999), 253 and Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

²⁴ Wendt argues that "although there is no guarantee that international time will move forward toward a Kantian culture, at least it is unlikely to move backward" (1999: 251, 311-312). Wendt's description of the three cultures of anarchy and the differences between them leaves no doubt that progress is defined in terms of peace.

fact it is given credence by the analysis below, which suggests that Hans Morgenthau, the paradigmatic classical realist, was a liberal. What, then, is the value of an analytical category that is so broad as to encompass almost everything in IR? Its utility lies precisely in recognizing the horizons, or boundaries, of our thought, as well as the limitations which they impose on our understanding. There are some things which “liberal” IR (in the broad sense) does a good job of conceptualizing, but there are other things that it fails almost entirely to comprehend, and one of them is enmity. Because we are all (or almost all) liberals, IR theorists tend to reduce enmity to terms that liberalism comprehends.²⁵ It is my contention, however, that enmity is a fundamentally illiberal, and yet very real, phenomenon. To understand it, we need to re-examine some basic assumptions of IR theory.

Threats and Enemies: What’s the Difference?

One of the most dominant assumptions of the field of International Relations over the past half-century or more is that states are “security seekers”. In other words, we assume that states seek security, or self-preservation, above all else, and that by extension if there were a reliable way to obtain security they would surely opt for it. An entire sub-field – “security studies” – is built upon the premise that this is true. The assumption is most apparent in neorealist theories of IR, but it is also pervasive in rational choice approaches. We assume that the rational choice is always the choice of security, and assuming that actors are rational, we conclude that departures from this rational course result from the limitations of imperfect knowledge and perception. We also make the

²⁵ The contention that “we are all liberals” has more to do with the way we make sense of the world than with our attitudes. It is entirely possible that an analyst who writes about the world in very “liberal” terms (which associate peace with rationality and progress) may nonetheless be motivated by very “illiberal” sentiments such as “enmity” or the desire for dominance. See below.

further assumption, following Thomas Hobbes, that the desire for self-preservation leads logically to a preference for peace (because war implies a very real possibility of death),²⁶ and that solving the problem of conflict is therefore largely a matter of fulfilling that desire. Also like Hobbes, we consider the latter to be no mean feat, especially in the absence of *Leviathan*. Kenneth Waltz aptly summed up this sentiment in 1959 with reference to the dominant political reality of that day: “The peace wish, we are told, runs strong and deep among the Russian people; and we are convinced that the same can be said of Americans... in the light of history and of current events as well it is difficult to believe that the wish will father the condition desired.” There is, he argued “an apparent disproportion between effort and product, between desire and result.”²⁷ This, we have come to think, is at the heart of the problem of international conflict.

I am going to argue that the above assumption is false. It is at least questionable how big a problem conflict would be in a world where all states sought only “security”.²⁸ States do, of course, seek security as a basic requirement for all other objectives, but not to the exclusion of all other objectives. They often pursue other goals – for example, economic gain, affirmation of the superiority of their society or way of life, or glory simply – and often at some risk to their security. In fact, states often walk a rather precarious line between self-preservation and the pursuit of these other objectives. I will also argue that what states pursue, and how they pursue it, is in no small measure a

²⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, C. B. Macpherson, ed. (London: Penguin, 1985), Ch. 14, 189 ff. and Ch. 4 below.

²⁷ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1959), 5.

²⁸ See Randall L. Schweller, “Neorealism’s Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?” *Security Studies*, 5:3 (Spring 1996), 90-121; and Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler’s Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 19-26. Similarly C. B. Macpherson argues that the extreme dangerousness of Thomas Hobbes’ “state of nature”, upon which the security dilemma is squarely based, is premised on the notion that some men’s appetites are without limit. See Macpherson, “Introduction,” in Hobbes (1985), 36, and Chapter 3 below.

function of “who” they are – that is, of their identities. “Identities are the basis of interests.”²⁹ As such, the balance that all states try to strike is between self-preservation on the one hand and what might be called “self-assertion” on the other, and the precariousness of that balance depends both on the self that is being asserted and the historical circumstances it is being asserted in.³⁰

The rejection of the assumption that states’ actions toward other states can always be explained by the quest for security raises the question of what else might be at work in conflict situations. I am going to argue that in the case of US – North Korean relations, the concept of enmity explains more than the concept of security. In a somewhat atypical

²⁹ Wendt (1992), 398.

³⁰ The term “self-assertion” has many philosophical correlates. It is used here in a broad sense, in contrast to the notion of self-preservation. One important influence is Plato’s notion of *thymos*, roughly “spiritedness”, which constitutes one part of his tripartite division of the soul. *Thymos* appears to be intimately related both to a sense of one’s own worth (as well as the worth of “one’s own”) and the desire to have that worth recognized by others. As such, it is the site both of the sense of injustice at not having one’s worth recognized by others, and of the sense of shame at not living up to one’s estimation of one’s own worth. See Plato, *The Republic*, Allan Bloom, trans., 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1968), esp. 435c-441c and 375a-375e (hereafter *Republic*). Self-assertion also corresponds roughly to Hegel’s notion of the “desire for recognition” – the attempt to become consciousness of oneself as an independent being, in the first instance by acquiring the recognition of another being. This is to be understood as part of the struggle toward “freedom” (in contrast to “bare existence”), meaning essentially freedom from the animal nature. This freedom is ultimately realized only in the risking of one’s life: “The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness.” Alexandre Kojève put this element at the centre of Hegel’s thought. On Kojève’s interpretation, the desire for recognition moves history forward through the master-slave dialectic, which begins with a fight to the death “for pure prestige,” in which one party relents in order to save his/her life. Thus, the difference between the psychology of the master and that of the slave is, at bottom, the relative weight assigned to self-preservation and self-assertion. For Kojève, history ends with rational social relations – the synthesis of the master and slave psychologies through the universal reciprocal recognition of the worth of man as man, embodied in the Universal and Homogeneous State. See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 229-240 (quote from 233); and Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James Nichols (New York: Basic Books, 1969). In Nietzsche, “self-assertion”, or “self-affirmation”, is an expression of the “will to power”. See, for example, Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), esp. I, 13; II, 2, 3, 12, 18; and III, 18. In Hobbes, self-assertion is oriented toward the satisfaction of appetite. The “desire for recognition” corresponds roughly to the appetites of “pride” and “vainglory”. Hobbes (1985), Ch’s 6 and 10. Much of the above receives accessible treatment by Francis Fukuyama (1992), especially Kojève’s interpretation of Hegel and Plato’s notion of *thymos*. Fukuyama uses *thymos* and “the desire for recognition” interchangeably, and I have largely followed him in this respect. My disagreement with Fukuyama, which is noted below, relates not to his interpretation of Plato, Hegel, or Kojève, but to his application of the concept of *thymos* to the contemporary world.

formulation for him, Hans Morgenthau described the same political conflict as Kenneth Waltz above as follows: “An intelligent and successful foreign policy depends upon the Americans’ and the Russians’ understanding what both nations *are and want*. Peace between the United States and the Soviet Union depends in the last analysis upon whether what one of them *is and wants* is compatible with what the other one *is and wants*.”³¹ This assessment identifies two distinct problems – perhaps *the* two problems – of international conflict. The first is the problem of the limits to perception and knowledge identified above. Simply put, conflicts may arise needlessly because states misperceive each other’s intentions. The second problem might be called conflict proper, and in the extreme case the problem of enmity. States whose aims or modes of being in the world are mutually exclusive will not co-exist in peace even if they do accurately perceive one another.³²

Neorealist accounts of international politics, in which states are undifferentiated except by their capabilities, generally conflate the two problems: enmity is most often portrayed as a problem of perception. States, which primarily want “security”, fear each other because they cannot accurately read each other’s intentions. They therefore undertake defensive actions, which to the other are indistinguishable from aggressive ones, and the two go to the brink of war and sometimes beyond because of the “security dilemma”.³³ Most realists conclude from this that the surest way to avoid war is to avoid

³¹ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, fourth ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 504, emphasis added. I refer to the fourth edition of this book throughout, because it is the last to bear Morgenthau’s name as sole author, which is important to the detailed consideration of Morgenthau’s thought undertaken in Chapter 5. The statement referred to here is atypical because the assumption that states are security seekers is pervasive in Morgenthau’s work as well.

³² See *ibid.*, 505.

³³ The classic formulation is John H. Herz, “Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics*, 2:2 (January 1950), 157-180. See also Morgenthau (1967), 64-5; Robert Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics*, 30:2 (January 1978), 167-214; Charles L. Glaser, “Political

the perception on the part of other actors that there is something to be gained through aggression (i.e. deterrence). As John Mearsheimer put it, “the greater military advantage one state has over other states, the more secure it is.” All states are influenced by this logic, and this leads inexorably “to a world of constant security competition, with the possibility of war always in the background.”³⁴

While they reject many realist assumptions, constructivists in IR have largely followed realists in conceptualizing enmity as a problem driven by concerns about “security”, or self-preservation. This is apparent in Alexander Wendt’s analysis of the interaction of states under conditions of anarchy. Wendt suggests that the latter can be conceptualized in terms of three roles, or subject positions, each of which “involves a distinct posture or orientation of the Self toward the Other with respect to the use of violence.” These are “enemies”, “rivals”, and “friends”, and their respective postures are stipulated as follows: “The posture of enemies is one of threatening adversaries who observe no limits in their violence toward each other; that of rivals is one of competitors who will use violence to advance their interests but refrain from killing each other; and that of friends is one of allies who do not use violence to settle their disputes and work as a team against security threats.”³⁵ Enmity, for Wendt, is based on “representations of the Other as intent on destroying or enslaving the Self”; that is, “as an actor who 1) does not

Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models,” *World Politics*, 44:4 (July 1992), 497-538; and Glaser, “The Security Dilemma Revisited,” *World Politics*, 50:1 (October 1997), 171-201. Cf. Schweller (1996), and John H. Kautsky, “Myth, Self-fulfilling Prophecy, and Symbolic Reassurance in the East-West Conflict,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 9:1 (March 1965), 1-17.

³⁴ John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security*, 19:3 (Winter 1994/95), 10-12. Mearsheimer suggests that although the level of fear between states varies, “it can never be reduced to a trivial level.” Later, however, he refers to states as having “close friends” and being “especially friendly for historical or ideological reasons” (*Ibid*, 11 and 31). It is difficult to see how the concept of “friendship” can fit within a system where states have no choice but to fear one another.

³⁵ Wendt (1999), 258.

recognize the right of the Self to exist as an autonomous being, and therefore 2) will not willingly limit its violence toward the Self.”³⁶

What Wendt means by enmity becomes clearest when he distinguishes it from rivalry, a distinction which boils down to “the perceived scope of the Other’s intentions, in particular whether he is thought to be trying to kill or enslave the Self or merely trying to beat or steal from him.” In other words, the distinction is based on “the level of violence expected from the Other.” While both enemies and rivals are assumed to have “revisionist” intent with respect to the self, an enemy seeks to “revise” one’s “life or liberty” (what Wendt calls “deep” revisionism”) while a rival seeks only to revise one’s “behavior or property” (“shallow” revisionism). Rivals, in short, are represented as “less threatening” than enemies. While rivals expect each other to use violence at times to settle disputes, there is also an expectation that sovereignty, or “life and liberty”, will be respected as a right, and that violence will therefore be used “within ‘live and let live’ limits.” In other words, “Violence between enemies has no internal limits,” and will be limited only by inadequate capabilities or external constraints, while “Violence between rivals... is *self-limiting*, constrained by recognition of each other’s right to exist.”³⁷

What is noteworthy here is that the roles are conceptualized in the purely reactive terms of self-preservation. Actions are a product of the “level of violence expected from the Other”. This stems from Wendt’s contention that “Processes of identity-formation under anarchy are concerned first and foremost with preservation or ‘security’ of the self.”³⁸ The effect of this is to treat enmity as though it were synonymous with threat:

³⁶ *Ibid*, 261, 260.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 261, 279-81.

³⁸ Wendt (1992), 399. I am interested here in what Wendt would call “micro-level” as opposed to “macro-level” structures (1999: 145-157, 247). He argues that “Everyone agrees that micro- or interaction-level

“States act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not.”³⁹ In Wendt’s description, the term enmity describes the conditions under which realist predictions about the behaviour of states – *realpolitik* – will hold true. In such cases, states will respond to enemies by acting like deep revisionists themselves, trying to destroy or conquer them on the principle of “kill or be killed.” Decision-making will be oriented toward the short-term and the worst case – toward negative possibilities rather than probabilities – and military capabilities will dictate policy, on the assumption that the enemy “will attack as soon as he can win”. Finally, if it comes to war, “states will fight on the enemy’s (perceived) terms,” which means observing no limits to violence unless it is clearly safe to do so.⁴⁰ While Wendt disagrees with realists about their explanation for *realpolitik* behaviour (he argues it is the result of a particular *culture* of anarchy, not of some inherent logic of anarchy), he essentially agrees with realism’s description of *realpolitik* behaviour, and characterizes enmity in those terms:⁴¹

“What Realism-as-description shows is that when the Other is an enemy the Self is forced to mirror back the representations it has attributed to the Other.... Self mirrors Other, becomes *its* enemy, in order to survive. This of course will confirm whatever hostile intentions the *Other* had attributed to the Self, forcing it

anarchic structures vary. Some are peaceful, others warlike.... The real question is whether the fact of anarchy creates a tendency for all such interaction to realize a single logic at the macro-level” (*Ibid*, 247). To be clear, I am not interested here in the latter question. Rather, I am interested what causes the variation in interaction-level structures, and in particular what animates enmity. In Wendt’s analysis, the three roles of enemy, rival and friend are discussed in connection with the structure of anarchy at the macro-level, which varies, he argues, based on which roles dominate the system. Though Wendt concentrates on roles as “properties” of macro-structure (“Roles are attributes of structures, not agents”), he allows that in principle they might belong to micro-structures (1999: 257), and in fact that “macro-level structures only exist in virtue of instantiations at the micro-level” (1999: 264). I would argue that, in fact, roles which are constituted at the micro (interaction) level are in many cases more salient, but further exploration of this point falls outside of the scope of the current discussion.

³⁹ Wendt (1992), 397.

⁴⁰ It also means being prepared to pre-empt in order to deny the enemy the advantage of first strike. Wendt (1999), 262.

⁴¹ Wendt, (1999), 263: “The Realist tradition contains much descriptive wisdom about *realpolitik*, but this does not entail the truth of its explanation for *realpolitik*.”

to engage in realpolitik of its own, which will in turn reinforce the Self's perception of the Other, and so on. Realpolitik, in short, is a self-fulfilling prophecy: its beliefs generate actions that confirm those beliefs.⁴²

To be fair, the above does not represent the totality of Wendt's thoughts on enmity. It does, however, suggest the pervasive influence of the liberal/realist assumption that enmity is all about security. Later, Wendt allows that enmity can become more deeply engrained in the identities and interests of states than the preceding discussion suggests.⁴³ States internalize "cultures of anarchy" to differing degrees, he argues, and at the highest degree of internalization of the "Hobbesian" culture, in which the role of enmity predominates, enmity undergoes somewhat of a transition. In such a culture, when states lack the means to "kill" each other (resolving enmity through conquest), they may internalize the norm of enmity to the extent that it comes to be seen not merely as a necessity (acting in accordance with realpolitik in order to survive), but also as legitimate. In effect, while the security dilemma is the *genus* of enmity, enmity can also become more than that. When enmity becomes "legitimate", states "appropriate the enemy identity as their own, with its corresponding interests." At this degree of internalization:

Power politics is... not just a means but an end in itself, a value constituted collectively as 'right,' 'glorious,' or 'virtuous,' and as a result states now need the Other to play the role of enemy as a site for their efforts to realize those values.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ The lack of emphasis on this point in Wendt's general description of enmity may indicate that he considers it rare or even unlikely in the contemporary world. Wendt characterizes the Westphalian system as a "Lockean culture" which has experienced only "temporary regressions to a Hobbesian condition when a powerful state [e.g. revolutionary France, Nazi Germany] had an internal revolution and rejected Lockean norms altogether" (1999: 270). In a Lockean culture, where the role of "rival" predominates, the role of "enemy" is unlikely to be internalized to the third and highest degree, at least not as a result of "macro-structure", which is Wendt's focus. Yet Wendt subsequently talks about the third degree of internalization of enmity as a real phenomenon deserving greater theoretical attention (*Ibid.*: 272-278). This calls into question the relative weight he assigns to macro and micro structures in his analysis and, potentially, his proposition that "at the core of each kind of anarchy is just one subject position ['enemy', 'rival,' or 'friend']" (*Ibid.*: 257-258).

What matters now is ‘fighting the good fight,’ just *trying* to destroy your enemies, not whether you succeed; indeed were you to succeed the result might be cognitive dissonance and uncertainty about who you are in the absence of your enemy...⁴⁴

Post-structuralist analysis of conflict in international politics tends to broaden the definition of security to include the securing of the *identity* of the self, in addition to its physical existence, but it also tends to follow realism in letting “security” do the bulk of explanatory work and in reducing enmity to self-preservation. A good example of this is William Connolly’s discussion of the concept of “othering”.⁴⁵ Connolly argues that identity can only be defined in relation to difference (that identity and difference are mutually constitutive), and that the securing of an identity requires that some differences be converted into another, more severe, category of *otherness*; in other words, “into evil, or one of its numerous surrogates.” As Connolly put it, “Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.” This account of the politics of enmity is premised on the notion that man’s existential, or “ontological” insecurity is *the* fundamental political fact.⁴⁶ Self-assertion on the basis of a collective identity appears as a sort of coping mechanism for this insecurity – a reaction to it, or compensation for it. Paradoxically, this process of “othering” makes the state’s identity inherently insecure, because it is threatened by the very existence of the other: “not *merely* by actions that the other might take to injure or

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 274.

⁴⁵ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991). A similar argument could be made about David Campbell’s discussion of “discourses of danger” as the foundation of the corporate identity of the state. See Campbell (1998). See also Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); and Campbell, *Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993). The following discussion of Connolly draws from Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 221-22.

⁴⁶ On “ontological insecurity” as the root of politics, see Huysmans (1998).

defeat the true identity but by the very visibility of its mode of *being* as other.”⁴⁷ Jutta Weldes argues that this process of othering need not occur, and that state identities are therefore only potentially precarious. Nevertheless, to the extent that identity *is* fixed by othering, “the identity of the self becomes fundamentally insecure.” As such, difference and otherness stand in a “double relation” to the self-identity: “They constitute it and they threaten it.”⁴⁸

The above discussion illustrates the difficulty of finding an account of enmity that does not conceptualize it as a function of the drive for security. As I have indicated above, and will elaborate below, this is a function of IR’s pervasive liberalism. In contrast to these accounts, I want to argue that, at least in some cases, enmity has more to do with the desire for self-assertion than the desire for self-preservation. While the role of enemy can no doubt be constituted, to borrow from Wendt, by representations of the Other as an actor who “does not recognize the right of the Self to exist as an autonomous being,” it can also be constituted by representations of the Other as an actor that does not deserve (does not have a right) to exist as an autonomous being. Admittedly, the distinctions between threat and enemy and between self-preservation and self-assertion are analytically tricky. Insecurity undoubtedly plays a role in the creation and reproduction of enmity, and it is difficult to draw a clear line where self-preservation ends and self-assertion begins. Nevertheless, there seems to be something about enmity that is not captured by concepts like threat, security, and self-preservation, and the historic overemphasis on these concepts arguably creates an imbalance that prevents IR

⁴⁷ Connolly (1991), 64, 159.

⁴⁸ Weldes (1999), 221; Connolly (1991), 67. As a result, foreign policy problems and state identity become mutually constituting as well: state identities give rise to foreign policy problems, and these problems “present important opportunities for the (re)production... of such precarious state identities.” Weldes, *Ibid*, 221-222.

scholars from understanding the nature of enmity and of the “intractable” conflicts to which it gives rise.

One significant resource for understanding what it is about enmity that concepts like security and self-preservation fail to capture is Plato’s concept of *thymos*, which translates roughly as “spiritedness”.⁴⁹ *Thymos* is that part of the human soul which assigns value to things, and becomes angry, or “indignant”, when that worth is not recognized by others. According to Francis Fukuyama, people evaluate and assign worth to themselves first and foremost, and feel indignation on their own behalf. They also assign value to others, however, and are capable of feeling anger on their behalf.⁵⁰ As such, *thymos* “provides an all-powerful emotional support to the process of valuing and evaluating”; one that enables human beings to move beyond “bourgeois selfishness” and to overcome their natural instincts, including that for self-preservation, “for the sake of what they believe is right or just.” In this light, *thymos* appears as the source of all “noble virtues”, such as selflessness, the sense of duty or responsibility, self-sacrifice, courage and honourability.⁵¹ It is also, however, the source of the drive for self-assertion; it is “the most specifically political part of the human personality because it is what drives men to want to assert themselves over other men.”⁵²

⁴⁹ See Plato, *Republic*, esp. 435c-441c and 375a-375e, and Fukuyama (1992).

⁵⁰ This feeling of indignation increases in proportion to one’s “nobility” – that is, one’s estimation of one’s own worth. See Fukuyama (1992), 165, and Plato, *Republic*, 440c-440d.

⁵¹ Fukuyama, *Ibid*, 161, 165, 171. The virtue of humility is noticeably absent from the list. On the selfishness of bourgeois man, see *Ibid*, 145 and chapter 2 below.

⁵² *Ibid*, 163. While it is possible to have “*thymotic* pride” without demanding recognition for oneself, “subjective certainty regarding one’s own sense of worth” requires recognition by another consciousness. “Thus *thymos* typically, but not inevitably, drives men to seek recognition.” *Ibid*, 165-6. The breadth of the concept in Fukuyama’s use can be observed by reference to the fact it encompasses both the basic sense of “self-esteem” necessary “to say ‘no’ to other people without self-reproach” and the desire to dominate which gives rise to imperialism and war. See *Ibid*, 181 and Joan Didion, “On Self-Respect,” in Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (New York: Dell, 1968), 142-148.

Thymos takes on this latter complexion because it does not demand the recognition of values simply, but of *our* values: “The thymotic self demands recognition for its *own* sense of the worthiness of things,” including the worthiness of the self.⁵³ The seeming indivisibility of dignity pushes self-assertion toward fanaticism: “either you recognize my dignity, or the dignity of that which I hold sacred, or you do not. Only *thymos*, searching for justice, is capable of true fanaticism, obsession, hatred.”⁵⁴ According to Fukuyama, it is the desire of Hegel’s “masters” for universal recognition of their superiority that constitutes the historical problem of war and imperialism. This is an extreme manifestation of *thymos*, which Fukuyama calls *megalo-thymia*:

The fact that peace in historical state systems has been so difficult to obtain reflects the fact that certain states seek *more* than self-preservation. Like giant *thymotic* individuals, they seek acknowledgement of their value or dignity on dynastic, religious, nationalist, or ideological grounds, and in the process force other states either to fight or to submit. The ultimate ground of war among states is therefore *thymos* rather than self-preservation.⁵⁵

I want to argue that the essence of enmity is to be found in *thymotic* self-assertion. This conception of enmity will be outlined in Chapter 4 with reference to Carl Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political*, which is in essence an apology for the continuing place of enmity in the modern world. For Schmitt, enmity is irreducible. It either exists or it does not, and the only choice the relevant actors have is to recognize it and oppose one another uncompromisingly, or to refuse to recognize it, which is fatal. What emerges with Leo Strauss’ critique of Schmitt, however, is that enmity is in large measure a moral choice.⁵⁶ Modifying Schmitt’s argument in light of Strauss’ critique, it will be argued below that

⁵³ Fukuyama, *Ibid*, 172, emphasis in original.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 214

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 256.

⁵⁶ Leo Strauss, “Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*,” trans. J. Harvey Lomax, reprinted in Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 83-107.

the choice of enmity resides in: a) the determination that the other is inimical, in a concrete and existential (i.e. not merely symbolic) sense to what “we” are, or what we see ourselves as in the process of becoming; and b) the decision to uncompromisingly oppose the other rather than to adapt our notion of self to accommodate it. Thus, enmity is a fundamental incompatibility between what two entities are and want, such that the existence of one constitutes an existential negation of the other. It exists when one entity refuses to accept either the existence or the mode of being of another, and would rather risk war than accommodate it.

In Schmitt’s portrayal (again, drawn out with the aid of Strauss), the decision of enmity takes the form “we will be this, and if that means enmity, then so be it.” This sentiment is well expressed by the charge of “appeasement”, often levelled at the Clinton administration for having signed the Agreed Framework with North Korea.⁵⁷ Though the argument that “appeasement” is bad is sometimes based on the notion that it will reinforce the aggressive intentions of the adversary (usually based on analogies to the Munich agreement with Hitler), one gets the sense that its main political force has become, and perhaps has always been, moral in nature.⁵⁸ More than an accusation about poor strategy, it is, in a fashion Schmitt would have approved of, a charge of the lack of

⁵⁷ The most prominent and consistent exponent of this view has been Senator John McCain, who is widely reported to have responded to the Agreed Framework by saying “If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it must be appeasement.” See McCain’s comments in *Congressional Record*, US Senate, May 24, 1994, p. S6245; and March 16, 1994, p. S3013, as well as McCain, “No Time to Sleep,” op-ed, *Washington Post*, October 24, 2002; McCain, “Rogue State Rollback,” *The Weekly Standard*, 8:18, January 20, 2003. The term “appeasement”, however, has become a standard feature of public discourse about US – North Korean relations. See U.S. Department of State, Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State, “Interview on Fox News Sunday with Tony Snow,” transcript, December 29, 2002, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2002/16241.htm>; Charles Krauthammer, “A Place for Temporary Appeasement,” *Washington Post*, March 7, 2003; James A. Baker III, “No More Caving on North Korea,” *Washington Post*, October 23, 2002, A27; and Curtis H. Martin, “Rewarding North Korea: Theoretical Perspectives on the 1994 Agreed Framework,” *Journal of Peace Research*, 39:1 (2002), 65.

⁵⁸ Morgenthau notes the “contemporary tendency to use the term ‘appeasement’ indiscriminately as a term of opprobrium,” rather than a term connected with a particular strategic argument. Morgenthau (1967), 62.

the moral courage to boldly be what “we” are in the face of adversity. This observation, in combination with others made in Chapter 2, is what suggests the appropriateness of the *thymotic* conception of enmity for analyzing the current case, and the inadequacy of the conception based purely on security.

This formulation of the problem implicitly calls into question the claims of a particular school of liberal IR theory, sometimes called “republican liberalism,” which is associated with the theory of the “liberal” or “democratic” peace.⁵⁹ The empirical question of peace among liberal-democracies is complex, and space precludes an adequate treatment here. What is more relevant is a particular explanation for this apparent phenomenon that is implicit in much of the literature; namely, that liberal democracies are by nature more peaceful than other states.⁶⁰ This has prompted some to suggest that the world we now live in is characterized by a division between a “post-historical” world made up of peaceful liberal-democratic states, and another world that

⁵⁹ See Michael W. Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” Parts 1 and 2 *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12:3&4 (Summer and Fall 1983), 205-54, 323-53; Doyle (1986), 1151-69; Zeev Maoz and Nasrin Abdoladli, “Regime Types and International Conflict, 1816-1976,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 29 (1989), 3-35; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, *War and Reason: Domestic and International Imperatives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 95-177; David E. Lake, “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War,” *American Political Science Review*, 86:1 (March 1992); Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember and Bruce Russett, “Peace between Participatory Polities: A Cross-National Test of the ‘Democracies Rarely Fight Each Other’ Hypothesis,” *World Politics* 44 (1992), 573-99; Ido Oren, “The Subjectivity of the ‘Democratic’ Peace: Changing US Perceptions of Imperial Germany,” *International Security*, 20:2 (Fall 1995), 147-84; Melvin Small and J. David Singer, “The War-Proneness of Democratic Regimes, 1816-1965,” *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 1:4 (Summer 1976), 50-69; R. J. Rummel, “Libertarianism and International Violence,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 27 (March 1983), 27-71; Rummel, “Democracies Are More Peaceful Than Other Countries,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 1:4 (December 1995), 457-79; John Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War: American Politics and International Security* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); Spencer R. Weart, *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); John R. Oneal, Bruce Russett and Michael L. Berbaum, “Causes of Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations, 1885-1992,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 47:3 (September 2003), 371-393; and Barbara Farnham, “The Theory of Democratic Peace and Threat Perception,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 47:3 (September 2003), 395-415. For the roots of the claim, see Immanuel Kant, *On History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 94 ff.; and Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), p. 69.

⁶⁰ This adds an important qualifier to the pervasive belief noted above that states are security seekers. In this view, liberal-democratic states are security seekers, and are thus more peaceful than other states.

remains “stuck in history” and characterized by a tendency to war and turmoil.⁶¹ This gives tacit support to conceptions of world politics such as the “rogue state” doctrine that has been so influential in analysis of US–North Korean relations.⁶² Leaving aside for the moment questions about how these lines are drawn, the proposition that the “post-historical” world is essentially peaceful, and the implication that the roots of conflict in our age lie in the historical world, seems to deserve closer scrutiny.

One of the most widely read proponents of this position is Francis Fukuyama, who, as noted above, argues that *thymos* is the primary cause of war in human history. For Fukuyama, the peacefulness of the “post-historical” world results from the fact that the liberal democratic state has solved the problem of *thymos* by according recognition, at least in theory, on a universal and equal basis. By recognizing equally “the dignity of each person as a free and autonomous human being” – the only *rational* form of recognition – liberal democracy, he argues, solves the “internal contradiction” of the master-slave dialectic by synthesizing the morality of the master and that of the slave.⁶³

⁶¹ Fukuyama (1992); Singer and Wildavsky (1996).

⁶² The terms rogue, pariah, outlaw, and backlash have been used synonymously. The “rogue state” concept relates primarily to an American foreign policy doctrine. In its current (post-Cold War) iteration, it was enunciated by US Secretary of State Anthony Lake in September 1993, and refined in a 1994 article. See Anthony Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” *Dispatch*, 4:39 (U.S. Department of State, September 27, 1993), 658-64; and Lake “Confronting Backlash States,” *Foreign Affairs*, 73:2 (March/April 1994), 45-55. For analysis, see Robert S. Litwak, *Rogue States and US Foreign Policy: Containment after the Cold War*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000); Paul D. Hoyt, “The ‘Rogue State’ Image in American Foreign Policy,” *Global Society* 14:2, (2000), 297-310; Raymond Tanter, *Rogue Regimes: Terrorism and Proliferation* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1999); and Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America’s Search for a New Foreign Policy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995). Earlier treatments include Robert E. Harkavy, “The Pariah State Syndrome,” *Orbis* 21:3 (Fall 1977), 623-649; Richard K. Betts, “Paranoids, Pygmies, Pariahs and Nonproliferation,” *Foreign Policy*, 26 (Spring 1977), 157-83; and Betts, “Paranoids, Pygmies, Pariahs and Nonproliferation Revisited,” *Security Studies*, 2:3/4 (Spring/Summer 1993), 100-23. On the history of the concept and its evolution, see Lake (2000), ch. 2.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 200-203. In reality, this is less a synthesis of the two moralities than a victory of that of the slave. It is at least questionable whether Hegel’s “master” can be convinced to be satisfied with *equal* recognition, but pursuing this point would take us beyond the bounds of the current discussion.

By extension, liberal democracy eliminates the basis of most *international* conflicts.⁶⁴ The claim is not merely about behaviour, but goes to a posited inherent peacefulness in the nature of liberal-democratic states, based on the notion that they seek only self-preservation and recognition of their (equal) dignity: “[It is] not so much that liberal democracy constrains man’s natural instincts for aggression and violence, but that it *has fundamentally transformed* the instincts themselves and *eliminated* the motive for imperialism.”⁶⁵

The corollary of this is that the persistence of war and conflict in our world is due to the warlike character of the states in the part of the world that is “still stuck in history,” where “Power politics continues to prevail”.⁶⁶ Thus, in a crucial turn, the “post-historical” liberal democracies acquire a common interest in the democratization of the rest of the world. Fukuyama calls for a more genuinely “Kantian” politics, based on the notion that the states in the system of perpetual peace must be “republican”, or liberal democracies. A “league of nations” that truly reflected Kant’s principles “would have to look much more like NATO than the United Nations – that is, a league of truly free states brought together by their common commitment to liberal principles.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 245.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 263, emphasis added. The evidence of this peaceful nature resides, Fukuyama argues, in the peaceful relations *among* liberal democracies. He mentions in passing that liberal democracies “can, of course, fight states that are not liberal democracies,” and perhaps with even more gusto than traditional monarchies and despotisms, but this does not appear to influence his argument. See also *ibid*, 279: “[I]t would seem natural that liberal democracy, which seeks to abolish the distinction between masters and slaves by making men the masters of themselves, should have different foreign policy objectives altogether.”

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 276-8.

⁶⁷ Having drawn the lines and attributed the motive force of conflict to the “historical” world, conflict can now once again be spoken of in terms of threats and security: “Such a league should be much more capable of forceful action to protect its collective security from threats arising from the non-democratic part of the world.” *Ibid*, 281-283.

Regardless of the virtues of democracy, it seems obvious that such a “Kantian” league itself, and its members, would be subject to the *thymotic* drive for self-assertion. Fukuyama argues that because liberal democracies share in common principles of universal equality they “have no grounds on which to contest *each other’s* legitimacy”.⁶⁸ There is nothing, however, to keep them from contesting the legitimacy of other states, and in fact he implies that they should. One can debate whether or not it is *moral* to do so, but whatever it is, it is certainly not “peaceful”.⁶⁹ Contrary to Fukuyama’s assertions, the principle of democratic legitimacy is itself capable of serving as the basis of *thymotic* or *megalothymotic* expression.⁷⁰ In the end, Fukuyama’s argument is not that liberal-democracies are immune to the *thymotic* drives toward self-assertion and imperialism, but that their self-assertion is justified because they are right, and because the global victory of liberal-democracy will *eventually* solve the problem of *megalothymia*. “[W]orld history is the final arbiter of right,” which means not that one must “endorse every tyrant and would-be empire builder who struts on the stage of world history for a brief moment,” but rather “only that one regime or system which survives the *entire* process of world history.”⁷¹ As such, Fukuyama’s interpretation of historical progress and its end point functions as a powerful ideological justification for the self-assertion of a particular

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 263, emphasis added.

⁶⁹ Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that liberal democracies will not squabble over the “true” principles of liberal democracy, about who is best suited to “lead” a world of liberal democracies, or about which states do and do not fit the category at all. The narcissism of small difference may provide adequate space for the struggle for recognition to continue *ad infinitum*.

⁷⁰ Fukuyama recognizes this capacity, but does not draw out its implications. He notes, for example, that “the emergence and durability of a society embodying rational recognition appears to *require* the survival of certain forms of irrational recognition”. For democracy to work, democrats “must forget the instrumental roots of their values, and develop a certain irrational thymotic pride in their political system and a way of life. That is, they must come to love democracy not because it is necessarily better than the alternatives, but because it is *theirs*.” *Ibid*, 207, 215.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 137. On this latter point, see Kojève’s correspondence with Leo Strauss in Strauss, *On Tyranny* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), 178-179.

group of already dominant states; a justification which reverberates in policy pronouncements today.⁷² In short, democratic states are capable of enmity too.

Implications of a Distinct Concept of Enmity

The reason all of this matters is that it has implications for the question of whether and how relations of enmity might be transformed into something else. This is the question to be addressed here with respect to the United States and North Korea. For most IR theories, such conflicts are primarily the result of insecurity. If this is not the case, then addressing security concerns may not be sufficient to resolve conflict. Introducing a distinct concept of enmity emphasizes this point. In addition, the concept of enmity elaborated here draws out both the social and the moral elements of politics, prompting different questions about conflict than those most frequently asked in IR.

According to realist logic, enmity could be avoided if the parties could reliably know each other's intentions, but alas they cannot.⁷³ Kenneth Waltz argues that states exist in a condition of insecurity because, at the least, they cannot be sure about one

⁷² Note, for example the preface to the 2002 US National Security Strategy, which states that that the world is converging on "a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise," and that "the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages." White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September, 2002), preface, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>.

⁷³ The problem of the perception of intentions is remarkably understudied in international politics, precisely because of the assumption that they cannot be reliably known. Only three studies investigate it in any real depth: Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); and David M. Edelstein, *Choosing Friends and Enemies: Perceptions of Intentions in International Politics*, Ph.D Dissertation, Chicago Illinois: University of Chicago, December 2000. See also Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty: Beliefs About Intentions and the Rise of Great Powers," *Security Studies*, 12:1 (Autumn 2002), 1-40; and Edelstein, "American Images of a Rising China: Lessons from History and Theory," in Carola McGiffert, ed., *China in the American Political Imagination* (Washington D.C.: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), 6-15. Stephen Walt introduces perceptions of intentions into his "balance of threat" framework, but does not discuss them in any depth. See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997). On the definition of intentions, compare Edelstein (2000), 4-5, and Jervis (1976), 48. Unlike Jervis, Edelstein distinguishes planned behaviour from actual behaviour in his definition of intentions.

another's future intentions. This results in fear among states and the security dilemma.⁷⁴ John Mearsheimer argues that "[u]ncertainty is unavoidable when assessing intentions, which simply means that states can never be sure that other states do not have offensive intentions to go with their offensive military capability." Even if perceived accurately, intentions can change without notice, and so states have little choice but to fear one another. This means they must "assume the worst" about intentions, and make decisions strictly on the basis of other states' capabilities. Thus, the way to increase security is to maximize one's military power relative to other states, and the ideal outcome would be to end up as the hegemon in the system.⁷⁵

If the above account were an accurate picture of international politics, one might expect the problem of the "security dilemma" to be sufficient to make conflicts intractable, even if there were nothing else going on. In reality, however, the "worst case assumption" about intentions that this portrayal is built upon is dubious both as a recommendation for policymaking and as a description of the way states actually "think". Contrary to realist expectations, states do try to assess each other's intentions, and these assessments do guide their policies. This is most clear where long experience of "friendly" relations has eliminated the fear of malign intentions, or at least nearly so, but

⁷⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 105, 186-187. See also 88-99 and 116-128. Waltz excludes intentions from his analysis – along with interests, motives, ideologies, and all other characteristics of states – because he is interested in the effects of the system, and thus excludes "unit attributes". Capabilities, seemingly a unit attribute, are permitted because power, defined as capability, tells us how states stand in relation to one another, and is thus a structural attribute. See *Ibid*, 97-99. On the need to exclude both unit-level characteristics and interactions from structural definitions, see 57, 78 and Ch. 3 generally. For Waltz's reasons for focusing on structure, see 65-70.

⁷⁵ Mearsheimer, *Ibid*, 10-12. Glaser notes that Waltz rejects the argument that states try to maximize relative power. See Glaser L. Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help," *International Security*, 19:1 (Winter 1994/95), 70; Waltz (1979), 118, 126, and 127; and Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A response to my critics," in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 322-345.

there is good evidence to suggest that states try to evaluate the intentions even of potential rivals, and that these perceptions of intentions affect their policies toward those states.

For example, David Edelstein has examined existing great powers' perceptions of the intentions of rising powers, and the effects of these perceptions on the existing powers' foreign policies, in four historical cases.⁷⁶ Edelstein found that that "Contrary to the structural realist expectation, low certainty about a state's intentions does not lead to worst-case assumptions."⁷⁷ While states are rarely completely certain about other states' intentions, in practice they adopt strategies that reflect both their assessments of them and the degree of confidence they have in those assessments. When state leaders are certain about the nature of other states' intentions, they pursue policies of cooperation or deterrence accordingly. When they are relatively uncertain, they pursue hedging strategies that combine elements of both.⁷⁸ In essence, what Edelstein demonstrates is that states generally make decisions on the basis of *probabilities*, rather than worst-case assumptions. Judgments about probabilities are the result of interaction, or practice; they are a product of "what actors *do*."⁷⁹

In the Hobbesian "state of nature", relying upon probabilistic assessments in formulating policy might be considered imprudent. Fortunately, the states-system does

⁷⁶ Edelstein (2000). The cases examined are the rise of Imperial Germany, 1871-1894; the rise of the United States, 1895-1901; the rise of interwar Germany, 1925-1936; and the rise of the Soviet Union, 1941-1946. These are seemingly "hard-cases" for the influence of perceptions of intentions, because the stakes in such situations are among the highest in international politics, and the temptation to assume the worst correspondingly high (*Ibid*, 20).

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 17.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*. The latter are intended not only to decrease vulnerability, but also to gain further information about the other state's intentions based on how they respond. Significantly, "Hedging strategies can either be optimistic... or pessimistic," and lie along a continuum between strategies of cooperation at one end and balancing at the other. They can also, one might add, be more or less ingenuous. See the discussion of "engagement" below.

⁷⁹ Wendt (1992), 404.

not resemble Hobbes' state of nature all that closely.⁸⁰ As Wendt has argued, reciprocal recognition of "sovereignty" as a "right" of states (that is, irrespective of their ability to protect it) is sufficiently widespread in our world that most states can afford to assume the "status quoness" of most other states most of the time.⁸¹ Under these circumstances, states would make their situation considerably worse if they were to rely consistently on worst-case assumptions. The suggestion that they *should* do so is based on the notion that assuming the worst minimizes risk, which is simply false. To act upon worst-case assumptions with respect to another state is to treat it as an enemy, and to treat a state as an enemy is to make it into one; the worst-case assumption is a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁸² As such, to act consistently on "worst-case" assumptions would be to make enemies of all other states, a policy which cannot fail to spell a state's demise, regardless of how strong it is. Though realists are fond of analogies to Hobbes' "state of nature", with its "kill or be killed" logic, Hobbes' point was not that "only the strong survive" in the state of nature, but that in such a state "there can be no security to any man, (how strong or wise soever he be,) of living out the time, which Nature ordinarily alloweth men to live."⁸³ While differences from this condition are implicit in many neorealist descriptions of the international state system, appealing to the analogy permits the selective

⁸⁰ Bull (1977); Wendt (1999), 268; 283-285.

⁸¹ Wendt (1999), 281.

⁸² Wendt (1992), (1999), 263; John Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; Hayward Alker, *Rediscoveries and Reformulations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. See also Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable," *World Politics* 31:1 (October 1978), 61-89; and Raymond L. Garthoff, "On Estimating and Imputing Intentions," *International Security*, 2:3 (Winter 1978), 22-24.

⁸³ Hobbes (1985), Ch. 14, 189-190. In addition to this "negative" incentive to act on the basis of probabilities, states also have a positive incentive, again because relationships depend upon practice, or "what states do". See, for example, Arnold Wolfers "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol," *Political Science Quarterly*, 67:4 (December 1952), 496, and Morgenthau (1967), 60-61 and 66. Among "neorealists" there is a range of opinion on this point, with so-called "offensive" realists more inclined to disagree with Wolfers' and Morgenthau's position than are so-called "defensive realists. See Glaser (1994/95) and compare Waltz (1979), 126-127 with Mearsheimer (1995), 11-12.

application of the “tough, hard-nosed” lessons of the Hobbesian state of nature to cases where they seem to apply, while avoiding discussion of the social relations that underlie those cases.⁸⁴ This is a powerful ideological tool, because it makes the logic of *realpolitik* appear necessary, in accordance with nature, where in fact its application is socially constructed.⁸⁵

At first glance, the implications of this point appear to be fairly limited. Even if the neorealist assumption that states assume the worst about each other’s intentions does not hold true universally, surely they assume the worst about some states’ intentions, and certainly about those of their enemies. In these cases, the “security dilemma” can, it would seem, still do the bulk of explanatory work. This seems to be precisely the intuition behind Stephen Walt’s work, which posits a “balance of threat” in place of Waltz’s “balance of power” as the focal point of states’ security concerns.⁸⁶ Realist explanations of enmity, with relatively minor adjustments, seem to suffice.

Upon further reflection, however, there seems to be implicit in Walt’s recognition that states view military capabilities differently (i.e. as more or less threatening) depending on who holds them, an acknowledgement that insecurity is a product of the *social relations* that underlie it. This recognition becomes more explicit in the work of one of Walt’s students, David Edelstein.⁸⁷ What seems peculiar is that having recognized the centrality of social relations in constituting conflict, we should then follow realists in assuming that the role of these social relations is limited to the production of insecurity.

⁸⁴ Wendt (1999), 285.

⁸⁵ The recent war in Iraq would make an interesting study in this phenomenon. A frequently heard criticism of the Bush Administration in recent months has been that it “sold” a “discretionary war” to the US population as though it were a “war of necessity”.

⁸⁶ Walt (1987).

⁸⁷ See in particular Edelstein’s discussion of role identity, domestic ideology and “theoretical filters” in influencing perceptions of intentions (2000), 32-43.

Indeed, while Edelstein demonstrates, against realist expectations, that states do not simply assume the worst about intentions in low certainty situations, he follows realists in assuming that considerations of security are *the* determinant of state behaviour. If states perceive aggressive intentions on the part of the other, they will seek to counter them with deterrence. If they see non-aggressive intentions, they will act cooperatively. Their policies are security-oriented, and thus purely reactive. This perspective is also retained in Wendt's formulation that "States act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not."⁸⁸ This seems to me to be an unjustified holdover from realist analysis that deserves scrutiny.

The fact that, in principle, the security dilemma could explain a persistent conflict does not mean that it does, in fact, explain any particular conflict. That the security dilemma is our starting point has more to do with convention than "science". The suggestion that states assume the worst about their enemies' intentions rather than all states' intentions introduces a new element to the discussion - that of identity. It then becomes necessary to ask whether one assumes the worst because this is the enemy, or whether this is the enemy because of the perception that it has malign intentions. In the latter case, which is consistent with the views of Edelstein, Wendt and others noted above, we do not really need a distinct concept to conceptualize enmity. The word "enemy" is merely a substitute for "threat", and enmity can be explained by the security dilemma. If, on the other hand, the perception of malign intentions is derivative of the fact that the other is one's enemy, then the possibility is open that there is more going on in relations of enmity than the pursuit of security. This formulation, however, still retains

⁸⁸ Wendt (1992), 397.

too much that is unexamined from neorealist analysis, because it still treats enmity as a problem of *perception*. If there are, in fact, malign intentions on one side or the other, we need to ask *why*. What is the social structure that underlies those intentions? The question is important, because if the answer is not “insecurity”, then it is possible that enmity will continue even if the security issues involved could, in principle, be addressed.

The Constitution and Transformation of Enmity

If addressing security concerns is not sufficient for the resolution of enmity, what, in fact, are the prospects for overcoming it? For Schmitt, as already noted, enmity is irreducible. The observation that two actors are enemies means only that each must be willing either to fight or to perish. For others, including Hans Morgenthau, enmity is reducible to interests. To say that two actors are enemies means only that each tends to oppose the realization of the other’s objectives. The continuance of enmity depends upon whether or not the relevant actors’ objectives remain the same. Neither position is entirely satisfactory: Schmitt’s because enmity is not irreducible, and Morgenthau’s because it is not reducible to interests. Arguably, the prospects for the transformation of enmity vary from case to case, depending upon how it is constituted. Understanding how it is constituted depends upon an accurate view of the relationship between what the actors are (Schmitt’s focus) and what they want (Morgenthau’s focus), and of the importance of both for how they relate to each other.

Both of the above views can be improved upon by viewing enmity as a social structure. Put simply, this means that it is produced by the beliefs and practices of actors, that it is maintained and reproduced by these beliefs and practices, and that it can, at least

in principle, be transformed by the alteration of these beliefs and practices.⁸⁹ If states stop acting as though they are enemies, and stop believing that they are enemies, then they cease to be enemies.⁹⁰ The prospects of this occurring depend in large measure on what sustains or underpins the beliefs and practices that constitute enmity (fear, contempt, misperception, the desire for recognition etc.) and how well entrenched they are. Another way to say this is that enmity is a function of interaction; that it arises from and is perpetuated by “social acts,” each of which involves a process of “signalling, interpreting, and responding.”⁹¹ In the final part of this thesis, having outlined an understanding of what motivates enmity, I will attempt to conceptualize how it might be transformed with the help of insights about social structures and interaction drawn from sociology. Importantly, unlike most other attempts to do so, I do not assume that

⁸⁹ This view of structure is “structurationist” in orientation. See Anthony Giddens, *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory* (London: MacMillan Press, 1982); Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis* (London: MacMillan Press, 1979); Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1984); Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, (Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press, 1979); and Nigel Thrift, “On the Determination of Social Action in Space and Time,” *Society and Space* (March 1983), pp. 23-57. Alexander Wendt contrasts Bhaskar’s approach to that of Giddens, arguing that the latter’s notion of structure is “weaker” and “arguably ultimately voluntarist in its implications”. See Wendt, “The agent-structure problem in international relations theory,” *International Organization*, Vol. 41:3 (Summer 1987), nt. 57 on 357. Since, however, Bhaskar’s “limits to naturalism” – which soften his position considerably – have a direct bearing on those elements of Giddens’ social theory that Wendt criticizes, it is difficult to know how far we can carry the contrast. I see no necessary conflict between Bhaskar’s concept of social forms and Giddens’ theory of structuration. See Bhaskar (1979), 48-49 and 56-69, and on the “duality of praxis”, (1979: 43-44), as well as Wendt’s concessions relating to social kinds (1999: 69-72). Also on the limits to naturalism, see the *Postscript* in Russell Keat and John Urry, *Social Theory as Science*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.

⁹⁰ See Smith (2000), 156.

⁹¹ This is the view of symbolic interactionism. See Wendt (1992); George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969); Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings, 1980); John Hewitt, *Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1988); and Jonathan Turner, *A Theory of Social Interaction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). For another application to international politics, see Stephen Walker, “Symbolic Interactionism and International Politics: Role Theory’s Contribution to International Organization,” in C. Shih and Martha Cottam, eds., *Contending Dramas: A Cognitive Approach to Post-War International Organizational Processes* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 19-38.

interaction produces enmity by producing insecurity, or that the social structure of enmity is primarily a structure of insecurity.⁹²

The understanding of social structure elaborated here is guided by two basic principles of constructivist social theory: that “people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them”; and that “the meanings in terms of which action is organized arise out of interaction.”⁹³ Social structures are made up of relatively enduring meanings in terms of which actors make sense of their relationships, and the practices that result from those meanings. Taken together, these meanings and practices make some things appear to be possible and reasonable, and other things unreasonable or impossible. Since social structure itself is

⁹² Cf. Wendt (1992), 406-7: “Competitive or egoistic identities are caused by... insecurity; if the other is threatening, the self is forced to ‘mirror’ such behaviour in its conception of the self’s relationship to that other.” For a similar take, see also Noel Kaplowitz, “Psychological Dimensions of International Relations: The Reciprocal Effects of Conflict Strategies,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 28:4 (December 1984), 373-406.

⁹³ Wendt (1992), 397, 403. There is some confusion in constructivist scholarship on the extent to which these meanings are “shared”, “collective”, or “intersubjective”, as opposed to “private”. Both types of meanings exist and participate in the “social structure of knowledge” (or the “distribution of knowledge”) that structures social behaviour (Wendt, 1999: 140-142; 249). Even “private” knowledge (subjectivity) is influenced by “shared” knowledge (intersubjectivity), and in IR there is the additional problem that meanings that are held collectively within the state are in a sense “private” when we talk about that state as an actor. We can better address this problem by recognizing a distinction between two types of meaning – what actors “mean” by their actions (or utterances) and what those actions “mean”. These might be called the subjective and intersubjective meanings of action respectively, and “interpretive understanding needs to reckon with both.” See Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 144-148. Constructivists have a tendency to assume that knowledge is intersubjective in ways that it is not, leading to arguments that sometimes border on the absurd. One example is Fierke’s suggestion that the social construction of Saddam Hussein’s identity has involved a process whereby Hussein internalized US perceptions/portrayals of him along the lines of “the Americans treat me like a criminal, therefore I am a criminal”, and furthermore that this has affected his actions in the form of “criminals do x, I am a criminal, therefore I will do x.” See K. M. Fierke, “Logics of Force and Dialogue: The Iraq/UNSCOM Crisis as Social Interaction,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 6:3 (2000), 344. Wendt has attempted to address this question in terms of the two parts of the self suggested by George Herbert Mead – the “I” and the “Me” – which Wendt identifies respectively as “individuality *per se*” and the “social terms of individuality”. This is a good starting point, but Wendt himself slides almost imperceptibly from “subjectivity” to “intersubjectivity” in the course of this discussion. Space precludes a closer examination of this problem here, but I have tried to remain conscious of it in the discussion that follows. See Wendt (1999), 181-182; George Herbert Mead, “The Genesis of the Self and Social Control,” in *Selected Writings*, Andrew J. Reck, ed., (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 267-293; and Mead, “The Social Self,” in *Ibid*, 142-149.

an under-specified concept, I follow Wendt in arguing that relationships like enmity are best conceptualized as “structures of identities and interests”.⁹⁴ This formulation fills out the concept of social structure, and makes it more manageable and analytically useful. Consistent with the notion that social structures are the product of social practice, identities and interests are themselves seen as “ongoing effects” of interaction; identities are produced in and through social (or “situated”) activity, and are in turn “the basis of interests”.⁹⁵

If enmity is a social structure (and if structurationists are right about what social structures are and how they operate) then enmity might in theory be transformed by social practices. Such a transformation might take place in two ways: First, it might occur through a gradual “evolution of cooperation” over time, as an “unintended consequence of policies pursued for other reasons,” due to actors’ interest in realizing joint gains within “a relatively stable context”.⁹⁶ In addition to the fact that it occurs very slowly, however, such an “evolution of cooperation” is extremely unlikely between enemies, because, as Wendt notes, “it presupposes that actors do not identify negatively with one another.” In other words, “The conditions... that make an ‘evolution of cooperation’ most needed work precisely against such a logic.”⁹⁷ A more relevant logic of transformation for present purposes is that which is driven by “self-conscious efforts to change structures of identity and interest”.⁹⁸ While perhaps exceptional, such efforts are not unheard of in international politics, nor do they necessarily involve changes so vast as

⁹⁴ Wendt (1992), 396 ff.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 407, 398. See also Wendt (1999), 231 on the relationship between identities and interests.

⁹⁶ See Wendt (1992), 410-418.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

to constitute a “threat” to the core identity of the self. Relatively minor reinterpretations of the self-other relationship can reveal a great deal of flexibility.

Wendt argues that the choice to transcend established roles has at least two preconditions: 1) a reason to think of oneself in novel terms, most likely as a result of new social situations that cannot be managed in terms of pre-existing self-conceptions; and 2) an expected benefit. That is, “the expected costs of intentional role change – the sanctions imposed by others with whom one interacted in previous roles – cannot be greater than its rewards.”⁹⁹ Neither of these preconditions need prevent the United States from undertaking such a reinterpretation of its role in the situation on the Korean peninsula. With respect to the first, I will argue that pre-existing self-conceptions have, in fact, been incapable of managing the situation on the Korean peninsula as it has evolved since the early 1990s. With respect to the second, it is arguably the case that each of the other parties now engaged in talks with the United States and North Korea (South Korea, China, Russia and Japan)¹⁰⁰ would welcome a shift in the US self-conception along the lines suggested here.

Wendt suggests that the transformative process, which he calls “critical strategic practice,” takes place in four stages. An actor first experiences the breakdown of consensus about its own identity commitments, followed by a second stage of “critical examination of old ideas about self and other and, by extension, of the structures of interaction by which the ideas have been sustained.” These steps are prompted by

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 419. See also p. 411 on the interest of actors in maintaining relatively stable role identities as a factor constraining social change.

¹⁰⁰ While it is not a major focus of this paper, observations on this point will be made throughout. While less strident than the US, Japan is more inclined to take a hard line with North Korea than the other three countries mentioned here, which is probably the reason North Korea now [October 2003] seeks to exclude it from the next round of talks.

dissonance resulting from new and seemingly unmanageable circumstances, and typically involve the “denaturalization” of “reified” structures.¹⁰¹ It is not Wendt’s position, nor is it mine, that a shift to a more cooperative identity, or the adoption of more cooperative behaviour on the part of the self, will inevitably result in more cooperative or peaceful social structures. To suggest that it will is to ignore the fact that the parties to a conflict mutually constitute it.¹⁰² As such, Wendt argues that “since old identities have been sustained by systems of interaction with other actors, the practices of which remain a social fact for the transformative agent... it is often necessary to change the identities and interests of the others that help sustain those systems of interaction.”¹⁰³ Consistent with the view of social structures outlined above, the vehicle for this change is, in a manner to be elaborated below, “one’s own practice”.¹⁰⁴ Fourthly, and crucially, the success of critical strategic practice is dependent upon reciprocation: “it must be ‘rewarded’ by alter [other], which will encourage more such practice by ego [self], and so on.”¹⁰⁵

The role of practice and the importance of reciprocation in transforming systems of interaction can be better appreciated by reference to the concept of “altercasting”.

¹⁰¹ Wendt (1992), 420. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman define reification as “the apprehension of the products of human activity *as if* they were something else than human products – such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will.... The reified world is... experienced by man as a strange facticity, an *opus alienum* over which he has no control rather than as the *opus proprium* of his own productive activity.” See Berger and Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 89.

¹⁰² Karin Fierke has made this criticism of David Campbell’s analysis of the first Gulf War. See Fierke (2000), 348 and Campbell (1993).

¹⁰³ I concentrate here on the identities and interests of the United States and North Korea. In order to give full consideration to the relevant “social structure”, one would need to give fuller consideration to the roles of other “significant” actors, in particular South Korea, Japan, China and Russia. I have tried to include analysis of at least the most salient aspects of these roles below.

¹⁰⁴ Wendt argues that “What these practices should consist of depends on the logic by which the preexisting identities were sustained,” which means that in the case of “competitive security systems”, which are sustained by practices that create insecurity and distrust, “transformative processes should attempt to teach other states that one’s own state can be trusted and should not be viewed as a threat to their security.” *Ibid*, 421. Since I do not treat enmity as a “competitive security system”, I do not follow this suggestion.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 422.

This is a basic technique of interpersonal control by which “ego tries to induce alter to take on a new identity (and thereby enlist alter in ego’s effort to change itself) by treating alter *as if* it already had that identity.”¹⁰⁶ Weinstein and Deutschberger define it as “projecting an identity, to be assumed by other(s) with whom one is in interaction, which is congruent with one’s goals.”¹⁰⁷ Altercasting is not merely coercion or inducement, but rather entails what might be called a successful “hailing” of the other party into a particular role.¹⁰⁸ In effect, Ego attempts to influence Alter’s definition of social situations in ways that create the role it wishes Alter to play, by manipulating the “cues in the encounter”. When this is successful, Alter will enact the response Ego is trying to

¹⁰⁶ Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger, “Some Dimensions of Altercasting,” *Sociometry*, 26:4 (December 1963), 454; Wendt (1992), 421. In his analysis of the end of the Cold War, Karin Fierke calls this “acting as if” other modes of relating were possible. See K. M. Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies: Critical Investigations in Security* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998). Acting as if is, indeed, the central element of “altercasting”, since identities and institutions (including enmity) are “dependent on what actors do: removing those practices will remove their intersubjective conditions of existence.” Wendt (1992), 413. Of course, speech, too, is a form of action.

¹⁰⁷ Weinstein and Deutschberger, *ibid.* This assumes that human actors do not merely follow roles, but also “pursue purposes”; in other words, that human behaviour is goal directed. Weinstein and Deutschberger described this as a “new look” in role theory, which called into question the notion that the “underlying texture of interaction” consisted of the “automatic unfolding of role reciprocity according to a normatively written script”. This presages the debate in contemporary IR about whether actors act intentionally or “follow rules”. See for example Steve Smith, “Wendt’s World,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 26:1 (2000), 151-163; and Wendt (1999), esp. 79 ff. and 117. Smith follows many scholars in the “post-Wittgensteinian” tradition of social theory in rejecting the intentional theory of action, suggesting that actors “follow rules” rather than acting on the basis of intentions. See in particular Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958); David Bloor, *Wittgenstein: A Social Theory of Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), esp. 19; W. Sharrock and D. Watson, “What’s the point of ‘rescuing motives’?” *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 35:3 (September 1984), 435-451; and Jeff Coulter, *Mind in Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989). For criticisms of Winch and his colleagues on this point, see Bhaskar (1979), 186; Nicolas G. Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 49-52; Wendt (1999), 180; Steve Bruce and Roy Wallis, “Rescuing motives,” *The British Journal of Sociology*, 34:1 (March 1983), 61-71; and Douglas Porpora, “On the post-Wittgensteinian critique of the concept of action in sociology,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 13:2 (1983), 129-46. Role theory’s accommodation of the notion of goal directed behaviour is probably instructive for constructivist IR, since the alternative is to make automatons of political actors.

¹⁰⁸ In this sense, it is similar to Louis Althusser’s concept of “interpellation”, in which individuals are hailed into particular subject positions. See Althusser, “Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation,” in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, B. Brewster, trans., (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-186, esp. 174.

elicit, seemingly of its own volition, as a means of eliciting a response from Ego.¹⁰⁹ To a degree, then, Alter adopts, and thus tacitly accepts, the role framed for it by Ego.¹¹⁰ When each of the actors tacitly accepts the identity projected by the other, the parties have reached a “working consensus”, which is “a tacit agreement as to the roles the several participants will play out in the encounter.”¹¹¹

The means Ego might use to influence Alter’s definition of the situation, and thus of its own role, can be more or less direct. One means is self-presentation, or Ego’s presentation of itself as a particular kind of actor. This presentation is successful if Alter responds to Ego “as persons with such an identity have a right to expect”; a sort of “tacit acceptance of Ego’s projected identity.” Self-presentation is not always an instance of altercasting, because the latter is concerned with the identity that is thereby created *for Alter*, and Ego may be more involved in its own projected image than in that it projects for Alter.¹¹² Nevertheless, self-presentation can be an indirect form of altercasting in that it may signal to Alter the basis, or the limits, of a “working consensus”.¹¹³ More directly related to altercasting are the “multiform gestures of approval and disapproval Ego makes to Alter’s responsive lines of action, which serve as signposts for the route he wishes Alter to take.” Still more direct is explicit expression by Ego of the identity it wishes Alter to assume, including the specification of actions that it sees as integral to that role. Ego may try to frame the situation in terms of what it perceives as Alter’s central values,

¹⁰⁹ Or, in sociological parlance, “If this process is effective, what is a task response for Ego will become a line of action for Alter.” Weinstein and Deutschberger (1963), 455.

¹¹⁰ This can only ever be the case to a degree. The two actors’ perceptions/representations of the role will never be identical. See note 93 above on private and collective meanings.

¹¹¹ Weinstein and Deutschberger (1963), 456.

¹¹² This possibility is increased when speaking of states, because those who project the state’s identity may be playing primarily to a domestic audience.

¹¹³ Weinstein and Deutschberger (1963), 456. Self presentation is the focus of Erving Goffman’s “dramaturgical analysis of encounters” in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1959).

such that rejection of the role implies inconsistency with Alter's ideal conception of itself.¹¹⁴

Weinstein and Deutschberger identify six "dimensions" of altercasting (dimensions of the role in which Alter is being cast), two of which are particularly relevant to the current discussion.¹¹⁵ The first is "structural distance", which is the "position of relative authority Ego is directing Alter to play out in the current encounter," or the amount of "authority ceded by Ego to Alter."¹¹⁶ If North Korea seems to many to have a peculiar way of signalling its desire for rapprochement, it is probably in large part because the "structural distance" implied by the role North Korea has attempted to cast for the United States approaches what might be called "structural parity", whereas the US expectation has been that rapprochement would imply a rather greater degree of relative authority for itself with respect to North Korea's government, economy and military. The second dimension of particular relevance is the "degree of freedom allowed alter," or the "range of behavior Ego allows Alter within the encounter."¹¹⁷ As I will argue in Chapter 7, the role the US has consistently projected for North Korea since the end of the Cold War has allowed relatively little freedom of movement. The US proposal for a "working consensus" casts North Korea essentially in the role of the repentant and reforming wayward state. North Korean acceptance of the role would be signalled by reform along pre-ordained lines. There is no "third way" for North Korea. The emphasis

¹¹⁴ Weinstein and Deutschberger, *ibid*, 456, 458.

¹¹⁵ A third might be number 4, "Support vs. Support Seeking," but space precludes treating it here. See *ibid*, 458.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 457.

¹¹⁷ One of the most common ways of restricting Alter's freedom is to make it clear that certain of one's own responses are contingent upon Alter assuming the role projected for it. A coercive form of this strategy may include laying the relationship "on the line". Other approaches might use Alter's self-evaluation in the manner suggested above, such that a rejection of the projected role constitutes a blow to Alter's sense of self. *Ibid*, 458.

on independence embodied in North Korea's state ideology of *juche*, also examined in Chapter 7, makes the North's acceptance of this role extremely unlikely. At the same time, North Korea has, over the past couple of decades, demonstrated both political pragmatism and a willingness to undertake "controlled" reform on "its own terms". Allowing North Korea greater "freedom of action" could significantly improve the chances of reaching a new "working consensus", and would almost certainly also speed up the very reforms the United States wishes to see in North Korea. The question is whether the United States can and will accept the role that this implies, and whether, in fact, it should.

Chapter Outline

This thesis proceeds in three parts, consisting of two chapters each. Chapters 2 and 3 examine the empirical record with an eye to what makes the confrontation between the United States and North Korea such an intractable conflict. In Chapter 2 I examine the recent history of the nuclear confrontation between the United States and North Korea, while Chapter 3 takes a more in-depth look at the Agreed Framework and its demise. Taken together, these two chapters make the case that the persistence of the conflict between the United States and North Korea is not well explained by reference to the concept of "security", and that a closer look at the concept of enmity is warranted.

Chapter 4 elaborates an understanding of the concept of enmity and its place in politics with reference to Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*. While in some ways morally problematic, Schmitt's argument seems to capture elements of politics that theories operating from within the perspective of liberalism, and without an awareness of its horizons, fail to grasp. Chapter 5 examines the question of why International

Relations has not understood enmity the way Schmitt has, by looking at IR's most direct response to Schmitt. This response was offered by Hans Morgenthau, and the latter's response to Schmitt, it is argued, has largely been IR's response to the concept of enmity.

Chapters 6 and 7 look at how a fuller conception of enmity, based on Schmitt's account, might offer a better understanding of the dynamics of the US-North Korean relationship. Chapter 6 looks at the ongoing debate about US national interests with respect to North Korea in an attempt to point out both in what ways it has been inadequate, and what the theoretical understanding of enmity offered in Chapter 4 might have to say to it. Chapter 7 takes a more in-depth look at the socially constructed meanings that constitute enmity between the United States and North Korea, with an eye to the prospects for US policy to transform that enmity into something else. Finally, in the Conclusion, I address briefly the question of whether such a move is morally justified.

Chapter 2 – A Brief History of the Nuclear Confrontation

The North Korean nuclear “problem,” for its part, does not derive from the technical specifications of the North’s Soviet-style reactors, but rather from the inherent character and intentions of the North Korean state. The North Korean regime *is* the North Korean problem, and unless its intentions change, which is unlikely, that problem will continue as long as the regime is in place.¹

“A first principle for understanding contemporary Korea,” Bruce Cumings has argued, “is to know that a devastating civil war occurred there in the recent past and that the war never ended: the warring sides agreed only to stop firing at each other – an armistice.” Moreover, Cumings points out, the end of the “hot phase” of the Korean War in 1953 left the United States wondering how it managed “to get stalemated by fourth-rate North Korea and third-rate China”.² Since that time, North Korea has been a target of what came to be known during the Cold War as US “containment”, and now has the distinction of having been the target of that containment longer than any other state.³ North Korea is to the United States, then, a “daily enemy of [50] years’ standing,” not a “backlash”, “renegade”, or “rogue” state that suddenly appeared to disrupt the emergence of a new peaceful and democratic global order at the end of the Cold War. This, I would

¹ Nicholas Eberstadt, “Hastening Korean Reunification: The Writing on the 38th Parallel,” *Foreign Affairs*, 76:2 (March/April 1997), 88.

² Bruce Cumings, “Nuclear Imbalance of Terror: The American Surveillance Regime and North Korea’s Nuclear Programme,” in Raju G. Thomas, ed., *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Prospects for the 21st Century* (London/New York: MacMillan/St. Martin’s, 1998), 210.

³ Patrick Morgan, “New Security Arrangements Between the United States and North Korea,” in Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee, eds., *North Korea After Kim Il Sung* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 165. According to Morgan, the DPRK became a target of containment: 1) as a Communist ally of the USSR and China; 2) because it posed a military threat to South Korea, a US client; and 3) because a perceived threat from Korea would result in Japanese rearmament.

argue, is a first principle for understanding the nuclear confrontation between the United States and North Korea in the 1990s and since.⁴

The containment doctrine, as formulated by George Kennan, had two aims: the “mellowing” of Communist regimes (with respect to their revolutionary, expansionist, or totalitarian nature), or their collapse.⁵ For successive administrations, mellowing sufficiently to “gain release from containment” required one or more of: 1) an explicit political rapprochement with the West; 2) market-oriented economic reforms; and 3) democratic political reform and easing of political repression. Significantly, “[the] first of these steps could produce a considerable easing of containment, but the second and third were far more potent for securing its complete elimination... The United States was simply not interested in a truly normal relationship without such changes.”⁶

Patrick Morgan contends that since 1988 the United States has been moving away from a policy of containment vis-à-vis North Korea, looking to supplement and eventually replace it with a “strategy of inducements”. “The salience of containment of the North is weaker,” he argues, because in the post-Cold War context, containment “is not a crucial part... of a larger purpose”, but rather “must be pursued on its own merits”.⁷ I would argue that a close reading of the dynamics of US-North Korean relations since 1988 does not support Morgan’s interpretation. While containment of North Korea may

⁴ Cumings (1998), 212; Cf. Anthony Lake, “Confronting Backlash States,” *Foreign Affairs*, 73:2 (March/April, 1994), 45-55.

⁵ See X [George F. Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* 25:4 (July 1947), 566-582.

⁶ Morgan (1998), 166-167. Morgan distinguishes the end of containment from “détente” within containment. While containment allows for some limited cooperation, for example on arms control matters, there has always been “a distinction between some level of détente and an end to containment.” *Ibid*, 165.

⁷ As evidence, he offers the US withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons, US plans to reduce its forces on the peninsula, and, tellingly, US agreement “to normalize relations with North Korea”. US persistence in pursuing this policy constitutes, for Morgan, “impressive evidence of the commitment behind it”. *Ibid*, 167, 169.

have lost its Cold War justification, it received a new articulation in the form of the “rogue state” doctrine that made it equally “a crucial part of a larger purpose”.⁸

Historically, the most obvious means of the containment policy are economic sanctions and the US military presence in South Korea. Sanctions remained almost fully in place for six years after the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework called for their removal, and even after the August 2000 executive order relaxing them, trade with a long list of North Korean entities is still prohibited on national security grounds. Sanctions have not only barred US trade with North Korea, but have also hampered investment there by firms from other states because nothing produced there could, prior to August 2000, be sold in the United States.⁹ A less visible, but perhaps now more significant element of the containment policy has been the blocking of North Korea’s entrance into any multilateral financial institutions that might be able to help it rebuild its economy. North Korea is barred from World Bank (IBRD) or International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance because it remains on the US State Department’s list of states that sponsor terrorism, despite the absence of any evidence that North Korea sponsors terrorism.¹⁰

⁸ See Lake (1994); and Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” *Dispatch*, 4:39 (U.S. Department of State, September 27, 1993), 658-64.

⁹ Though still relatively small in absolute terms, “processing on commission” – assembly of products for South Korean and Japanese firms with cheaper North Korean labour – has been one of the most quickly expanding categories of North Korean trade in recent years.

¹⁰ North Korea’s inclusion on the US list of states that sponsor terrorism relates to activities 15 years or more ago; namely, involvement in the destruction of a South Korean airliner in 1987, a bomb attack on members of the South Korean cabinet in Rangoon in 1983, and the sheltering of members of the Japanese Red Army who hijacked a Japanese airliner to Pyongyang in 1970. Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 5, 2002, General Thomas A. Schwartz, commander in chief of the UN Command/Combined Forces Command and US Forces in Korea, stated: “We’re watching them carefully to see if they’re participating in any kind of terrorist activities that would support terrorism around the world. I can report to you that we have had no indicators they’re doing that.” No evidence, in fact, has been publicly presented of any recent DPRK involvement in terrorism. Curiously, the State Department stated in its 2000 annual report on global terrorism that North Korea maintained links to Osama bin Laden, but dropped this reference in its 2001 report, and has made no such accusation since September 11, 2001. James Miles cites North Korea’s continued sheltering of Japanese Red Army members as the key remaining obstacle to removal from the list, but this seems a very flimsy case. Much more serious

More tellingly, Washington and Tokyo have repeatedly blocked North Korean attempts to join the Asian Development Bank (ADB), most recently in May 2000 when they vetoed an application supported by South Korea. A US representative explained that the state sponsors of terrorism list was not the sole barrier: even if North Korea were not on the list, “as long as the North Korean regime is one which is fundamentally incompatible with the principles of institutions such as the ADB, we would oppose membership.”¹¹

In 1999, a group of US foreign policy experts, including the now Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, wrote a report on US relations with North Korea that recommended that the US should “treat the Agreed Framework as the beginning of a policy toward North Korea, not as the end of the problem”, and that toward that end it should decide “what precisely do we want from North Korea, and what price are we prepared to pay for it.”¹² This is a question, I would argue, that has never been answered definitively, because much of the foreign policy establishment still regards “paying” North Korea for anything as illegitimate. Senator Joseph Biden, Jr. recently observed on the Senate floor, “I understand why President Bush is loath to strike any ‘bargains’ with an oppressive North Korean regime. After all, our power is at its zenith.” “Why,” he

concerns did not prevent the US from removing Pakistan from the list in expeditious fashion as part of its campaign in Afghanistan. See James Miles, “Waiting Out North Korea,” *Survival* 44:2 (Summer 2002), 42-43 and 49. Gen. Schwartz quoted on p. 9, note 6.

¹¹ Edwin Truman, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, quoted in Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and US Disengagement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 35. The US also refused visas to North Korean representatives who wished to attend meetings of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Hawaii as observers in April 2001.

¹² Richard L. Armitage et. al., “A Comprehensive Approach to North Korea,” National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Strategic Forum*, no. 159 (March 1999), <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/dprk/1999/forum159.html>.

asked rhetorically, “should we soil ourselves by sitting down for tea with [such a government]?”¹³

The one answer to this question that has carried any weight in Washington is that they should do so to prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons. Some analysts date the beginning of North Korea’s quest for nuclear weapons as early as June 27, 1955, a date marked by North Korea’s attendance at a conference on nuclear energy in Moscow.¹⁴ In January 1958, the United States introduced nuclear weapons into South Korea, in violation of the Armistice Agreement, and would continue to station them there until the fall of 1991. As such, North Korea was the object of US “extended nuclear deterrence”, and sometimes of overt nuclear threats, for more than three decades.¹⁵ In 1965 the Soviet Union supplied North Korea with a small (2-4 megawatt) nuclear research reactor. This reactor went operational in 1967, and was put under safeguards in 1977, at Soviet behest. The 1970s, however, witnessed South Korea’s most enthusiastic pursuit of nuclear weapons (despite its signing of the NPT in 1968 and ratification in 1975), an effort that was stopped only by persistent and forceful US opposition.¹⁶ In 1979, North Korea began building the now infamous 5-MWe reactor at Yongbyon, which became operational in 1986.¹⁷ It is moderated by graphite and fuelled by natural uranium (238), both of which North Korea has in abundance, and could potentially have been the

¹³ Joseph R. Biden, Jr., “North Korea: Back to the Brink?” floor statement, US Senate, February 4, 2003, <http://foreign.senate.gov/Democratic/press/03/Floor/2.4.North.Korea.html>. His answer was that “It comes with the job! Such is the dirty business of securing America’s interests in a world full of unsavory people and countries.”

¹⁴ Kim Chang Soon of the Institute for North Korean Studies, quoted in James Fallows, “The Panic Gap: Reactions to North Korea’s Bomb,” *The National Interest*, 38, (Winter 1994/95), 42.

¹⁵ Cumings (1998), 213-220; Peter Hayes, *Pacific Powderkeg: American Nuclear Dilemmas in Korea* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1991), 35 ff.; Harrison (2002), 197-200.

¹⁶ Harrison (2002), 245-256.

¹⁷ Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 20-2.

start of an indigenous energy program for a state that produces no oil.¹⁸ It also, however, seemed to present the possibility of at least a partial response to the US “nuclear deterrent” and an increasing South Korean military advantage. More importantly, perhaps, as the Cold War ended and North Korea lost its Chinese and Soviet subsidies, it presented a “bargaining chip” that might keep its adversaries from trying to smother it, and prompt them instead to consider a normalization of relations similar to what Russia and China were undertaking with South Korea.¹⁹ The resulting dynamic has produced three brief and abortive breakthroughs in US–North Korean relations, and two “nuclear crises”.

Opportunity Knocks but Thrice?

The first crack in the US containment policy toward North Korea came in the fall of 1991, which saw brief progress in North Korea’s relations with both the US and South Korea. The US withdrew its tactical nuclear weapons from the peninsula and, in conjunction with South Korea, cancelled their massive annual joint military exercises, called Team Spirit, for 1992. North and South Korea negotiated two landmark agreements, and the North signed a safeguards agreement with the IAEA.²⁰ Some state department officials wanted to proceed with direct negotiations, but ran into intense opposition from other officials who distrusted North Korea and did not want to appear “weak” in their commitment to South Korean security. Prevailing opinions about North

¹⁸ Cumings (1998), 220-2.

¹⁹ Harrison (2002), 201-2.

²⁰ The agreements with South Korea were the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation, signed on December 13, 1991, and the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, signed on January 20, 1992. Their significance is discussed further below.

Korea resulting from four decades of animosity went against negotiation.²¹ President Roh Tae Woo of South Korea and much of Congress also opposed direct negotiations, and George Bush faced potential opposition to his re-nomination by hard-liners within his party.²² Prominent US editorials and columnists, focusing on new satellite intelligence that suggested North Korean efforts to hide nuclear waste storage sites, called for an increasingly hard line during the fall of 1991.²³ A prominent Democratic Senator, Stephen Solarz, returned from Pyongyang and Seoul to say that he had little confidence in North Korea's will to solve the nuclear problem.²⁴

In this climate, a compromise was struck within the administration between full negotiation and none. It was decided that one meeting only would be held, and it took place on January 22, 1992 in New York. US representatives report that, for the US, the purpose of the meeting was to reiterate the preconditions for future talks, which were full compliance with IAEA safeguards and implementation of the inspections requirements of the North-South Denuclearization Accord, as well as progress in bilateral relations with

²¹ As a senior administration official later commented, "The basic assumption in the intelligence community and in Defense was that these people are liars... and you couldn't trust any agreement that you reached with them." Senior State Department official, quoted in Sigal (1998), 34, from interview of February 27, 1996. The most prominent advocates of negotiation were Assistant Secretary of State Richard Solomon and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Arnold Kanter. Opposition came prominently from National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, the Director of Central Intelligence, Robert Gates, and Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.

²² Roh was reportedly worried about the potential for Washington to "get out in front" of Seoul on the issue, and had reportedly been given assurances by President Bush, in meetings at the White House on July 2-3, that the US-ROK alliance would take precedence over resolving the nuclear issue. *Ibid.*, 35.

²³ Columns urging a harder line included Jim Hoagland, "Stopping North Korea's Bomb," *Washington Post*, October 24, 1991, A-23; and Stephen Chapman, "A Nuclear North Korea: The Danger We Can't Ignore," *Chicago Tribune*, November 14, 1991. On the satellite intelligence, see Mitchell Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995), 245-246.

²⁴ Sigal (1998), 34-35. Solarz subsequently argued in favour of a deal: "It would make little sense to let Pyongyang assemble a stockpile of nuclear weapons simply because it refuses to surrender the one or two weapons it already may possess; ... it would be better to reach an understanding with Pyongyang in which it is permitted to keep the fissile material it already has in exchange for precluding it from accumulating more." Solarz, "Next of Kim," *The New Republic*, 211:6 (August 8, 1994), 27.

South Korea. There were no clear indications about the benefits that would result from taking these steps, and there was no talk of normalizing relations. The nuclear issue was to be solved first, and on its own terms. For North Korea this seemed like insistence that it give up its bargaining chip before real discussions of quid pro quos began; to “comply first... and hope to reap the benefits later”.²⁵ For Washington, however, there was to be no contingency with respect to compliance with IAEA safeguards; it was an obligation, pure and simple, and would not be tied to progress on any other front. In 1992, any chance of surmounting these differences was essentially precluded by the stipulation that no high-level talks would be held.²⁶

Meanwhile, IAEA inspections of North Korean nuclear facilities under its newly signed safeguards agreement began. Director General Hans Blix visited North Korea on May 11-16, and the first *ad hoc* inspections began on May 30. North Korea made a proposal to Blix during his visit, and to US officials in Beijing on June 1, to scrap its reprocessing facilities in return for new light-water reactors and fuel. This proposal went almost unnoticed in Washington, however, because compliance with IAEA safeguards

²⁵ Sigal (1998), 9 and 35-37. The senior representatives were Arnold Kanter and the Secretary for International Affairs of the Korean Workers Party (KWP), Kim Yong Sun.

²⁶ Three low-level talks were held over the next year, but US participants had no authorization to offer incentives. Sigal (1998), 38. Other factors converged to heighten tensions in 1992: 1) Director of Central Intelligence Gates told a House committee in February that North Korea was “a few months to a couple of years” from having an atomic bomb, and told the press in April that they were “close, perhaps very close to having a nuclear-weapons capability.” This fed an already pervasive skepticism about whether North Korea would comply with its safeguards agreement; 2) At the State Department’s urging, South Korea insisted on elaborate provisions for “challenge inspections” in talks to establish the Joint Nuclear Control Commission to monitor the December 1991 North-South Denuclearization Accord. This reflected concern about the reliability of the IAEA after its failure to detect Iraq’s nuclear weapons program. US officials later conceded that these provisions were so demanding that “if the North accepted them, the South might have to reconsider,” and the US Department of Defense was “not so sure” about their own willingness to comply, because it would require opening US bases in the South to inspection; and 3) In late September South Korean officials announced a massive roundup of alleged North Korean spies in the South, including some opposition politicians. See Elaine Sciolino, “C.I.A. Chief Says North Koreans Are Hiding Nuclear Arms Projects,” *New York Times*, February 26, 1992, A-1; Michael J. Mazarr, “Going Just a Little Nuclear: Nonproliferation Lessons from North Korea,” *International Security*, 20:2 (Fall 1995), 95; and Sigal (1998), 39-50.

was by this point seen as a legal obligation, not a political process.²⁷ The second ad hoc inspections took place in July, uncovering a discrepancy regarding the amount of plutonium declared in North Korea's initial declaration, and beginning a two-year standoff with the IAEA. To make matters worse, the ROK Ministry of Defense announced preparations for 1993 Team Spirit exercises on October 8. It then announced the go-ahead for these exercises on January 25, 1993, five days after President Clinton's inauguration, and before the new administration had time to take stock of the situation. In February, the IAEA took the unprecedented step of requesting "special inspections" of two nuclear waste storage sites to clear up the discrepancy in the North's initial declaration, and on February 25 it set a one-month deadline, warning of "further measures" by the UN Security Council in the event of non-compliance. On March 8, Team Spirit exercises began, and North Korean forces went on semi-war alert status. Four days later, North Korea gave 90 days notice of its intent to withdraw from the NPT.²⁸ The progress made in the fall of 1991 was decidedly undone.

When it did eventually formulate a North Korea policy, the Clinton administration initially retained both the "no talks before full compliance" position and the "no-linkage" approach that it inherited from the Bush administration. It later abandoned the former position in the face of mounting tensions in June 1993, and the latter when tensions reached a crisis point in the summer of 1994. Though there were many on the US side who wanted to keep increasing the military and economic pressure until North Korea gave in, those closest to the action, including the commander of US forces in Korea, General Gary Luck, and US Ambassador to South Korea James T. Laney, saw this as a

²⁷ Sigal (1998), 39-40.

²⁸ Sigal (1998), 49-50.

recipe for a war the United States did not really want. Laney and Luck both made attempts to send “a cold dose of reality” back to Washington about the increasing risk of war, but the most direct intervention came when Laney contacted former President Jimmy Carter and suggested he go to Pyongyang “with Clinton’s blessing, if possible, without it if necessary”.²⁹ Carter’s success in negotiating the terms for a potential agreement with Kim Il Sung, and his announcement of these terms on television, left the Administration with a stark choice: close the deal or appear to be warmongers. The signing of the Agreed Framework on October 21, 1994 was a dramatic event, signifying as it did the end of the highest tensions on the Korean Peninsula since 1953, but it also represented a sort of “overnight conversion” on the part of the administration, which would prove problematic for its implementation.³⁰

For those who did not share Laney, Luck, and Carter’s view of the situation, and who favoured a more coercive course of action, it appeared that victory had just slipped through their fingers.³¹ A Wall Street Journal editorial lamented, “When the history of this week’s agreement is written, we suspect what will be remembered is that the world started pouring money into the Kim regime just as it should have been allowed to crash.”³² Another columnist criticized the “tendency in this administration to reward its adversaries for hanging tough.”³³ The Republican congressional leadership, which took control of both houses less than a month after the accord was signed, was equally

²⁹ Harrison (2002), 215-16. Carter had been invited to Pyongyang in 1991 and 1992, but decided not to go in the face of opposition from the Bush administration and South Korea. Laney, previously the president of Emory University, had been instrumental in the creation of the Carter Centre there. Laney and Luck’s roles during 1993-94 are extensively chronicled in Sigal (1998). See esp. 75, 95, 111, 121-22, 151, and 154-55. Laney’s disagreement with the administration’s approach was uncommonly public. See Fallows (1995), 44.

³⁰ On the overnight nature of the policy change, see Reiss (1995), 272-73.

³¹ For a good sample of reactions to the agreement, see Sigal (1998), 192 ff.

³² Editorial, “New Deal for Pyongyang,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 21, 1994, A-14.

³³ Jim Hoagland, “Facilitator-in-Chief,” *Washington Post*, October 20, 1994, A-21.

disparaging. Senator John McCain argued that the deal was “very badly flawed and unacceptable” in that it would prolong the existence of “a bizarre Orwellian regime”, and observed that it put Congress “in a box,” because “If we refuse to fund it, we can be accused of breaking it.”³⁴ Senate minority (soon to be majority) leader Robert Dole observed that “It is always possible to get an agreement when you give enough away.”³⁵ After the November elections, the new congressional leadership made it clear that they would not fund the implementation of an agreement that reversed the containment policy toward North Korea. In the face of this opposition, and having not had the opportunity to build support for the agreement, the administration minimized its objectives for implementation, and decided against presenting the agreement as a case of mutual accommodation. Instead, it attributed the agreement to the success of coercive diplomacy – claiming essentially that the US had stared down the adversary and won.³⁶ However unconvincing this argument was for those who saw the agreement as “appeasement” pure and simple, the decision to make the argument meant that no senior administration official even made the case for the logic of reciprocation upon which the agreement was built, and which implementing it would require.³⁷

³⁴ Quoted in Thomas W. Lippman, “Senate GOP Concedes Assault on N. Korea Pact is Futile,” *Washington Post*, January 21, 1995, A-11.

³⁵ Quoted in Elaine Sciolino, “Clinton Ups Atom Stakes,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1994, A-7.

³⁶ See Sigal (1998), 198-199, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher’s testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 24, 1995.

³⁷ The Agreed Framework thus proves the Armitage Group’s point that “To make a comprehensive approach sustainable politically, it is critical to start with and maintain close coordination with Congress” and that successful policy toward the Korean peninsula requires “strong bipartisan support.” See Armitage *et al.* (1999). The Perry Commission made a similar observation. See Dr. William J. Perry, *Review of United States Policy Toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations*, unclassified report, Washington D.C., October 12, 1999, available at http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/991012_northkorea_rtp.html, Key Finding no. 6, and Key Policy Recommendation no. 4.

Thus, with the crisis seemingly over, the business of containing North Korea continued as usual, with the exception of a few token gestures to avoid blame for scuttling the deal before it got off the ground.³⁸ The State Department urged North Korea to be patient with the vagaries of US politics, and initially North Korea acquiesced.³⁹ After almost four years without progress, however, North Korea returned to coercive bargaining. On June 16, 1998, North Korea issued a foreign ministry statement warning of further missile development to ensure its security if Washington did not move to implement the Agreed Framework. On August 16, having heard no response, it conducted the now infamous Taepodong I missile test, demonstrating a longer-range capability than anyone thought they had.⁴⁰ The second window of progress in US-North Korean relations, opened by the Agreed Framework, appeared to be firmly shut.

The August 1998 missile test once again made North Korea a hot-button issue in US domestic politics. To deal with the resulting uproar, the Clinton administration asked former Defense Secretary William Perry to lead a comprehensive review of US policy toward North Korea. Another group of policy experts, headed by now Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, undertook its own review of US policy at nearly the same time. While placing different emphasis on various observations about the situation, the two panels came to remarkably similar conclusions. Both essentially opted for what Perry termed a “two-track strategy”. More fundamentally, both recognized, implicitly if

³⁸ The record of implementation is outlined below.

³⁹ Harrison (2002), 226.

⁴⁰ North Korea tested a three-stage missile, using “bundled” scud technology from its Nodong missile program. Analysts had expected only a two-stage missile. While the third stage failed, had it succeeded, it would have demonstrated a rudimentary intercontinental range. See Robert D. Walpole, National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Programs, “North Korea’s Taepo Dong Launch and Some Implications on the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States,” speech to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., December 8, 1999 (text released Jan. 29), www.defense-aerospace.com/data/verbatim/data/ve10.

not explicitly, that the willingness to co-exist with North Korea was the basic minimum requirement without which nuclear diplomacy with North Korea could not succeed, and that this willingness could be signalled credibly only by movement toward normalization of economic and diplomatic relations and the alleviation of North Korea's security concerns. The Armitage report, which came to be known as the "more for more" report, recommended increasing both incentives and deterrence toward North Korea, as well as US demands with respect to its weapons programs; in essence, upping the stakes in both positive and negative terms:

The objective of negotiations should be to offer Pyongyang clear choices in regard to its future: on the one hand, economic benefits, security assurances, political legitimization, on the other, the certainty of enhanced military deterrence. For the United States and its allies, the package as a whole means that we are prepared – if Pyongyang meets our concerns – to accept North Korea as a legitimate actor, up to and including full normalization of relations.⁴¹

The Armitage report made no mention of objectives such as "system transformation", and despite passing references to "opening", the report made it clear that the priorities of the United States should be to ensure adequate deterrence and eliminate the threat posed by North Korea's weapons programs by peaceful means. North Korea, in other words, should be looked at as a "security" issue. "Our goal is to reduce the risks to the United States, [South Korea], and Japan," and in addition "to facilitate North-South reconciliation". To that end, they suggested a comprehensive and multilateral package by the US, South Korea and Japan aimed at addressing North Korea's security concerns, in order to make the North's decision as easy as possible:

A multilateral commitment should be based on the pledges made in [former South Korean President] Kim Dae Jung's inaugural address – that we have no intent to implode North Korea, to absorb North Korea, or to force North Korea to change

⁴¹ Armitage *et. al.* (1999).

its political system.... Our goal should be to foster an environment making it as easy as possible for Pyongyang to choose reform. *The United States and its allies should make it clear that we are prepared to coexist with a less threatening regime in North Korea.*

Similarly, Perry argued for a “two path strategy focused on our priority concerns over the DPRK’s nuclear weapons- and missile-related activities.” The first path would feature “a new, comprehensive and integrated approach” to negotiations in which the US would seek full verification that the DPRK did not have a nuclear weapons program, verifiable cessation of all testing, production, and deployment of missiles exceeding Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) parameters, and likewise of the export of these missiles and their components. In return:

[T]he United States and its allies would, in a step-by-step and reciprocal fashion, move to reduce pressures on the DPRK that it perceives as threatening. The reduction of perceived threat would in turn give the DPRK regime the confidence that it could coexist peacefully with us and its neighbors and pursue its own economic and social development. If the DPRK moved to eliminate its nuclear and long-range missile threats, the United States would normalize relations with the DPRK, relax sanctions that have long constrained trade with the DPRK and take other positive steps that would provide opportunities for the DPRK.⁴²

The second path consisted of efforts to “contain” the threat if it could not be eliminated through negotiation, including “firm but measured steps” to persuade the DPRK to return to the first path. The first path was considered to be “clearly preferable for the United States and its allies”, but Perry noted that it depended “on the willingness of the DPRK to traverse it with us”. The DPRK had already made what Perry considered the most important step in that regard, which was “to give assurances that it will refrain from further test firings of long-range missiles as we undertake negotiations”. This condition had been fulfilled with the North’s announcement of a unilateral suspension of

⁴² Perry, 1999.

such tests the previous month.⁴³ Perry noted a “unique window of opportunity for the US with respect to North Korea,” resulting from an emerging alignment in thinking by the key players on how to handle the situation, North Korea’s apparent commitment to the Agreed Framework, and the Commission’s perception that the North “for the time being is convinced of the value of improving relations with the US.”

Thanks in large part to significant developments in inter-Korean relations, Perry’s “first track” nearly got off the ground. Though a mere two years later it would seem hard to imagine, at the end of 2000 one of the most respected commentators on Korean affairs in the US wrote with good justification that “the year 2000 was the best of times in Pyongyang’s checkered international life – with many historical firsts.”⁴⁴ Pre-eminent among these was the first ever Inter-Korean Summit in Pyongyang, which concluded with the North-South Joint Declaration of June 15. Between May and November of that year, Kim Jong Il, who had previously met with almost no foreign leaders, also had summits with Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and hosted unprecedented meetings with US Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian, and a delegation of European officials.⁴⁵

US-DPRK relations had an “auspicious run” of progress following the inter-Korean summit. Reportedly, Washington had helped to make this summit possible,

⁴³ North Korea held to this promise, reiterating it in October 2000 and extending it to 2003 in May 2001 (despite the suspension of all negotiations by the US in early 2001), probably in an effort to leave open the possibility for restarting negotiations.

⁴⁴ Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea in 2000: Surviving through the High Hopes of Summit Diplomacy,” *Asian Survey*, 41:1 (January/February 2001), 12-29.

⁴⁵ The powers in the region seemed to be re-adjusting their priorities somewhat after putting almost all of their eggs in the South Korean basket, probably in anticipation of collapse, in the early 1990s. The year also saw the establishment of diplomatic relations with Italy, Australia, the Philippines and the United Kingdom, North Korea’s admission to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the first-ever inter-Korean joint-sponsored UN General Assembly Resolution on Peace, Security and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, and North Korea’s first public expression of gratitude for UN food aid and humanitarian assistance.

signalling in late March that such a summit would make it possible for the US to ease economic sanctions, and proposing a draft communiqué for a subsequent visit to Washington of a high-level DPRK official.⁴⁶ This signalled a proactive approach on the part of the Clinton administration to the implementation of the Perry report. Following the summit, on June 19, the White House announced an executive order that would ease sanctions against North Korea. Secretary of State Albright and North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun then held the first-ever ministerial-level talks between the two countries on the sidelines of an ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) conference in Bangkok, and in October a high-level North Korean delegation visited the US.⁴⁷ This visit culminated in a Joint Communiqué in which the parties agreed to take steps to fundamentally improve bilateral relations, support and encourage international efforts against terrorism, and have Secretary of State Albright visit the DPRK in the near future – a visit that took place less than two weeks later.⁴⁸ There were rumblings of a US Presidential visit to Pyongyang, and during Albright's visit Kim Jong Il indicated a willingness to negotiate an immediate freeze on long-range missile development and to stop exports of missiles and missile components when Clinton came to Pyongyang.⁴⁹ In the end, the Clinton visit did not materialize, and North Korea preferred to re-evaluate the

⁴⁶ Leon Sigal, "North Korea: On Hold... Again," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 57:3 (May/June 2001), 33-39.

⁴⁷ The delegation was led by Vice-Marshal Jo Myong Rok, first vice-chairman of the National Defense Council, and included Kang Sok Ju (who negotiated the Agreed Framework on the North Korean side) at US request.

⁴⁸ See the US-DPRK *Joint Communiqué*, October 12, 2000, available from the Arms Control Association, <http://www.armscontrol.org/Events/communiqué.htm>

⁴⁹ Working-level meetings on these issues in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in mid-November were inconclusive, with North Korea's representatives indicating that certain specifics would have to be worked out between Kim and Clinton, because Kim alone had the authority to make a deal. See Harrison (2002), 228-30 and Kim (2001).

matter “in the context of the overall posture of the Bush administration” toward them.⁵⁰ Samuel Kim observed that “Despite significant progress made possible by Pyongyang’s substantial concession... North Korea stopped short of a diplomatic touchdown due to changing US political circumstances beyond its control.”⁵¹

The Second “Nuclear Crisis”

The election of George W. Bush in 2000 appeared to mark a return to containment in earnest.⁵² All talks with North Korea were immediately put on hold, including the missile talks, pending a full policy review. Bush expressed open scepticism about South Korea’s “sunshine policy” to President Kim Dae Jung in their first meeting, and ruminated openly about whether the effects of system collapse in North Korea would be as bad as the experts predicted. Some saw this as part of an overall attempt to “create leverage” vis-à-vis the three communist states in Asia by taking a hard-line with China, North Korea and Vietnam in the beginning, and then indicating a willingness to compromise depending on how those states chose to deal with the US. As one analyst put it, Bush was forcing these states “to decide whether they want [Secretary of State] Powell’s diplomacy or [Secretary of Defense] Donald Rumsfeld’s militarism”.⁵³ It did not seem to occur to many that the North had already signalled a clear preference for

⁵⁰ North Korean Foreign Minister Paik Nam Soon, quoted in Harrison (2002), 229, from interview of May 30 2001. Clinton’s decision not to go to Pyongyang is chronicled in Sigal (2001).

⁵¹ Kim (2001), 24. James Miles attributes the lack of a missile deal at the end of 2000 to “a misguided North Korean attempt at brinkmanship,” but as he does not specify the nature of this attempt it is difficult to evaluate the validity of the statement. See Miles (2002), 41.

⁵² In now famous comments, President Bush segued to North Korea from a discussion of the underlying reasons to go to war with Iraq: “Or North Korea. Let me talk about North Korea. I loathe Kim Jong Il! I’ve got a visceral reaction to this guy, because he is starving his people. And I have seen intelligence of these prison camps – they’re huge – that he uses to break up families, to torture people. I am appalled... I’m not foolish. They tell me, we don’t need to move too fast, because the financial burdens on people will be so immense if we try to – if this guy were to topple... I just don’t buy that. Either you believe in freedom... and worry about the human condition, or you don’t.” Quoted in Bob Woodward, *Bush At War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 340, from interview of August 20, 2002.

⁵³ Nicholas Berry, “Bush’s Plan: Get Tough, Then Deal,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 7, 2001.

diplomacy. In the meantime, after threatening in March 2001 to end its missile-testing moratorium in light of the US decision to end negotiations, North Korea announced on May 3, 2001, during a visit to Pyongyang by a EU delegation, that it would extend the moratorium until 2003.⁵⁴

The “choice” of diplomacy or militarism was seemingly put to North Korea in June 2001. The US policy review produced no public report, but on June 6 President Bush declared the US willing to talk to North Korea, offering it “the opportunity to demonstrate the seriousness of its desire for improved relations”, and indicated that the US was willing to talk “at any time and without preconditions”.⁵⁵ “Talk”, however, does not mean “negotiate”, and “no preconditions” does not mean “no strings attached”. The announcement was accompanied by an insistence that the agenda of the talks include an acceleration of nuclear inspections, the reduction of North Korean conventional forces, and human rights abuses, in addition to concerns about the North’s nuclear and missile programs.⁵⁶ This amounted to a repudiation of the terms of Agreed Framework, and an attempt to rewrite it to require greater concessions and faster compliance from North Korea while minimizing US commitments; a sort of “more for less” approach. The creation of “leverage” seems to have been based on the premise that North Korea got off too easy in 1994, and that this situation could be redressed by turning up the heat.

⁵⁴ See Alex Wagner, “D.P.R.K. Extends Missile Pledge as US Readies to Resume Talks,” *Arms Control Today* (June 2001), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2001_06/korjun01.asp. The European Commission voted to establish formal diplomatic relations with the DPRK on May 14.

⁵⁵ See “Statement by President George W. Bush on US Policy towards North Korea, Announcing the Resumption of Talks with Pyongyang,” Washington, D.C., June 6, 2001, reprinted in *Korea and World Affairs* (Summer 2001), 255.

⁵⁶ Michael R. Gordon, “US Toughens Terms for North Korea Talks,” *New York Times*, July 3, 2001. See also Bill Keller, “Actually, there is a plan for North Korea,” *International Herald Tribune*, January 11, 2003: “talk is to negotiate as foreplay is to sex”.

North Korea gave its response on June 18. Noting that the US had unilaterally and publicly set the agenda for the talks, the DPRK Foreign Ministry stated “We cannot construe this otherwise than an attempt of the US to disarm the DPRK through negotiations.” They argued that talks should first address the implementation of the Agreed Framework, and in particular the delays in the LWR project.⁵⁷ A certain scepticism seems to have been warranted. Robert Gallucci, who negotiated the Agreed Framework on the US side, later commented: “The administration says it is willing to meet anytime and anywhere with the North Koreans. But what they mean is that they are prepared to meet to accept North Korea’s surrender on the points at issue.”⁵⁸

North Korea’s caution seems to have been confirmed by its inclusion the “axis of evil” articulated by President Bush in the 2002 State of the Union address, which put US – DPRK relations firmly “back in the freezer”.⁵⁹ In a subsequent trip to South Korea, Bush stated that the US had no intention of attacking North Korea, but he also defended his characterization of the regime as “evil”, and reiterated that the US would “not permit

⁵⁷ See Korean Central News Agency, (KCNA), “Spokesman of DPRK Foreign Ministry on Bush’s statement on resuming negotiations with DPRK,” June 18, 2001; and Howard W. French, “North Korea Rebuffs US on Troop Talks,” *New York Times*, June 19, 2001. Leon Sigal has noted that North Korea issued a second statement on June 28 that linked the US demand for accelerated inspections to its own demand for electricity compensation for the delays in the LWR project. Sigal’s assessment is that “It was hinting at a deal: trading electricity for expedited compliance.” See Arms Control Association, “Progress and Challenges in Denuclearizing North Korea,” press conference, May 2, 2002, transcript in *Arms Control Today* (May 2002), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002_05/pressmay02.html.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Michael R. Gordon, “Bush’s Hard Line With North Korea,” *New York Times*, February 14, 2002. If this assessment is accurate, then North Korea was prudent to avoid high profile meetings with the United States. Given that the US has consistently portrayed talks with North Korea as a form of “reward” or “concession”, such a meeting would have raised expectations for “reciprocal” concessions on the part of North Korea, and opened the door for accusations of intransigence if they did not materialize. Administration officials rejected Gallucci’s characterization, arguing that their proposal for “broad-based dialogue” was aimed at “transforming the relationship and reducing the North Korean threat across the board.”

⁵⁹ Kurt Campbell, quoted in David E. Sanger, “Bush Aides Say Tough Tone Put Foes on Notice,” *New York Times*, January 31, 2002. North Korea quickly cancelled a planned visit to Pyongyang of four former US ambassadors to South Korea. This visit, initiated by the DPRK, was widely seen as a means of keeping channels of communication open despite tensions with the Bush Administration. See Michael R. Gordon, “North Korea Cancels Trip by 4 Experts From the US,” *New York Times*, February 9, 2002.

the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons." He also seemed to indicate that no policy shift would be forthcoming without transformation in North Korea: "I will not change my opinion on [Kim Jong Il] until he frees his people and accepts genuine proposals... to dialogue; until he proves to the world that he's got a good heart".⁶⁰ A leaked Nuclear Posture Review subsequently suggested nuclear strikes as an option for dealing with "rogue states" suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction, with North Korea first on the list, and the principle of pre-emption was further endorsed in the 2002 US National Security Strategy.⁶¹

When the two sides did eventually meet to begin talks, in Pyongyang in October 2002, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly revealed US suspicions regarding a North Korean program to produce highly enriched uranium, and the North Korean delegation confirmed the existence of such a program.⁶² The US subsequently cut off oil shipments

⁶⁰ See Elisabeth Bumiller, "North Korea Safe From US Attack, Bush Says in Seoul," *New York Times*, February 20, 2002; White House, "President Bush and President Kim Dae-Jung Meet in Seoul," Remarks By President Bush and President Kim Dae-Jung in Press Availability, Seoul, Korea, press release, February 20, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/02/20020220-1.html>; and White House "President Bush Visits Demilitarized Zone," Remarks by the President at Dorasan Train Station, Dorasan, Republic of Korea, press release, February 20, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/02/20020220-2.html>.

⁶¹ Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Nuclear Plan Sees New Weapons and New Targets," *The New York Times*, March 10, 2002; Gordon, "Nuclear Arms for Deterrence or Fighting?" *The New York Times*, March 11, 2002; David E. Sanger, "Bush to Formalize a Defense Policy of Hitting First," *New York Times*, June 17, 2002; and *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: White House, September, 2002), p. 15, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>.

⁶² See U.S. Department of State, "North Korean Nuclear Program," press statement by Richard Boucher (spokesman), Washington, DC, October 16, 2002, www.state.gov/r/pu/prs/ps/2002/14432.htm; and U.S. Department of State, "Democratic People's Republic of Korea Prepared to Talk With U.S.," press release, San Jose, California, April 30, 2002, www.state.gov/p/cap/rls/prs/2002/9895.htm. Erich Weingartner, for one, argues that North Korea had high hopes for this visit, and that they "felt insulted and cheated" by it. Weingartner quotes *People's Korea*, a Tokyo based DPRK "official mouthpiece" as having reported prior to the meeting that "Pyongyang is ready to amaze Washington and the world too, in the near future, as the DPRK's top leader did in June 2000 [the North-South summit] and September 2002 [the Japan-DPRK summit] in order to put an ultimate end to the only remaining Cold War structure in Northeast Asia." North Korea had reason to hope that recent improvements in relations with South Korea and Japan might entice the US to the negotiating table, and may have been building up to major concessions. It is possible that Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly botched a key opportunity by overreacting to the uranium enrichment program, the admission of which should have been a signal of North Korea's willingness to

to the DPRK, and North Korea responded by expelling IAEA nuclear inspectors, withdrawing from the NPT, restarting the reactor at Yongbyon, moving the approximately 8,000 unprocessed fuel rods already in storage, and, subsequently, beginning to reprocess them.⁶³ Thus began the second “nuclear crisis” on the Korean Peninsula.

Since the discovery of the UE program, the US approach might be characterized as malign neglect: the avoidance of direct responsibility for the situation, while taking the lead in pressuring North Korea to disarm. “The important point for us is that this is not an issue between the United States and North Korea,” argued one official, adding “North Korea is in breach of its obligation to the international community.”⁶⁴ There seems to be substantial disagreement in the administration about where to go from there. Some nonproliferation specialists have been impatient with the lack of negotiation with North Korea because of the “lesson” other potential proliferants will draw if North Korea is “allowed” to go nuclear, with some arguing that there is a “Rubicon” which, once crossed, will make the program difficult to roll back.⁶⁵ Secretary of State Powell, on the other hand, while favouring a “diplomatic” solution, has argued that it is important not to be “panicked” into negotiations, because this would strengthen North Korea’s hand.⁶⁶

deal. See Weingartner, “Understanding North Korea: Perception vs. Reality,” *Behind the Headlines*, 60:1 (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Autumn 2002), 11-12.

⁶³ See David E. Sanger, “North Korea Says it Now Possesses Nuclear Arsenal,” *New York Times*, April 24, 2003.

⁶⁴ Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation John Wolfe, quoted in James Brooke, “White House Sticks to Decision to Avoid Talks with North Korea,” *New York Times*, January 30, 2003.

⁶⁵ James Sterngold, “Korea experts see true crisis: They fear North may sell nuclear weapons,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 2003, A-1.

⁶⁶ Powell: “Some of my severest critics have been out all over television... saying that we should... go speak to the North Koreans directly, show them how scared you are, and see what it is we have to pay to get them to do – what? – What they did last time?” *Interview with The Washington Times Editorial Board*, Washington DC, July 22, 2003, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2003/22687.htm>. The *New York Times* quotes Powell in similar fashion: “[W]hat we can’t find ourselves in the position of doing is essentially

Many in the Department of Defense favour maximum pressure on North Korea, and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld had a confidential memo circulated which advocated “teaming up” with China to overthrow the North Korean regime. The State Department was quick to point out that this was not US policy, and a Pentagon spokesperson “clarified” that Secretary Rumsfeld supported the President.⁶⁷ Some “hard-liners” have said that while they prefer putting economic, political, and perhaps military pressure on North Korea in hopes that the government would collapse, they are in favour of negotiation because talks will likely fail and provide more support for raising the pressure – a strategy which has come to be known as “hawk engagement”.⁶⁸

Most administration officials, including the President, have studiously avoided talk of “negotiating” with North Korea, because this would be seen as rewarding bad behaviour. They have expressed a willingness to talk to the North, and have even been willing to speculate about what kinds of benefits might accrue to North Korea if it should decide to comply with their demands, but negotiation is out: “We’re prepared to talk directly with North Korea, but we’ll not negotiate... We will not talk to them in a way that rewards them for their behavior, and amounts to a submission to blackmail.”⁶⁹

panicking at their activities and their demands.” James Dao, “Bush Administration Defends Its Approach on North Korea,” February 7, 2003.

⁶⁷ David E. Sanger, “Administration Divided Over North Korea,” *New York Times*, April 22, 2003. See also Richard L. Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State, *Interview by Radio Free Asia*, Washington D.C., July 2, 2003, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/22570.htm>; and John Newhouse, “Sidelines by the State-Defense Split,” *Washington Post*, October 5, 2003, B5.

⁶⁸ Steven R. Weisman, “North Korea Said to Offer Small Nuclear Steps, at a Price,” *New York Times*, April 29, 2003; and Weisman, “North Korea Seen as Ready to Agree to Wider Meetings,” *New York Times*, August 1, 2003. The term “hawk engagement” comes from Victor D. Cha, “Hawk Engagement and Preventive Defense on the Korean Peninsula,” *International Security*, 27:1 (Summer 2002), 40-78.

⁶⁹ John R. Bolton, under secretary of state for arms control and international security, quoted in Howard W. French, “North Korea Informs South Korea That it Doesn’t Plan to Produce Nuclear Weapons,” *New York Times*, January 23, 2003. This position recently prompted the resignation of the US special envoy to North Korea, Charles Pritchard, who has argued that prospects for a diplomatic solution are “very grim” in the absence of sustained bilateral dialogue. See Arshad Mohammed (Reuters), “US Envoy to N. Korea Out as

President Bush has consistently rejected the notion that the US should negotiate with North Korea, stating that “we expect them to disarm” (i.e. unconditionally), and that the North Korean demand for a broad new agreement is “nuclear blackmail”. A good “first step” for North Korea, US officials have indicated, would be to dismantle its nuclear program and submit to verification.⁷⁰ This is seen as a pre-requisite to negotiation, a word that was carefully avoided even in the lead-up to the August 2003 six party talks in Beijing. In the words of the President: “the discussions will be all aimed at convincing Mr. Kim Jong-il to change his attitude about nuclear weaponry.”⁷¹ At the talks, Assistant Secretary of State Kelly demanded that North Korea unconditionally end its nuclear weapons program before any benefits would be discussed.⁷²

Talks Near,” *Washington Post*, August 26, 2003, A4; and Peter Slevin, “Former Envoy Presses North Korea Dialogue,” *Washington Post*, September 9, 2003, A19.

⁷⁰ David E. Sanger, “Bush Says Shift by North Korea Could Bring Aid,” *New York Times*, January 15, 2003; and Howard E. French, “2 Koreas Agree to Resume Talks on Nuclear Crisis,” *New York Times*, January 16, 2003.

⁷¹ White House, “President Discusses Economy, North Korea with Cabinet,” press release, Washington D.C., August 1, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/08/20030801-3.html>.

⁷² John Pomfret and Anthony Faiola, “US Flexibility South on N. Korea,” *Washington Post*, September 4, 2003, A16; and Pomfret, “US, North Korea Don’t Bend on Arms: No Movement at Nuclear Talks in Beijing,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 2003, A23. Much has been made of the format for the talks, with North Korea initially demanding bilateral negotiations and the US insisting on multilateral talks involving South Korea, Japan, and China. The Beijing talks in April were “trilateral”, at least in name, and were billed by some in the American press as “an apparent victory for President Bush”, despite the fact that the absence of South Korea and Japan was probably an equal “victory” for North Korea. See David E. Sanger, “North Koreans and US Plan Talks in Beijing Next Week,” *New York Times*, April 16, 2003; James Brooke, “North Korea Shifts Stance on Nuclear Talks,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2003; Joseph Kahn, “China Offers Its Help in US-North Korea Nuclear Talks,” *New York Times*, April 24, 2003. The rigidity of North Korea’s position on format has been exaggerated in the Western press. See, for example, KCNA, “DPRK sends letter to president of UNSC,” June 28, 2003: “It is the stand of the government of the DPRK that bilateral, tripartite and multilateral or any other forms of talks proposed... should be held in an appropriate order. Since there were tripartite talks in Beijing in April, it would be beneficial to have next DPRK-USA bilateral talks and then tripartite or further expanded talks”; KCNA, “US unreasonable stand under fire,” July 12, 2003: “The DPRK is not opposed to [multilateral] talks. The DPRK’s stand to hold the DPRK-US talks before the multilateral talks is quite just...”; and KCNA, “US urged to make switchover in its Korea policy,” July 16, 2003. After the first Beijing talks, the two sides seemed to be converging on a formula that would have seen another round of trilateral talks (involving China), followed immediately by five-party talks including South Korea and Japan. In the end, they settled on six party talks involving Russia as well. The *New York Times* billed this as another victory for the Bush administration, but Chinese officials have indicated that US agreement to meet bilaterally at these talks as well was necessary to secure North Korean agreement to the format. US officials downplayed this aspect of the

To the extent that there has been a coordinated US strategy on North Korea, its core has been to try to convince China, South Korea, Japan and Russia to exert pressure on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear ambitions. As Powell put it, “This Administration has decided, ‘Fellows, you in the region have more at stake than we do, and we’re not going to allow this to become just a US-DPRK problem.’”⁷³ Despite this stated strategy, however, attempts to pass a critical resolution or discuss sanctions in the UN Security Council have been quashed by China and Russia.⁷⁴ Russia appears to be at least as critical of the United States as North Korea on this issue, and even Japan, the most likely of the four to take a hard line with North Korea, has emphasized the importance of addressing North Korea’s security concerns.⁷⁵ While US officials say they have been pleased with China’s proactive approach to the situation, China has taken an independent

talks, and their unwillingness to engage in serious bilateral discussions apparently had much to do with North Korea’s dissatisfaction with the talks, which took place in late August in Beijing. North Korea had ended the first round of talks early for similar reasons. The press initially misinterpreted the expression of this discontent as the rejection of further talks in principle and a return to “nuclear blackmail”. See Glenn Kessler, “N. Korea Open to 3-Way Talks, Officials Say,” *Washington Post*, July 17, 2003, A09; Kessler, “Proposals to N. Korea Weighed: US Might Offer No-Attack Pledge,” *Washington Post*, July 22, 2003, A01; Kessler, “N. Korea Arms Talks Appear Near: Pyongyang Seems to Accept US’s Multilateral Format,” *Washington Post*, August 1, 2003, A1; James Brooke, “US and North Korea Announce Accord on Wider Atom Talks,” *The New York Times*, August 2, 2003; Phillip P. Pan and Glenn Kessler, “US, North Korea Plan One-on-One Talks: Administration Concession Led to Deal for Multilateral Meeting on Nuclear Crisis,” *Washington Post*, August 2, 2003, A16; John Pomfret, “N. Korea Nuclear Talks End With Agreement to Meet Again,” *Washington Post*, August 30, 2003, A23; Audra Ang, “North Korea Rejects Further Nuclear Talks,” *Associated Press*, August 30, 2003; Sang-Hun Choe, “N. Korea Reverts to Stirring Nuke Tension,” *Associated Press*, August 30, 2003; John Pomfret, “N. Korea Retreats from Further Talks on Weapons,” *Washington Post*, August 31, 2003, A19; Reuters, “N. Korea Says it Still Wants Talks on Atomic Dispute,” September 2, 2003; Sang-Hun Choe “N. Korea Willing to Resolve Nuclear Dispute,” *Associated Press*, September 2, 2003.

⁷³ Powell, *Interview with Washington Times*, July 22. Powell defended the approach of multilateral pressure instead of negotiation as follows: “Why are we doing it this way? Because we tried it the other way last time. The last time was a two-party deal. And although I always give credit to my predecessors in the Clinton administration for freezing Yongbyon for eight years, they didn’t shut down Yongbyon and it was still there waiting to pop out at a time of the North Koreans’ choosing. And while everybody was watching Yongbyon, they were doing another one. ‘Hey, if we can sell it once, let’s sell it twice’.” Hardly anyone seems to have noticed that they did not get “paid” the first time.

⁷⁴ April 9, 2003, reported in James Brooke, “North Korea Shifts Stance on Nuclear Issue,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2003.

⁷⁵ See Mike Allen and Anthony Faiola, “Bush Floats Idea of N. Korea Deal: Security Issue Discussed, Japanese Say,” *Washington Post*, October 18, 2003, A14.

line, and has been openly critical of the US approach. After each of the two rounds of talks that have taken place so far, Chinese officials have publicly contradicted the US account of the talks (that North Korea continues to be intransigent and that the other parties involved are lining up with the US effort to pressure it into disarming), emphasizing the barriers to a resolution posed by US inflexibility. After the six-party talks in August, Chinese vice foreign minister Wang Yi told reporters that he considered the United States to be the “main obstacle” to settling the nuclear issue peacefully, and Chinese officials commended North Korea for showing flexibility and offering a detailed proposal at the talks.⁷⁶ According to one Asian diplomat, China’s strategy has been aimed at producing diplomatic progress in order to reduce the influence of hardliners in Washington, whom it fears will provoke a military crisis.⁷⁷ As one China scholar recently told a US Senate hearing, “If escalating confrontation leads to conflict – by design or miscalculation – Beijing will resent American insensitivity to its interests and its inability, as the world’s sole superpower, to chart and lead a negotiated solution.”⁷⁸

North Korea pronounced its own position on the current situation soon after US officials announced their discovery of the DPRK’s uranium enrichment program. On October 25, 2002, the foreign ministry made public the terms which it had apparently

⁷⁶ Similarly, after four days of overwhelmingly negative press regarding the first round of talks in Beijing, the Chinese foreign ministry conducted a briefing for 20 Western diplomats in order to give what it considered a more balanced account. See John Pomfret and Glenn Kessler, “China Puts North Korea Talks in Brighter Light: Unusual Briefing Suggests Beijing Is Eager to Keep Talks Between Washington, Pyongyang on Track,” *Washington Post*, April 29, 2003, A20; and Pomfret and Anthony Faiola, “US Flexibility Sought on N. Korea,” *Washington Post*, September 4, 2003, A16. See also Pomfret, “A New Direction for Chinese Diplomacy: Nuclear Threat in North Korea Prompts Ambitious Moves Toward Multilateralism,” *Washington Post*, August 16, 2003, A17.

⁷⁷ Unnamed diplomat, quoted in Steven R. Weisman, “North Korea Seen as Ready to Agree to Wider Meetings,” *New York Times*, August 1, 2003.

⁷⁸ Dr. Bates Gill, Testimony before the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee on “Regional Implications of the Changing Nuclear Equation on the Korean Peninsula,” March 12, 2003, <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/GillTestimony030312.pdf>.

given to Kelly during his visit to Pyongyang, and from which it has not made any significant departure since; namely, that it was “ready to seek a negotiated settlement of this issue on the following three conditions: firstly, if the US recognizes the DPRK’s sovereignty; secondly, if it assures the DPRK of non-aggression; and thirdly, if the US does not hinder the economic development of the DPRK.”⁷⁹ Having learned a lesson from the role of Congress in scuttling the Agreed Framework, North Korea has indicated that the second condition should be satisfied by a non-aggression pact that has gained Senate ratification, and that only under that condition will it verifiably dismantle its nuclear weapons program.⁸⁰ There seems to be a consensus that this is a non-starter in the US, because the Senate is highly unlikely to ratify such a treaty.⁸¹ Elaborating on the first and third conditions, North Korea has insisted on full normalization of economic and diplomatic relations. The key to a solution, for the DPRK, lies in whether or not the US is willing to make the switch to a policy of peaceful coexistence.⁸² If the US is willing to give legal assurances of non-aggression, then “the DPRK will be ready to clear the former of its security concerns.” In essence, North Korea has articulated its own “two-

⁷⁹ North Korean Foreign Ministry Statement, printed in KCNA, “Conclusion of Non-Aggression Treaty between DPRK and US Called For,” October 25, 2002. This position has been frequently reiterated. See for example KCNA, “KCNA detailed report on circumstances of DPRK’s withdrawal from NPT,” January 22; and KCNA “KCNA urges negotiations based on equality and trust,” July 21, 2003. It is also remarkably similar to the terms of the US-DPRK Joint Statement of June 11, 1993.

⁸⁰ See James Brooke, “White House Sticks to Decision to Avoid Talks with North Korea,” *New York Times*, January 30, 2003.

⁸¹ See Glenn Kessler, “Proposals to N. Korea Weighed: US Might Offer No-Attack Pledge,” *Washington Post*, July 22, 2003, A1; and *The Economist*, “North Korea and America: A Possible Way Out,” 366:8306 (January 11, 2003), 36. See also comments by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, quoted in Howard W. French, “US Expands Aid Offer, and North Korea Wants to Talk,” *New York Times*, January 20, 2003.

⁸² See KCNA, “KCNA on US Talk about “Peaceful Solution to Nuclear Issue,” October 17, 2003.

track” strategy: both negotiation and “the use of deterrent force” are consistent with the protection of sovereignty, “but the DPRK wants the former, as far as possible.”⁸³

The United States has been extremely resistant to this formula for resolving the situation. Recent reports have suggested that some in the US administration have resigned themselves to the fact that there is not much they can do to stop the nuclearization of the peninsula, and Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet has argued in Congressional testimony that North Korea is trying to negotiate “a fundamentally different relationship with Washington, one that implicitly tolerates the North’s nuclear weapons program.”⁸⁴ North Korea’s reluctance to actually build nuclear weapons in the past, and its willingness to explore other means of ensuring its security, suggest that these are precisely the wrong conclusions to draw from the situation. It may, in fact, be more accurate to say that there is little Washington can do to *coerce* North Korea to forgo its nuclear weapons option, and that it has been unwilling to pursue the formula that would induce North Korea to do so, which would require the abandonment of the containment policy.

Arguably, this policy has not served US interests well. It has perpetuated an acute foreign policy problem, increased the perception of threat of the American population, given rise to a potentially dangerous sense of frustration at being for so long defied by such an unworthy opponent, and threatens to do damage to US credibility unmatched, perhaps, even by the Vietnam War if things go badly. To understand why the policy persists, we need to look more closely at the failure of the 1994 US-D.P.R.K Geneva

⁸³ North Korean Foreign Ministry Statement, printed in KCNA, “Conclusion of Non-Aggression Treaty between DPRK and US Called For,” October 25, 2002.

⁸⁴ Michael R. Gordon with Felicity Barringer, “North Korea Wants Arms and More Aid From US,” *New York Times*, February 13, 2003; and David E. Sanger, “President Takes a Softer Stance on North Korea,” *New York Times*, July 22, 2003.

Agreed Framework, which seemed briefly to signal its end. In a sense, the eight-year history of that agreement is the key to understanding what perpetuates the conflict between the United States and North Korea. In addition, the decision currently confronting the United States is not appreciably different than the one it faced in 1994. In essence, it must choose between the maintenance of the containment policy, and thus continued enmity, and the goal of keeping the Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons without going to war. The choice of enmity, while not synonymous with war, is the choice to risk war. Conversely, “The way to reduce the nuclear, missile, and conventional threats from North Korea is to put and end to enmity.”⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Leon Sigal in Arms Control Association Press Conference (May 2002).

Chapter 3 - The Agreed Framework

According to Reuters, “North Korea agreed in 1994 to shut down a Soviet-era graphite moderated reactor, which Washington had suspected was developing weapons, in exchange for two light-water reactors to be built by a US led international consortium.”¹ Nearly identical descriptions of the Agreed Framework are to be found in most other news sources. As far as the historical memory of the mass media is concerned, as well as most scholars for that matter, this was the Agreed Framework: an arms control agreement consisting of a straight trade-off between North Korean nuclear weapons and Western energy aid.² Despite the ubiquity of the description, however, I am going to argue that it is a patent misrepresentation of the Agreed Framework. It misrepresents the framework primarily in two ways. First, it makes no mention of the other provisions – what are sometimes referred to as the “soft” side of the agreement – such as the commitment of the parties to move toward full normalization of economic and diplomatic relations, or the commitment of the United States to provide assurances

¹ Reuters, “North Korea Says May End Reactor Deal, Cites US Delay,” May 16, 2001.

² For a few of innumerable examples see Henry Sokolski and Victor Gilinsky, “Bush is Right to Get Tough with North Korea,” op-ed, *Wall Street Journal*, February 11, 2002; Peter Slevin, “N. Korea Not Following Nuclear Pact, US to Say,” *Washington Post*, March 20, 2002, A4; James Brooke, “In Diplomacy with North Korea, Some Progress, and a Setback,” *New York Times*, August 14, 2002; David E. Sanger, “North Korea Says It Has a Program on Nuclear Arms,” *New York Times*, October 17, 2002; Sanger, “US to Withdraw From Arms Accord with North Korea,” *New York Times*, October 20, 2002; and James Miles, “Waiting Out North Korea,” *Survival* 44:2 (Summer 2002), 37-8. Some of the above also mention the fuel oil that was to be delivered to North Korea in the interim, the inspections that were to be carried out on North Korea’s existing nuclear facilities, and/or the dismantlement of those facilities as envisioned by the framework, but these details do not clarify the spirit of the agreement. See below.

that it would not use nuclear weapons against North Korea.³ Second, it does not account for North Korea's reasons for signing the framework. The description is consistent only with the interpretation that North Korea was attempting to blackmail the United States for material concessions, and was in such a weak position that it would take what it could get in that regard. A closer examination suggests that material concessions had very little to do with North Korea's decision to sign the agreement. Rather, this decision is better seen as an attempt by North Korea to attain what it had been seeking with a nuclear deterrent, namely security, as well as an escape from US-led containment on its own terms.⁴ In other words, North Korea was seeking a transformation of its relationship with the United States – a relationship that can only be described, for the entire period of the DPRK's existence, as one of enmity. This, I will argue, is precisely what the Agreed Framework offered.

Of course, it is always possible for different parties to sit at the same table and have different interpretations of what the same agreement is all about. While agreements can “mean” different things to different parties, however, their meaning is not infinitely malleable. The terms of the agreement itself, the negotiating record, and the historical circumstances of its negotiation impose limits on interpretation, and a close examination

³ Interestingly enough, these provisions received greater attention in early media reports on the agreement, suggesting a sort of collective historical revisionism might be at work in the description noted above. See, for example, R. Jeffrey Smith, “N. Korea, US Reach Nuclear Pact: Political, Economic Ties are Involved,” *Washington Post*, October 18, A1; and Lally Wymouth, “Questioning the Korea Deal,” *Washington Post*, January 25, 1995, A 25. Robert Gallucci, who was the lead negotiator of the Agreed Framework on the US side, would object to the use of the term “agreement” to characterize the framework. For convenience, I use the word “agreement” below to refer to the framework, but in a looser sense that I think is consistent with the point Gallucci is making, which is that the Agreed Framework does not confer legal obligation. The framework is an agreement to the extent that the two sides agreed upon the steps that needed to be taken in order to resolve the situation, not in a legal sense. See Gallucci's comments in Arms Control Association Press Conference, “Progress and Challenges in Denuclearizing North Korea,” transcript printed in *Arms Control Today* (May 2002), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002_05/pressmay02.html.

⁴ In other words, there was both a security element and a *thymotic* element to North Korea's strategy.

of them allows one to approximate the “meaning” of an agreement retrospectively. I am interested here both in the meaning of the agreement, and in the meaning of its failure. I look first at the terms of the agreement and their meaning, and then at the record of implementation and its meaning. The interpretation of the agreement offered here is bolstered by the fact that those closest to the negotiations on the US side, and in particular the lead US negotiator, Robert Gallucci, understood the agreement in essentially the same way.

It might be objected by some that the analysis below is unduly critical of the United States, and unduly “kind” to the DPRK. Two points might be made about this at the outset. The first is that this thesis is in large measure an evaluation of US foreign policy – the record of US policymakers in dealing with a difficult situation in world politics – and as such focuses more on the merits or deficiencies of the US approach than those of the North Korean approach. The second and more substantive point is that the degree to which the analysis that follows is critical of the US is in no small measure a matter of one’s normative perspective. If one is of the opinion that containing and ultimately stifling North Korea should be a priority for the US government, then it is no criticism to argue that the US has attempted to keep the containment policy in place while avoiding outright confrontation with North Korea and trying to prevent the latter’s nuclear armament at the same time. This merely reflects good statecraft. From this perspective, the only criticism implicit in the analysis below would be the ineffectiveness of the containment policy, which some attribute to the considerable “softening” of the US position represented by the Agreed Framework. This is the perspective of those who accuse the Clinton administration of “appeasement”. If, on the other hand, one is of the

opinion that successful resolution of the conflict between the US and North Korea should take precedence, then there is much criticism of the US foreign policy record in the analysis to follow. In the latter case, the reprehensible nature of the North Korean regime is somewhat of a red herring, while in the former case it is the central reality of the situation. In effect, my position splits the two, by arguing that successful conflict resolution is, in this case, also the best way to address the reprehensible nature of the “target regime”, because it is likely to unleash extant forces for change in that state that are currently inhibited by the conflict with the United States.

The Terms of the Agreed Framework

It is indisputable that the Agreed Framework was built around the replacement of North Korea’s graphite-moderated nuclear reactors with more “proliferation resistant” light-water reactors. To that end, the framework the United States agreed to “make arrangements for the provision to the DPRK of a LWR project with a total generating capacity of approximately 2,000 MW(e) by a target date of 2003” and to arrange for the provision of 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil annually “to offset the energy foregone due to the freeze of the DPRK’s graphite moderated reactors”.⁵ In return, the DPRK would freeze its graphite-moderated reactors within one month of the date of the agreement, and would allow the IAEA to verify that it had done so. It would also cooperate with the US

⁵ United States and Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, *Agreed Framework*, Geneva, October 21, 1994, available from the Korean Energy Development Organization, <http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/AgreedFramework.pdf>. A subsequent agreement specified that the project would consist of 2 reactors of approximately 1,000 MW(e) generating capacity each. See *Joint US-DPRK Press Statement*, Kuala Lumpur, June 13, 1995, available at <http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/KualaLumpur.pdf>.

in finding an acceptable method of safe-storage for existing spent fuel, and dismantle the reactors “when the LWR project is completed”.⁶

The above provisions are generally presented as the totality of the Agreed Framework. In reality, they constitute one of four sections of the agreement. The two sides also committed themselves to move toward full normalization of political and economic relations (s. 2), to work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula (s. 3), and likewise toward the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime (s. 4). Specifically, under section two they were to reduce barriers to trade and investment within three months of signing the agreement, open liaison offices in each other’s capitals, and “As progress is made on issues of concern to each side... upgrade bilateral relations to the Ambassadorial level.” Section three required the US to “provide formal assurances to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the US”, and required the DPRK to “consistently take steps to implement the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” and to “engage in North-South dialogue, as this Agreed Framework will help create an atmosphere that promotes such dialogue.”

Section 4 of the framework deals with the trickiest part of the nuclear freeze agreement – North Korea’s compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA under the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). In combination with the “confidential minute” that was negotiated as part of the Agreed Framework, it accepts the principle of, and lays out a framework for, a phased implementation of that agreement. North Korea agreed to remain a party to the NPT, and to allow implementation of its safeguards agreement, but

⁶ The DPRK complied with these commitments until December 2002, when it expelled IAEA inspectors and removed the seals from its nuclear facilities. See below.

in a specific fashion: First, upon the conclusion of a contract for the supply of the LWRs, North Korea would allow implementation of its safeguards agreement with respect to facilities not related to the freeze agreement with the United States, allowing for the “continuity of safeguards” – that is, verification that it was not diverting additional spent fuel for reprocessing – at facilities that were related to that framework. It would also allow the IAEA to verify that the facilities associated with the freeze agreement were, in fact, frozen.

The final subsection addresses the crucial point of the timing of the final phases of compliance. Upon completion of “a significant portion of the LWR project, but before delivery of key nuclear components”, the DPRK would have to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement, “including taking all steps that may be deemed necessary by the IAEA, following consultations with the Agency with regard to verifying the accuracy and completeness of the DPRK’s initial report on all nuclear material in the DPRK.” The crucial US concern here was clearing up the ambiguity surrounding how much plutonium North Korea had produced during the period from 1989 to 1991.⁷ In effect, while the IAEA would be able to verify that no further material was being diverted for reprocessing during the entirety of the LWR project, inspections for the purpose of clearing up North Korea’s “nuclear history” would occur near the end of the project, which the confidential minute clarifies as being after “delivery of essential

⁷ In this regard, Kent Wiedemann, senior director for Asia of the National Security Council under Clinton, stated in 1995 that “We finally came to recognize that from the North Korean perspective, it’s in their interest to maintain ambiguity about this whole thing [i.e. the Yongbyon nuclear programme].” Quoted in Susan Rosegrant with Michael D. Watkins, *Carrots, Sticks, and Question Marks: Negotiating the North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government Case Program, 1995), 29.

non-nuclear components for the first LWR unit, including turbines and generators”.⁸ The project, of course, did not get to this stage.

The Meaning of the Agreed Framework

As noted above, the standard interpretation of the Agreed Framework in the United States is that North Korea agreed to terminate its nuclear weapons program in exchange for energy compensation. To be sure, North Korea does have an acute energy supply problem, and so this element of the Agreed Framework should not be downplayed too much.⁹ The DPRK cannot possibly rebuild its economy without improving its energy generation capacity.¹⁰ At the same time, this description of the framework leaves certain important questions unanswered. Why did North Korea insist on light-water reactors, when alternative sources could have provided energy more quickly and efficiently? Why would North Korea bargain away what it has consistently described as a nuclear deterrent in exchange for energy compensation that, in the final analysis, would make little difference to its future prospects without dramatic improvements in its energy infrastructure and its relations of trade? There are standard answers to these questions as well, but these prove to be quite flimsy upon closer examination.

I would argue that a significant source of error in interpreting the Agreed Framework has been the failure to make a serious attempt to understand what North Korea was after in negotiating the agreement. One of the central players on the US side

⁸ Following the US declaration of North Korea's uranium enrichment project, North Korea made public the relevant section of the confidential minute. See Statement of the North Korean Foreign Ministry, reported by KCNA, "Conclusion of Non-Aggression Treaty between DPRK and US Called For," October 25, 2003.

⁹ The DPRK has itself, at times, characterized the LWR project as "the key provision" of the Agreed Framework. See for example, KCNA, "KCNA detailed report on circumstances of DPRK's withdrawal from NPT," January 22, 2003; and KCNA, "Report on delay in construction of light-water reactor project issued", May 16, 2003.

¹⁰ In addition, the North may have seen LWRs as a symbol of modernization and technical sophistication that the South had and it did not. See Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 205-206.

recently commented, “One of the things we learned back in 1993-94 was it is not an easy game, or even perhaps a losing game, to try to figure out what North Korea is thinking.”¹¹ The Agreed Framework is commonly considered by US officials to have been “an abrupt about face” on the part of North Korea.¹² Most of the Washington intelligence community had, in fact, predicted that North Korea would not give up their nuclear program in exchange for material concessions such as energy compensation, and so the framework came as somewhat of a surprise to many. This was generally taken as an indication that North Korea was in an even weaker position than the intelligence community had thought, and simply took what they could get.¹³ Speculating on what “brought North Korea around” in June 1994, Han Sung-joo, who was South Korean foreign minister at the time, recently stated, “I would like to think that... there were two major factors that prompted North Korea to invite President Carter. One was the show of force. The other was the Chinese communication to North Korea that [it] could not count on a Chinese veto if and when the issue of sanctions was to come to a Security Council vote.”¹⁴ Similarly, testifying before a Senate committee soon after the agreement was reached, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher attributed the agreement to a success

¹¹ Daniel Poneman, former Special Assistant to the President of the United States for Nonproliferation and Export Control Policy, comments in Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), “Nuclear Confrontation with North Korea: Lessons of the 1994 Crisis for Today,” panel discussion, Dong-A Ilbo Building, Seoul, Korea, March 20, 2003, transcript at http://www.csis.org/isp/crisis_peninsula/seoulRTtranscript.pdf.

¹² Official quoted in R. Jeffrey Smith, “N. Korea, US Reach Nuclear Pact: Political, Economic Ties are Involved,” *Washington Post*, October 18, 1994, A1.

¹³ Scott Snyder argues that there was thought to be a “tacit admission of weakness inherent in North Korea’s decision to bargain away its nuclear weapons program for oil and energy resources.” Snyder, “North Korea’s Challenge of Regime Survival: Internal Problems and Implications for the Future,” *Pacific Affairs*, 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 521.

¹⁴ Han Sung-joo, comments made at CSIS (2003).

of coercive diplomacy.¹⁵ Thus, a combination of North Korean weakness and American strength, with Chinese cooperation, compelled North Korea to sign an agreement that they did not really want to sign.

This interpretation of North Korea's signing of the Agreed Framework ignores at least two very important facts. The first is that North Korea has repeatedly proven itself to be intransigent in the face of US pressure, even at great cost to its own population. The second, and much more important, is that North Korea had itself proposed a package of reciprocal steps to end the impasse, which included all of the essential elements of the Agreed Framework, in a meeting with US representatives on November 11, 1993.¹⁶ Thus, far from an abrupt North Korean about face, the Agreed Framework appears to have been largely of North Korean design. This prompts the question of what North Korea was trying to achieve by negotiating the framework.

One question that appears not to have been seriously considered by most US and South Korean analysts (at least not in public) is why North Korea insisted on the inclusion of light water reactors as part of the package, an element that has come in for much criticism recently. The South Korean National Security Advisor at the time recently wondered "if our decision, which was dictated partly by North Korea, to make light water reactor[s] the centerpiece of this Agreed Framework, perhaps allowed North Korea to keep the nuclear option way too late in the game." He went on to suggest that

¹⁵ See Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 198-199, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher, testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 24, 1995.

¹⁶ Some argue the North Korean proposal was even more ambitious in terms of improved relations with the United States. See Bruce Cumings, "Nuclear Imbalance of Terror: The American Surveillance Regime and North Korea's Nuclear Programme," in Raju G. Thomas, ed., *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Prospects for the 21st Century* (London/New York: MacMillan/St. Martins, 1998), 231-232; and Harrison (2002), 212.

“We could have perhaps persuaded North Korea to accept another alternative which could have provided North Korea with a faster, more direct means of getting what they wanted and also allowing us to obtain what we were looking for, transparency of North Korea’s nuclear program.”¹⁷ What these remarks fail to recognize is that the purpose of the LWRs in the Agreed Framework was not primarily the provision of energy, which, as Chung and others have pointed out, could have been achieved more quickly and efficiently by other means. Rather, it seems likely that their primary purpose was that the long construction period provided a timeframe around which the other elements of the accord could be structured. That is, the delay in compliance with full IAEA safeguards until “a significant portion” of the LWR project was completed provided the North with enough time to evaluate whether the United States was serious about the other provisions in the accord, and thus whether it was serious about a transformation of the US – D.P.R.K. relationship, before it put its nuclear weapons option beyond reach.

As mentioned above, these other provisions are (on the rare occasions that they are mentioned at all) sometimes called the “soft” side of the framework. The scant attention paid to them suggests that analysts are either not aware of them, or assume that they are just “diplomatic niceties”, of little importance in themselves, which accompany the real provisions of the agreement. In responding to a question about what role US slowness in delivering on these “soft” provisions might have played in North Korea’s

¹⁷ Chung Chung-wook, former Blue House National Security Advisor, comments in CSIS (2003). US Ambassador to Seoul Thomas Hubbard agreed “that the fact that the program was based so heavily on nuclear energy, which is something North Korea insisted on, was a flaw in the agreement,” because it made the process of dismantling the North’s nuclear program and creating a new energy supply “inordinately long”. Han Sung-joo, the South Korean foreign minister in 1994 stated at the same panel discussion that “we are not quite sure why North Korea wanted to have the light water reactors then in return for freezing their nuclear program.” *Ibid.*

decision to abandon the framework, however, the lead US negotiator of the framework, Robert Gallucci, offered the following assessment:

North Korea genuinely believed that they were not getting what they hoped for out of the framework. Not only was the reactor deal going much more slowly than they had hoped, but the political payoff was not there. There were occasional problems with the heavy fuel oil delivery, but much more important was that *the special relationship with the United States was not materializing and that was the key to their security*. This is all about security. Light water reactors are tangential to that and much else is. The special relationship and normalization of relations with us is what they were really after, and what they are still after. We reached a high point in good relations when Madeleine Albright and Marshall Cho exchanged visits.... when they got the closest thing to assurances... that we did not consider them an enemy.¹⁸

In Gallucci's opinion, not only were the so-called "soft" provisions of the framework important, but the LWRs were "tangential" by comparison. At the heart of the agreement was the promise of normalization of relations, "the key to North Korean security", which is what the Agreed Framework was all about. This is in marked contrast not only with media representations of the framework, as observed above, but also with most academic accounts. Consider the following example:

Despite a reflexive preference for taking a hard line, in the autumn of 1994 the USA offered a state perceived as hostile, aggressive, and volatile – perhaps the most dangerous of what were called 'rogue states' – a menu of diplomatic incentives to freeze and eventually dismantle its nuclear weapons program. This was not an offer of broad diplomatic and economic engagement aimed at transforming relations. It was rather... 'a specific short-term benefit exchanged for an explicitly delineated response from the recipient'. In fact, the 'carrots' in the Agreed Framework are better understood as part of a 'limited engagement' policy that still relied principally upon the 'sticks' of containment and isolation.¹⁹

¹⁸ Comments in *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

¹⁹ Curtis H. Martin, "Rewarding North Korea: Theoretical Perspectives on the 1994 Agreed Framework," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 39:1 (January 2002), 53. The internal quote is from William J. Long, *Economic Incentives and Bilateral Cooperation* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 3. As such, Martin sees the 1999 Perry Commission report as a fundamental shift away from the narrow and issue-specific "limited engagement" of the Agreed Framework to a more comprehensive and integrated approach (*ibid.*, 59 ff.). I argue the opposite – that the Agreed Framework envisaged and was dependent upon a fundamental transformation of relations. See below.

Some saw this use of incentives as “appeasement”, while others saw it as paying an acceptable price for disarmament, but in either case it has been read as an instance in the use of “carrots and sticks”, rather than as an attempt to address the concerns of both sides.²⁰ In contrast to this interpretation, Gallucci, has emphasized the reciprocal character of the agreement:

It is very clear what went on in these negotiations. Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Ju told me he didn’t trust the United States, and I of course told him that we didn’t trust the DPRK. So how do we have this deal? Well, that is what the framework is. The framework is not an agreement; it’s a set of steps that one side takes and the other side takes. It’s reciprocal, sometimes in parallel.²¹

As a reciprocal arrangement, the Agreed Framework was designed to provide benefits to both sides both immediately and, provided that both sides acted consistently with its terms, in the future. The US would see the immediate freezing of a nuclear program that they estimated at the time would be capable of producing around 150 kilograms of plutonium *per year* (up to 30 bombs’ worth, depending on the level of

²⁰ This point is elaborated in Chapter 6.

²¹ Robert Gallucci in Arms Control Association (2002). Gallucci continues: “And the North Koreans said quite clearly that compliance with the IAEA, particularly special inspections, is an act of transparency... And [Kang Sok Ju] said quite clearly that the promise of transparency was an incentive for the United States to deliver that first part of the reactor project. No suggestion was ever made that North Korea was going to start giving the transparency earlier so that they can have a smoothly flowing construction of the light-water reactor project. It was to come afterwards.” In pushing for the acceleration of IAEA inspections, the Bush administration appears to have been arguing the position of anticipated or “anticipatory” breach. This term appeared on the radar with an op-ed piece, Henry Sokolski and Victor Gilinsky, “Bush is Right to Get Tough With North Korea,” *The Wall Street Journal*, Monday, February 11, 2002. In essence, the argument holds that since full compliance with the safeguards agreement must precede delivery of the nuclear components of the LWR project, and since one can anticipate the pace of delivery, and since the IAEA has indicated it will take three to four years to verify compliance, we can conclude that North Korea will not be in compliance in time to receive those components, and is thus in “anticipatory breach”. There are at least three problems with this argument. The first is that based on the past 8 years’ experience, it is almost ludicrous to suggest that predicting the timetable of the LWR project is a straightforward matter. The second is that the language of the agreement does not support such an interpretation. As Gallucci put it, “a significant portion of the reactor could be completed and then the delivery of the nuclear components could commence immediately, or there could be a delay before the nuclear components are delivered while the IAEA completes its work. The language does not specify either scenario.” The third problem is that it does not accurately reflect either the record of negotiations or the nature of the agreement as reported by its negotiators. Specifically, it treats the Agreed Framework like a legal contract, which it is not. See Gallucci’s comments in *Ibid*.

technology used) within five to seven years. In the longer term, the facilities associated with this program would be dismantled, and US concerns regarding already re-processed plutonium would be addressed. For its part, North Korea would receive a provisional energy supply and a reduction in economic sanctions in the short term, with the promise of greater energy capacity and normalized diplomatic and trade relations with the United States in the future. Of equal importance, the agreement also provided both sides with an exit from a situation that was moving toward a war that neither side wanted.²² As

Gallucci explained, the Agreed Framework was less about obligations than interests:

The Agreed Framework is not an agreement. Our lawyers were very clear about this; I testified on this. We are not legally bound by it; they are not legally bound by it. This is a framework for both sides to take action on. If we want to get up one morning and say, “We’re not going to deliver the reactors,” we will not have violated anything. We would not be acting consistent with the framework, but if we decide it’s in our interest not to, we can do that without violating any international agreement. They can do the same. *We signed the framework document because we thought it was in both of our interests to do so...*²³

The agreed reciprocal steps outlined in the Agreed Framework, then, are not obligations. Rather, they constitute agreed measures by which the political will to undertake a transformation of the relationship could be demonstrated and continually reiterated. They are simultaneously confidence building measures, steps toward a coordinated solution, and indicators of the continuing political will of the parties to move toward that solution; in effect, a measure of their satisfaction with the emerging end-game. In the terms of critical social practice outlined in Chapter 1, they are the means by which the parties will move toward and signal their acceptance of a new “working consensus”. As such, the essence of the Agreed Framework is to be found in the new

²² Gallucci’s characterized the situation as follows: “while I would not claim that we reached the brink of war in 1994, I would certainly say we were on the road to war in 1994.” *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

roles (identities) it implies for the parties with respect to the encounter, and its success was therefore dependent upon the parties acting consistently with those roles. North Korea is under no obligation to end its nuclear program or its missile program, but has indicated a willingness to negotiate on both. Likewise, the United States is under no obligation to address North Korea's security concerns, to normalize relations with the DPRK, or to help it address its energy needs in ways that do not produce plutonium as a by-product. From the beginning, any force or effect the Agreed Framework was to have resided solely in the perception of the parties that it was in their interests to act consistently with its terms. The record of implementation suggests that this perception of the national interest did not enjoy sufficient support among US decision-makers.

The Implementation of the Agreed Framework

If the terms of the Agreed Framework have been misunderstood and misrepresented, its implementation has been no less so. As noted above, the US position has been that "The United States honored its side of the agreement; North Korea didn't."²⁴ In light of the facts, this is simply untenable. The LWR project has experienced chronic delays, and before the current halt due to the discovery of North Korea's uranium enrichment program, the most optimistic estimates were suggesting a completion date of 2008 for the first reactor (five years behind schedule), while others were suggesting 2015 as a more realistic estimate.²⁵ The US has, at times, fallen behind

²⁴ White House, "President George Bush Discusses Iraq in National Press Conference," press release, Washington, D.C., March 6, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030306-8.html>.

²⁵ The Department of Energy suggests 2008 is the best-case scenario. Energy Information Administration, US Department of Energy, *Country Analysis Brief: North Korea*, October 2002, available at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/nkorea.html>. Harrison argues that 2015 is more realistic (2002: 259). Some of these delays are due to the legally complex nature of the project. For example, KEDO's chairman has identified the issue of liability (who pays if there is a nuclear accident) as the most significant obstacle to completion. Others are less excusable, such as those that result from the issuing of supply contracts for crucial components (such as cooling pumps) to US companies, which are barred from supplying them by

on the fuel oil shipments mandated in the agreement because of Congressional unwillingness to fund them.²⁶ Congress immediately imposed additional conditions on implementation of the accord, tying it to progress in North-South relations, which until the dramatic shift in South Korean policy in 1998 was a non-starter on both sides on the 38th parallel.²⁷ In addition, the first easing of US economic sanctions against North Korea, required within three months, left “about 99 percent” of them in place (according to an Administration official’s estimate), because the Congressional leadership had threatened to block funding for the agreement if more were removed.²⁸

After North Korea’s Taepodong missile test-launch in August 1998, and a trip to Pyongyang by Ambassador William Perry, the White House announced an agreement on September 17, 1999 that provided for the relaxation of “most” sanctions in return for a

US domestic law (the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation act of 1978) until a US-North Korea nuclear cooperation agreement is concluded. Such an agreement would require that North Korea first satisfy IAEA concerns about all nuclear material under its control. As such, contracts issued to US companies serve as a clever but inflammatory mechanism to exert pressure for an accelerated inspections timeline, effectively repudiating the principle of phased compliance embodied in the Agreed Framework. Tensions among the contributing countries have also caused perennial delays, with Japan, having never liked the idea of giving LWRs to North Korea in the first place, looking to slow the project as much as possible. See *ibid*, 260-261.

²⁶ The Administration angered Congress by funding the first shipment out of previously approved funds in order to postpone a Congressional vote on any aspect of the framework until the Spring of 1995. A senior official explained: “We will not do anything that requires passage of a statute because we cannot assume passage of a statute.” See R. Jeffrey Smith, “US Tickets Funds for N. Korea Nuclear Pact: Administration to Use Previously Approved Money to Avoid Clash With GOP Lawmakers,” *Washington Post*, December 1, 1994, A44.

²⁷ According to some reports, the South had tried to undermine the negotiations leading up to the Agreed Framework. See T.R. Reid, “South Korean Moves Said to Undermine US-N. Korea Talks,” *Washington Post*, October 9, 1994, A43. The US had indicated to South Korea that it would insist on progress in North-South relations as part of any agreement with North Korea, but dropped this position in the course of the Agreed Framework negotiations. Instead, it accepted the weaker formulation that “The DPRK will engage in North-South dialogue, as this Agreed Framework will help create an atmosphere that promotes such dialogue.” Thus, progress in North-South dialogue was seen by the negotiators as a bi-product of the implementation of the accord, not a precondition to it as Congress subsequently insisted. See Patrick Morgan “New Security Arrangements Between the United States and North Korea,” in Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee, eds., *North Korea After Kim Il Sung*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 177; Harrison (2002), 169; and *Agreed Framework*, Article III, 3. Subsequently, the Administration appears to have conceded to Congress on this issue. See the comments of Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot in Reuters, “U.S.-N. Korean Ties Linked to South,” *Washington Post*, January 28, 1995, A21.

²⁸ Unnamed administration official quoted in R. Jeffrey Smith, “Clinton Lifts Some Restrictions on U.S. Trade with North Korea,” *Washington Post*, January 21, 1995, A5.

temporary North Korean moratorium on missile testing while negotiations proceeded. In essence, Washington got paid twice for this pledge, since it had already agreed to this as part of the *nuclear* freeze in 1994. Once again, however, Congress threatened to block funding for the Agreed Framework if the promise were carried out, and the White House once again reneged, making additional demands regarding North Korea's missile program at talks in New York on March 18, 2000.²⁹ Nevertheless, Pyongyang maintained the missile-testing moratorium. On June 19, 2000, four days after the first ever summit between North and South Korea ended, President Clinton finally issued an executive order regarding the lifting of sanctions following a personal plea from Kim Dae Jung. The order has only been partially implemented, with Presidents Clinton and Bush both restricting its scope more than the language indicated on security grounds.³⁰

No significant movement has been seen toward normalization of diplomatic relations or security guarantees.³¹ With respect to the latter, Washington has refused to go beyond its generic declaration of 1978 (reaffirmed in 1995) that it would not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapons state party to the NPT, "except in the case of an attack on the US or its allies by such a state allied to a nuclear weapons state." In effect, because North Korea has a mutual security treaty with China, a nuclear power, and the US maintains one with South Korea, the United States has reserved the "right" to

²⁹ Harrison (2002), 227, 88.

³⁰ US trade and investment are still barred with a sweeping list of entities allegedly linked with North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. Still, the move was seen as significant internationally, and it cleared the way for normalization between North Korea and many US allies in Europe and Asia. *Ibid*, 89.

³¹ In this respect, the Agreed Framework did not go as far as a previous "joint statement" between the parties which stated that the parties had "agreed to principles of: Assurances against the threat and use of force, including nuclear weapons; peace and security in a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, including impartial application of fullscope safeguards, mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs; and support for the peaceful reunification of Korea." See *US-DPRK Joint Statement*, New York, June 11, 1993, available from the Arms Control Association, <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/1993Nkagreement.htm>.

use nuclear weapons against North Korea in the event of war on the Korean peninsula.³² More to the point, North Korea is the first country mentioned by the leaked 2002 US Nuclear Posture Review in connection with the suggestion that nuclear weapons could be used pre-emptively in situations such as the development of weapons of mass destruction capabilities (a category not limited to nuclear weapons) by states considered to be dangerous.³³ It would not be easy for the US to issue a unilateral guarantee that would satisfy this provision (Article 3.1) of the agreed framework, because, given the China-DPRK Mutual Security Treaty, such a guarantee would be seen as betrayal by the South Korean military. Many US military leaders, in fact, reject the notion of giving up the right of “first use” toward North Korea or China out of hand, because it would set a global precedent that would dangerously restrict US military freedom of action elsewhere.³⁴ Nevertheless, the fact remains that the US agreed to provide such assurances as part of the Agreed Framework, and as Selig Harrison argues, “If Washington and Seoul want North Korea to surrender its nuclear weapons option, they must be prepared to negotiate an end to the concept of nuclear deterrence as the basis for the South’s defense.”³⁵

All of this suggests that, however frequently it may be asserted, it simply cannot be credibly claimed that the US has fulfilled its commitments under the 1994 Agreed Framework. As for North Korea’s compliance, it is universally acknowledged that North

³² Now that North Korea has withdrawn from the NPT, of course, this pledge would not apply in any case unless North Korea were to rejoin the NPT regime.

³³ Michael R. Gordon, “U.S Nuclear Plan Sees New Weapons and New Targets,” *The New York Times*, March 10, 2002; Gordon, “Nuclear Arms for Deterrence or Fighting?” *The New York Times*, March 11, 2002.

³⁴ Harrison (2002), 266-269.

³⁵ He suggests that a first step to doing so would be to take China up on its long-standing suggestion of a mutual “no-first-use” agreement. The assurance of a nuclear-free Korea in the long run, he argues, would require a six power (China, US, Japan, Russia, and the two Koreas) “no-use” declaration and ultimately an enhanced oversight and verification system similar to EURATOM in Europe (ASIATOM). *Ibid*, 266, 274.

Korea implemented the freeze of its graphite-moderated facilities as required by the Agreed Framework, and that it permitted IAEA verification of this freeze. It also permitted implementation of the IAEA safeguards agreement with respect to facilities not related to the freeze agreement, and, after much negotiation and in exchange for considerable compensation, permitted a US technical team to inspect a suspected nuclear site at Kumchang-ri that turned out to be an empty underground tunnel.³⁶ Allegations that North Korea did not live up to its commitments under the Agreed Framework relate solely to its uranium enrichment project, which appears to be of recent beginning, but about which very little reliable information is available.³⁷

The Meaning of the Agreed Framework's Failure

It has been suggested by some that the current “nuclear crisis” on the Korean peninsula is “the natural and foreseeable result” of the Agreed Framework, based on the premise that “the only thing the government of North Korea understands is “force, strength and resolve.”³⁸ On this view, the lesson of the Agreed Framework is that North Korea is inherently untrustworthy, and that negotiating with it is futile. Another

³⁶ Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea in 1999: Bringing the Grand Chollima March Back In,” *Asian Survey* 40:1 (January/February 2000), 155-6.

³⁷ Secretary of State Colin Powell told news media on December 29, 2002 that “It’s a decision they made and a program they started four or so years ago,” and that “They were motivated some four, five years ago, if not earlier, to make the political decision to move down the road of finding a second way of developing a nuclear weapon.” See interviews of that date with “Fox News Sunday with Tony Snow” and “NBC’s Meet the Press with Tim Russert”, available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2002>. The CIA, however, has reported that “We assess that North Korea embarked on the effort to develop a centrifuge-based uranium enrichment program about two years ago,” that North Korean procurement agents “began seeking centrifuge-related materials in large quantities” in 2001, and that the North could have a plant capable of producing enough weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year “as soon as mid-decade.” See Bill Gertz, “North Korea Can Build Nukes Right Now,” *Washington Times*, November 22, 2002; and CIA, *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions, 1 January through 30 June 2002*, http://www.cia.gov/cia/reports/721_reports/jan_jun2002.html#5. Whether or not North Korea was investigating the possibility of a uranium enrichment program sooner, the wording of CIA reports suggests that it only began to actively pursue that program around 2000 or 2001.

³⁸ James A. Baker III, “No More Caving on North Korea,” *Washington Post*, op-ed, October 23, 2002, A27. Baker was Secretary of State from 1989 to 1992.

interpretation might be that the US was reluctant to implement the framework because it considered North Korea to be untrustworthy, and the “vulnerabilities that attend cooperation” were thought to be too high.³⁹ I will argue that neither of these interpretations gives an adequate explanation of the failure of the Agreed Framework. Rather, it failed primarily because US decision-makers considered mutual accommodation with North Korea, of the kind implied by normalization of diplomatic and economic relations, an unacceptable way to deal with the problem posed by North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. Enmity, not North Korean duplicity or the inherent limits of cooperation under anarchy, explains the failure of the Agreed Framework.

The explanation of North Korean duplicity is inadequate in part because it ignores the poor US record in implementing the framework. Observations about US “bad faith”, of course, do not prove North Korean “good faith”, and there is no good reason to assume the latter *a priori*. These observations do, however, suggest that there are factors at work in North Korea’s actions other than a simple desire to “dupe” the United States and the international community to its own advantage. North Korea’s implementation of the Agreed Framework was inextricably linked to US implementation, because if the North alone implemented it, they would have given up their bargaining leverage for nothing, and the pressures in US politics to “squeeze out” the regime could be expected to increase as it became safer to do so. If Washington has difficulty mustering the political will to move forward on explicit agreements while North Korea retains the capability to

³⁹ Joseph Grieco, “Anarchy and the limits of cooperation: A realist critique of the newest liberal institutionalism,” *International Organization*, 42 (1988), 485-508; and Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics,” *International Organization*, 46:2 (Spring 1992), 418.

revive its nuclear program, how much less political will would there be to initiate unspecified concessions once the nuclear option is beyond reach?

More importantly, however, there have been several strong indications that North Korea has been serious about the attempt to negotiate a transformation of the situation on the Korean peninsula. Among these are delays in nuclear fuel reprocessing and bomb-making, the signing of the safeguards agreement with the IAEA, which was done unilaterally, several years of strict compliance with the Agreed Framework despite a lack of movement on the other side, and the observance of a moratorium on missile testing, even when the US failed to follow through on the quid pro quo. Two examples in particular illustrate the point that there are objectives that are more important to North Korea than acquiring nuclear weapons, and, crucially, that opportunities to advance these objectives will decrease the importance of the nuclear program for Pyongyang.

One example is North Korea's response to the two major US concessions in 1991-92; namely, the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula, announced on September 27 and completed by December of 1991, and the cancellation of Team Spirit exercises for 1992, announced by the ROK Defense Ministry on January 7, 1992. North Korea announced on November 25, 1991, that it would sign a safeguards agreement with the IAEA if the US began the nuclear withdrawal. On December 13, 1991, the two Koreas signed an Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation, and on January 20, 1992, they signed a Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The day the Team Spirit cancellation was announced, the North announced its intent to sign a safeguards agreement, and did so

within a month, on January 30, 1992.⁴⁰ These moves suggest that North Korean officials had in mind objectives that they considered to be more important than the nuclear weapons program, and, crucially, that they were willing to pursue these objectives by cooperative means as well as coercive ones.

Even more compelling in this regard is the fact that North Korea appears to have deliberately delayed its nuclear weapons program to preserve the possibility of a negotiated solution. According to IAEA analysis, North Korea reprocessed spent fuel to make plutonium in 1989, 1990, and 1991. How much plutonium they were able to produce in the process is the subject of contention.⁴¹ What is not contentious is that by some point in 1992 or early 1993 the approximately 8,000 fuel rods in the Yongbyon reactor provided North Korea with the means to make several (probably 5 or 6) bombs. Yet they did not begin to defuel the reactor until the summer of 1994, over a year after the IAEA had expected them to do so, and sealed off these fuel rods under IAEA observation for eight years as part of the freeze agreement. As Leon Sigal has asked, if North Korea was intent on building nuclear weapons, why did it delay defueling, agree to a ban on reprocessing (in the North-South Agreement), and sign a safeguards agreement? Furthermore, why allow the IAEA to verify that it had not diverted additional fuel for

⁴⁰ Speaking of the nuclear withdrawal, then Assistant Secretary of State Richard Solomon pointed out that the “unilateral” nature of the act lent itself to skepticism about reciprocation: “Normally, you would expect it to be pocketed since we had not negotiated this with them... Instead it led to reciprocal acts by them.” Quoted in Sigal (1998), 31, from interview of February 27, 1996.

⁴¹ A confidential but heavily leaked US National Intelligence Estimate of 1993 is the origin of the now often quoted conclusion that there is a “better than even” chance that North Korea already has one or two nuclear devices, based on an estimate that 12 to 13 kilograms of plutonium had been extracted. Subsequent analysis, less often cited, called this estimate into question. Defense Department analysts at Livermore and Hanford reduced the estimate to seven or eight kilograms in 1994, and later to less than a bomb’s worth. See Sigal (1998), 94, and Robert Gallucci’s testimony to the US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, December 1, 1994. Estimates of the amount needed for a nuclear bomb range from five kilograms to 10, depending on the level of technology available. See Cumings (1998), 222; David Albright, “North Korean Plutonium Production,” *Science and Global Security*, 5 (1994), p. 83; and Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).

reprocessing, as North Korea did between 1992 and 1994, even as it denied them the ability to ascertain how much fuel it had previously reprocessed?⁴² These are not the actions of a state hell-bent on producing nuclear weapons.

In this light, and given the fact that the Agreed Framework was largely of North Korean authorship, North Korea's uranium enrichment program is more likely a result of the lack of progress in implementing the 1994 agreement than an indication that North Korea did not take it seriously in the first place. This is not an agreement that failed to fly, so much as an agreement that never got off the ground. While critics of the deal predicted that North Korea would break it, defenders of the agreement familiar with the facts of the situation should not be surprised by North Korea's UE program either. North Korea gave indications from the beginning that it was preserving its nuclear options in case the political, economic and military changes envisioned by the Agreed Framework should fail to materialize, and the terms of the framework, particularly those related to phased compliance with IAEA safeguards, made this clear as well.⁴³ In addition, supporters of the framework in Pyongyang faced opposition from hardliners from the beginning. While it appears North Korea was investigating the possibility of uranium enrichment earlier, the CIA reports that active procurement to accelerate the program began in 2001, a date that coincides with the suspension of all talks by the US side after a near break-through at the end of the Clinton administration.⁴⁴ This may represent the point at which the "moderates" in North Korea finally ran out of the political capital necessary to maintain compliance with an agreement that had failed to deliver results, or perhaps the point at which they gave up on it and began to see continued compliance as a

⁴² See Sigal (1998), 13, 22, and 32.

⁴³ Harrison (2002), 201-202.

⁴⁴ CIA (2002).

losing proposition. Strategically speaking, the UE program was probably intended to serve as leverage in yet another round of “coercive bargaining” to secure what the Agreed Framework had promised – a fundamentally different relationship with the United States. From Pyongyang’s perspective, it is essential to demonstrate that it will not simply go away or give up on its objectives, as many in Washington no doubt still hope it will. As for when and how the DPRK intended to initiate this next round of bargaining, and whether they anticipated that the US would detect the UE program, these are questions we simply do not yet have the information to answer.⁴⁵

What remains to be explained is the US reluctance to implement the framework once North Korea had complied with its nuclear freeze provisions. One explanation would be that the mistrust that Ambassador Gallucci described in characterizing the negotiations that led to the framework remains, and has prevented the United States from taking steps to implement the framework out of fear that North Korea will “cheat”. This interpretation would be in line with most realist and rational choice explanations of the situation. In actual fact, this account does a very poor job of explaining the failure of the Agreed Framework. Several considerations lead me to make this argument. Two of these have to do with the structure of the agreement – what specifically the “vulnerabilities that attend cooperation” were in this case. Three additional points speak to the probability that North Korea would “cheat” on the agreement, and are thus more subjective in nature. Their relevance to the question of US decisions about implementing

⁴⁵ The intentional revelation of a “clandestine” program in order to gain leverage would not be unprecedented for North Korea. Bruce Cumings argues that given the level of US surveillance on North Korea, the awareness of which is attested to by the extensiveness of the latter’s underground facilities, the North had to have known that its “unveiling” of a nuclear waste site at Yongbyon in 1989 and subsequent “camouflaging” of that site would be witnessed by satellite: “Of course, it meant that they wanted the [US National Reconnaissance Office] to witness these events; it wanted to show its ace in the hole, and then put it back in the deck.” Cumings (1998), 227-8.

the Agreed Framework is dependent upon whether they entered into US calculations about the probability that North Korea would “cheat”.

First, the structure of the Agreed Framework was such that North Korea had relatively little to gain from cheating, and the United States little to lose if they did. The DPRK would not receive crucial components of the light water reactors until complete and thorough inspections of its nuclear facilities had taken place, meaning that it would gain nothing until nuclear weapons were essentially out of reach for the foreseeable future. The low cost of implementing the framework compared to other options, as outlined above, means that the US had little to lose. Second, North Korea would almost certainly have built nuclear weapons in the absence of the Agreed Framework, and almost certainly will (if it has not already) in the absence of an agreement to replace it.⁴⁶ The concern about “cheating” has until recently been focused on the ambiguity about one or two bombs’ worth of plutonium stemming from North Korea’s reprocessing activities between 1989 and 1992. The unfreezing of North Korea’s graphite-moderated reactors due to the breakdown of the framework may give it the capacity to build up to 30 bombs per year. Thus, if nuclear weapons were the sole US consideration, their interest would lie unambiguously in implementing the framework.

Third, and more subjectively, North Korea has repeatedly delayed its nuclear weapons program in order to preserve the possibility of a negotiated settlement with the United States, which suggests that nuclear weapons are not a high-priority objective in

⁴⁶ Recent North Korean statements suggest that it has, but this has not been verified. See, for example, KCNA, “Spokesman for DPRK Foreign Ministry on US Rumour over Nuclear Issue,” October 16, 2003: “Recently some people of the international community argued whether the DPRK possesses a nuclear deterrent force or not in an attempt to sound out its inmost thought. The DPRK, however, does not care about this. When an appropriate time comes, the DPRK will take a measure to open its nuclear deterrent to the public as a physical force and then there will be no need to have any more argument.”

and of themselves. Fourth, not only did North Korea freeze its graphite-moderated nuclear program, but also it did so in exchange for a form of nuclear energy that would, for the first time in its existence, make it heavily dependent upon outside sources for its energy supply.⁴⁷ Thus, the leverage of the international community over North Korea would be greater after implementation of the framework than before. Fifth and finally, presuming that the framework went forward, and North Korea attained normalization of economic and diplomatic relations while retaining the ability to make its own decisions about its economy and system of government, what reason would it then have to jeopardize the economic benefits, increased security, and freedom of action that the framework had delivered by pursuing nuclear weapons? The incentives to build bombs would be exponentially lower after implementation of the framework than before, the disincentives proportionately higher. Taken together, these considerations justify at least a healthy scepticism with respect to the claim that US reluctance to implement the Agreed Framework was due to a mistrust of North Korean intentions.

From the North Korean perspective, US insistence that it *has* lived up to its side of the bargain has been perhaps even more significant than its actual failure to do so,

⁴⁷ The Agreed Framework required North Korea to give up an indigenous source of energy for one that would make it dependent on outside sources, giving them a potential source of leverage. North Korea has tried to minimize its reliance on outside energy sources as part strategy of self-reliance. The Yongbyon reactor and the two other much larger reactors North Korea had under construction were moderated by graphite and fueled by natural uranium (238), both of which North Korea has in abundance. In the early 1990s, North Korea's dependence on imported petroleum was only 10 percent, and is currently estimated at about 6 percent. Primary energy consumption in 2000 was mostly coal (86%) with electricity production split between hydroelectric power plants (67%) and coal fired thermal plants (33%). Total electricity consumption was only 65% of that in 1991, but up nearly 9% over 1999. North Korea produces no oil. According to Kim Il Sung, some North Korean scientists wanted to start up petrochemical industry for refining petroleum in the late 1960s, but Kim did not support it: "we are not yet in a position to depend on imports... [to do so] means allowing a stranglehold on our jugular." Sweden's Taurus Petroleum, Britain's Soco International, and Australia's Beach Petroleum hold concessions for offshore oil exploration, and Sovereign Ventures of Singapore was awarded the first onshore concession in November 2001. Energy Information Administration (2002); and Kim Il Sung, interview of December 22, 1978, reported in *Tokyo Shakaite* (March 1979), pp. 162-168 and quoted in Cumings (1998), 221.

because it indicates how little North Korea could hope to gain by continued compliance with the framework. For example, a US representative to the Korean Energy Development Organization (the group charged with overseeing the LWR construction) described the significance of an August 2002 concrete pouring ceremony for the LWR project as follows:

Today's ceremony... is hard evidence of the seriousness with which the United States and KEDO partners have treated our obligations under this project and the Agreed Framework. In short, the United States and our KEDO partners have kept our end of the bargain. We expect the DPRK to do the same... The success of the LWR project and the Agreed Framework ultimately hinges on the choices North Korea makes, including whether to cooperate with the IAEA, now, not later.⁴⁸

From the perspective of North Korea, these words must have been a signal, though certainly not the first, that they should not expect movement on the other provisions of the Agreed Framework. Washington no longer, if it ever did, saw a transformation of US-North Korean relations as part and parcel of the Agreed Framework. By August 2002, this was merely confirmation of the obvious. What it meant was that the continuation of the Agreed Framework portended a losing situation for North Korea: it may or may not eventually realize an energy supply from the reactors, but without an appreciable change in its relationship with the United States, and only after full verification that nuclear weapons were, for the foreseeable future, out of reach. Thus, in the best case scenario they would have traded their bargaining power for a couple of good energy generators which, in the absence of better infrastructure and other means to develop their economy, would do them little good. More probably, the US would be reluctant to complete a nuclear reactor project for a "rogue" state with which it

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, Charles L. Pritchard, U.S. Representative to KEDO, "Remarks at KEDO Concrete Pouring Ceremony," Kumho, North Korea, August 7, 2002, www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2002/12628.htm.

still had very poor relations (especially once the nuclear threat was verifiably gone), and would thus make additional demands relating to transformation of the North Korean system of government, economy and military (as the Bush administration did in June 2001) as pre-requisites to the project's completion. In the latter case, North Korea would have given up its bargaining power for nothing at all.

The argument made here is that the United States has done itself a disservice by not implementing the Agreed Framework more vigorously, precisely because North Korea was after more than just energy in negotiating the agreement. The poor US record on implementation is bad not because it represents a breaking of legal commitments (which the framework did not confer), or because it impugns US "honour" (though the credibility of future commitments should be a consideration), but primarily because of the progress foregone as a result. Michael Mazarr has argued that "Both in the second half of 1992 and in the months since October 1994, the United States wasted the major progress achieved with package deals by interpreting its responsibilities toward North Korea in the narrowest terms imaginable."⁴⁹ Some would question the characterization of the Agreed Framework as "major progress", but this scepticism is primarily based on a flawed interpretation of the framework's provisions. I have argued that the framework was in essence a roadmap for the beginning of a process of abandoning enmity. To be sure, it was only a beginning, and several, perhaps many, subsequent agreements would have had to have been negotiated to resolve outstanding issues relating to North Korean missile production, the size and posture of conventional forces on the peninsula, and North-South reconciliation to name but a few. What it did outline, however, was the

⁴⁹Mazarr, Michael J., "Going Just a Little Nuclear: Nonproliferation Lessons from North Korea," *International Security*, 20:2 (Fall 1995), 5.

basis upon which these issues could be addressed – a new set of roles, or “working consensus”, regarding the situation. I have also argued that dominant perceptions of the national interest have prevented the United States from accepting the role implied for it by that working consensus, and that the reason for this is that the United States sees North Korea as an enemy. It is to the meaning of this latter point that I turn my attention in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – The Concept of Enmity

To esteem is to create: hear this, you creators! Esteeming itself is of all estimable things the most estimable treasure. Through esteeming alone is there value: and without esteeming, the nut of existence would be hollow. Hear this, you creators!¹

Perhaps only within the academic field of International Relations would it be surprising to hear that the problem with relations between the United States and North Korea is that they are enemies. This is not to say that the field's practitioners would be surprised by the statement, but that, for the majority of them, it would have no particular meaning. Enmity is largely an untheorized concept - a word without content. As such, the inquiry turns promptly to terms such as competition, threat, anarchy, power, balance of power, and, recently, culture or identity – terms that have received theoretical treatment – to make sense of the situation, on the assumption that to say that the parties are enemies would add nothing of substance to that understanding. I wish to make the opposite contention: That an accurate understanding of US-North Korean relations, and in particular the failure of the Agreed Framework, requires that we understand what it means to say that they are enemies.

This, of course, is not to say that the above-mentioned terms have nothing to say to the concept of enmity. Almost all of them do, to varying degrees. The word “enemy” signifies an identity, and some of the recent work relating to that concept will be particularly useful. In addition, much of what goes on within relations of enmity has to do with the dynamics of power, its pursuit and expression. There is nothing inherent in

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Thousand and One Goals,” in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Book I, reprinted in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking, 1954), 171.

the term “power”, however, (nor in terms such as balance of power) that explains how and why these dynamics are what they are. What animates them and gives them their particular form? To answer this question, we require a theoretical account of the phenomenon of enmity. That this concept remains largely untheorized in IR is a function of the fact that, for the majority of the discipline, it appears either as unreal or as irrational. In the former case it does not warrant attention. In the latter, it is not accessible to reasoned analysis. Thus it exists, if at all, in that mysterious world of spirit, into which reason may not venture. This is to be denied.

As a beginning point for the theorization of enmity, I propose to look at Carl Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political*.² This is appropriate not only because enmity is, arguably, the central concept of the book, but also because it is examined within the broader question of what politics is, another too often forgotten question in International Relations, and particularly security studies. The recognition that “security” is something political – that it is fundamentally and inextricably bound up in politics – is both demonstrated by and essential to understanding the failure of the Agreed Framework as well. Beginning with Schmitt is also appropriate because he had a profound impact on one of IR’s most influential theorists, Hans Morgenthau. Morgenthau’s response to Schmitt constitutes one of IR’s closest and most thoughtful encounters with the concept of enmity, and understanding the relationship between Morgenthau and Schmitt goes a long way toward explaining mainstream IR’s lack of account for enmity.

As such, the object of the next chapter will be the critique of Morgenthau, in order to understand IR’s lack of account for enmity. Morgenthau is selected for this critique

² Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

not because he is the worst offender, but, on the contrary, because he is among the most aware of the ontological foundations he is helping to build – those of the realist stream of liberal international relations theory.³ Because they are also liberals, many of the most devoted critics of this school of thought have remained within the bounds of some of its most basic assumptions. Thus, the critique of Morgenthau is perforce the critique of much of mainstream and, to an unappreciated degree, of critical IR scholarship in the second half of the 20th century. This is true in a very specific sense: that the assumption that the purpose of IR is to suggest *the rational set of international social relations* that can yield the maximum degree of peace and stability by solving the tensions between various interests and identities is the unconscious assumption of most of IR theory during that time period. The essence of liberalism resides both in this objective and in the particular way in which it pursues it.⁴ Many have since posited more ambitious ends than these (based on more ambitious notions of justice), but few have suggested that they be pursued at their expense – least of all in security studies. Many have criticized the rationalism of “realist” and “liberal” international relations theory, but generally by proposing a broader conception of rationality that can better facilitate the objectives mentioned above. A consistent departure from the goal of rational social relations

³ This characterization is applied here only to what is commonly referred to as “classical realism”, of which Morgenthau is one of the primary exponents. Whether and to what degree “neorealism” remains a liberal theory of politics is a debatable and important question, but it is outside of the scope of the current inquiry. The underlying assumption here is that realism in its classical form is more aware of its ontological foundations, and that, therefore, greater understanding of them is to be gained from its critique than from that of neorealism, the development and critique of which has consumed much of the field’s energy for the past two decades or more.

⁴ As Michael Oakeshott points out, liberalism shares this objective with other systems of political thought (and, in fact, all of ‘modern’ politics), but remains its most complete expression. See Oakeshott, “Scientific Politics”, in Oakeshott, *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*, Timothy Fuller, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 100.

defined in terms of peace is difficult to maintain, particularly for those aiming at *progressive* notions of politics.

Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political* presents us with a mode of thought that has such a departure as its primary purpose. Schmitt is engaged in the critique of liberalism.⁵ Morgenthau, on the other hand, set out to offer a variant of liberalism that would be practicable in international politics. He finds it in the political thought of Thomas Hobbes, the essence of which was familiar to his audience via *The Federalist Papers*. While Schmitt was an avowed admirer of Hobbes, Leo Strauss's cogent critique of *The Concept of the Political* makes it clear that Schmitt and Hobbes are at variance on the most fundamental political question – namely, the aim of politics. For Hobbes, it is peace, as dictated by the first Law of Nature, to “seek peace, and follow it”. Schmitt does not make it explicit in *The Concept of the Political* what he sees as the highest aim of politics, though one gets the sense it is the preservation of human dignity.⁶ What is clear is that he rejects the notion that it can be peace itself.

What the current analysis seeks by looking at Schmitt is not a basis upon which to reject the project of rational social relations, but to better understand the ontological shift that liberal international relations theory undertakes in the service of that objective.

⁵ This interpretation follows Leo Strauss. See Strauss, “Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*,” trans. J. Harvey Lomax, reprinted in Schmitt (1996), 83-107, note 9. Hereafter, citations refer to Strauss's note numbers.

⁶ Strauss suggests, on the basis Schmitt's *Political Theology*, that it is the possibility of “the morally difficult decision”. See Strauss (1996), note 26, and Schmitt, *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität* (Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1922, 1934), 56, where he refers to it as “the core of the political idea”. Heinrich Meier suggests that it is the preservation of the possibility of obedience to God. On this view, politics is salvation in the sense that every specific enemy is a concrete embodiment of the Providential enemy. The battle with the latter, determined “historically and concretely” in the moments of great politics, is the case “from which and toward which [Schmitt's] thought moves.” See Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue*, J. Harvey Lomax, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 56, 80. Both can be encompassed within the notion of the preservation of the dignity of man. The difference turns upon the role of the divine in Schmitt's thought, and specifically whether it requires moral decisionism, or faith simply.

Specifically, in attempting to lower the aims of politics in order to make it more manageable – to lower the stakes, as it were – liberalism tends to narrow our perspective on political reality such that we are less capable of understanding certain aspects of it, and in particular the phenomenon of enmity. The argument is not that liberalism is a wrong turn, but that human beings, and human collectivities, are not by nature “liberals”. While Morgenthau is aware of this, (the ontological move is, for him, a conscious one), he invites us to think about international politics in terms that do not give an account of its illiberality. We return to Schmitt to gain an account of enmity, not to affirm it.

Carl Schmitt's Concept of Enmity

In *The Concept of the Political*, Carl Schmitt sets out to offer a simple definition of that concept; one that does not merely equate it with the state.⁷ Why he does so will become clear below, but he begins by addressing the question of how he will do so. He concerns himself with what is unique to politics, with “the specifically political categories”, because there he expects to find its essence. His definition of the political rests not upon a uniquely political concept, however, but on a uniquely political antithesis: “The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.”⁸ This distinction is independent of any other antithesis or set of antitheses, including those which define morality (good and evil), aesthetics (beautiful and ugly), and economics (profitable and unprofitable):

The political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not even appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions. But he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way,

⁷ Schmitt (1996), 19-20.

⁸ *Ibid*, 26.

existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible.⁹

By the autonomy of the friend-enemy distinction, Schmitt does not mean that it arises independently of all other distinctions. “It does not describe its own substance,” and “can derive its energy from the most varied human endeavors.” What it speaks to, above all, is “the intensity of an association or dissociation of human beings”. The motives of the relevant actors can be “religious, national, economic, or another kind and can effect at different times different coalitions and separations.” Other groupings can become political, and they do so at the point at which they become sufficiently strong to “group human beings effectively according to friend and enemy.”¹⁰ Schmitt is nevertheless insistent that the friend-enemy distinction is not reducible to other antitheses, and that furthermore the concept of the political can “treat, distinguish, and comprehend the friend-enemy antithesis independently of other antitheses.” To the extent that other groupings become capable of grouping people effectively as friends and enemies, a qualitative change takes place such that the previously non-political antithesis “pushes aside and subordinates its hitherto purely religious, purely economic, purely cultural criteria and motives to the conditions and conclusion of the political situation at hand.”¹¹

Ultimately, the political antithesis can be distinguished from other kinds of antithesis only by understanding what Schmitt means by “enemy”. While the political derives its essence from the distinction between friends and enemies, this distinction itself is given its substance by the concept of enmity, not that of friendship: “the

⁹ *Ibid*, 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 37-38.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 27, 38.

substance of the political is contained in the context of a concrete antagonism,” and “The high points of politics are simultaneously the moments in which the enemy is, in concrete clarity, recognized as the enemy.”¹² As Leo Strauss put it in his *Notes* on Schmitt’s essay, “One may say: every ‘totality of men’ looks around for friends only – it has friends only – because it already has enemies”.¹³ This is because the friend-enemy distinction is determined by “the extreme possibility” – the possibility of war – and war belongs to the concept of enmity.

In Schmitt’s account, friends and enemies are not to be understood as metaphors or symbols, “not mixed and weakened by economic, moral, and other conceptions”, and not as “normative [or] pure spiritual antitheses”, but rather “in their concrete and existential sense.” The reality that gives them concrete meaning is the real possibility of war.¹⁴ War, as the extreme case, “has an especially decisive meaning which exposes the core of the matter”, because it reveals “the most extreme consequence of the political grouping of friend and enemy.” Enemies are expressly not economic competitors or debating adversaries; neither are they “the private adversary whom one hates”. Rather, “An enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity.” The concept of enemy carries “the ever present possibility of combat”, which is also to be understood “in its original existential sense”. Combat is not “competition”, nor is it “purely intellectual controversy nor symbolic wrestlings in which, after all, every human being is somehow always involved”.¹⁵

Schmitt is categorical:

¹² *Ibid*, 30, 67. For Schmitt’s response to this ‘reproach’, see Meier (1995), note 2 on pp. 3-4.

¹³ Strauss (1996), note 9.

¹⁴ Schmitt (1996), 27-28.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 35, 28, 32-33.

The friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing. War follows from enmity. War is the existential negation of the enemy. It is the most extreme consequence of enmity. It does not have to be common, normal, something ideal, or desirable. But it must nevertheless remain a real possibility for as long as the concept of the enemy remains valid.¹⁶

The Determination of Enmity

The obvious question with respect to the focus of this paper (though as we shall see not the most important) is whether the concept of enemy is valid as between the United States and North Korea; whether, that is, this is a “political” relationship in a strictly Schmittian sense of the word. This determination is complicated by the fact that Schmitt denies to the outside observer the ability to make it: “Only the actual participants can correctly recognize, understand, and judge the concrete situation and settle the extreme case of conflict.” He does, however, give us an indication of how they might *themselves* make this judgment: “Each participant is in a position to judge whether the adversary intends to negate his opponent’s way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one’s own form of existence.”¹⁷ Thus, while we cannot, according to Schmitt, make the actual judgment of enmity between other parties, we can address the more important question of *what it means* for the US to view North Korea as an enemy in the way Schmitt uses the word, and vice versa.

Put simply, the determination of enmity means that in one’s own judgment the existence of the other constitutes, at least potentially, the negation of one’s own mode of existence. To reiterate, this is not to be understood symbolically or metaphorically, but in concrete and existential terms. This does not mean one has enemies only if they pose a

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 33.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 27. This closely parallels Hans Morgenthau’s definition of “imperialist powers”, explored in the next chapter. See Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, fourth ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 36 ff.

threat to one's physical existence (though in some cases they may), but that they constitute in some way the negation of something that is considered essential to one's form of existence – that is, to one's identity. By negation is not meant that they simply do not agree with it, or live in accordance with it, but that they threaten to prevent one from being what one is in an essential sense. There are three responses to such a “threat”. One may: 1) assert one's identity in opposition to the other; 2) accept defeat and the condition of rule; or 3) adapt one's notion of self to accommodate the other either in its current or a redefined form.¹⁸ The decision of what is essential to one's identity, and thus decisive for the determination of enmity might be formulated as follows: Assuming that current definitions of self and the other imply a real possibility of war, if one would choose to fight a war rather than revise one's notion of self in a way that would resolve the antagonism – that is, to accommodate the other – then one has an enemy. The elements of the self that are incompatible with the current form of existence of the other are considered essential.¹⁹ This distinction is important, because Schmitt allows that the

¹⁸ The latter is the intuition behind “altercasting” and Wendt’s “critical strategic practice.” See Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics,” *International Organization*, 46:2 (Spring 1992), and Chapter 7 below.

¹⁹ It would be an error to suggest that precisely the same identities – or notions of self – will be invoked vis-à-vis all situations. These are not necessarily universal and stable identities of which we are speaking. Wendt, for example, argues that “a state may have multiple identities” which are relationally defined, and that “The commitment to and the salience of particular identities vary, but each identity is an inherently social definition of the actor grounded in the theories which actors collectively hold about themselves and one another and which constitute the structure of the social world.” Wendt (1992), 398. In theory, some “identities” may be seen as so essential to oneself that they cannot be separated from any situation. Identities are, however, as Schmitt claims of “all political concepts, images, and terms”, polemical in meaning and bound to concrete situations, with the result that they become “empty and ghostlike abstractions” when those situations cease to exist. *Ibid*, 30. Defining oneself in a particular way vis-à-vis a particular situation will, of course, have implications for other situations that one is or becomes involved in, as the demand for consistency and the transferal of logics (argument by analogy) are perennial elements of political discourse and deliberation. Whether, and how precisely, particular definitions of self are attached to other specific situations is, however, an empirical, and to some extent political (polemical), question.

“politically reasonable course” can reside in the avoidance of war.²⁰ How far this avoidance can extend is the critical question.

It should be noted that forms of existence do not appear in *The Concept of the Political* as something subject to scrutiny. Though not explicitly defined as such, they take on the character of irreducible structures. The above, then, by suggesting “elements of the self” that can be differentiated as more or less essential, and by suggesting some choice on the part of a political entity as to how it actualizes itself in the world, already implies greater ground for scrutiny of relations of enmity than Schmitt would be willing to concede. For Schmitt, it appears, forms of existence simply are, and the choice is merely one of recognizing the resulting conflicts or refusing to recognize them. “The sole remaining question... is always whether such a friend-and-enemy grouping is really at hand, regardless of which human motives are sufficiently strong to have brought it about.”²¹ By contrast, the rejection of the necessity of conflicts between identities is of the essence of liberalism, the critique of which animates *The Concept of the Political*.

The Critique of Liberalism

Understanding Schmitt’s critique of liberalism is important for two reasons. First, as Leo Strauss pointed out, it is this critique that motivates his definition, and his affirmation, of “the political”. Second, liberalism’s response to Schmitt’s critique has been IR’s predominant response to the concept of enmity. Before we can understand the nature of this response, we have to understand the nature of the critique.

²⁰ Schmitt (1996), 33.

²¹ *Ibid*, 36. To state otherwise would be to imbue them with some sort of moral status, and thus place morality above politics – to make it the arbiter between forms of existence – which Schmitt tries to avoid at all costs.

That Schmitt's purpose is, in fact, the critique of liberalism is clear, Strauss argues, if one examines Schmitt's argument in light of his own "general principles of understanding".²² Because "all spirit [is] only spirit of the present" and "all political concepts, ideas, and words [have] a polemical meaning... a concrete opposition in view [and are] tied to a concrete situation," the thesis with which Schmitt begins – that "The concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political" – is itself to be understood as polemical. It is oriented toward concrete political existence, and against some other conception of the state.²³ As such, Strauss asks: "To what extent does the present situation compel us to recognize that the basis of the state is the political? Against what opponent does the political emerge as the basis of the state?"²⁴ It is, in short, the neutralizations and depoliticizations of liberalism. Strauss summarizes Schmitt's thoughts on the matter as follows:

The present situation is characterized by the fact that a process three hundred years old has 'reached its end'. The age at the end of which we find ourselves is 'the age of neutralizations and depoliticizations.' Depoliticization not only is the accidental or even necessary result of the modern development but is its original and authentic goal; the movement in which the modern spirit has gained its greatest efficacy, liberalism, is characterized precisely by the *negation* of the political.²⁵

The substance of Schmitt's critique of liberalism, on the surface, is that this project of depoliticization has been, and will continue to be, a failure. Its negation of the political is not the elimination of politics "from the face of the earth", but only a hiding of it. Every "significant human movement" gives rise to political distinctions, and liberalism is no exception: "Its neutralizations and depoliticizations (of education, the

²² The argument which follows relies on Strauss's argument in (1996), notes 2-6.

²³ *Ibid*, note 2.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ *Ibid*, note 3.

economy, etc.) are, to be sure, of political significance.”²⁶ Liberal thought systematically “evades or ignores” the political by use of an “always recurring polarity of two heterogeneous spheres, namely ethics and economics, intellect and trade, education and property.”²⁷ Enemies are portrayed as merely “competitors” or “debating partners”. Yet liberalism itself remains a political – which is to say polemical – force in the world. Politics is engaged in by a mode of discourse that does not recognize the political, but that “serves existing or newly emerging friend-and-enemy groupings” all the same. A political position founded on economic superiority is not “essentially unwarlike” (as Schumpeter claimed), but merely uses a pacifist vocabulary to justify those means used to sustain it and condemn those used to challenge it: “War is condemned but executions, sanctions, punitive expeditions, pacifications, protection of treaties, international police, and measures to assure peace remain.”²⁸ As Strauss put it, “Liberalism has thus killed not the political but only understanding of the political, sincerity regarding the political.”²⁹ Schmitt’s purpose is to convince the reader that a theory is needed that can replace “the astonishingly consistent systematics of liberal thought”; one that recognizes the political and makes it apparent as such.³⁰

The structure of Schmitt’s argument against liberalism will be familiar to IR theorists. He associates liberalism with “anthropological optimism” – a belief in the essential goodness of human beings – and then argues that “all genuine political theories presuppose man to be evil, i.e., by no means unproblematic but a dangerous and dynamic

²⁶ Schmitt (1996), 69.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 70.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 78-79.

²⁹ Strauss (1996), note 4.

³⁰ He does not, both in Strauss’s estimation and by his own admission, provide such a theory himself, but only a point of departure for one. See *ibid*, note 6.

being.”³¹ His most explicit basis for this contention is the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes.³² “For Hobbes, truly a powerful and systematic political thinker, the pessimistic conception of man is the presupposition of a specific system of political thought.”³³ The constant, concrete possibility of the enemy substantiates the claim of man’s dangerousness, and “everywhere in political history, in foreign as well as in domestic politics, the incapacity or the unwillingness to make [the] distinction [between friend and enemy] is a symptom of the political end.”³⁴ Liberalism, then, is not only mistaken, but also dangerous. Nations cannot eliminate the distinction simply by “declaring [their] friendship for the entire world,” nor by voluntarily disarming:

It would be ludicrous to believe that a defenseless people has nothing but friends, and it would be a deranged calculation to suppose that the enemy could perhaps be touched by the absence of a resistance... If a people no longer possesses the energy or the will to maintain itself in the sphere of politics, the latter will not thereby vanish from the world. Only a weak people will disappear.³⁵

³¹ Schmitt (1996), 61.

³² Schmitt was also clearly influenced by “theological dogmas of sin” and of “the evilness of the world and man” which also lead to a categorization of men (into chosen and non-chosen) and make “the undifferentiated optimism of a universal conception of man” impossible. At the same time, he lamented that theological interference tends to confuse political concepts by shifting the distinction into “moral theology”, which assumes freedom of choice and thus “weakens the doctrine of the radical evilness of man”, as well as the distinction between chosen and nonchosen. See *ibid*, 64-65 and note 33.

³³ See *ibid*, 65. This passage underwent revision, probably as a direct result of Strauss’ point that Hobbes was, in fact, “the anti-political thinker” (see the footnote to Strauss [1996], note 14). By the 1933 edition, Hobbes had become, for Schmitt, “a great and truly systematic thinker [in whom] despite his extreme individualism, the ‘pessimistic’ view of man is so strong that it keeps the political understanding alive.” Similarly, his “specifically political system of thought” had, by 1933, become “a system of thought that still knows how to ask and answer specifically political questions.” These changes are quoted in Meier (1995), p. 36.

³⁴ Schmitt (1996), 68.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 53. Cf. Morgenthau (1967), 31, and Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 72. For Schmitt, this does not necessarily mean the literal disappearance of that nation, but certainly its disappearance as a ‘political’ entity, via the law of protection and obedience: “If a people is afraid of the trials and risks implied by existing in the sphere of politics, then another people will appear which will assume these trials by protecting it against foreign enemies and thereby taking over political rule. The protector then decides who the enemy is by virtue of the eternal relation of protection and obedience” (*Ibid*, 52).

The Critique of the Philosophy of Culture

So far, we have seen Schmitt's opposition to liberalism on the basis of its inability to succeed. This, however, is not the extent, nor arguably the essence, of his critique of liberalism. Schmitt also undertakes a more fundamental critique of what he sees as the characteristically liberal way of thinking about society and politics – the philosophy of culture. This is the purpose that Hobbes, with his strong and pessimistic emphasis on nature, seems to serve so well for Schmitt. As we shall see below, however, Hobbes proves to be an uncertain ally in this endeavour. Both Schmitt and Hobbes put nature prior to culture, but their views on the subsequent relationship of the two are arguably quite different.

According to Strauss, Schmitt wants to oppose the “philosophy of culture” in a dual sense. Firstly, he opposes the notion that the various spheres of culture are each autonomous. He is not satisfied, as he first appears to be, to establish the political itself as an autonomous domain of human experience. Rather, he sees the political as fundamental and authoritative vis-à-vis other domains of social relations. War is the “dire emergency” not only within the sphere of the political, but also “for man simply”. As such, Schmitt's conception of the political “implies a fundamental critique of at least the prevailing concept of culture,” according to which the various domains are autonomous in relation to one another, and (by implication) none is authoritative.³⁶

This raises the question of whether a philosophy of culture that presented culture as a more unified and ordered phenomenon might be more acceptable to Schmitt. Ultimately it is not, because he also rejects the view that the roots of politics – the genus

³⁶ Strauss (1996), note 7.

of the political – lie in culture. He seeks to discredit the notion that prior to its various domains “culture as a whole is already ‘autonomous,’ the sovereign creation, the ‘pure product’ of the human spirit.”³⁷ This belief leads to liberalism’s claim that the political is escapable; that it is possible to avoid the distinction between friend and enemy. In Hobbes, Schmitt finds a basis for his concept of the political; namely, the state of nature (*status naturalis*) – “the way in which man, prior to all culture, behaves toward other men.”³⁸ For Hobbes, the state of nature is the state of war, where “the nature of war, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto.” Similarly, for Schmitt the essence of the political is found “not in fighting itself... but in a behavior that is determined by this real possibility;” i.e., in enmity. Hobbes’ state of nature is for Schmitt the genuinely political status. The political is not the result of culture, but rather “a status of man; indeed [it] is *the* status as the ‘natural,’ the fundamental and extreme, status of man.”³⁹

While Schmitt’s conception of the natural state of human social relations seems very Hobbesian, however, Strauss points out that there are important differences that stem from (and speak to) the difference in their polemical purpose. Hobbes spoke of the state of nature as a state of war among individuals, while Schmitt portrayed a state of war among groups (especially nations).⁴⁰ Furthermore, for Hobbes everyone is the enemy of everyone else in the state of nature, whereas for Schmitt all political behaviour is oriented toward *friends* and enemies. Neutrality and friendship exist as possibilities alongside (but not in the absence of) enmity. Strauss attributes this to the fact that Hobbes’

³⁷ *Ibid*, note 10.

³⁸ *Ibid*.

³⁹ *Ibid*, note 11.

⁴⁰ Schmitt obscures this point. See Schmitt (1996), 59.

definition of the state of nature as the war of all against all is intended “to motivate the abandonment of the state of nature.” On Hobbes’ definition, the state of nature is an impossible state. On Schmitt’s definition, the state of nature is, in principle, possible, and in fact the state of humanity up to that point comes to be seen *as* the state of nature. The history of humanity is the history of friends and enemies. For Hobbes, civilization (*status civilis*) is the *opposite* of the state of nature – the negation of the state of war. Whereas Hobbes wants to negate the state of nature to the greatest extent possible by means of civilization, Schmitt invites civilization to partake more fully in the state of nature, in the genuinely political state.⁴¹ As such, the two differ on the proper relationship between nature and culture, because civilization presupposes culture in the broadest sense, defined as a disciplining of the human will. Schmitt affirms nature, while Hobbes, at least implicitly, is the prophet of a civilizing culture.

The Rejection of Bourgeois Humanity

We have already noted that Schmitt’s conception of the “state of nature” is different than that of Hobbes, and so the above is not meant to suggest that the “genuinely political status” that Schmitt seems to be affirming is Hobbes’ state of nature. As Strauss notes, Hobbes’ polemic against the state of nature “does not need to question the political in Schmitt’s sense, that is, the ‘natural’ character of relationships of human groups.”⁴² In fact, Hobbes allows that the state of nature will continue at least in relations between nations. This compels us to try to identify Schmitt’s departure from Hobbes more precisely. Again, Strauss seems to have put his finger on it.

⁴¹ See Strauss (1996), note 11.

⁴² *Ibid*, note 13.

For Schmitt, the state possesses “the right to demand from its own members the readiness to die.”⁴³ For Hobbes, this is precisely what the state cannot demand. The individual is under no obligation to risk his life, because death, and in particular violent death, is the greatest evil. Schmitt himself argues that the negation of the political is “inherent in every consistent individualism,” and that “No consistent individualism can entrust to someone other than to the individual himself the right to dispose of the physical life of the individual.”⁴⁴ Strauss points out that, for Hobbes, the individual’s right to secure his life “has fully the character of an inalienable human right, that is, of an individual’s *claim* that takes precedence over the state and determines its purpose and its limits.” Furthermore, Hobbes “does not shrink from the consequence and expressly denies the status of courage as a virtue.”⁴⁵ Hobbes starts from the position that an individual’s claim is valid *qua* claim. Man is by nature free; any obligation comes subsequently, and only in exchange for the securing of his life. Thus, while the state can demand unconditional obedience in other matters, it cannot demand that he risk what it exists to secure.

This difference between Hobbes and Schmitt is, in essence, about what is most important in human social relations, and in political organization in particular. For Hobbes it is the securing of life – the negation of the state of nature. Strauss suggests that for Schmitt it is the possibility of “the morally difficult decision”, in this case not by the individual but by the political group. “Agreement at all costs is possible only as agreement at the cost of the meaning of human life; for agreement at all costs is possible only if man has relinquished asking the question of what is right; and if man relinquishes

⁴³ Schmitt (1996), 46.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 70-71.

⁴⁵ Strauss (1996), note 13.

that question, he relinquishes being a man.”⁴⁶ One response might be that liberalism does not entail the abandonment of this question, but only individualizes it. For Schmitt, however, these are one in the same. The morally demanding decision, the specifically political decision, comes down to the distinguishing of friends and enemies, and the enemy is always the public enemy. For Schmitt, this distinction is the only thing that can justify the taking of human life or insistence upon the willingness of one’s own to die.⁴⁷ Hobbes denies that politics (to depart from Schmitt’s definition of the word) should have such lofty aims, or such severe consequences, and liberalism has followed him on this point. As Tracy Strong put it, “It is precisely to deny that the stakes of politics should be so high that liberals resist Schmitt.”⁴⁸

If this reading is accurate, one is left to wonder why Schmitt does, in fact, put the stakes of politics so high. Again, we must return to the question of Schmitt’s polemical purpose. What is it specifically in liberalism that Schmitt finds so distasteful? Heinrich Meier has argued convincingly that Schmitt wrote *The Concept of the Political* in opposition to the “apolitical” consciousness of “bourgeois man”. Schmitt takes his definition of this man from Hegel, who was the first to offer a “polemically political definition” of him:

The bourgeois is an individual who does not want to leave the apolitical riskless private sphere. He rests in the possession of his private property, and under the justification of his possessive individualism he acts as an individual against the totality. He is a man who finds his compensation for his political nullity in the fruits of freedom and enrichment and above all in the total security of its use.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, note 28.

⁴⁷ Schmitt, (1996), 35-36, 49.

⁴⁸ Tracy B. Strong, “Foreword: Dimensions of the New Debate Around Carl Schmitt,” in Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Scwab, trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), xvi.

Consequently he wants to be spared bravery and exempted from the danger of a violent death.⁴⁹

What Strauss demonstrates to Schmitt, Meier argues, is “that the existence for which the foundations are laid by Hobbes’s principles is that very existence of the bourgeois against which Schmitt seeks to maintain the reality and necessity of the political.”⁵⁰ Hobbes’ possessive individualism legitimates bourgeois man, and his subjection of humanity to “planning” leads inevitably to the *ideal* of civilization; “that is, to the demand for rational social relations of humanity as *one* ‘partnership in consumption and production’.” This makes Hobbes “the author of the ideal of civilization”, and “By this very fact he is the founder of liberalism.”⁵¹

To say that Schmitt “posits” the political against the liberal philosophy of culture is to say, at least, that he asserts its reality, even where liberalism reigns supreme; that he “confronts the liberal negation of the political with... the recognition of the reality of the political.”⁵² Strauss argues, however, that he also *affirms* it. That is, seeing the political as at least potentially “threatened”, Schmitt sets out to make the case that it should remain. His argument is that since the evilness (dangerousness) of man is “the ultimate presupposition of the position of the political,” and since on Schmitt’s account the thesis of man’s dangerousness is a “supposition” or “anthropological confession of faith”, then the position of the political is also the affirmation of the political. Since the opposite “confession of faith” is also possible (that culture, broadly defined, is the origin of man’s

⁴⁹ Schmitt, 62-63. His reference is to Hegel’s “Wissenschaftliche Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts,” *Sämtliche Werke* (Glockner edition; Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1927), I, 499.

⁵⁰ Meier (1995), 38.

⁵¹ Strauss (1996), note 13. See also Meier (1995), 35-38. Hobbes considered himself the founder of “Civil Philosophy”. See C. B. Macpherson, “Introduction,” in Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Macpherson ed. (London: Penguin, 1985), 10.

⁵² Strauss (1996), note 15.

dangerousness), the attempt to eliminate man's dangerousness is not, in principle, excluded. Thus, to posit the political in opposition to this attempt is to endorse the political.⁵³

In Strauss' view, Schmitt does so because he sees depoliticization as dehumanizing. A world without political distinctions – the only distinctions that can justify the risking or taking of life – is merely “a world of entertainment, a world of amusement.” If everything is of equal value, then nothing is of any value. Schmitt posits the political in defence of “the seriousness of human life” against the notion of “agreement at all costs”, which means that “[Schmitt's] affirmation of the political is ultimately nothing other than the affirmation of the moral.”⁵⁴ Though he goes to great lengths to hide it, Schmitt does not reject the primacy of morality over politics so much as the claim of pacifist, humanitarian morals *to be* morals.⁵⁵

Enmity and Morality

The above presents Schmitt's *Concept of the Political* as essentially an apology for the persistence of enmity. This is a difficult case to make where liberalism predominates, because the accommodation of different identities through the depoliticization of identity in general is of the essence of liberal philosophy. In this climate, Schmitt's argument has little chance of being accepted as moral. Thus, it is should not be surprising if Schmitt resorts to the argument of necessity – of the “inescapability” of the political – to make what is, at bottom, a moral argument. If Strauss is right, however, does this mean that the political collapses into the moral? That enmity is always “about right and wrong, and noble and disgraceful, and good and

⁵³ *Ibid*, note 21.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, note 27.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, note 30 and 31.

bad?”⁵⁶ Could not political groups just as easily fight over resources, markets, religion, ethnicity, or for “pure prestige”, and would they not equally be enemies if they did?

The question is a difficult one, because other kinds of differences, economic for example, can come to be seen as issues of “good and evil” (capitalism vs. communism; open markets vs. protectionism). The real question is whether this transformation is a necessary precondition of enmity. Space will not allow a satisfactory answer here. Regardless of the answer, however, the political does not simply become the moral. Even if we leave open the question of whether all political distinctions are moral distinctions, clearly not all moral differences are political differences in Schmitt’s sense of the word. The notion of existential negation is still essential to the concept of enmity. Moral (or any other) differences do not become political differences until one entity declares that another’s moral position (or another aspect of their mode of being) constitutes a negation, in a concrete and existential sense, of the former’s own form of existence. Conversely, the declaration of enmity, whether by the initiation of war or otherwise, implies such a negation.

The moral argument that Strauss has Schmitt making is essentially that political entities should take seriously their differences with other political entities and be willing to fight over them; that they should not be willing to adapt themselves endlessly to accommodate the other. What he accomplishes by making the political “autonomous” (and therefore mysterious) is to put it beyond scrutiny. His seemingly “unpolemical” description of the political – that is, the assertion of its existence, regardless of whether one admires or deplores it – is intended not to leave open all possible evaluative stances

⁵⁶ Plato, *Euthyphro*, 7c-d, in Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans., Harold North Fowler, (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb/Harvard University Press, 1999).

toward the political, but “precisely to seal off all such possibilities: the political cannot be evaluated at all, cannot be measured by an ideal”.⁵⁷ If, however, the position of the political turns out to be a moral decision, and thus *itself* open to scrutiny, then it cannot insulate particular political decisions – distinctions between friend and enemy – from scrutiny. In the end, the affirmation of the political in disregard of the moral is untenable as a critique of liberalism, because it is merely a liberalism that prefers war to peace:

[T]he affirmation of the political as such is the affirmation of fighting as such, wholly irrespective of *what* is being fought *for*. In other words: he who affirms the political as such comports himself *neutrally* toward all groupings into friends and enemies... [He] respects all who want to fight; he is just as *tolerant* as the liberals – but with the opposite intention: whereas the liberal respects and tolerates all ‘honest’ convictions so long as they merely acknowledge the legal order, *peace*, as sacrosanct, he who affirms the political as such respects and tolerates all ‘serious’ convictions, that is, all decisions oriented to the real possibility of war. Thus the affirmation of the political as such proves to be a liberalism with the opposite polarity.⁵⁸

Conclusion

Schmitt’s critique of liberalism, in attempting a departure from the goal of rational social relations defined in terms of peace, is in sharp contrast to most of contemporary IR theory. It seems possible that by examining the “horizons” of liberalism, he recovers an understanding of an element of “the political” that most theories of international politics have left behind; namely, an account of the phenomenon of enmity. At the same time, Schmitt’s argument seems morally problematic, and one is left wondering if his explanation of the political is separable from his normative

⁵⁷ Strauss (1996), note 15.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, note 32. Emphasis in original. See also Hans Morgenthau, “Über den Sinn der Wissenschaft in dieser Zeit und über die Bestimmung des Menschen,” (Geneva, 1934), p. 55, where Morgenthau accuses Schmitt, who had by then joined the Nazi party, of opportunism and moral indifference: “Thus scholarship ultimately turns into a matter of advocacy that is at the beck of anyone willing to pay for its services. The scholar turns into a dialectically agile, yet intellectually dishonest defender of anyone who is politically strong at the moment. Thereby, he disavows any values transcending the political realm – a Jesuit who no longer believes in God.” Quoted in Cristoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 162.

orientation toward it. The next chapter examines IR theory's point of departure from Schmitt, which turns out to be, in the first instance, more normative than ontological in nature. Arguably, though, this normative departure has been accompanied by an ontological shift that makes IR theory less capable than Schmitt of understanding enmity in international politics. Chapter 5 attempts to gain an understanding of IR's response to Schmitt. The chapters that follow deal with the question of whether Schmitt's concept of enmity offers a basis for a better understanding of the US-North Korean nuclear confrontation than the concept of enmity, and what the implications of such an understanding might be.

Chapter 5 - IR Theory's Encounter with Enmity: Schmitt and Morgenthau

Having located the means of a potentially better understanding of enmity in Carl Schmitt's *Concept of the Political*, the obvious question is what IR theory has had to say about it. It is somewhat remarkable that it should have had anything to say about it at all, since Schmitt wrote from within the German academic field of *Staatslehre*, a sub-field of jurisprudence dealing with public and constitutional law.¹ As it happens, this was the field that trained one of the most prominent theorists of American IR in the post-World War II period, Hans Morgenthau.² It was in this environment that IR began its engagement with Schmitt's concept of enmity, and Morgenthau's response to Schmitt has, by and large, been IR's response.

In Morgenthau, Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction met what would become two of the most influential streams of thought in American IR, neither of which was positively disposed toward it. First, and most obviously, it met what became known as "classical realism", more likely to see interests than friends and enemies.³ Second, it met

¹ See Cristoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 115-116.

² This was Morgenthau's first field of intensive intellectual endeavour. He wrote his doctoral dissertation in this field, completed in 1929 and titled "Die internationale Rechtspflege, das Wesen ihrer Organe und die Grenzen ihrer Anwendung; insbesondere der Begriff des Politischen im Völkerrecht", (translated by Frei as "The International judicial function; the nature of its organs, and the limitations of its application; in particular, the concept of the political in international law"). It was published under the title *Die internationale Rechtspflege, ihr Wesen und ihre Grenzen* (Leipzig, 1929). He also lectured on this field briefly in Geneva (1932-34), until this became impossible due to the increasingly anti-Semitic academic environment among Germans there, precipitating his move to Madrid in the Spring of 1935. See *Frei*, *ibid*, 44-53, and 123-124, notes 41 and 42.

³ The position of classical realism is often associated with the dictum, commonly attributed to Benjamin Disraeli, that "Nations have no permanent friends and no permanent enemies. Only permanent interests."

with a form of *realpolitik* that embraced the essence of the very liberal project that Schmitt set out to discredit. The “realism” in Morgenthau is not easily separable from his “liberalism”, and in fact the former derives its particular form from the latter. Nonetheless, classical realism approaches the liberal project in a particular way not common to all liberal theories, and so it is worthwhile trying to specify what its effects are, specifically as it relates to the concept of enmity. Briefly stated, classical realism reduces friendship and enmity to interests, while liberalism seeks to negate enmity as far as possible by positing “rationality” in opposition to it. Each of these elements of Morgenthau’s thought will be examined in turn, but first it is important to understand what Morgenthau retained from Schmitt in the process.

By the time Morgenthau began to study *Staatslehre*, Schmitt was already one of the pre-eminent theorists in that field.⁴ During the late 1920s and early 1930s – when the three editions of *The Concept of the Political* were published – *Staatslehre* was embroiled in debate about how to deal with the increasingly apparent problems facing the Weimar republic. Importantly, Schmitt and Morgenthau stood on the same side of the vast theoretical divide that coincided with this debate, opposing the predominant legal positivist school in favour of a more socially and politically aware jurisprudence. Some of the dynamics of this early intellectual exchange will emerge below, but it is the

⁴ Their personal contact was limited, and characterized by animosity, at least on Morgenthau’s end. Schmitt sent Morgenthau a letter of congratulation upon the passing of his doctoral dissertation in 1929, an honour which caused Morgenthau to request permission to visit Schmitt. Their meeting, in August 1929, left such a negative impression on Morgenthau that upon leaving Schmitt’s apartment he remarked to himself, “Now I have met the most evil man alive”. Subsequently, Schmitt appropriated the concept of “intensity” as the determining factor in whether an issue between states is of a political nature, an idea that had been developed by Morgenthau in his doctoral dissertation. Schmitt used it in the 2nd (1932) edition of *The Concept of the Political* “without lifting the veil of anonymity from [its] author.” See Morgenthau’s “Fragment of an Intellectual Autobiography: 1904-1932,” published in Kenneth W. Thompson and Robert J. Myers, *Truth and Tragedy: A tribute to Hans J. Morgenthau*, 2nd, augm. ed. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1984), 1-17, and Frei, *ibid*, 160-1.

influence of Schmitt's thought on Morgenthau's most influential work, *Politics Among Nations*, that is of greatest import in terms of Schmitt's influence, or lack thereof, within the field of American IR more generally.⁵

There are several important points on which Morgenthau follows Schmitt's lead in that work. First, like Schmitt, he sets out to define the political in contradistinction to, and as autonomous in relation to economics, aesthetics, morality, and law:

Intellectually, the political realist maintains the autonomy of the political sphere, as the economist, the lawyer, the moralist maintain theirs. He thinks in terms of interest defined as power, as the economist thinks in terms of interest defined as wealth, the lawyer, of the conformity of action with legal rules; the moralist, of the conformity of action with moral principles.⁶

Secondly, like Schmitt, Morgenthau defends the political as having an appropriate place in human social relations. He suggests that international politics "as it is" reflects international politics "as it ought to be in view of its intrinsic nature".⁷ This is because "politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature," which "has not changed since the classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece endeavored to discover these laws." Since these laws are "impervious to our preferences," and we challenge them "only at the risk of failure", the place of politics in

⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, fourth ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967). Schmitt's continued influence on Morgenthau after his arrival in the United States is most apparent in the opening chapters of *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, Morgenthau's first book in English, where Schmitt's ideas are employed in the critique both of "liberalism" and "rationalism". See Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), esp. ch.'s 3 & 4, and Frei, *ibid*, 197. *Politics Among Nations*, however, has been infinitely more influential. In September 1948, the month it was published, it was officially adopted as a textbook by Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and Notre Dame, and by ninety other colleges by April 1949. By October of 1953, it had, according to its publisher, more adoptions than all competing textbooks, and more than twice as many as its nearest competitor. In 1963, a survey of 450 American political scientists ranked Morgenthau third in American political science in terms of "most significant contribution" and first within international relations. See Frei (2001), 73, 77, and Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *American Political Science: A Profile of a Discipline* (New York, 1964), 66, cited in *ibid*, 77.

⁶ Morgenthau (1967), 11.

⁷ *Ibid*, 14.

social life must be respected.⁸ More specifically, there can be no question of eliminating the struggle for power, but only of changing the context within which it operates. This derives from a third similarity to Schmitt, the rejection of “anthropological optimism”. The struggle for power is universal in time and place, because “The drives to live, to propagate, and to dominate are common to all men,” and “The tendency to dominate, in particular, is an element of all human associations, from the family through fraternal and professional associations and local political organizations, to the state.”⁹

Flowing directly from these first three points of similarity with Schmitt is a fourth - Morgenthau’s rejection of the application of “standards” external to politics in the evaluation of foreign policy. The appropriate question is not, for example, “Is this policy in accord with moral principles?” but rather “How does this policy affect the power of the nation?”. The political realist is aware of the existence and relevance of other standards of thought, but “he cannot but subordinate [them] to those of politics.” He takes issue in particular with the “legalistic-moralistic approach” to international politics.¹⁰ Political realism, Morgenthau argues, is aware of “the ineluctable tension between the moral command and the requirements of successful political action,” and is unwilling to gloss it over and thus “obfuscate both the moral and the political issue by making it appear as though the stark facts of politics were morally more satisfying than they actually are, and

⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

⁹ *Ibid*, 31-32.

¹⁰ Morgenthau equivocates on this point somewhat, insisting merely that the desirable be reconciled with the possible; that universal moral principles cannot be applied to states’ action in their abstract universal formulation, but rather must be “filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place.” This calls for prudence, or “the weighing of the consequences of alternative political actions,” which is “the supreme virtue in politics”. *Ibid*, 10-11. The tension, however, is more acute than this suggests. See below.

the moral law less exacting than it actually is.” To put a finer point on it, “the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation... get in the way of successful political action”.¹¹

A fifth similarity with Schmitt is Morgenthau’s rejection of the identification of one nation’s interests with those of humanity as a whole. For Schmitt, the concept of humanity, and the identification of its good with one’s own objectives, “is an especially useful ideological instrument of imperialist expansion.” It operates as such by denying the enemy the quality of being human or declaring him an “outlaw of humanity”.

Humanity, however, excludes the category of enemy, because it has none, “at least not on this planet”.¹² Similarly, Morgenthau’s political realism “refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the laws that govern the universe. As it distinguishes between truth and opinion, so it distinguishes between truth and idolatry.” The idolatry he speaks of is that of a nationalism which “pretends to know with certainty what is good and evil in the relations among nations”, or holds “the blasphemous conviction that God is always on one’s side and that what one wills oneself cannot fail to be willed by God also.” This is not only morally indefensible, but also “politically pernicious, for it is liable to engender the distortion in judgment which, in the blindness of crusading frenzy, destroys nations and civilizations – in the name of moral principle, ideal, or God himself.”¹³

¹¹ *Ibid*, 9-10.

¹² “When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity, it is not a war for the sake of humanity, but a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent. At the expense of its opponent, it tries to identify itself with humanity in the same way as one can misuse peace, justice, progress, and civilization in order to claim these as one’s own and to deny the same to the enemy.” Schmitt, (1996), 54.

¹³ Morgenthau (1967), 10. It is morally indefensible because it is “that very sin of pride against which the Greek tragedians and the Biblical prophets have warned rulers and ruled”.

Morgenthau's Polemic

In order to understand why Morgenthau follows Schmitt as far as he does, as well as the divergence between the two observed below, it makes sense to follow the method used with Schmitt earlier and inquire into Morgenthau's polemical purpose. Morgenthau, by his own early observation, seems always to have expressed himself in opposition to something, and wrote more polemically than one might expect for a theorist of such keen insight.¹⁴ We are concerned here, in particular, with his polemical purpose in writing *Politics Among Nations*, and he seems to have furnished it in the preface to the second edition. When originally written in 1947, he intimates, the book was largely a reflection "on the ways by which a false conception of foreign policy, put into practice by the western democracies, led inevitably to the threat and the actuality of totalitarianism and war."¹⁵ This is generally taken to be a reference to inter-war "idealism", and specifically to its rejection of power politics based on humanitarian-pacifistic morals and the belief "that involvement in power politics is not inevitable, but only a historic accident, and that nations have a choice between power politics and other kinds of foreign policy not tainted by the desire for power."¹⁶ As the book was written when "that false and pernicious conception of foreign policy was still in the ascendancy", it "was indeed, and could be nothing else but, a frontal attack against that conception."¹⁷

¹⁴ "I need an opponent, a great controversy... I can only express myself antithetically." Quoted in Frei (2001), 114, from Morgenthau's diary of March 20, 1928. See also Michael Oakeshott, "Scientific Politics", in Oakeshott, *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*, Timothy Fuller, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 97-110.

¹⁵ "Preface to the Second Edition," reprinted in Morgenthau (1967), p. xi.

¹⁶ Morgenthau (1967), 35.

¹⁷ Morgenthau, "Preface to the Second Edition," reprinted in (1967), xi. He continues, "It had to be as radical on the side of its philosophy as had been the errors on the other side. With that battle largely won, the *polemic purpose* can give way to the consolidation of a position that no longer needs to be attained, but only to be defended and adapted to new experiences" (emphasis added). Among other changes, the first chapter to the second edition was entirely new, and was influenced by Leo Strauss. See *Ibid*, xi-xiii.

Certainly Morgenthau takes care not to disparage the role of power in society and politics, and criticizes those who do.¹⁸ He presents the attempt to stamp it out as both futile and dangerous. Still, it bears notice that the book was addressed not to the problems of the inter-war period, but to those of the post-war period, when the emerging Cold War was the dominant political reality. In this context, pacifism was hardly the danger. A fuller conception of the object of Morgenthau's polemic is to be gained by reference to two of his other works from the same period. The first is an essay on *The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy*, published between the first two editions of *Politics Among Nations*.¹⁹ Its thesis is that "this generation of Americans must shed the illusions of their fathers and grandfathers and relearn the great principles of statecraft which guided the path of the republic in the first decade... of its existence"; namely political realism.²⁰ In this work, Morgenthau draws out the implications of the nineteenth century rejection of power politics more fully, noting that it has two basic propositions. The first, essentially the same as that noted above, is that the struggle for power is a historical accident associated with non-democratic government, and would disappear with the triumph of democracy. The second goes beyond the formulation in *Politics Among Nations*:

[T]hat, in consequence, conflicts between democratic and non-democratic nations must be conceived not as struggles for mutual advantage in terms of power but primarily as a contest between good and evil, which can only end with the complete triumph of good and with evil being wiped off the face of the earth.²¹

¹⁸ Morgenthau (1967), 14.

¹⁹ Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. XLIV: 4 (December 1950), 833-854.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 833.

²¹ *Ibid*, 839.

Briefly stated, Morgenthau sets out to “restore” the view that these conflicts are struggles for mutual advantage in terms of power. This conception of foreign policy has been displaced, he argues, by one in which moral principles no longer merely justify actions taken in pursuit of “the enduring national interest”, a practice of which he is already critical, but rather “replace it as a guide for action.” The latter began its ascendancy when McKinley “knelt beside his bed in prayer” and “heard the voice of God telling him... to annex the Philippines”, and found its fulfillment in the political thought of Woodrow Wilson.²² The inter-war rejection of Wilsonianism – the “isolationism” of the twenties and thirties – in fact ratified Wilsonianism’s rejection of the realist tradition of foreign policy and the idea of the necessity of power politics. The two “have more in common than their historic enmity would lead one to suspect. In a profound sense they are brothers under the skin.”²³

The fundamental error of which they are both manifestations is the position of an antithesis between the national interest and moral principles. One stops short of the national interest and the other “soars beyond it”, but the more fundamental error is the same: adherence to a “moral” principle in opposition to that interest. Morgenthau denies that this is morality. In the absence of an integrated international society capable of providing it, “the attainment of a modicum of order and the realization of a minimum of moral values” depends upon the political success of national communities. No “higher

²² *Ibid*, 847.

²³ Neither has any conception of the national interest of the United States outside of the Western Hemisphere, and so each substitutes abstract principles – albeit different ones – for the “guidance” which the national interest should rightly provide. While isolationism maintains that the United States has no interest in any particular political and military constellation outside the Western Hemisphere, as if isolation were a natural condition that need only be left “undisturbed” in order to continue forever, Wilsonianism asserts that the American national interest is nowhere in particular but everywhere, being identical with the interests of mankind itself. See *ibid*, 850-851.

morality” can result from the application of universal moral principles to international politics, but only “moral deterioration through either political failure or the fanaticism of political crusades.” As such, “the antithesis between moral principles and the national interest is not only intellectually mistaken but also morally pernicious.”²⁴

Of the two manifestations of this common “error”, there is no question which Morgenthau is more concerned with in *Politics Among Nations*. “Isolationism” hardly makes an appearance, except as an historical footnote.²⁵ On the other hand, a phenomenon directly related to the crusading spirit – that of “nationalistic universalism” – is the subject of an extended critique.²⁶ In contrast to the nationalism of the nineteenth century, which aimed at “one nation in one state and nothing else”, nationalistic universalism is a new “political religion” which “claims for one nation and one state the right to impose its own valuations and standards of action upon all the other nations.”²⁷ Not only has it weakened the (almost certainly fantastical) international (European) morality of the 17th and 18th centuries, but “it has also supplied the power aspirations of individual nations with a good conscience and a Messianic fervor... [and] inspired them with a thirst and a strength for universal domination of which the nationalism of the nineteenth century knew nothing.”²⁸ The stakes of the contest among nations are no longer merely relative power positions, “but the ability to impose upon the other contestants a new universal political and moral system recreated in the image of the

²⁴ *Ibid*, 853-854.

²⁵ See Morgenthau (1967), 33-4, 189.

²⁶ See esp. *Ibid*, 241-249 and 321-331.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 323.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 322.

victorious nation's political and moral convictions.”²⁹ In conjunction with modern technology, this new force has changed profoundly the character of war, and modern technology “cannot be undone”. As such, “The only variable that remains subject to deliberate manipulation is the new moral force of nationalistic universalism.”³⁰

The second work that sheds light on Morgenthau's polemical purpose is *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, published two years prior to *Politics Among Nations*.³¹ It is a trenchant, even overstated, critique of rationalism, or “the belief in the power of science to solve all problems and, more particularly, all political problems which confront man in the modern age.”³² Morgenthau, having been educated in Germany, was disturbed by the characteristic optimism and pragmatism of the American intellectual tradition.³³ In it he saw a radical belief in progress, in “the unlimited perfectibility of human affairs” and “the promise of perfection here and now”.³⁴ At the root of this Morgenthau identified rationalism, a dogmatic belief in science as an instrument of “social salvation”, manifesting itself in the pervasive and unconscious assumption that evil resides in “lack of reason,” and that its elimination from the earth is merely a matter of overcoming ignorance.³⁵ He considered this mode of thinking ill equipped to deal with the harsh realities of international power politics, and he saw it manifested in the crusading spirit at

²⁹ *Ibid*, 246. “Thus, carrying their idols before them, the nationalistic masses of our time meet in the international arena, each group convinced that it executes the mandate of history, that it does for humanity what it seems to do for itself, and that it fulfills a sacred mission ordained by Providence”. *Ibid*, 249.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 540.

³¹ Morgenthau (1946).

³² *Ibid*, vi. On the overstated nature of Morgenthau's critiques of rationalism and liberalism in this book, see Oakeshott (1993).

³³ Having been educated in a tradition that venerated theory and history and was “contemptuous of empiricism and pragmatism”, Morgenthau apparently experienced a sort of intellectual culture shock when confronted with the American intellectual climate, which was “optimistic, pragmatic [and] ahistorical”. See Frei (2001), 184.

³⁴ See Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation: vol. 2, Human Destiny*, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 160 ff, and Morgenthau (1946), 18.

³⁵ Morgenthau (1946), 5, 15.

the heart of nationalistic universalism. If evil results from ignorance, then the “mission” of enlightened nations is to educate the rest of humanity. Morgenthau was writing against the excesses of a rationalism that assumed it could remake the world to an unlimited degree, and a nationalistic universalism that assumed that the image it should be remade in was its own.

Classical Realism: Enmity Reduced to Interests

Briefly restated, the problem Morgenthau is addressing in *Politics Among Nations* is that of two firmly constituted, rigidly defined, intensely unified political groupings, each of which assigns universal importance to its own mode of being, confronting each other on the stage of international politics. That is, he is addressing the problem of enmity. Morgenthau does not deal explicitly with Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction in this work, but he did do so several times during his early years as a scholar, and the influence of those thoughts on his later work could hardly be more pronounced.³⁶ Much of what IR has come to call “classical realism” had already been expressed in the forum of German *Staatslehre* by the early 1930s.

One of Morgenthau’s most explicit treatments of Schmitt’s thought comes in a 1933 publication on *The Concept of the Political and the Theory of International Conflict*.³⁷ In an earlier lecture, Morgenthau had argued that Schmitt stopped “midway” in his examination of the political, instead of penetrating to its “ultimate roots” in the

³⁶ Morgenthau dealt with Schmitt’s concept of the political in his doctoral dissertation, cited above, in his *Habilitation*, completed in Geneva, and in his inaugural lecture to the law faculty at the University of Geneva in the spring of 1932, entitled “The Struggle of German *Staatslehre* for the Reality of the State.” See Frei (2001), 117 ff, and 158-163.

³⁷ Hans Morgenthau [Morgenthau], *La Notion du ‘Politique’ et la Théorie des Différends Internationaux* (Paris : Recueil Sirey [Société Anonyme], 1933). All translations below are the author’s.

psychology of man.³⁸ He continues along this line in the 1933 treatise, arguing that the friend-enemy antithesis does not get at the heart of politics. He demonstrates this by comparison to the antitheses that define the moral, esthetic and economic respectively. Each of these is based on a “standard of value” that is specific to that domain. The pair of concepts that constitutes the defining antithesis of each domain, he notes, is nothing but the tautological expression of that standard of value, which is itself the tautological expression of the concept that gives the domain its name. For example, “according to whether or not a given object is in accordance with the standard of value implied by the concept of the esthetic, it will be judged to have or not to have esthetic value, which is to say as esthetic or not esthetic, or finally beautiful or ugly.”³⁹ On the other hand, “the pair of concepts friend – enemy in no way results from the concept of the political with the same logical necessity as that which allows us to deduce the concepts of the moral, the esthetic or the economic”.⁴⁰

Not only does this antithesis refer to a higher level of specification and concretization than those which relate to the other domains, but more importantly, Morgenthau argues, it is not specific to the domain of the political at all, and so does not refer to a unique essence in the same way that more concrete expressions of the fundamental antitheses of the other domains still do. The difference, he argues, is that the other categories refer to some abstract standard of value, which can serve as the basis of a judgment about a given phenomenon of life. Judgments of this type posit a relationship between the phenomenon and the abstract standard of value. The friend and enemy concepts, by contrast, do not appeal to any abstract notion of value, but only to domains

³⁸ “The Struggle of German *Staatslehre* for the Reality of the State,” p. 25, quoted in Frei (2001), 119.

³⁹ Morgenthau (1933), 48-49.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 51.

of value specific to a particular person or group of persons; the antithesis merely reflects and restates what they value. “The term friend designates a person... whose psychological relation to another person and their sphere of life has a positive character, that is to say it is favourable. The enemy, by contrast, is a person... whose psychological relation to another has a negative character, that is to say it is unfavourable.”⁴¹

This psychological relation is, of course, not confined to the interior world of thought, but will tend to manifest itself in the exterior world: The subject of the relation will tend to “attest to it” by expressions of their thoughts or by their actions.⁴² In this translation from the interior to the exterior, a critical transformation takes place in the concepts of friendship and enmity. They become, in effect, the harmony and opposition of interests respectively:

The political friend, then, will be he who promotes or who looks to promote the political goals pursued by another person, or who is at least disposed to do so; the political enemy will be he who hinders or looks to hinder the realization of these goals; in the same fashion, the artistic friend will be he who facilitates the realization of the artist’s esthetic goals, and the enemy he who obstructs them... Therefore, he who, in pursuing political, moral, esthetic or economic goals, distinguishes between friend and enemy, establishes a distinction between the one who tends to promote the realization of his goal and the one who tends to hinder it.⁴³

Far from being a uniquely political phenomenon, the distinction between friend and enemy operates on the logic of economics, and is equally applicable to all domains of human life. It is “nothing but a personification of the distinction between the conditions likely to favour the realization of a given goal and those which are likely to hinder it,” and the conditions for the realization of a particular goal constitutes “the economic

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 52-54.

⁴² *Ibid*, 54.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 54-5.

problem par excellence”.⁴⁴ This has the further implication that the distinction does not have an absolute or permanent character, but is relative to the goal pursued. “The most solid political friendship can turn into enmity and vice versa, as soon as the economical relation between its object and the goal pursued changes, or as soon as the goal itself changes.” Thus, the distinction between friend and enemy is neither a fundamental distinction unique to the domain of politics nor derivative of such a distinction, but is rather a “functional element common to all of these domains of value”.⁴⁵

The concept of interests might dispense with the concept of enmity altogether if it were not for the fact that, both in 1933 and for the rest of Morgenthau’s career, interests are defined in terms of power, and politics as the struggle for power. “International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim.”⁴⁶ As such, “Every foreign policy is nothing but the will to maintain, to increase, or to demonstrate one’s power”.⁴⁷ While this definition retains the ever-present possibility of hostility, however, it dispenses with the notion of identity, and thus with the essence of enmity. While politics, for Schmitt, is about conflicting identities, for Morgenthau it is about a ubiquitous and largely undifferentiated endeavour among human beings who all seek power. In addition, it is not power simply that animates politics, but interests defined in terms of power. The interposition of interests suggests that the earlier observation that friend and enemy designations are as malleable as circumstance and objectives still applies. There are no

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 58.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 60.

⁴⁶ Morgenthau (1967), 25.

⁴⁷ Morgenthau (1933), 61.

constitutional oppositions or existential negations.⁴⁸ The concepts of friend and enemy have no substance of their own, and no autonomous meaning.

This view, however, is not entirely satisfactory. If one looks closer at Morgenthau's conception of the struggle for power, there is a potential for enmity that the interposition of the concept of interests cannot fully do away with. First, the desire for power is in fact the desire to *rule*, since "When we speak of power, we mean man's control over the minds and actions of other men."⁴⁹ Second, the struggle for power is inescapable, because "The drives to live, to propagate, and to dominate are common to all men", and "The tendency to dominate, in particular, is an element of all human associations, from the family through fraternal and professional associations and local political organizations, to the state."⁵⁰ Thirdly, politics is not, for Morgenthau, a completely undifferentiated phenomenon. Every status quo in politics will, he argues, be characterized by a division between those who are satisfied with the current distribution of power and those who wish to overthrow it, and thus he posits a distinction between "status quo" and "imperialist" powers.⁵¹ And fourth, the struggle is not always proportionate to the value of its object. If every foreign policy is aimed at maintaining, augmenting or demonstrating one's power, the last, which corresponds to "the policy of prestige", is distinguished by the characteristic disproportion that exists between the value of the immediate objective and the intensity of the political will devoted to it.⁵²

⁴⁸ « Dans les domaines que nous avons considérés, il n'existe pas d'inimitiés 'constitutionnelles', comme il n'y a pas non plus d'amitié qui soit de nature 'éternelle'. » *Ibid*, 59-60.

⁴⁹ Morgenthau (1967), 26. He continues, "By political power we refer to the mutual relations of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large."

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 31, 32.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 36ff.

⁵² Morgenthau (1933), 61; (1967), 36-7 and 75ff.

The reduction of enmity to interests in the sphere of politics proves problematic, because politics involves a struggle for power. Thus, the negation of enmity is not yet complete.

That enmity cannot be reduced to interests in the sphere of politics results from the fact that the struggle for power implies the possibility for existential negation. The pursuit of particular objectives does not exhaust the motivations for political action. Political actors also often seek to assert themselves as such in the world. Morgenthau is, in fact, keenly aware of the prominent role identity *can* play in politics, but chooses to downplay it. This is already implicit in what has been said about nationalistic universalism above, and is confirmed more explicitly by a conspicuous passage in a chapter that takes issue with the attempt, specifically by UNESCO, to mitigate international conflict through increased cultural understanding. The attempt is misguided, he argues, because increased understanding does not necessarily lead to increased friendship. He illustrates the point by reference to the Cold War: “An intelligent and successful foreign policy depends upon the Americans’ and the Russians’ understanding what both nations *are and want*. Peace between the United States and the Soviet Union depends in the last analysis upon whether what one of them *is and wants* is compatible with what the other one *is and wants*.”⁵³

If there are only interests, then it would suffice to say that peace depends upon whether what one of them wants is compatible with what the other wants. Morgenthau knows, however, that this would be to underestimate the obstinacy of international conflicts. The most robust conflicts may be those where “vital interests” are at stake, but what states consider to be vital is inseparable from what they are. Ultimately, he would

⁵³ Morgenthau (1967), 504, my emphasis.

have them be something different than what he sees in the two superpowers of that day. Rather than have them try to reconcile what they are through greater understanding, however – a project he considers doomed to failure since what they are is ultimately incompatible⁵⁴ – he would have them assign less universal importance to what they are, and thereby become something else. Politics “as it is”, it seems, is not exactly “as it ought to be”.⁵⁵

Classical Liberal Realism: Enmity Negated by Rational Social Relations

A more decisive negation of enmity than its restatement in terms of interests results from Morgenthau’s restatement of liberalism. To be sure, it is a rather “conservative” expression of liberalism, but it constitutes nonetheless an embrace of precisely what Schmitt sought to discredit.⁵⁶ The difference between Morgenthau and Schmitt is, in fact, less an ontological disagreement than a normative departure. As we have seen, both reject anthropological optimism on the basis of a strong notion of nature. Both see politics as inescapable, and both recognize the acuteness of the problem of enmity in politics. In addition, both recognize the central role of identity in giving rise to enmity. The difference comes in how they respond to these observations.

Here, Morgenthau’s definition of politics as the struggle for power plays a crucial role, and his realism and liberalism come together. The abstraction from identity – away from the moral comparison of different modes of existence – makes politics seem less noble. Morgenthau not only defines politics as the struggle for power, he implies that

⁵⁴ “That correlation between understanding and the inevitability of conflict is one of the melancholy lessons history conveys to posterity: the more thoroughly one understands the other side’s position, character, and intentions, the more inevitable the conflict often appears to be.” *Ibid*, 505.

⁵⁵ See *ibid*, 14. In effect, despite all indications to the contrary, Morgenthau wants to tame the will to power.

⁵⁶ On the characterization of Morgenthau as a “conservative liberal”, see Frei (2001), 205, and Stanley Hoffman, “Notes on the Limits of ‘Realism’,” *Social Research*, 48 (Winter 1981), 657.

power itself is the prime motivator of political action. The “true nature” of a policy, which is always the pursuit of power, “is concealed by ideological justifications and rationalizations.” Because this is distasteful to most, political actors cannot help but “disguise, distort, belittle, and embellish the truth”. They use ideologies to “render involvement in [the] contest for power psychologically and morally acceptable to [themselves] and their audience”.⁵⁷ Morgenthau admits that legal and ethical principles and “biological necessities” sometimes do constitute the “ultimate goals of political action” – the objectives for the realization of which power is sought – but since he is “not concerned... with the ultimate goals of international politics”, he deals with them “only in so far as they perform the function of ideologies”; that is, of “pretexts” and “false fronts”.⁵⁸

In choosing to exclude the “ultimate goals” of political action from his theory of international politics, Morgenthau denies that more is at stake than advantage in the struggle for power, and thus lowers the stakes of politics. Consequently, if the struggle for power can be tamed, there is no reason why it should not be. He does not engage in the discussion of ultimate ends because the moral comparisons that would result would detract from this purpose. Rather, he seeks to reduce the importance of particularity by arguing that regardless of what ideals one uses to define one’s interests, these interests partake of the more general phenomenon of the aspiration for power. Not only are they not unique, but also they are secondary to – indeed, are mere disguises for – a more primal desire that seems much less noble than those ideals themselves. Thus, we might say that while Schmitt wants a politics capable of the heroic, Morgenthau wants to dispel

⁵⁷ Morgenthau (1967), 14, 84.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 85.

the myth of heroism. To do so, Morgenthau returns to Hobbes as Schmitt has departed from him.

The Struggle for Power and Peace

That Morgenthau follows Hobbes is not likely to be controversial for IR scholars, but because both have frequently been read superficially it is important to understand in what way he does so. The answer has to do with his attempt to reconcile the struggle for power with the struggle for peace (note the subtitle of *Politics Among Nations*). In certain respects, Morgenthau's answer to the problem of power and peace goes beyond Hobbes: He wants to extend the solution into the international realm, where Hobbes did not venture. As we shall see below, he also relies more heavily on the enlightenment of human beings – on culture, or education – for his solution.⁵⁹ These, however, are more in the way of modifications than contradictions of Hobbes' philosophy. The former is merely an extension of it to another arena. The latter is consistent with Hobbes' belief in the educability of the passions of man, but Morgenthau's reliance upon it, which comes by way of default, makes him less than certain about the prospects for his project's success.

Hobbes presents as his two chief propositions about human nature that men struggle incessantly for power over others, and that men struggle for life, or, more precisely, to avoid "the chiefest natural evil", death.⁶⁰ While the former inclines men toward war, and in fact the war of all against all, the latter – the fear of death – along with the "Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a Hope by their

⁵⁹ This is evident also in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*: "Politics is an art and not a science, and what is required for its mastery is not the rationality of the engineer but the wisdom and the moral strength of the statesman." Morgenthau (1946), 10.

⁶⁰ See C. B. Macpherson, "Introduction," in Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Macpherson ed. (London: Penguin, 1985), 39.

Industry to obtain them,” incline them toward peace. “And Reason suggesteth convenient Articles of Peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement.” These articles are what Hobbes calls the “Laws of Nature”.⁶¹ Thus it is through reason, or rational social relations, that the struggle for power is to be reconciled with the necessity of peace in order to avoid the greatest evil.⁶²

The first of the Hobbes’ chief propositions about human nature identifies the dangerousness of mankind; it resides in the incessant struggle for power. To stop here, however, as too many IR theorists have, is to fail to understand the heart of Hobbes’ political philosophy. So far, we have no explanation for what animates the struggle for power, and thus no way of identifying what might limit or control it. According to Hobbes, “The Power of a Man, (to take it Universally,) is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good.”⁶³ This power is of two kinds: natural and instrumental. Instrumental power is acquired by the use of natural power, “or by chance”, and supplies the means for satisfying more desires and acquiring yet more power. Man’s natural power consists in the qualities of his mind and body, but not in these qualities simply. Rather, they consist in “the *eminence* of the Faculties of Body, or Mind: as *extraordinary* Strength, Forme, Prudence [etc.]”.⁶⁴ Or, as he put it in the *Elements of Law*, “because the power of one man resisteth and hindereth the effects of the power of another: power simply is not more, but the excess of the power of one above that of another.” C. B.

⁶¹ Hobbes, *ibid*, Ch. 13, p. 188.

⁶² Hobbes made this connection more poignantly in the *Elements of Law*: “And forasmuch as necessity of nature maketh men to will and desire *bonum sibi*, that which is good for themselves, and to avoid that which is hurtful; but most of all that terrible enemy of nature, death, from whom we expect both the loss of all power, and also the greatest of bodily pains in the losing; it is not against reason that a man doth all he can to preserve his own body and limbs, both from death and pain. And that which is not against reason, men call RIGHT...” Hobbes, *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, Ferdinand Tönnies, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), Part I, Ch. 14, sec. 6, pp. 54-55.

⁶³ Hobbes (1985), 150.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, Ch. 10, 41, and Macpherson (1985), 34, emphasis added.

Macpherson points out that the corollary of this is “that all acquired power consists in command over some of the powers of other men.” If, as Hobbes suggests, one’s power is always opposed, “the only way you can acquire power is to master the powers opposed to yours.”⁶⁵

That the struggle for power is incessant, as both Hobbes and Morgenthau assert, is for Hobbes the result of men’s appetites. Human beings are but matter in motion, and that motion is supplied by appetites and aversions, which are (precisely) as inherent to life as are the senses which give rise to them: “...Life it selfe is but Motion, and can never be without Desire, nor without Fear, no more than without sense.”⁶⁶ A few appetites are “born with men”, but these are not many; “The rest... proceed from Experience, and triall of their effects upon themselves, or other men.”⁶⁷ That men have different passions, and have them to varying degrees, is a product not only of the “different Constitution of the body”, but also “from their difference of customes, and education.”⁶⁸ Hobbes allows that not all men have an insatiable appetite for power or the “goods” it can bring, but he implies that some, and not coincidentally the most alive and sharpest of judgment, do; “that some men’s desires are without limit”.⁶⁹ Since these

⁶⁵ He also suggests that both the proposition that one’s power consists in its excess over that of opposing powers, and that, therefore, the acquisition of power is the acquisition of the mastery of the power of others, are summed up in Hobbes’s statement that “The value, or WORTH of a man, is as of other things, his Price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his Power.” See Hobbes, *ibid*, Ch. 11, p. 47, and Macpherson, *ibid*, 37.

⁶⁶ Hobbes, *ibid*, Ch. 6, p. 130. In this respect, Hobbes does not distinguish between human and other animal life. Indeed, one of his purposes appears to be to minimize the distinction between them. Consider his discussions of “deliberation” and “will” in *ibid*, Ch. 6, pp. 127-128

⁶⁷ For things we have not experienced, “or believe not to be”, our desire can extend no further than “to taste and try.” Aversion is somewhat different, as we have it for things “not onely which we know have hurt us; but also that we do not know whether they will hurt us, or not.” *Ibid*, Ch. 6, pp. 119-120.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, Ch. 8, pp. 138-139, and Macpherson (1985), 32.

⁶⁹ Macpherson (1985), 36. According to Hobbes, differences of passion give rise to differences of “wit” and judgment, and most of all the desire for power, in all of its various forms, including “Riches, Knowledge and Honour”. Thus a man without great passion for any of these things will have little wit or

desires can only be fulfilled by mastering the power of someone else, those who are not self-impelled to augment their power will be forced to fight for it in any case, if only to defend what they already have:

So that in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death. And the cause of this, is not alwayes that a man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power: but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.⁷⁰

Thus we can say that for Hobbes: 1) Men are dangerous; 2) they are dangerous because of their appetites, and the more so because some men's appetites are without limit; 3) Men's appetites are (for better or worse) educable, including by custom or, one might say, by "culture"; and 4) left unrestrained, men's appetites will lead to the war of all against all.

Morgenthau's own definition of power is reminiscent of Hobbes' formulation: "When we speak of power, we mean man's control over the minds and actions of other men."⁷¹ In the most thorough intellectual biography of Morgenthau to date, however, Christoph Frei rejects the notion that Morgenthau's conception of the struggle for power is Hobbesian. Rather, he argues, it takes its bearings from Nietzsche. He bases this contention on a sharp distinction between self-preservation and self-assertion as the animating force of the struggle for power. Both are present in Morgenthau's thought, but

judgment, "For the Thoughts are to the Desires, as Scouts, and Spies, to range abroad, and find the way to the things Desired..." (1985: 139).

⁷⁰ See Hobbes, *Ibid*, Ch. 11, p. 161, and Morgenthau (1967), note 7 on p. 53. See also Hobbes, *ibid*, Ch. 13, pp. 184-85: "Also because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the act of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a mans conservation, it ought to be allowed him."

⁷¹ He continues: "By political power we refer to the mutual relations of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large." Morgenthau (1967), 32.

the latter, on Frei's reading, is absent from Hobbes. He takes issue with Ulrich Albrecht and Hartwig Hummel, who have argued that "Morgenthau's anthropological views are fully compatible with Hobbes" because both "consider human beings as striving for power for reasons of self-preservation".⁷² Frei draws a sharp distinction between Hobbes and Nietzsche on this point, and argues that "Morgenthau is *entirely* on Nietzsche's side":

[Morgenthau's] idea that the aspiration for power corresponds to the 'assertion' of vital forces makes a complete break with the calculus of self-preservation in modern rationalist theories of power espoused by Hobbes or Spinoza. The dynamics of life and power, Morgenthau argues, cannot be reconciled with a static concept such as self-preservation.⁷³

Frei offers good evidence of Nietzsche's influence on the early development of Morgenthau's thought, but his interpretation of Hobbes on this point is simply untenable. No single idea is more important to Hobbes' thought than that of motion – the motion of life – animated by appetite. To suggest that the drive for self-preservation exhausts Hobbes' account of human nature is to treat the heuristic device (the state of nature) as more important than the theory that underpins it (contained in the twelve chapters before it is introduced), *and* to focus on the calculation that leads men away from that state to the exclusion of what leads them to it, and what makes it what it is, in the first place. There is indeed a difference between the suggestion that men struggle for power because of their appetites and the contention that the desire for power is *itself* the most basic appetite of human beings. Applied to the problem of peace, however, the difference is one of emphasis – of degree, not of kind. Frei is on solid ground in suggesting that Morgenthau, in 1930, saw the drive for power as more basic to human beings than the

⁷² See Albrecht and Hummel, "Denkrichtungen und Analyseansätze: Macht," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, vol. 21 (1990), 92, cited in Frei (2001), 127.

⁷³ Frei (2001), note 53 on p. 127.

drive for preservation.⁷⁴ Neither Hobbes nor Nietzsche posits one to the exclusion of the other, however, nor does Morgenthau, who argues that self-preservation belongs to a “realm governed by the unalterable laws of nature”.⁷⁵

Like Nietzsche, Hobbes saw the drive for power and the drive for preservation as being in radical conflict. Again, man is dangerous for Hobbes primarily because he is appetitive; appetite and aversion are at the root of the universal struggle for power.⁷⁶ The drive for self-preservation functions primarily as a force leading mankind *away from* the state of nature. Uncertainty about the means and measures required to preserve one’s existence exacerbates the universal struggle for power, but if men were sheep this would hardly be a problem.⁷⁷ Thus, even if Morgenthau continued in later years to see Nietzsche’s analysis of the psychology of power as more penetrating than that of Hobbes, the radical conflict with Hobbes’ political philosophy does not exist.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ He quotes Morgenthau as follows: “Living things want, above all, to find an outlet for their strength... in fact, self-preservation is the reflection of a mere need and constitutes an inhibition of the real basic instinct in us – an urge which is directed toward increasing one’s power.” From “On the Origins of the Political in the Nature of Man” (Über die Herkunft des Politischen aus dem Wesen des Menschen), unpublished manuscript, Frankfurt, 1930, page unspecified, quoted in *Ibid*.

⁷⁵ Morgenthau, *Ibid*, p. 65, quoted in Frei (2001), note 56 on 128.

⁷⁶ Morgenthau echoes this point, but Frei attributes it to Nietzsche’s influence. He observes that Morgenthau repeatedly emphasizes pleasure as “the single most important motivating principle in the realm of self-assertion. Whether one calls it joy, satisfaction, or gratification, the immediate goal of human action is always the incitement of pleasure (*Lust gewinnen*) or the avoidance of displeasure (*Unlust vermeiden*).” Frei (2001), 128. Cf. Hobbes (1985), Ch. 6, pp. 119 ff. One could also point to the basis of conflict (*Kampf*), which results not only from “continuous reassessments of relative rank and strength, but... also unceasing competition for all kinds of objects.” Frei, *Ibid*, 129. On the importance of rank, see Hobbes, *ibid*, Ch. 10 and Ch. 13, p. 185. On competition for objects, see Ch. 13, p. 184. Or again to the basis for the efficacy of norms, which Morgenthau sees as the “fear of displeasure”. See Morgenthau, *La Realite des Normes: en particulier des Normes du Droit International* (Paris, 1934), 46, quoted in Frei (2001), 136. Cf. Hobbes, *ibid*, Ch. 14, p. 200. Each of these elements of Morgenthau’s thought is attributed to Nietzsche’s influence. Morgenthau’s notion of the “policy of prestige” (see 1933: 61, and 1967: 69 ff.) also appears to be specifically Hobbesian in origin. Cf. Hobbes, *ibid*, ch. 10.

⁷⁷ “Nor do I know, if men are like Sheep, why they need any government: Or if they are like wolves, how can they suffer it.” Sir William Temple, “An Essay Upon the Original and Nature of Government,” *Works* (1751), vol. 1, p. 99, quoted in Macpherson (1985), 61.

⁷⁸ Frei does recognize that Morgenthau shares with Hobbes the view that politics in its “primitive” and “undisguised” form – the natural state of human social relations – is the greatest threat to humanity, and he adds in a footnote that “Morgenthau’s deep longing for security, too, is strongly reminiscent of Hobbes”.

More importantly, what Frei misses in downplaying Hobbes' influence on Morgenthau is the theoretical foundation of Morgenthau's *solution* to the struggle for power, which finds no counterpart in Nietzsche. As Frei observes, "While Morgenthau remains attached to the analyst [in Nietzsche], he refuses to follow the prophet."⁷⁹ He notes the appearance of a sort of "transcendent idealism", first in Morgenthau's polemic against Ernst Jünger and the "new German philosophy of war", and later in some of his American writings.⁸⁰ In the critique of Jünger, we find Morgenthau espousing "European" (essentially liberal humanist) values, and advocating the "humanization" of the satisfaction of human instincts by "civilization", or "culture in the broadest sense". Civilization, whose substance and direction are determined by "supreme values", is seen as "destiny", the "ultimate justification of human existence", and "its most precious fruit".⁸¹ Frei, however, offers no basis upon which to reconcile this with Morgenthau's emphasis on the struggle for power and his defence of its place in human social relations.

The resulting portrayal is of a bifurcated body of thought. Morgenthau's "liberal humanism" and his realism do not meet in any theoretically coherent fashion. The *is* and the *ought to be*, though both present, remain radically disjointed. Frei has Morgenthau following Weber in asserting a strong fact-value distinction, making it impossible to

His misreading of Hobbes' portrayal of the struggle for power, however, prevents Frei from recognizing just how thoroughly Hobbesian Morgenthau's later work is. As Frei notes, Morgenthau, in 1933, "read and carefully re-read the 'remarques excellentes de Strauss'" on Schmitt's Concept of the Political, and that in the process he had not only to recognize his own differences with Schmitt, "but also... to reconstruct consciously his own point of view and recognize its 'liberal' essence." Frei (2001), 173-4. That he should follow Strauss this far and yet not recognize the centrality of Hobbes – the "founder of liberalism" – to the position he was staking out seems hardly plausible.

⁷⁹ See Frei (2001), 107. He continues, "He closes his mind where Nietzsche heralds new moral principles and a reevaluation of all values. He is not moved by Zarathustra, and he finds little substance in ideas about the *Übermensch*".

⁸⁰ *On the Critique of Pacifism and of the New German Philosophy of War* [Der Selbstmord mit gutem Gewissen. Zur Kritik de Pazifismus und der neuen deutschen Kriegsphilosophie], unpublished manuscript, Frankfurt, 1930 cited in *Ibid*, 165. See also Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).

⁸¹ Frei (2001), 165-167, and Morgenthau, *Ibid* (1930), 41ff.

justify values, or a hierarchy of values, on a rational basis, and leaving only a choice between “irrational faith” and relativistic scepticism.⁸² Thus, when Morgenthau, in Frei’s account, abandons the latter in the face of “immanent political danger”, it can only be in favour of the former. Morgenthau did, however, attempt to bridge the divide between fact and value – to offer a description of international politics “as it is and as it ought to be in view of its intrinsic nature”. In *Politics Among Nations*, he attempted to formulate a specifically political and rational, which is to say not merely moral or ethical, justification for the valuing of peace not only over war, but also over self-assertion. He does so by appealing to the same foundation as Hobbes long before him – that of the “laws of nature”.⁸³

And Reason Suggesteth Convenient Articles of Peace

According to Hobbes, man’s natural condition is both freedom and war, with the result that no one can secure his own life. The unrestricted play of men’s passions results in a war of all against all. Following from this, the only relevant question for Hobbes is how to escape this situation and to avoid returning to anything that resembles it. The answer is given by a “generall rule of Reason” resulting from the nature of man. In the state of war of all against all, everyone is governed only by his own reason, and each justly decides for himself what is of benefit in preserving his life against enemies.

Everyone has a right to everything, “even to one another’s body”.

And therefore, as long as this naturall Right of every man to every thing endureth, there can be no security to any man, (how strong or wise soever he be,) of living out the time, which Nature ordinarily alloweth men to live. And consequently it is a precept, or generall rule of Reason, *That every man, ought to endeavour*

⁸² Frei (2001), 151.

⁸³ Whether either succeeds in the effort must remain, for present purposes, an open question.

*Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warr.*⁸⁴

This rule of reason contains both Hobbes' first and fundamental Law of Nature (*Lex Naturalis*), and the sum total of his Right of Nature (*Jus Naturale*). *Lex Naturalis* denotes an obligation imposed by nature, and its primary dictate is "to seek Peace, and follow it".⁸⁵ *Jus Naturale* denotes a liberty, bestowed by nature and inalienable, and its substance is "By all means we can, to defend our selves."⁸⁶ The obvious tension between the two is addressed by the second law of nature, derived from the first, "That a man be willing, when others are too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe."⁸⁷ This renunciation or transferring of rights is signified by words or actions, but the strength of the resulting bonds derives "from Feare of some evill consequence upon the rupture."⁸⁸ Promises "are too weak to bridle mens (sic) ambition, avarice, anger, and other Passions, without the feare of some coercive Power".⁸⁹ As such, mere renunciation of rights is not an option; the only solution is their transfer to some higher authority. In Hobbes' famous

⁸⁴ Hobbes (1985), Ch. 14, pp. 189-190. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁵ Confusion is possible on this point because of Hobbes' previous definition of the general case, the concept of *Lex Naturalis*: "A Law of Nature, (*Lex Naturalis*,) is a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive to his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved." This constitutes the foundation of the specific laws of nature, the first of which is "to seek Peace, and follow it". In sum, nature dictates that man attempt to negate the state of nature to the greatest extent possible, because to live in a state of war is "destructive to his life." See *Ibid*, Ch. 14, 189 ff.

⁸⁶ Or, as the chapter begins: "The Right of Nature... is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own Judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to the the aptest means thereunto." *Ibid*, Ch. 14, 189, 190.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 190.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 192.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 196. Similarly, "the Lawes of Nature (as Justice, Equity, Modesty, Mercy, and (in summe) doing to others, as wee would be done to,)... are contrary to our naturall Passions, that carry us to Partiality, Pride, Revenge, and the like." *Ibid*, Ch. 17, p. 223.

formulation, “Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all.” Therefore, some authority must be constituted with sufficient power to ensure the security of all. Because of reason, then, men, “who naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others”, introduce the restraint of “Commonwealth”.⁹⁰

Thus, the laws of nature dictate, for Hobbes, that nature be subdued through reason. That Morgenthau intends to follow him in attempting to conform social reality to reason is made clear when he contends that it is no argument against his theory “that actual foreign policy does not or cannot live up to it”. To make this criticism, he argues, is to misunderstand the intention of the book, “which is to present not an indiscriminate description of political reality, but a rational theory of international politics.” In fact, far from being invalidated by the fact that it is not perfectly reflected in reality, Morgenthau’s theory of international politics “assumes that reality, being deficient in this respect, must be understood and evaluated as an approximation [of the ideal].” Rational foreign policy is good foreign policy, “for only a rational foreign policy minimizes risks and maximizes benefits and, hence, complies both with the moral precept of prudence and the political requirement of success.” Political realism, he notes, has a normative orientation:

Aware of the inevitable gap between good – that is, rational – foreign policy and foreign policy as it actually is, political realism maintains not only that theory must focus upon the rational elements of political reality, but also that foreign policy ought to be rational in view of its own moral and practical purposes.⁹¹

There are two important contentions here: 1) “that foreign policy ought to be rational”, and 2) “that theory must focus upon the rational elements of political reality”.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 223-224.

⁹¹ Morgenthau (1967), 7-8.

The problem is that it is not immediately clear what Morgenthau means by the term “rational”. Most have assumed its meaning to be essentially instrumental reason – matching means to ends – whereby the standard of rationality, and thus of good foreign policy, becomes success. Morgenthau, however, expressly rejects the notion that he uses success as the standard of political action.⁹² No other standard of rationality is explicit in the text, but we cannot make sense of the two contentions noted above unless we know what he means by “rational”.

A starting point is offered by the presentation of the concept in the text: what are the risks to be minimized, the benefits to be maximized, and the moral and practical purposes to be realized? Morgenthau, however, expressly (and conspicuously) desists from this line of enquiry, arguing that both the motives of political action and its “ultimate aims” lie outside of the proper scope of enquiry for a theory of politics.⁹³ This failure to discriminate among political motives and political objectives seems to leave Morgenthau open to the characteristic criticisms of his theory – especially the use of success as the standard of political action and “indifference to the moral problem” – which he bemoans in the prefaces to the later editions, and by which he shares the painful fate of authors “to be criticized for ideas one has never held”.⁹⁴ It also lends itself to the criticism that he treats interests as objectively given, a conclusion that seems hard to

⁹² “Preface to the Third Edition” (1960), reprinted in *ibid*, p. x.

⁹³ His reasons for doing so are suggested in the above discussion of his definition of politics as the struggle for power. On motives, see Morgenthau (1967), 5-6. On the lack of concern with “ultimate aims” and “ultimate goals”, see *Ibid*, 25 and 85 respectively. In the end, the concern with “ultimate aims” creeps back into his theory, because it is otherwise quite impossible to avoid the twin pitfalls of foreign policy: “While it would be fatal to counter imperialistic designs with measures appropriate to a policy of the status quo, it would be only a little less risky to deal with a policy seeking adjustments within the status quo as though it were imperialistic.” *Ibid*, 61.

⁹⁴ “Preface to the Third Edition”, in *Ibid*, x.

avoid if interests are to be defined as power in abstraction from their ultimate ends.⁹⁵ In reality, none of these is Morgenthau's position. Foreign policies do not receive praise (as "rational") or blame simply on the basis of whether they succeed in augmenting the nation's power, suggesting there is some higher principle of rationality at work.

Morgenthau presents the concept of "*interest defined in terms of power*" as "the link between reason trying to understand international politics and the facts to be understood".⁹⁶ It is the key to distinguishing rational (good) foreign policy from its irrational distortions and deviations. Certainly statesmen will not always make the "rational" choice,⁹⁷ but in order to make sense of political reality, political realism, like "all social theory", must stress the rational elements of political reality – "the rational essence to be found in experience, without the contingent deviations from rationality which are also found in experience."⁹⁸ This conception of rationality, however, is in tension with other central themes in the book, most notably that of moderation, or "self-restraint". Consider the following:

[I]f we look at all nations, our own included, as political entities pursuing their respective interests defined in terms of power, we are able to do justice to all of them... we are able to judge other nations as we judge our own and, having judged them in this fashion, we are then capable of pursuing policies that respect the interests of other nations, while protecting and promoting those of our own. Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgment.⁹⁹

Nonsense! the attentive student of political realism is tempted to reply. What moderation? Where is its basis in the concept of interest defined in terms of power? The

⁹⁵ On the contrary, "the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated. The goals that might be pursued by nations in their foreign policy can run the whole gamut of objectives any nation has ever pursued or might possibly pursue." *Ibid*, 8-9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 5.

⁹⁷ "The contingent elements of personality, prejudice, and subjective preference, and all of the weaknesses of intellect and will which flesh is heir to, are bound to deflect foreign policies from their rational course."

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 7. It might be suggested that the more important reason it does so is because it aims at rationality.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 11.

political realist asks, “How does this policy affect the power of the nation?”. If our interest is in power, defined as power over the actions of other men (or states), and their interest is in power over us, how can we pursue our interests while “respecting” theirs? How does one “balance” the other’s interest in power over oneself with one’s own interest in power over the other? The outcome of such a situation, if there is to be one, is that one must become master, and the other subject. Morgenthau suggests as much: The issue in all of the great wars that have “decided the course of history and changed the political face of the earth” has invariably been “Who shall rule and who shall be ruled? Who shall be free and who slave?”.¹⁰⁰ If this is so, then one’s interest defined in terms of power is to become master. The moderation of one’s own pursuit of power out of respect for the other’s identical interest would be irrational – a “contingent deviation from rationality”. Unless, that is, some higher principle or standard of rationality is at work.

Several likely candidates for this latter role seem to be excluded. Morgenthau does not want to allow external standards, such as those of law or morality, to be higher than the specifically political standard of behaviour, which to this point remains undefined. To reiterate, “the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation... get in the way of successful political action.”¹⁰¹ Clearly success is important to the standard of political action, but Morgenthau expressly denies that it can constitute this standard. One could add the qualifier that moderation in the pursuit of power can be permitted only where this accords with the nation’s interests, but this seems to alter substantially, if not altogether negate, the concept of interest *defined as* power.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 504.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 10.

Neither, it appears, is Morgenthau calling for some sort of “depoliticization” (to return to Schmitt’s definition) of foreign policy – a sort of neutralization of the “will to power”. This, for him, is sheer folly, since the competition for power results from the laws of nature, which govern politics and make it what it is and what it “ought to be in view of its intrinsic nature”. Again, these laws are impervious to our preferences, and we challenge them at the risk of political failure: “If the desire for power cannot be abolished everywhere in the world, those who might be cured would simply fall victim to the power of others.”¹⁰² Nations do not have a choice between power politics and some other form of politics.

Yet Morgenthau is aware, and seems to approve of the fact, that states do often moderate their pursuit of power. He notes that “not every action that a nation performs with respect to another nation is of a political nature,” and that “not all nations are at all times to the same extent involved in international politics”; that is, they do not all engage in the pursuit of power to the same degree. Rather:

[T]he relation of nations to international politics has a dynamic quality. It changes with the vicissitudes of power, which may push a nation into the forefront of the power struggle, or may deprive a nation of the ability to participate actively in it. It may also change under the impact of cultural transformations, which may make a nation prefer other pursuits, for instance commerce, to those of power.¹⁰³

Furthermore, even those states that pursue “imperialist” (that is, non-status quo) policies often limit themselves to local objectives, and not always by necessity or even for expediency. The limits of what he calls localized imperialism “are not, as in the case of the geographically limited type, primarily a product of the objective facts of nature

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 14, 4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 25, 26.

beyond which it would be either technically difficult or politically unwise to go,” but rather “are primarily the result of a free choice among several alternatives”.¹⁰⁴ He also argues that morality constrains the actions of statesmen in ways that “actually [sacrifice] the national interest where its consistent pursuit would necessitate the violation of a moral principle”.¹⁰⁵

That Morgenthau is serious about moderation in foreign policy – the moderation of the pursuit of power – is most apparent in the book’s ultimate recommendation to seek “peace through accommodation”, using the instrument of diplomacy.¹⁰⁶ The means of diplomacy are persuasion, compromise, and the threat of force, and its essence is described by four fundamental rules: 1) Diplomacy must be divested of the crusading spirit; 2) the objectives of foreign policy must be defined in terms of the national interest and supported by adequate power; 3) diplomacy must look at the political scene from the point of view of other nations; and 4) nations must be willing to compromise on all issues that are not vital to them. The second and seemingly most assertive of these serves, in fact, to define the national interest in “restrictive and transcendent terms”; namely, “The national interest of a peace-loving nation can only be defined in terms of national security, and national security must be defined as integrity of the national territory and of its institutions”. In case the message were not quite clear, these four rules are

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 54. The alternatives he mentions are the status quo and continental imperialism.

¹⁰⁵ [I]f we ask ourselves what statesmen and diplomats are capable of doing to further the power objectives of their respective nations and what they actually do, we realize that they do less than they probably could and less than they actually did in other periods of history. They refuse to consider certain ends and to use certain means, either altogether or under certain conditions, not because in the light of expediency they appear impractical or unwise but because certain moral rules interpose an absolute barrier. *Ibid*, 228, 225.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 519. This is the only solution he will admit as possible within the context of the current states’ system. Were he not serious about it, *Politics Among Nations* would read as merely a long doomsday scenario. He ends the penultimate chapter as follows: “If war were inevitable, this book might end here. If war is not inevitable, the conditions for the revival of diplomacy and for its successful operation in the service of peace remain to be considered.” *Ibid*, 531.

supplemented by five prerequisites of compromise.¹⁰⁷ The nation's interests are reconciled with, in fact identified with, the interests of peace by Morgenthau's definition of diplomacy. Diplomacy's role in preserving international peace is "but a particular aspect" of its general function as an element of national power, "For a diplomacy that ends in war has failed in its primary objective: the promotion of the national interest by peaceful means."¹⁰⁸ Morgenthau's standard of rationality is Hobbes' first law of nature – "to seek peace, and follow it."

How do we reconcile this with the maxim to pursue interests defined in terms of power, which seems to lead to the conclusion that one must "rule or be ruled"? One important consideration is Morgenthau's great esteem for the success of the modern nation-state in solving the problem of civil war. He considered anything that would endanger this measure of peace as a step backward.¹⁰⁹ Given his view of international politics as a struggle for power, Morgenthau's prescription for the statesman had to strike a balance of sufficient self-assertion on the part of the nation to ensure its preservation, and the avoidance of the pursuit of power for its own sake or the compulsion to rule. If Morgenthau is whispering in the statesman's ear, he is saying "be content not to be ruled."

Peace Without *Leviathan*

The problem of enmity compels Morgenthau to attempt to outline a basis upon which Hobbes' project might be extended to international politics. The possibilities for such an extension turn out to be, in his estimation, quite modest. To whatever degree it was to be realized, however, the "transformation of the contemporary world" would

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 521, 540 ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 520.

¹⁰⁹ Morgenthau (1953), 854.

occur not “by confronting a political reality that has its own laws with an abstract ideal that refuses to take those laws into account”, but “only through the workmanlike manipulation of the perennial forces that have shaped the past as they will the future”; that is, by the workmanlike manipulation of nature.¹¹⁰ The vehicle of that manipulation will no doubt be surprising to many.

At first, the central concept of Morgenthau’s solution to the struggle for power seems to be the balance of power. This mechanism operates whenever and wherever there is politics, he argues, but the crucial question for peace is within what context it operates. In the United States, the balance of power functions “under the conditions of relative stability and peaceful conflict,” and “If the factors that have given rise to these conditions can be duplicated on the international scene, similar conditions of stability and peace will then prevail there, as they have over long stretches of history among certain nations.”¹¹¹ Here Morgenthau reveals what seems to be the model for his project: “Nowhere have the mechanics of social equilibrium been described more brilliantly and at the same time more simply than in *The Federalist*.”¹¹² He quotes approvingly John Randolph: “You may cover whole skins of parchment with limitations, but power alone can limit power.”¹¹³ The government of the United States, based on the Constitution that

¹¹⁰ Morgenthau (1967), 9.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 9.

¹¹² “One only needs to substitute the terminology of international politics for the concepts used by *The Federalist*...[to see] the main elements common to both the system of checks and balances of the American Constitution and the international balance of power. In other words, the same motive forces have given rise to the American system of checks and balances and seek to fulfill the same functions for their own stability and the autonomy of their constituent elements, however much they may differ in the means they employ and in the degree to which they realize their aim.” *Ibid*, 163-66, quote on 166. He quotes explicitly Federalist No. 51, by James Madison, but the structure of his argument owes more to Federalist No. 10, also by Madison.

¹¹³ See *Ibid*, 163, and William Cabell Bruce, *John Randolph of Roanoke* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam, 1992), vol. II, p. 211.

the Federalists shaped and defended, is “the outstanding modern example” of this principle at work in the service of stability.¹¹⁴

Yet Morgenthau’s purpose is neither to suggest the institution of a world state on the model of the American Constitution, nor to suggest the sufficiency of the balance of power for solving the problem of order in international relations. He expressly desists from both of these arguments. The immediate historical context of the book demonstrated in startling clarity the limitations of the balance of power concept for international politics. Bipolarity, which many considered the most stable international equilibrium, was turning out to be dangerous already before the publication of the first edition, and threatening to be catastrophic by the publication of the second.¹¹⁵ The two superpowers of the Cold War, “Imbued with the crusading spirit of the new moral force of nationalistic universalism”, faced each other “in inflexible opposition”. The “rigid, relentless, and one-track mind of the crusader” was guiding the “destiny of nations”, and this mind “knows nothing of persuasion and compromise. It knows only of victory and of defeat.” It is this reality with which the book ultimately grapples.

The balance of power has proved insufficient, and Morgenthau proceeds to point out its limitations. Since 1815, he observes, many states had been partitioned, annexed, or destroyed not merely in spite of the balance of power, but in its name. It had thus failed to fulfill its functions both for individual states and for the states’ system. He identifies “three main weaknesses of the balance of power as the guiding principle of international politics: its uncertainty, its unreality, and its inadequacy.”¹¹⁶ The observation above that the context of the balance of power is decisive for peace does not

¹¹⁴ Morgenthau, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 348-9

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 196-197 and ff.

misrepresent Morgenthau's position, but context is to be taken not in a merely institutional sense. Morgenthau posits a "moral factor" – a certain "self-restraint" – as the determining factor of the effectiveness of the balance of power in international politics: "Before the balance of power could impose its restraints upon the power aspirations of nations through the mechanical interplay of opposing forces, the competing nations had first to restrain themselves..."¹¹⁷ Between 1648 and 1772, and from 1815 to 1933, for example, a "moral consensus" about the limits of competition for power made the balance of power more effective than in the intervening and subsequent periods. The effectiveness of the balance of power is not intrinsic to it, nor is it a function of "structure", taken in a purely material sense. It resides in the "moral climate", or culture, within which it operates.

If one looks at the structure of *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau undertakes a long progression from the ambitious to the modest in terms of solving the problem of power and peace in human social relations. As seen above, he first expounds the exemplary performance of the modern (liberal) state in solving this problem within its own borders. He contrasts this performance with various attempts at "international government", which have failed in their attempts to solve the problem of international peace by limiting national aspirations for power, and could not have succeeded within the context of the modern states' system. The factor accounting for this difference in performance is the state itself: "the argument of the advocates of the world state is unanswerable: There can be no permanent international peace without a state coextensive

¹¹⁷ He continues "by accepting the system of the balance of power as the common framework of their endeavors". *Ibid*, 213. On self-restraint as the essence of civilization, see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (New York: Pantheon, 1982).

with the confines of the political world.”¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, such a state is impossible under current conditions, because a state requires a society willing and able to support it, meaning “there can be no world state without a world community willing and able to support it.”¹¹⁹ He then turns to the question of how to create such a community. The latter presupposes “at least the mitigation and minimization of international conflicts so that the interest uniting members of different nations may outweigh the interests separating them.” This brings him to the final, and I would argue central, question of the book: “How can international conflicts be mitigated and minimized?”¹²⁰

By reference to *The Federalist*, Morgenthau establishes the permanence of the problem of the struggle for power in terms that are not only familiar to his audience, but carry all of the weight of the prestige of the American founding fathers. But the problem of order is not solved by power alone, nor by the compulsory organization of social relations: “The state is indispensable for the maintenance of domestic peace; such is the true message of Hobbes’ philosophy. Yet the state by itself cannot maintain domestic peace; such is the great omission of Hobbes’s philosophy.”¹²¹ The Leviathan is necessary but not sufficient.¹²² As such, there must be other necessary conditions, and may possibly even be prior conditions, for peace.

¹¹⁸ Morgenthau, *ibid*, 483, 491.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 495.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 516. Whether or not Morgenthau genuinely supports the idea of a world state is open to question. His argument, following Hobbes, can hardly avoid the conclusion of its indispensability, but his emphasis on the role of national loyalties in preserving domestic peace, and in giving vicarious outlets to power urges (See *ibid*, 485 and 97 ff.), suggest that he may well be reluctant to recommend anything that would undermine the national state. In any case, the preconditions he suggests for the creation of the world state are so far removed from the reality he describes that the conclusion of its necessity is not terribly problematic even if he does not think it entirely desirable.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 490. Cf. Donald Hanson, “Thomas Hobbes’ ‘highway to peace’,” *International Organization*, 38:2 (Spring 1984), 329-354.

¹²² “Society might find substitutes for the legal unity the state conveys to it in time and space and for the agencies for social change through which the state regulates the dynamics of the social processes. Society

To find them, we must look at Morgenthau's assessment of what keeps peace in the domestic sphere.¹²³ Domestic peace, he tells us, rests on a dual foundation: 1) the disinclination to break the peace; and 2) the inability to break it if so inclined. Ensuring the latter requires both overwhelming power, consisting of a monopoly on the use of organized violence, and (more importantly according to Morgenthau) an "irresistible social pressure" not to break the peace. The disinclination to break the peace depends upon "supra-sectional loyalties", resulting both from pluralism and nationalism, and the expectation of justice; that is, of at least partial satisfaction of claims. If competition between groups cannot be limited by these two mechanisms, "the peace of such a society cannot be saved by the state, however strong."¹²⁴ The maintenance of agencies for social change that allow all groups to expect at least some satisfaction for their conflicting claims, not the possession of the means of overwhelming force, is "the very heart of the peace-preserving functions of any state."¹²⁵ The state is not sufficient to maintain peace because it presupposes a community co-extensive with it. Society – that is, culture – is prior to the state:

The state is not the artificial creation of a constitutional convention, conceived in the image of some abstract principles of government and superimposed upon whatever society might exist. On the contrary, the state is part of the society from which it has sprung, and prospers and decays as society prospers and decays. The state, far from being a thing apart from society, is created by society.¹²⁶

has no substitute for the power of the Leviathan whose very presence, towering above contending groups keeps their conflicts within peaceful bounds." Morgenthau, *ibid*, 490.

¹²³ See *Ibid*, 484 ff.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 490.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 494.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 490. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that much of what is currently called constructivism – at least of the "Wendtian" variety, was already present in Morgenthau, if somewhat de-emphasized because of his polemical purpose. In this connection, it is interesting to note Wendt's recent essay, "Why A World State is Inevitable: Teleology and the Logic of Anarchy," University of Chicago, January 2003, available at <http://political-science.uchicago.edu/faculty/worldstate1.pdf>, a more "optimistic" take on a central theme from *Politics Among Nations*. See above and Morgenthau, *ibid*, 491 ff.

Hobbes' 'Great Omission'

Hobbes' great omission is the role of culture in maintaining the peace. Arguably, though, his theory presumes its importance, and the success of his project confirms it. How aware Hobbes is of this fact is open to question, but he is certainly aware that the passions of men are educable, and he clearly wants to educate them to prefer peace. C. B. Macpherson argues that Hobbes' theory in fact presumes a *bourgeois* culture.¹²⁷ Men's sense of obligation, in this case to the sovereign, can only be maintained if the passions that work against it can be 'tamed'. "[I]t would be impossible to maintain... a universally competitive society as a going concern if everybody in it was constantly seeking to subdue others, or resist being subdued by them, by force."¹²⁸ Arguably, the role of the sovereign state, for Hobbes, is to institutionalize self-restraint, not to substitute for it.¹²⁹

The maintenance of a society characterized by universal competition for power, even for the shortest length of time, requires that everyone be "constantly *peacefully* engaged" in seeking the transfer of some of the power of others to themselves, or resisting the loss of their own power. This is not, however, by nature a peaceful process. Hobbes does not specifically address the question of the pacification of the passions. As Macpherson notes, if men followed his prescription for absolute deference to the sovereign there could be no civil war. If they did not, and the result were civil war, his doctrine would have failed, and he need not suggest further procedures to deal with such

¹²⁷ The heart of bourgeois culture is, for Macpherson, possessive individualism. It is essentially the culture of liberalism discussed above in connection with Hegel's definition of bourgeois man. See Macpherson (1985), 38-39 and C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), chapter II, section 3.

¹²⁸ Macpherson (1985), 39.

¹²⁹ Hanson (1984).

a case.¹³⁰ The phenomenon to be explained, however, is not the project's failure, but its success: "Bourgeois self-interest has in fact sustained a sovereign state, Hobbesian in almost every respect except the self-perpetuating power of the sovereign body, in most bourgeois societies since Hobbes's time."¹³¹

At the heart of "bourgeois culture" is the assumption of fundamental equality, as embodied in the concept of the market. Whereas traditional hierarchical societies required unequal right according to rank, bourgeois, or market society, required the opposite; that "a man's value" – the price others would give for the use of his power – be determined by the market, which requires that men be equally free "to use or offer their powers in the market".¹³² As a result of the "objective" standard of the market, the individual's assessment of his own worth becomes unimportant. The acceptance of the postulate of fundamental equality might be said to be the pedagogical aim of *Leviathan*. Without this, the position of universal obligation to the sovereign is untenable, "For unless individuals are acknowledged to be in the most fundamental sense equal, some individuals could make a moral claim to unlimited superiority."¹³³

Hobbes' solution to the problem of the struggle for power requires that men be taught not to overvalue themselves, and not to attach universal importance to the triumph of their own interests and ideas.¹³⁴ Similarly, Morgenthau's solution requires that the interests of humanity be dissociated from those of any particular nation. The triumph of

¹³⁰ Macpherson (1985), 62.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 58, and Hobbes (1985), Ch. 30, p. 180, and Ch. 10, p. 42.

¹³³ Macpherson, *ibid.*, 59.

¹³⁴ Stated differently, the problem for Hobbes is to get men to honour the "social contract", which requires each to relinquish their right to unlimited freedom to the sovereign, and to maintain their loyalty to that sovereign. It requires, in other words, a certain amount of trust. On the role of trust in social organization see Martin Hollis, *Trust Within Reason*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, and on the importance of culture in cultivating it, Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, New York: Free Press, 1995.

liberalism is not in subduing men to rule, but in getting them to think like liberals: to see their partiality to their own ideas in the light of others' partiality to their own, and to respect – if not altogether accept – the judgment of the “market” while attempting peacefully to change its valuations. Morgenthau's polemic against nationalistic universalism is aimed specifically at this objective, and his solution of “peace through accommodation” is its expression par excellence. “Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgment.” This moderation takes place through the individualization of morality based on the principle of fundamental equality. This constitutes the negation of Schmitt's concept of the political, and consequently of enmity. Morgenthau has not only read Hobbes (and his disciples) well, but has correctly identified the essential condition for peace that is only implicit in Hobbes; namely a peaceful culture, in this case that of bourgeois man.

If Morgenthau is such a believer in the power of culture, however, why is it that he hides it so well behind a theory based seemingly on “material” power alone? One answer is that he does not, in fact, hide it as well as superficial readings have obscured it. As we have seen above, culture is present throughout *Politics Among Nations*. Still, it must be conceded that it is not given pride of place. There are two important explanations for this. The first is Morgenthau's polemical purpose. To reiterate, he was writing against the excesses of a rationalism that assumed it could remake the world to an unlimited degree, and a nationalistic universalism that assumed that the image it should be remade in was its own. As such, the need of the hour as he saw it was not reiteration of the fact that culture is prior to all forms of political organization, but recollection of the fact that nature is prior to culture, and is only modified by it; that “‘culture’ always

presupposes something that is cultivated: culture is always the culture of nature,” whether it is understood as “the careful nurture of nature” or as the conquest of nature “through obedience to nature”.¹³⁵ The nature of man, according to Hobbes and Morgenthau, is predisposed toward a struggle for power that can only be tempered, not eliminated. Theories that assume the “natural goodness” of man are just as dangerous for Morgenthau as those that glorify war, and the two sometimes coincide.¹³⁶ Thus, while “Hobbes in an unliberal world accomplishes the founding of liberalism”, and Schmitt “in a liberal world undertakes the critique of liberalism”, Morgenthau, in a world of “developed” liberalism (liberalism that is no longer aware of its horizons), returns to Hobbes, the “founder” of liberalism, in an effort to recover its roots and extend it to international politics.¹³⁷

The second reason Morgenthau hides his theory of culture is that he has found a more powerful polemical instrument; namely rationality. Foreign policy should be rational, he argues, and theory must focus upon the rational elements of political reality. The second contention turns out to have the more serious consequences. By this means, Morgenthau sets the boundaries of proper inquiry into politics, with some phenomena inside, and some outside. He presents the concept of “interest defined in terms of power” as the link between reason and reality, but this is not his final word. Morgenthau’s final word is interest defined in terms of peace. The pursuit of power is conceived as merely a means, if an essential one, to this objective, and ceases to be valid as an interest when it begins to work against it.

¹³⁵ Leo Strauss, “Notes on Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political,” trans. J. Harvey Lomax, reprinted in Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), note 10. The latter characterizes Morgenthau’s position.

¹³⁶ See his critique of Junger, recounted in Frei (2001), 163-68.

¹³⁷ See Strauss (1996), notes 13 and 14.

Morgenthau's insistence that theory focus on the "rational" elements of reality, combined with his standard of rationality, functions as an ontologically reductionist move. Rationality is cultural, and every rationality embodies a particular morality. Hobbes and Morgenthau both want to further a particular (liberal) morality by presenting its corresponding rationality as though it were rationality itself. Morgenthau, three hundred years removed from Hobbes' "founding" of liberalism, clearly recognizes the effectiveness of his method. The relationship of their particular morality to the "laws of nature" must for present purposes remain an open question. What is clear, however, is that other forms of rationality continue to operate in the world, and are not for that reason inaccessible to rational inquiry. The fact that human behaviour cannot be reduced to the interaction of (any) particular set of abstractions should not be confused with the notion "that there are areas of human behaviour inherently impervious to rational analysis."¹³⁸

Conclusion

As observed above, Morgenthau makes two responses to Schmitt's concept of enmity, both of which have influenced IR theory. For those who accept the reduction of enmity to interests defined in terms of power as unproblematic, theory will see everywhere and always the rational pursuit of power objectives, and nothing more. Morgenthau shares this form of reductionism with Schmitt, because it is pre-determined by their identical method of defining the political. Each asserts what is unique to the political, and then proceeds to treat it as though it were the totality of the political.¹³⁹

That this characteristic belongs to the political is true by definition, and the definition is

¹³⁸ Oakeshott (1993), 106.

¹³⁹ Each is, semantically, protected from this criticism by the proviso that they are not seeking to give a full and comprehensive account of the political, but the defense is *merely* semantic because each of their arguments proceeds as though this were not the case.

furnished by the uniqueness of that characteristic to the political. Everything not included in the definition falls outside of the scope of the discussion. Thus, the inherent circularity of the process of definition is employed in the polemical task of delimiting what is permissible in, and what excluded from, discussions of politics.¹⁴⁰

Yet it is at least questionable whether enmity has remained untheorized for so long because we believe it to be reducible to interests defined in terms of power. The assumption that states are, above all else, security seekers – of interests defined in terms of peace – is at least as pervasive. It is the starting point of most realist and rational choice accounts of international politics, and of many “critical” theories as well. In application, it amounts to an assumption that states prefer peace whenever possible – that they prefer security over self-assertion – and that therefore insecurity results in no part from their will, but exclusively from external factors such as the condition of anarchy and uncertainty about others’ intentions. To the extent that we recognize that states do not pursue security single-mindedly, this is seen as a departure from rationality, and thus impervious to rational analysis. While states do in fact seek security, however, they do not pursue this objective to the exclusion of all else. In addition to self-preservation, states also pursue self-assertion. Statesmen call populations to engage in noble and glorious pursuits, and assure them that their security remains the paramount concern in the process. The dangerousness of this balance between security and self-assertion depends not only upon circumstance, but also upon the “self” that is being asserted. More importantly for the current discussion, so do the prospects for peaceful relations with another “self”.

¹⁴⁰ Morgenthau is almost certainly aware of what he is doing. See his discussion of the tautological nature of definitions in relation to Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction above.

Chapter 6 – Reason, Interests, and Enmity

The conception that international conflicts can be eliminated through international understanding rests on the implicit assumption that the issues of international conflicts, born as they are of misunderstandings, are but imaginary and that actually no issue worth fighting about stands between nation and nation. Nothing could be farther from the truth. All the great wars that decided the course of history and changed the political face of the earth were fought for real stakes, not for imaginary ones. The issue in those great convulsions was invariably: Who shall rule and who shall be ruled? Who shall be free and who slave?¹

This thesis began by questioning whether the persistence of the US-North Korea nuclear confrontation from the early 1990s to the present day could be adequately explained with reference to the concept of “security”. The recent history of US-North Korean diplomacy over the nuclear issue and the record of implementation of the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework suggested that something more than a “security dilemma” was at work, and that a closer look at the concept of enmity was appropriate. Having now elaborated a fuller conception of enmity, it remains to be seen whether it can offer a better account of US-North Korean relations, and of the failure of the Agreed Framework. This chapter relates the concept of enmity developed in the previous two chapters to the ongoing debate about US interests regarding North Korea. The following chapter will then look at what makes these two parties enemies – what constitutes and reproduces enmity between them – with an eye to how it might be transformed into something else.

To review, the determination of enmity means that in one’s own judgment the existence of the other constitutes, at least potentially, the negation of one’s own mode of existence. This is not to be understood symbolically or metaphorically, but in concrete

¹ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, fourth ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 504.

and existential terms. This does not imply that one has enemies only if they pose a threat to one's physical existence (though in some cases they may), but that they constitute in some way the negation of something that is considered essential to one's form of existence – that is, to one's identity. Negation means that they threaten to prevent one from being what one is in an essential sense, not that they simply do not agree with it, or live in accordance with it. The decision of what is essential to one's identity, and thus decisive for the determination of enmity, might be formulated as follows: Assuming that current definitions of self and the other imply a real possibility of war, if one would choose to risk war rather than revise one's notion of self in a way that would resolve the antagonism – that is, to accommodate the other – then one has an enemy. The elements of the self that are incompatible with the current form of existence of the other are considered essential.

As indicated in the Introduction, the argument of this thesis is that there is a significant element of moral decision involved in the problem of enmity between states. In essence, where enmity exists, it exists because the parties have, in some fashion, chosen to be enemies. This does not, as it may at first appear to liberal eyes, prejudge the moral issue. The enemies of the apartheid regime in South Africa are almost universally thought to have been justified, as are the enemies of Nazi Germany in World War II. The choice of enmity is made by a collectivity which decides that another has no right to exist, and which decides to act upon that conviction, but it is also made by the collectivity which, perceiving such a disposition on the part of the other, decides to defend itself and its way of life. The choice of enmity is a part of "imperialism", but it is also a part of "resistance"; a part of the "liberation struggle" and a part of "terrorism". Our estimation

of its moral status is likely to be affected by which of these or other labels we apply. The more salient point, perhaps, is that it is often not apparent that a choice is being made at all, as is arguably the case with US enmity toward North Korea, because the element of moral decision is inextricably bound up in the process of description; the description of the self, the description of the other, and the description of the way that international politics works. My intention in the pages that follow is not to exhaust the moral debate about US enmity toward North Korea, but merely to reveal the moral element of the debate, and the effects of the way it has been carried out to date.

Scrutinizing the National Interest

Methodologically, enmity is being treated here as a “structure of identities and interests”. This is in line with Hans Morgenthau’s suggestion that peace between states, at least between the United States and the Soviet Union, was dependent “upon whether what one of them is and wants is compatible with what the other one is and wants.”² It follows that this problem cannot be adequately understood simply by reference to what actors want, nor, in fact, simply by reference to what they are.³

The importance of what actors are will be considered below with reference both to how they define themselves, and how they define each other. Actors’ definitions of themselves, it is argued, are the basis of what rational choice IR refers to (somewhat understatedly perhaps) as “preferences”. In other words, “identities are the basis of

² *Ibid*, 504, emphasis added.

³ Wendt explains it as follows: “Interests presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is... Identities may themselves be chosen in light of interests, as some rationalists have argued, but those interests themselves presuppose still deeper identities. However, identities by themselves do not explain action, since being is not the same thing as wanting, and we cannot “read off” the latter from the former... Without interests identities have no motivational force, without identities interests have no direction.” Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 231.

interests.”⁴ Actors’ definitions of each other can be looked at in two different ways, which are not mutually exclusive. To the extent that portrayals/definitions of the other are merely “ideological” – that is, intended to build support for a particular course of action, regardless of correspondence to reality – they relate primarily to how the actor doing the defining has defined its own place in the world and how the other fits into that definition, and thus belong to the problem of enmity proper. To the extent that they are intended to be accurate portrayals that guide deliberation and action, and are inaccurate, they relate to the problem of perception. The distinction between the two should not be overdrawn, however, as portrayals intended to be merely ideological have a way, over time, of being taken as true representations of the other, and positioning oneself in relation to that representation can be a key part of defining oneself.

In order to refer to what states want, I will use the term “national interest”, which Morgenthau called “the main signpost” for finding one’s way “through the landscape of international politics.”⁵ This is controversial. Its value as an analytic concept is often questioned even within mainstream IR, and is rejected altogether by many “critical” scholars in the field.⁶ The notion, commonly attributed to realists, that national interests are objectively given by, or can be deduced from, the structure of the international system does indeed seem impoverished.⁷ We are not, however, obligated to follow realist

⁴ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics,” *International Organization*, 46 (1992), 398.

⁵ Morgenthau (1967), 5.

⁶ See Steve Smith, “Theories of Foreign Policy: An historical overview,” *Review of International Studies*, 12:1 (1986), esp. 23-26; James N. Rosenau, “National Interest”, in David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. II, (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), 34-40; and Stanley Hoffman, *Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 133.

⁷ Robert Rothstein’s assessment that realist analysis of the international system cannot “convincingly” be related to “specific choices in the world of action” seems to me to be correct. See Robert L. Rothstein, “On the Costs of Realism,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 87:3 (1972), 353. Kenneth Waltz agrees, and argues

conceptions of the national interest, nor to concede that interests are an exclusively realist or “materialist” variable: “No one denies that states act on the basis of perceived interests... What matters is how interests are thought to be constituted.”⁸

Arguably, the assumption of unproblematic interests in IR owes more to scientific aspirations – the quest for a “generalizable and deductively-derived theory of international politics on the model of economics or the natural sciences” – than to correspondence with the realities of international politics. This goal seems to require strictly consequentialist and utility-maximizing models.⁹ As Martha Finnemore argues, however, the latter offer no means with which to talk about the element of persuasion in politics. They make automatons of political actors. Choices may be influenced by new information, but there is no room for “the crafting of argument and the art of persuasion – of changing what people value or think is right and good.”¹⁰ If the motivations of state action go beyond the reflex for “security” or self-preservation to encompass self-assertion

that this contributes to the strength and “elegance” of structural analysis. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 70-71. For present purposes, however, this limitation is not acceptable, because such theories “cannot help us to explain the adoption by a state of particular policies over alternative means for achieving security.” Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6. Nor, one might add, can they explain the choices states make about how to balance their desire for security with other desires. See also Rosenau (1968); and Fred A. Sonderman, “The Concept of the National Interest,” *Orbis*, 21:1 (1977), 121-138.

⁸ See Wendt (1999), 113-114. Wendt does think states have *objective* interests, among which are physical survival, autonomy, economic well-being, and “collective self-esteem”. The first three come from Alexander George and Robert Keohane, “The Concept of National Interests: Uses and Limitations,” in George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, (Boulder: Westview, 1980), 217-238. Wendt adds the fourth. I use the term in the subjective sense Wendt calls “conceptions” of interest, which “makes sense when our goal is to explain behavior, of which subjective states are a proximate cause.” For Wendt, though the “relationship between objective and subjective interests is under-determined,” objective interests have a causal impact in that “a persistent failure to bring subjective interests into line with objective ones will lead to an actor’s demise.” Wendt, *ibid*, 238.

⁹ Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1996), 9. This, she argues, is a “necessary part of the foundation on which such theories must rest.”

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 141.

and the assertion of “our values”, then the element of moral persuasion is not one that can be left out of explanations of international politics.

In reality, “states do not always know what they want”, but develop perceptions, or perhaps more properly conceptions, of their interests through interaction in the world and through internal (and transnational) social and political processes.¹¹ “Much of international politics is about defining rather than defending national interests.”¹² The importance of theorizing the concept of the national interest resides precisely in this process of definition. As Jutta Weldes argues, the process of interpreting what situation the state faces and how it should respond to it “presupposes a language shared, at least, by... state officials in determining state action and by the audience for whom state action must be legitimate.” The shared “language of state action” is the language of the “national interest”.¹³ This logic is compelling: if the concept serves a crucial function in the political life and policy formulation of the state, then analysts of foreign policy must know how to think about it, even if, in traditional treatments, “it has never fulfilled its early promise as an analytic tool”.¹⁴

As such, I follow Weldes in arguing that national interests should be reconceptualized as the product of the interplay of social and political forces in a society. That is, they should be seen as interests that have been and are being *defined* in a particular historical, social and political context. Articulations of the national interest are

¹¹ Finnemore argues that “They and the people in them develop perceptions of interest and understandings of desirable behavior from social interactions with others in the world they inhabit.” *Ibid*, 128. I follow Weldes in giving greater emphasis to internal social and political processes. See below.

¹² Finnemore, *ibid*, preface, ix.

¹³ Weldes (1999), 3-4. See also Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 166: “The internal language of decision is the language of national interest.” Cf. Rosenau (1968), 34.

¹⁴ Rosenau (1968).

interpretations of the self, of the world that is confronted, and of the proper way to respond to that world. In the language of constructivist IR, they are social constructions that are “created as meaningful objects out of the intersubjective and culturally established meanings within which the world, particularly the international system and the place of the state in it, is understood.”¹⁵ This said, it is important not to view them as arbitrary. This would be to miss the point entirely, which is that they are conventional - the product of concrete social practices in concrete historical circumstances. “If it has a history, then it is not arbitrary”.¹⁶

The suggestion that the national interest is the “language of state action”, at least as understood here, implies a dual role for the concept: it is both the concept through which policy makers “understand the goals to be pursued by a state’s foreign policy”, and “a rhetorical device that generates the legitimacy of and political support for state action”.¹⁷ In addition to these two roles, it also serves as a locus around which contests for social and political power take place. In any given foreign policy debate, more is at stake than choices about specific policy alternatives. Within political communities,

¹⁵ Weldes (1999), 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 100. The quote is from Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: New Left Books, 1979), 330. Cf. Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 3. Doty calls representational practices “arbitrary, constructed, and political.”

¹⁷ Weldes (1999), 4. Some might object that language used by state officials is merely rhetoric designed to persuade audiences to support particular state policies and actions. That there may be gaps between the language in which state officials conceptualize the national interest and the terms they use to express or justify it to the population cannot be denied. While state officials play the lead role in articulating the national interest, however, the process is not nearly this unidirectional. The terms in which the population understands the national interest matter as well, and state leaders are at least partially a product of those understandings. In addition, gaps and inconsistencies between official thinking about the national interest and public justification of it will inhibit the pursuit of interests as conceived by office holders, and so officials will generally try to avoid such gaps. See Weldes (1999), 114-118, and Michael Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 15 ff. The time lag in the discovery of such inconsistencies may, however, play a role in officials’ decisions regarding public justifications for action. The use of weapons of mass destruction as a justification for the recent war in Iraq might make an interesting study in this regard.

groups and individuals are always competing for the prevalence of a particular view of social and political realities, and in some cases for the right to define them for the community as office-holders. Hence, in important ways, foreign policy debates take on the complexion of broader contests about how to interpret and respond to events in the world, with different sides each guided by and pushing for the prevalence of different organizing principles. James Fallows, for example, has argued that for many, North Korea has mattered more as a case in a larger (and very old) debate about the necessity of “toughness” as opposed to “appeasement” in dealing with bothersome states. For those looking to make the larger point that America under the Clinton administration had “gone in wholesale for appeasement”, the actual facts of the case were often of secondary importance.¹⁸ The corollary of this is perhaps even more significant for present purposes: the outcomes of policy debates depend heavily on the outcomes of contests for social and political power. For example, Himadeep Muppidi argues that debates within the US government over alternative understandings of India in the 1950s were decided “not by policymakers progressively approximating the reality of India” but by the competition of broader articulations of the situation in the world and of the nature of international politics in general.¹⁹ In addition, once a particular view became firmly established, dissenting opinions were seen not as potentially better understandings of the realities at

¹⁸ See James Fallows, “The Panic Gap: Reactions to North Korea’s Bomb,” *The National Interest*, No. 38, (Winter 1994/95), 44.

¹⁹ In his formulation, they were decided “by the overall logics of meaning and power within each security imaginary”. See Himadeep Muppidi, “Postcoloniality and the Production of International Insecurity: The Persistent Puzzle of US-Indian Relations,” in Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson, and Raymond Duvall, eds., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 140.

hand, but as indications of an “inability to grasp the ‘overall reality’ of US security policy.”²⁰

It should be noted that this way of looking at the national interest – sometimes called the “subjectivist” position – is not new or exclusive to constructivist IR. In particular, it is shared by exponents of “decision-making” approaches to foreign policy, going back as far as the early 1950s.²¹ For these theorists, the national interest was not “a singular objective truth that prevails whether or not it is perceived by the members of a nation,” but rather “a pluralistic set of subjective preferences that change whenever the requirements and aspirations of the nation’s members change.” In essence, there are many groups in a nation that disagree on the best policy or course of action in a given situation, and “the national interest is a reflection of these preferences rather than of objective circumstances.” Decisions about the national interest result from the competition between these preferences in the country’s political processes.²²

Rosenau criticizes this position on the grounds that it seems to make the question of “what is the national interest?” unanswerable. What is one to make of power imbalances that affect the competition of ideas, or of closed authoritarian societies in which many groups have no opportunity to articulate their needs and wants at all? Do the results of the political process of decision-making deserve to be called the “national interest” in such cases? This criticism seems to miss the mark, at least with respect to the

²⁰ Muppidi (1999), 140. Leon Sigal makes a similar point with respect to dissenters from the consensus view on North Korea within the US foreign policy bureaucracy. See Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 33-34 and ch. 3 generally.

²¹ See Edgar S. Furniss and Richard C. Snyder, *An Introduction to American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Rinehart, 1955), p. 17: “The national interest is what the nation, i.e., the decision-maker, decides it is.” See also Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, *Decision-making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* (Princeton University: Organizational Behavior Section, 1954).

²² See Rosenau (1968), 35-37.

position taken here. These are criticisms of the subjectivist position on national interests only if one wants to apply the label of “objective national interests” to whatever decisions about foreign policy emerge from the political process. It is, in fact, the exact opposite that is claimed here – that these decisions *do not* necessarily accord with an objective national interest, but rather reflect historically specific social and political processes. The same applies to Rosenau’s criticism that “it is not always possible to ascertain when a policy has been officially decided upon, since most policies undergo a continuous process of evolution and revision as external conditions change and internal demands shift.”²³

This is exactly right, but it is only a problem if one is relying on the political process to tell one what the *real* national interest is.²⁴ On the contrary, the intent here is to subject the results of that process, and indeed the process itself, to scrutiny.²⁵

²³ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁴ i.e., Will the real national interest please stand up?

²⁵ Of course, the very notion of scrutiny implies that in the mind of the observer there are better and worse descriptions or interpretations of the national interest – that the national interest is not entirely “subjective”, if the latter is taken to mean that there are no right or wrong answers about what the national interest is. In a normative sense, conceptions of the national interest might be judged to be superior or inferior according to their effects – the consequences for self and others of adopting a particular conception of the national interest. For an argument along these lines (though not specifically related to the question of the “national interest”), see David Campbell, *Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1993). In an empirical sense, conceptions of the national interest might be judged by how well the logics, or theories, that inform them correspond to reality. This implies a commitment to the correspondence theory of truth, according to which “theories are true or false in virtue of their relationship to states of the world”. This is controversial for theories that emphasize the effects of subjectivity on social reality, but ultimately unavoidable if one wants one’s criticisms of social reality to be taken seriously. See Wendt, (1999), 67; and Linda Alcoff, “Foucault as epistemologist,” *The Philosophical Forum*, 25:1 (Winter 1993), 110. On the neglect of questions of correspondence in radical constructivist work, see Lee Jussim, “Social Perception and Social Reality: A Reflection-Construction Model,” *Psychological Review*, 18:1 (1991), 54-73. I make both types of argument here. My argument about the dominant US conception of its national interests with respect to North Korea is primarily normative, though I do challenge certain empirical assumptions and assertions that inform it. My argument about the inadequacy of traditional IR theories for understanding how states think about their interests is primarily empirical. They fall short because they do not give an adequate account of reality, and in particular of enmity. Nothing in the correspondence theory prevents us from thinking of other “possible worlds”, or “worlds that do not, as far as we know really exist, but which would if anything in this world happens other than it does.” See Nicolas G. Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 37. On the benefits of this way of thinking, see David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), ch. 1. What it does preclude is the granting of existential standing to “plural worlds”. On the

North Korea and The US National Interest

In the remainder of this chapter, I review the debate about the US national interest with respect to North Korea. This serves primarily two purposes. First, it permits a better sense of whether all of the preceding talk about enmity on the one hand, and about roles, identities, and social construction on the other, are really necessary for understanding the relationship between the United States and North Korea. What is it, in other words, that more conventional approaches do not capture? Second, it should clarify what the current approach has to say both to those approaches and to continuing debates about the US national interest with respect to North Korea. The current analysis is intended, as far as possible, to be an immanent critique of the literature on that subject.

One prominent axis of debate about the US national interest regarding North Korea has been the debate about “engagement vs. containment”. The wisdom of strategies of “engagement” is difficult to assess, in no small part because the concept is often indistinct and undifferentiated in usage. The dichotomy between engagement and containment (or isolation, or coercion) is over-simplified, and thus incapable of capturing much of what is going on in a given situation. Nevertheless, it is difficult to talk about US policy toward North Korea, and to engage the literature on that topic, without engaging the debate about “engagement vs. containment”. Furthermore, while imprecise, it is clear that the dichotomy does point to real differences in policy and strategy. As such, it is worthwhile trying to refine the debate and to relate the implications of the current analysis to it. What becomes clear upon closer examination is that strategies of

difference, see Onuf, *Ibid.* For a good discussion of these approaches in IR theory, see Chris Brown, “‘Turtles All the Way Down’, Anti-Foundationalism, Critical Theory and International Relations,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 23:2 (1994), 213-36. For an approach that does grant existential status to plural worlds, see Richard K. Ashley, “Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 17:2 (1988), 227-262.

“engagement” differ considerably according to the logics that inform them, and that these differences are of decisive importance both to their effects and their chances of “success”, however that might be defined.

Before looking at the engagement/containment debate more closely, however, it is necessary to clarify its relationship to other debates that have perhaps had a greater public profile. These are the debates about the deployment of Ballistic Missile Defense and about nonproliferation strategy. If the debate about engagement and containment can be said to be concerned with the appropriate political relationship between the United States and North Korea, these other debates are concerned with the appropriate tactical response to the “North Korean threat”. Policymakers sometimes focus on the latter to the exclusion of the former, as occurred in early 1992 when US policymakers attempted to enforce the newly established nonproliferation structures of the North-South Denuclearization agreement and the DPRK’s safeguards agreement with the IAEA, in abstraction from progress in US-North Korean and North-South Korean relations.²⁶ As this example illustrates, however, the strategic is always inseparable from the political, and is in fact subservient to it. This is not a normative statement, but an empirical one: strategy always operates within a political context, and its success or failure is largely dependent upon that context.²⁷

Since the early 1990s, North Korea has served as a primary justification for the US Ballistic Missile Defense program, and BMD has sometimes been presented as a

²⁶ See Chapter 2.

²⁷ See Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed., Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), esp. “Two Notes by the Author”, 69; and Peter Paret, *Understanding War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 126-28.

solution to the “North Korea problem”.²⁸ At best, deploying BMD would deal only imperfectly with the “missile threat”, and would do nothing to resolve political tensions on the peninsula.²⁹ BMD only qualifies as a solution if one does not expect the D.P.R.K. to be around for very long, a mode of thinking that has, in fact, had a persistent and problematic influence on US strategy toward North Korea.³⁰ At worst, BMD will exacerbate tensions on the Korean peninsula. This is not simply because it will increase North Korea’s sense of insecurity (though it may), but more importantly because it may be used as a way to avoid dealing with the political aspects of the conflict with North Korea – a way to safely ignore North Korea’s “demands”. As outlined below, this is a losing proposition.

Nonproliferation, as a strategy, can be more or less in touch with the political realities within which it operates, and its chances for success are greatly affected by the level of political awareness that informs it. The emphasis in the United States has been on how to put in place appropriate structures to ensure the verified dismantlement of North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs, but this objective cannot be pursued in abstraction from political developments. As Michael Mazarr points out, nonproliferation is “a relative interest, not an absolute one”. It can be an important element of resolving conflict situations that involve concerns about weapons of mass destruction, but it is not,

²⁸ For a range of opinion, see Frank Harvey, “The International Politics of National Missile Defense: A Response to the Critics,” *International Journal*, 55:4 (Autumn 2000), 545-566; Keith B. Payne, “Action-Reaction Metaphysics and Negligence,” *Washington Quarterly*, 24:4 (Autumn 2001); Selig S. Harrison, “The Missiles of North Korea: How Real a Threat?” *World Policy Journal* (Fall 2000), 13-24; Charles L. Glaser and Steve Fetter, “National Missile Defense and the Future of US Nuclear Weapons Policy,” *International Security*, 26:1 (Summer 2001), 40-92; and James M. Lindsay and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Defending America: The Case for Limited National Missile Defense* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), esp. Ch. 3.

²⁹ Victor D. Cha, “Hawk Engagement and Preventive Defense on the Korean Peninsula,” *International Security*, 27:1 (Summer 2002), 74.

³⁰ See discussion below.

in itself, a solution to those conflicts. Such a solution must address the “proliferant’s” motives, which may include “a complex set of factors related to its basic security and sometimes its national survival”. In some cases, a recognition of this fact “will simply rule out the common criterion of success as understood by US nonproliferation specialists: the immediate, complete and total end to all nuclear research.”³¹

It would, in fact, be difficult to point to a case where nonproliferation efforts have been successful in rolling back an existing nuclear weapons program without addressing the basic security concerns of the “proliferant”. Threats of sanctions mean little to a state that sees its basic survival as immanently threatened.³² In this respect, the argument made by many nonproliferation specialists that other potential proliferants would draw “the wrong lesson” if North Korea were “permitted” to develop nuclear weapons misses the point.³³ Potential proliferants do not *think* that nuclear weapons provide greater bargaining leverage, as these analysts fear; they *know* this to be the case, at least in certain spheres of interaction. They are not in need tutoring on the role nuclear weapons play in the world. The great powers take states with nuclear weapons more seriously, as do other states, and the repetition of nonproliferation doctrine to the contrary will not alter this situation. States also know, however, that there are costs to proliferation (both monetary and political), that having nuclear weapons can actually exacerbate threats to

³¹ Michael J. Mazarr, “Going Just a Little Nuclear: Nonproliferation Lessons from North Korea,” *International Security*, 20:2 (Fall 1995), 92, 100, 102.

³² Mazarr points to Ukraine as an example of where nonproliferation was successful because it took into consideration the motivations of the “proliferant”. As Sherman Garnett put it: “The key to success in US policy toward Ukraine was the marriage of US nuclear non-proliferation policy with a broad-based policy that supported economic and political reform and addressed Kiev’s security concerns... The element that made the difference was the strategic linking of Kiev’s nuclear disarmament to a broadened US and Western political, economic and security relationship with Ukraine.” See Mazarr, *ibid*, 106, and Sherman W. Garnett, “Ukraine’s Decision to Join the NPT,” *Arms Control Today*, 25:1 (January-February 1995), 12.

³³ See, for example, James Sterngold, “Korea experts see true crisis: They fear North may sell nuclear weapons,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 2003, A-1.

their security, and that there are mechanisms that can provide greater security than can nuclear weapons with fewer adverse consequences, such as the kinds of arrangements negotiated by Ukraine with both NATO and the Russian Federation. These are the reasons why many states with the capacity to develop nuclear weapons do not do so. The “nonproliferation regime” is held together not by threat of coercion, but primarily because it is in most states’ interests not to acquire nuclear weapons. In some cases, where the motivations for proliferation are not acute, the potential for negative sanctions may dissuade it. But if the nonproliferation effort is to have a chance in cases like North Korea – hard cases – it resides not in the possibility of coercion, but in the fact that there are better ways of addressing their security and other concerns. As other analysts have pointed out, a basic and indispensable principle of the non-proliferation regime is that states that do not possess nuclear weapons cannot be threatened by those that do have them.³⁴ There may be situations in which nuclear powers feel obliged to disregard this principle, but in such cases, all *non-proliferation* bets are off.

Typically, successful nonproliferation in hard cases will involve the negotiation of “package deals” that address the security concerns of the proliferant. The Agreed Framework of 1994 had the essential elements of such a deal, though subsequent agreements would undoubtedly have been needed as the situation developed.³⁵ Package

³⁴ Bruce Cumings, “Nuclear Imbalance of Terror: The American Surveillance Regime and North Korea’s Nuclear Programme,” in Raju G. Thomas, ed., *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Prospects for the 21st Century* (London/New York: MacMillan/St. Martins, 1998), 228; and Peter Hayes, *Pacific Powderkeg: American Nuclear Dilemmas in Korea* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1991), 214. See also UN Security Council Resolution 255 of March 7, 1967.

³⁵ Mazarr argues that the “tortuous” road to the Agreed Framework illustrates how little this approach informs US nonproliferation policy, and that the lack of progress a year after the agreement was signed raised “real concerns about the US ability to implement package agreements even when it manages to reach them.” US officials, he argues failed to appreciate “the larger rationale for the package deal approach”. He also argued presciently that “Only by a continuous and energetic follow-up process of engagement and

deals like the Agreed Framework are not merely a set of *quid pro quos*; they are instances of mutual accommodation, designed to address specific concerns on both sides. The BMD and “disarmament” approaches can be seen as indicators of the US reluctance to engage in a genuine political process to address North Korea’s concerns. This reluctance comes out more clearly in the “engagement vs. containment” debate, and the “disarmament” approach is, in turn, bolstered by the terms of the engagement debate, which tends to portray the US-North Korean relationship either in terms of “behaviour modification” or of “crime and punishment”.

Containment, Engagement and Appeasement

It was argued earlier that the US policy toward North Korea throughout the 1990s and early 2000s has been, in effect, one of containment, with the implicit objective of seeing the regime in the DPRK either collapse or transform. This will strike some as both obvious and appropriate, but it is not an uncontentious interpretation of the situation. Robert Litwak, for example, has argued that the US policy toward North Korea has included “a significant engagement component”, which constitutes the sole exception to its generic policy of isolation toward rogue states.³⁶ One reason for differing characterizations of the policy is that all engagement policies are not created equal. To the extent that there has been an engagement component to US policy toward North Korea, it is akin to what Victor Cha has called “hawk engagement”, aimed at “exposing”

reconciliation with North Korea can the United States and its allies make this deal stick.” See Mazarr (1995), 117-118, 122.

³⁶ See Robert S. Litwak, *Rogue States and US Foreign Policy: Containment after the Cold War*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 5, 9, and Chapter 6. Similar views are expressed by Mazarr (1995), 120; and Patrick Morgan, “New Security Arrangements Between the United States and North Korea,” in Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee, eds., *North Korea After Kim Il Sung*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 167-169. Cf. Curtis H. Martin, “Rewarding North Korea: Theoretical Perspectives on the 1994 Agreed Framework,” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 39:1 (January 2002), 53.

North Korean bad faith and building support for a more coercive strategy.³⁷ It will be argued below that such an approach cannot form the basis of a non-coercive resolution to the situation. The failure of the Agreed Framework is, in essence, a failure of “hawk engagement”, and it illustrates the poverty of that approach.³⁸

If there is an overarching feature to the US engagement-containment debate regarding North Korea, it is that it is carried out almost entirely in the terms of “reward and punishment” or “carrot and stick”. Clinton administration policies were often criticized as being “all carrot and no stick”, while the subsequent Bush administration’s approach is sometimes criticized as being “all stick and no carrot”.³⁹ Some analysts worry about rewarding North Korea’s “bad behaviour”, while others urge resistance to the temptation to “punish” it.⁴⁰ US officials have often maintained that engaging in bilateral talks with North Korea is itself a “reward”, while critics argue that this position is itself a barrier to resolving the situation.⁴¹

Litwak argues that a distinction should be made between “conditional reciprocity” – essentially the rewarding of good behaviour – and “appeasement”, the rewarding of bad behaviour. To fit into the first category, inducements “must be tied to specific changes in the target state’s behavior,” and must be given “only after the specific change in behavior.” If given in advance or in the absence of “behavior modification,” they “may

³⁷ Cha (2002), 40-78.

³⁸ This is true in the double sense that it did not succeed either *as a strategy of engagement* or in the distinctive goal of hawk engagement – to garner support for a more coercive course of action. See the discussion below.

³⁹ On the Bush administration approach, see Paul Krugman, “Games Nations Play,” *New York Times*, January 3, 2003. It is a sign of the polarization of the debate that the Clinton administration received criticism both for being too tough and too soft. See Litwak (2000), 217.

⁴⁰ C.S. Eliot Kang, “North Korea and the US Grand Strategy,” *Comparative Strategy*, 20:1 (2001), 34.

⁴¹ Mitchell Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995), 253; Mazarr (1995), 101-102; and Sigal (1998), 38. See also the comments US special envoy to North Korea, Charles Pritchard, after his recent resignation, in Peter Slevin, “Former Envoy Presses North Korea Dialogue,” *Washington Post*, September 9, 2003, A19.

legitimately be criticized” as bribes.⁴² The concept of appeasement has not always had such moralistic implications, at least in theory. For Morgenthau, appeasement was bad not because it “rewards bad behaviour”, but because it is dangerous. It is “a corrupted policy of compromise, made erroneous by mistaking a policy of imperialism for a policy of the status quo.”⁴³ Appeasement and imperialism, he argued, “are logically correlated.” To say that one state has committed the error of appeasement is to say that the other has “imperialistic” intentions toward it, and “If the latter statement is incorrect, the former is meaningless.” As such, to say that the United States has “appeased” North Korea is to say that North Korea pursues a “policy of imperialism” vis-à-vis the United States, not that North Korea has failed to modify its behaviour in ways specified by the United States.⁴⁴ Litwak’s application of the term, however, which occurs in the context of a moderate and critical analysis, suggests how pervasive the moralistic connotations of “appeasement” are. Its rhetorical power is moral, not strategic, in origin.

Certainly, though, it is hard to object to the expectation that concessions be reciprocal; this is a requirement of any form of cooperation. Furthermore, it is clear that incentives and disincentives play a role in shaping others’ behaviour to better reflect one’s own preferences – something all actors engage in.⁴⁵ The carrot and stick metaphor

⁴² Litwak (2000), 111.

⁴³ Morgenthau (1967), 61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 62. In this connection, he quotes Winston Churchill, the great opponent of the Munich Agreement: “What we really mean [by no appeasement], I think, is no appeasement through weakness or fear. Appeasement in itself may be good or bad according to the circumstances. Appeasement from weakness and fear is alike futile and fatal. Appeasement from strength is magnanimous and noble and might be the surest and perhaps the only path to world peace.” Sir Winston Churchill in the House of Commons, December 14, 1950, quoted in *ibid*, 63. Using the term a bit more broadly, Leon Sigal has argued with respect to the Agreed Framework that appeasement would have been wrong under two conditions, neither of which obtained: “if North Korea had had unlimited ambitions and the means to pursue them, and if North Korea had been stronger and inducements would have further strengthened it at American expense.” Sigal (1998), 7.

⁴⁵ See the discussion of “altercasting” in Chapter 1.

seems, on the surface, to be merely a useful shorthand for conceptualizing this dynamic. In important respects, however, it is fundamentally misconceived. First, it takes no account of motivations of the “target state” that are independent of the “rewards and punishments” offered. As North Korean officials pointed out to one American visitor, the carrot and stick metaphor refers to methods of getting a donkey to move.⁴⁶ But states are not donkeys, and are not merely stubborn. They have motivations of their own that inform their actions, or as Weinstein and Deutschberger put it, they “bring... purposes into interaction,”⁴⁷ and if the “carrots” offered are not related to these, they will be of limited effectiveness. This may seem like an obvious point, but the earlier discussion of the Agreed Framework suggests that it bears mentioning. The nearly ubiquitous uncritical acceptance of the notion that North Korea gave up its nuclear weapons option in exchange for a couple of power generators, and that provisions calling for normalization of relations and security assurances were unimportant by comparison, suggests a “carrot and stick” logic gone awry.

A second problem with the carrot and stick metaphor is that it suggests that the barrier to resolving the situation lies ultimately with North Korea, and that the United States stands in a superior position not only in terms of its “character” (or the values it espouses), but also in relation to the ongoing conflict between the two parties. This puts the responsibility for progress or the lack thereof squarely on North Korea, and precludes

⁴⁶ The visitor was K. A. (“Tony”) Namkung, who played a crucial role in the ‘Track II’ diplomatic efforts that brought about the Agreed Framework. DPRK officials showed him a diagram in an old Merriam-Webster dictionary depicting a donkey with a bunch of carrots dangling beyond its reach, and the master, stick in hand, standing beside it. Namkung, memorandum of June 7, 1994, cited in Sigal (1998), 7-8. Oxford identifies the origin of the metaphor as follows: “with allusion to the proverbial encouragement of a donkey to move by enticing it with a carrot.” See *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 280, under ‘carrot’.

⁴⁷ Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger, “Some Dimensions of Altercasting,” *Sociometry*, 26:4 (December 1963), 454.

consideration of how US actions may themselves constitute a barrier to the very concessions that North Korea is expected to make. This is implicit in the charge of appeasement levelled at those who wish to negotiate with North Korea. In essence, it assumes the latter's objectives are inherently illegitimate, and that therefore any concession to these objectives is also illegitimate. Thus, what one should be engaged in is "behaviour modification", in Litwak's terms, or if that is not possible, "crime and punishment" – making an example of a "rogue state" which stubbornly refuses to comply.⁴⁸

In effect, the carrot and stick metaphor implies a certain moral superiority that tends to lead to a disregard of North Korea's objectives. This may be done unwittingly, out of ignorance, or more intentionally because of an awareness that recognizing these objectives as legitimate would require concessions that the US is not prepared to make. In either case, it constitutes a barrier to dispute resolution. Regardless of how morally superior one may feel (or be) vis-à-vis the other, the logic of "reward" and "punishment" does not speak to the problem of making objectives commensurable – of finding a "working consensus". The distinction is not immaterial, however, because it speaks to the roles enmity and misperception play respectively in sustaining the containment policy. In light of the inseparable nature of description and decision, explored further in the next chapter, it is probably some combination of the two that prevents genuine engagement.

The role of perception is not limited to US perceptions of North Korea's objectives. Arguably, one factor that has kept the containment policy largely in place is

⁴⁸ The criticism of the 'crime and punishment' approach is a major theme in Sigal (1998).

the expectation that North Korea, an isolated Communist dictatorship devoid of Soviet and Chinese sponsorship, with very limited foreign trade, an inefficient centrally controlled economy and declining infrastructure, cannot last long in the post-Cold War environment, particularly while it is barred from receiving assistance from the World Bank, the IMF, or the Asian Development Bank. Evaluating the prospects for North Korea's collapse or absorption has been both a political and scholarly pre-occupation for most of the post-Cold War period.⁴⁹ Most scholarship has revolved around a central paradox of North Korea's situation: economic survival requires reform and opening, but reform and opening pose a threat to regime survival. Reform, many argue, would undermine the ideological basis of the regime and its economy, as well as its position in the "legitimacy competition" with the South, and would dishonour the legacy of Kim Il Sung, upon which the legitimacy of the regime depends. Opening would display the North's inferiority to the South in terms of standard of living to its entire population.⁵⁰ In addition, not only Soviet, but also Chinese patronage dried up in the early 1990s, and successive natural disasters (flooding and drought) hit the North in the mid 1990s.

⁴⁹ For a representative sample see Marcus Noland, "Why North Korea Will Muddle Through," *Foreign Affairs*, 76:4 (July/August 1997), 105-118; Nicolas Eberstadt, "Hastening Korean Reunification," *Foreign Affairs*, 76:2 (May/June 1997), 77-92; David Reese, *The Prospects for North Korea's Survival*, *Adelphi Papers*, no. 323 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998); Scott Snyder, "North Korea's Challenge of Regime Survival: Internal Problems and Implications for the Future," *Pacific Affairs*, 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 518; and Phillip Park, "The Future of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 31:1 (2001), 104-120.

⁵⁰ For discussions of these requirements of regime legitimacy in North Korea and North Korean efforts to manage them see Han S. Park, "North Korean Perceptions of Self and Others: Implications for Policy Choices," *Pacific Affairs* 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 503-516; Park, *North Korea: The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Roland Bleiker, "Identity and Security in Korea," *Pacific Review*, 14:1 (2001), 121-148; Chris Rhodes, "The Juche Idea and its Role in the North Korean Political Economy," in Hazel Smith *et. al.*, eds., *North Korea in the New World Order*, (London: Macmillan, 1996); and Charles A. Armstrong, "A Socialism of Our Style": North Korean Ideology in a Post-Communist Era," in Samuel S. Kim, ed. *North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). For the argument that rigid states are prone to be overthrown from below, see Jeff Goodwin and Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World," *Politics and Society* 17:4 (1989), 489-509.

The collapse thesis seems to have less currency now than it once did. China and Russia seem to have readjusted their policies to a more balanced “honest broker” approach toward the Koreans, beginning with summit meetings by presidents Zemin and Putin with Kim Jong Il in 2000, after seemingly having put all of their eggs in the South Korean basket at the beginning of the 1990s.⁵¹ North Korea has been able to weather what seems to have been the worst of its economic and humanitarian crises with the help of international humanitarian assistance. In the process, significant “opening” has occurred as a result of its interaction with aid organizations, and it has undertaken a cautious “reform by stealth” program with respect to its economy.⁵² In addition, at least prior to November 2002, North Korea’s relations with most western countries except the United States were seeing steady improvement.

Regardless of its merits, however, the collapse thesis has significantly influenced the policies of other states “from the moment the Berlin Wall fell,” and arguably has paralysed US policy toward North Korea throughout the post-Cold War period.⁵³ The

⁵¹ Selig Harrison argues that China and Russia are increasingly playing the role of “honest broker” on the peninsula, and that both want the US to do the same. Harrison (2002), 110. Russia declared in April 1994 that it intended to uphold its 1961 mutual security treaty if North Korea were attacked without provocation. Samuel Kim argued that this reflected a recognition by Moscow that they had “made a cardinal strategic mistake when they put all their eggs into the South Korean basket at the expense of credibility and leverage in Pyongyang,” and that “north Korea needs a certain degree of external support to... prevent its turn to a more defensive/aggressive stance.” Also, China indicated its intention to block attempts to impose sanctions in the UN Security Council at that time. See Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea in 1994: Brinkmanship, Breakdown, and Breakthrough,” *Asian Survey*, 35:1 (January 1995), 22-23. The DPRK-USSR Mutual Defense Treaty was allowed to expire in 1996. The parties signed a new Treaty on Friendship, Good Neighborly Relations, and Co-operation in 1999, but it was contained little of substance, “as each party can offer nothing the other particularly wants”. Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea in 1999: Bringing the Grand Chollima March Back In,” *Asian Survey* 40:1 (January/February 2000), 156-7. See also Yinhay Ahn, “North Korea in 2001: At a Crossroads,” *Asian Survey*, 42:1 (January/February 2002), 52; and Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea in 2000: Surviving through the High Hopes of Summit Diplomacy,” *Asian Survey*, 41:1 (January/February 2001), 13.

⁵² On opening, see Hazel Smith, “‘Opening up’ by default: north Korea, the humanitarian community and the crisis,” *Pacific Review*, 12:3 (1999), 453-478. The phrase “reform by stealth” comes from Selig Harrison (2002), ch. 4.

⁵³ Snyder, (2000), 518; Harrison (2002), 3.

negotiation of the Agreed Framework coincided with a rise in “collapsist” thinking in the US. As the economic crisis in North Korea was nearing its peak in the mid-1990s, the view that if left alone the regime would simply collapse of its own volition, and that that this would be a good thing, seemed to achieve the status of orthodoxy.⁵⁴ Some, in fact, justified the accord on the basis that the light water reactors, having an expected construction time of ten years, would never be completed.⁵⁵ As one senior Defense Department official put it at the time, “Five years from now, North Korea is not going to be there.”⁵⁶ The Agreed Framework itself increased the influence of such thinking, because there was thought to be a “tacit admission of weakness inherent in North Korea’s decision to bargain away its nuclear weapons program for oil and energy resources,” something many in the Washington intelligence community had predicted would not occur.⁵⁷

While the collapse thesis has undoubtedly been influential, however, the argument that it helps to explain the persistence of the containment policy presumes that collapse, be it in the form of absorption by the South or of internal transformation (“regime change”), would be a desirable outcome for the United States. Again, since North Korea is a Communist dictatorship and a “rogue state”, this seems obvious, but it is worthwhile

⁵⁴ This sentiment is well summed up by Karen Elliot House, “Let North Korea Collapse,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 February 1997, A14.

⁵⁵ Snyder (2000), 522 and Harrison (2002), 4. Cf. Eberstadt (1997), esp. 77-78, who argues that the Agreed Framework was part of a longer-term strategy not premised on early re-unification.

⁵⁶ Quoted in *The Washington Post*, 15 December 1995, cited in Kyung-Ae Park, “North Korea’s Defensive Power and US-North Korea Relations,” *Pacific Affairs*, 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 552. Park points out that hard-liners in North Korea have argued that this was Washington’s rationale in signing the agreement from the beginning, and that US failures to implement its provisions have strengthened their position within the regime.

⁵⁷ Snyder (2000), 521. Both this characterization of the agreement and the notion that North Korea was negotiating from a position of weakness are challenged here.

asking if there are conditions under which the United States might make the switch from a policy of containment to a policy of “engagement”.

Engagement on What Terms, and What Kind of Engagement?

On realist assumptions, we should expect “engagement” to be pursued if it is in the “security” interests of the United States to do so. On Patrick Morgan’s account, some easing of containment might be expected as a result of an explicit political rapprochement with the West, but genuine “release” from containment would require market-oriented economic reforms, democratic political reform, and easing of political repression. The United States has historically “simply not [been] interested in a truly normal relationship without such changes.”⁵⁸ This formulation, of course, prompts several questions, including the terms upon which the United States would be willing to undertake the “explicit political rapprochement” which might result in the easing of containment, and whether the three conditions are related to concerns about “security” or something else, such as *thymotic* self assertion.

Victor Cha argues that the use of an engagement strategy, both “historically and theoretically” presumes at least two things: 1) Some confidence that the interests and intentions of the “engager” and “target state” are somehow mutually compatible – that they do not constitute a “game of deadlock”, but rather a “coordination game” where engagement can serve important functions such as transparency and communication; 2) Some confidence that the target state’s intentions are “engageable” (i.e. not “revisionist” or “revolutionary”), and include some degree of “opening”. Otherwise, engagement will

⁵⁸ Morgan (1998), 166-167. Morgan distinguishes the end of containment from ‘détente’ within containment. While containment allowed for some limited cooperation, for example on arms control matters, “there was always a distinction between some level of détente and an end to containment.” *Ibid*, 165.

be a costly and futile exercise. If 1 or 2 is not present, then there must be at least some degree of confidence that engagement can create the conditions for them – a reasonable expectation that engagement will have a transforming effect on the underlying preferences and intentions of the target state.⁵⁹

The distinguishing of tactics and intentions is often considered essential to the determination of whether or not the conditions for engagement exist. Caution is warranted, it is argued, since “The most dangerous and costly engagement policy is one in which the implementer goes forward despite uncertainty about the target’s intentions, or simply assumes that engagement will transform those revisionist intentions (e.g., Chamberlain’s Munich Pact)”.⁶⁰ The charge is frequently made that changes in North Korean foreign policy behaviour, such as the June 2000 North-South summit, movement toward normalization with Japan, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with western countries, “should be seen as tactical changes, as opposed to fundamental changes in system goals.”⁶¹ Cha argues that the assessments of South Korea, the United States and Japan constitute a spectrum on the matter, with South Korea’s sunshine policy “[banking] on a transformation of preferences,” Washington in the middle “[hoping] for the same but the skepticism is palpable,” and Japan at the opposite extreme, not necessarily due to greater pessimism but rather because “even in the most optimistic extrapolation of the current situation, it may end up in the worst-off position.” For his

⁵⁹ Cha (2002), 549-550.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 553-54, 558-59. Cha argues that changes in the conventional military situation or the missile situation would indicate more fundamental changes in preferences, because, unlike ‘smile diplomacy’ (which costs little and offers economic payoffs), these would be costly to revisionist intentions. Interestingly, he places the return of the remains of US soldiers missing-in-action in the ‘basket of issues’ indicating changes in intentions rather than tactics. According to Kyung-Ae Park, negotiations on this issue have seen the most progress of all bilateral issues between the US and North Korea. See Park (2000/01), 552-553. Another positive indicator is the North Korean offer, following the 2nd Berlin Talks in January 2000, to give up long-range missiles in exchange for the launching of their satellites by other countries.

⁶¹ Park (2002), 100.

part, Cha argues that North Korea's "gestures of opening" in 2000-2001 "are consonant with nothing more than tactical changes in behavior" and do not provide evidence of "a fundamental change in underlying preferences."⁶²

Surprisingly, while he contends that none of the three conditions enumerated above has been established in the case of North Korea, Cha argues that engagement is still the appropriate strategy, "even if one is a hawk". In fact, he argues that it is "the only viable policy on the peninsula."⁶³ Eliot Kang offers a similar assessment:

[T]hose who argue for a tougher stance toward North Korea are generally silent about what specific alternative steps might be taken. They argue that North Korea should be allowed to collapse or the United States should push for Korean reunification on South Korean terms, but they fail to spell out how they would bring about these results... In fact, among those who have policy experience and are knowledgeable about the history of US involvement in Korea, there is a considerable bipartisan consensus on restraint and engagement."⁶⁴

To treat the prevailing judgment among US policymakers as one in favour of engagement with North Korea, however, obscures more than it reveals. When used loosely in this fashion, the term "engagement" does not, in fact, tell us very much about the policy pursued. A more differentiated understanding can be gained by looking at three distinct arguments that Cha makes (in two essays) in favour of engagement. The first is that the instruments of engagement, in particular the Agreed Framework, provide "the best window on whether DPRK intentions are ultimately amenable to peaceful

⁶² This is a curious piece of reasoning coming from Cha, because it uses 'revisionist' behaviour during the Cold War as its baseline, something Cha criticizes: "Policymakers continue to apply lessons drawn from the Cold War to new threats. Instead they should assess the nature of these threats within the context of the post-Cold War environment and tailor their policies accordingly. Policy formulas that assume static notions of threat based on the Cold War experience are dangerous because the factors that contributed to deterrence and peace in one era could lead to conflict in another." See Cha (2002), 45.

⁶³ Cha (2002), 43, 44.

⁶⁴ Kang (2001), 32.

resolution of conflict on the Korean Peninsula.”⁶⁵ Second, he presents engagement as a form of “preventive defense”, aimed at preventing “the crystallization of conditions under which Pyongyang could calculate aggression as a ‘rational’ course of action even if a DPRK victory were impossible.”⁶⁶ Third, he argues that engagement is the best way to “expose North Korean bad faith” and to “build a coalition for punishment”, or coercion, once North Korea’s true colours are revealed. What becomes evident upon closer examination is that “engagement” is a very different thing depending upon which of these three logics informs it. There is no generic policy of “engagement” that will succeed or fail based solely on the realities of the situation, but rather a spectrum of possible engagement policies, the success of which will depend, in no small degree, on their own characteristics.

If their implications are drawn out, the three justifications for engagement identified above actually span the entire spectrum of engagement logics. At one extreme is the “hawk engagement” logic, which assumes that North Korean intentions are inherently malign, and seeks merely to demonstrate this fact to the rest of the world so that appropriate coercive action can be taken. “Engagement that puts North Korea on notice that it could be facing its last chance for cooperation is the most effective way to build a coalition for punishment.”⁶⁷ Since its objective is to build support for coercion, as a policy of engagement it is not only likely to fail, it is *designed* to do so. This characterizes the “engagement” logic adopted by the US congressional leadership

⁶⁵ Victor D. Cha, “Japan’s Engagement Dilemmas with North Korea,” *Asian Survey*, 41:4 (July/August 2001), 550.

⁶⁶ Cha (2002), 44. On the concept of “preventive defense” see Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999).

⁶⁷ Cha (2002), 71.

throughout most of the Agreed Framework period. In the middle is a sort of exploratory, or “wait and see” approach to engagement – Cha’s “window on DPRK intentions” – which in theory makes no prior judgments about North Korean intentions, but rather is designed to reveal them. The Perry Report, with its two-track formula designed to offer North Korea the choice to demonstrate intentions in one direction or another, approximates this logic very closely. It does not assume that intentions are pre-existing and immutable, as the previous approach does. On the other hand, it does not adequately recognize the connection between US actions and North Korean intentions either. In practice, the burden of proof has been squarely on North Korea, which must demonstrate benign intentions in irreversible ways in order for progress to occur.⁶⁸ It is, fundamentally, a “you go first” approach to conflict resolution. At the other end of the spectrum is an approach that recognizes that actors’ intentions are interdependent, and that resolving the conflict requires a formula that addresses the concerns of both simultaneously. It is a repudiation of the “you go first” approach. The Agreed Framework was designed (but not implemented) on this logic.

In reality, there is some overlap between the second and third approach; a lack of reciprocation will stall or reverse progress in both. There is also some overlap between the first and second approaches, as “hawk engagement” is really just a less ingenuous two-track approach. The differences, however, are real, and become clear in implementation. As Cha argues, if engagement is viewed as “an exit strategy that builds a coalition for punishment”, the US can be expected to push for shorter timelines for implementation, both in order to get the exit strategy in motion and because this is in

⁶⁸ The exception to this was the proactive approach of the Clinton administration during 2000, when it helped to make the June North-South summit possible, reduced sanctions, and made significant steps toward resolving the missile issue. See Chapter 2.

their “non-proliferation interests”. In addition, “brinkmanship tactics” and “bad behaviour” (what will be called coercive bargaining below) are more likely to be met with a punitive response, since hawks “are less likely to give Pyongyang the benefit of the doubt on any questionable behavior and would shift with greater alacrity to the alternative path.”⁶⁹ All of this makes “hawk engagement” incompatible with a strategy of mutual accommodation, or even a genuine two-track approach. This becomes clear if one looks more closely at Cha’s argument for hawk engagement.

The Importance of Prospects

Cha’s argument for “hawk engagement” is based on prospect theory, which emphasizes the importance of context, as opposed to strictly “gains-based” utility calculations, in framing the decisions state leaders have to make. That is, the choices made by state leaders, including the level of risk they are willing to accept, are *context dependent*, and states are more risk-acceptant as their situations deteriorate.⁷⁰ The reference above to a situation in which North Korea might consider aggression rational even if victory were impossible is based on the notion that if North Korea comes to see

⁶⁹ Cha (2002), 74-76. It is the nature of hawk engagement to concede as little as possible in order to demonstrate a ‘good faith’ effort at a peaceful resolution of the situation. The standard for this has as much to do with how effective one’s discursive efforts are as how much one actually concedes. Thus, demonizing the ‘target state’, minimizing one’s own responsibility for the situation (a-historicity or historical revisionism), and reinterpreting one’s obligations under agreements made (as with the Agreed Framework) can considerably lower the ‘costs’ of the endeavour.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 54-56. For the roots of prospect theory see Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk,” *Econometrica*, 47:2 (March 1979), 263-291; and Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, “Rational Choice and the Framing of Decisions,” *Journal of Business*, 59:4, pt. 2 (1986), S251-S278. For examples of adaptations to political decision-making see Jack S. Levy, “Prospect Theory, rational choice, and international relations,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 41:1 March 1997), 87-112; Levy, “An Introduction to Prospect Theory,” *Political Psychology*, 13:2 (June 1992), 171-186; and Levy, “Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems,” *Political Psychology* 13:2 (June 1992), 283-310; Janice Gross Stein, “International Co-operation and Loss Avoidance: Framing the Problem,” in Stein, ed., *Choosing to Co-operate: How States Avoid Loss* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 2-34; and George Quattrone and Amos Tversky, “Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice,” *American Political Science Review*, 82:3 (September 1988), 719-736.

the continuation of the status quo as inevitably a losing formula for itself, it is likely to take measures to shake up the situation in an attempt to negotiate a more favourable status quo. The bleaker the future looks, the more likely a state is to take drastic measures to disrupt the status quo. If things cannot get much worse, Cha argues, then “states can rationally choose to fight even when there is little hope of victory.”⁷¹

The key point, here, is the importance of context in framing the decisions states make. Cha derives three specific points about the importance of context from prospect theory: First, “how states frame a situation or encode a decision can drastically affect the choices they make.” He uses the illustration of an expected golf score: “If I play golf expecting to shoot ten strokes below my handicap but shoot only five strokes below, I see this as an inferior outcome rather than a positive improvement in my game.” The assessment would, of course, be substantially different if he started with no (or different) expectations and achieved the same score. The “frame of reference” is what determines the evaluation, “regardless of the objective equivalence of the two situations.” Second, states are subject to an “endowment effect”, which means that “they value what they have more than what they can achieve”. Finally, “certain outcomes weigh more heavily in states’ calculations than probable ones.” As such, state behaviour is “primarily motivated by the pursuit of certain gains or the avoidance of certain losses.”⁷²

For present purposes, what is more important than the specific tenets of prospect theory is the more general argument that “the ‘decision frame’ is critical to choice,” and that “[t]his frame, in turn, is determined by the identification of a reference point and the

⁷¹ *Cha* (2002), 45, 48.

⁷² *Ibid*, 54-56.

coding of decisions in terms of gains or losses.”⁷³ Cha applies this insight to the choice of North Korea about whether to take preventive/preemptive action because of the fear of attack or its own collapse. The basic argument is that the more “stake” a state has in the status quo, the less apt it is to take preventive/preemptive action. In other words, “if a state is potentially a target of attack but frames the current situation as a ‘winning’ one, then it will generally be averse to taking preemptive or preventive actions.” On the other hand, if a state sees itself as the potential target of attack, but sees the current situation as a “losing” one, then the likelihood of preventive/preemptive action is high.⁷⁴

In order for the logic of pre-emption to be compelling, Cha argues, a state must be able to envision a non-status quo outcome that has a higher “utility” than doing nothing. In other words, “There has to be a story that North Korea can tell itself as to why the alternative to nonaction is rational.” In this case, “one can envision a spectrum of such stories.” At one end might be a “coercive bargaining” strategy, which does not imply all-out war, but rather “utilizes deliberate, limited acts of violence to create small crises and then negotiates down from the heightened state of tension to a bargaining outcome more to the North’s advantage than the status quo ex ante.”⁷⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, Cha envisions a scenario in which North Korea might attempt, by using long-range artillery, missiles, or chemical weapons against deliberately non-American targets, to hold Seoul hostage, hoping to renegotiate a more favourable status quo. The objective feasibility of such an action is not the point, but rather “the belief in North Korea that doing something is better than doing nothing – because the latter only promises slow but

⁷³ *Ibid*, 56.

⁷⁴ It is also affected by the perceived chances of success: “The incentive to act is exponentially reinforced if offense is perceived to be advantageous.” *Ibid*, 58.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 53. See also Levy, (1992b), 302-303.

certain death.”⁷⁶ In Cha’s view, North Korea’s provocative behaviour during the 1990s reflects a strategy of “coercive bargaining”, motivated by the logic of preemptive/preventive action:

Dissatisfied with the status quo, Pyongyang engages in limited disruptive acts that are not severe enough to start a war but are dangerous enough to attract attention and precipitate a crisis. These deliberate pinpricks put Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo in the awkward position of wanting to respond punitively but feeling constrained by better judgment against provoking a larger, costly conflict. As a result, the allies denounce the misbehavior but still come to the negotiating table hoping to reduce tensions. From Pyongyang’s perspective, the provocation is designed not to produce a military victory but to initiate a coercive bargaining process that results in an outcome more to its advantage than the status quo *ex ante*.⁷⁷

The conclusion drawn from this is that containment does not alleviate the preemptive/preventive logic of coercive bargaining, and may actually promote it.⁷⁸

Understanding the “North Korean threat” in these terms “highlights the misdirected focus of the DPRK engagement debate in Washington and Seoul”. It should not be, as it currently is, about “whether the North seeks to subvert the South or the degree to which it seeks reform,” but rather about the likelihood that various strategies will prevent situations in which North Korea “(1) sees the status quo as an unbearable losing [one], and (2) perceives an attack on it (or extinction) as imminent, or (3) believes that coercive bargaining behavior is better than doing nothing.”⁷⁹ In this light, engagement is superior to strategies of coercion and isolation, which will both exacerbate the pressures that lead to North Korean coercive bargaining by increasing its sense of vulnerability, pushing its perception of the status quo further into the domain of losses, and raising the costs of

⁷⁶ Cha (2002), 54.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 63.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 65.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 68.

doing nothing. “Sticks” will not work if North Korea has no stake in the status quo.⁸⁰

Conversely, if the continuation of the status quo portends losses for North Korea, logically the United States can decrease the incentives for North Korea to attack “by adding to the value of that status quo, promising rewards for peaceful relations.”⁸¹

This is a good argument for engagement with North Korea, but it is not an argument for “hawk engagement”. Indeed, in light of the above, one would expect Cha to recommend a more success-oriented strategy; one that genuinely seeks to increase North Korea’s stake in peace, as opposed to seeking the most expedient course for legitimizing and enabling coercive action against it.⁸² There is plenty of evidence to suggest he favours such a policy, but only if North Korea is willing to go first: “If the DPRK is intent on improving relations with the United States and avoiding [coercion],” he argues, “then the burden of proof is on Pyongyang to provide quid pro quos that prove the skeptics wrong.”⁸³

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 72.

⁸¹ James W. Davis, Jr., *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 5. Cha cites DPRK behavior from 1989 to 1992 and from 1998 to 1999 as evidence of the effectiveness of such strategies. Though the pressures for preventive action were acute during the fundamental changes that occurred at the end of the Cold War, intense diplomatic efforts on the part of Washington and Seoul helped to ensure they these pressures were not actualized in dangerous situations. In the latter period, the Perry review’s recommendations for US engagement with North Korea, holding out the prospect of financial aid, humanitarian assistance and political normalization had a moderating effect on North Korean behavior: “Perry’s recommendations for engagement moved the DPRK out of the domain of losses and into a situation where it had a stake in the status quo.” Cha, *Ibid*, 70.

⁸² There are indications that Cha’s argument is somewhat politic. His purpose is to explain “how engagement can be an acceptable alternative even to those who favor isolation or coercion,” and could thus be seen as an attempt to gain their acquiescence in a policy which might become a more genuine two-track approach. He is unenthusiastic about the coercive options available in the event that engagement “fails to move North Korea toward peaceful reform and nonproliferation”, arguing that none is desirable, “but they constitute the end-game of hawk engagement.” Cha, *Ibid*, 71, 76-77. If this is Cha’s intent, though, the current analysis suggests that his argument may do more harm than good, by legitimizing a form of “engagement” that is bound to fail.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 77. He adds, “Hawks are not impressed with what sunshine policy advocates point to as the fruits of engagement, because the North has thus far not conceded anything that it truly values.”

While North Korea would clearly benefit from better relations with the United States, this formulation insists that they be willing to pursue this goal on any terms and any timeline preferred by the United States. It treats North Korea more as a “moral deviant to be reprimanded” than as a “security problem to be solved” (how else do we justify the proposition that the burden of proof lies with North Korea).⁸⁴ In addition, as I argued in Chapter 3, the burden of “proving the skeptics wrong” is likely to expend most of North Korea’s bargaining power before the real negotiation begins, leaving it in an extremely vulnerable position. In effect, this logic of engagement says to Pyongyang, “if you capitulate we will treat you well,” a formula which they not only distrust, but which does not particularly interest them in any case.⁸⁵

Prospect theory can also be used to better understand the US position in this conflict. While Cha presents North Korea as dissatisfied with the status quo (which is undoubtedly true), it is arguably US dissatisfaction with the status quo that keeps the containment policy in place. Arguably, the reference point with respect to which US policy-makers have evaluated different outcomes, or “end-games”, of the situation on the Korean peninsula is that of the collapse of the North Korean regime and/or its absorption by the South. Arguably, the dominant influence here has been a particular view of the end of the Cold War: having just achieved “victory” in that conflict by maintaining a tough line with the Soviet Union, it was by no means evident why the US should take a different course against a much less worthy opponent (North Korea), or why the same

⁸⁴ Earlier, Cha criticizes this attitude: “[R]egimes such as North Korea’s should be regarded not as moral deviants to be reprimanded but as security problems to be solved. Those who do not accept this assessment seem willing to risk war as the price of pursuing a more ‘moral’ foreign policy.” *Ibid*, 71.

⁸⁵ See Chapter 7.

approach should not be equally successful.⁸⁶ The images of communist states capitulating in their competition with the West and liberalizing in state and economy following the collapse of the Soviet bloc have had a powerful influence in American politics, and there is a tendency to think of “change” in those terms when it comes to Communist states, or dictatorships in general.

The US point of reference is indicated by both the interpretation of and the reaction to the Agreed Framework in Congress and the foreign policy establishment. As noted above, North Korea’s signature was interpreted as an admission of weakness, and this conclusion, in turn, supported the narrow interpretation of the agreement that was so influential in its demise. “When the history of this week’s agreement is written,” read one editorial page, “we suspect what will be remembered is that the world started pouring money into the Kim regime just as it should have been allowed to crash.”⁸⁷ Senator John McCain argued that the deal was “very badly flawed and unacceptable” in that it would prolong the existence of “a bizarre Orwellian regime”, and Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole observed that “It is always possible to get an agreement when you give enough away.”⁸⁸ Arguably, these reactions were conditioned by a point of reference that expected immanent victory over the North Korean regime, defined as its dissolution, and that saw the Agreed Framework as squandering that prospect.

⁸⁶ This is the “Reagan victory” account, and it is hotly contested. See for example, Fred Chernoff, “Ending the Cold War: the Soviet Retreat and the US Military Buildup,” *International Affairs*, 61:1 (January 1991), 111-126; Robert H. Johnson, *Improbable Dangers: US Conceptions of Threat in the Cold War and After*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1994, 4-6; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Reagan and the Russians,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 273:2 (February 1994), 35-37.

⁸⁷ Editorial, “New Deal for Pyongyang,” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 21, 1994, A-14.

⁸⁸ Quoted respectively in Thomas W. Lippman, “Senate GOP Concedes Assault on N. Korea Pact is Futile,” *Washington Post*, January 21, 1995, A11; and Elaine Sciolino, “Clinton Ups Atom Stakes,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1994, A-7.

While prospect theory's emphasis on context is a welcome change from traditional "utility models", however, it cannot, on its own, fully explain these reactions, and it leaves a host of questions essential to a full account of the situation unanswered. While the concept of a reference point helps us to conceptualize where a particular outcome might lie along a win-loss spectrum in the perception of a particular actor, it does not explain what constitutes this spectrum in the first place. Prospect theory is valuable in that it asks the question of why actors measure success as they do, but it does not ask why they define it as they do. Why actors value the things they do, how these valued things become defined in particular ways, how and why they become attached to particular objects/situations and not to others, how actors go about assigning relative weight to the things they value and why they come to see the things they value as "threatened" in particular ways, for example, are all things that prospect theory cannot tell us, because they are external and prior to the model. One might ask these questions, for example, about the North Korean emphasis on "independence", as indeed we will in the next chapter.

In Cha's example of golf, the spectrum of success is already constituted by the definition of the sport: lower scores are better than higher ones. How low the player expects to shoot (point of reference) and their previous achievements in the sport (endowment effect) can tell us more about how they will perceive the result, and their confidence in particular shots can tell us something about tactics (pursuit of certain gains and avoidance of certain losses), but the spectrum of superior and inferior outcomes is already determined. International politics has no such spectrum, and so prospect theory, while an improvement over other utility models, does not give a complete account.

Defining “Win”

In effect, the spectrum of superior and inferior outcomes depends upon what it means to “win”. It may seem obvious what constitutes a win for the United States in this case, but if it does this is primarily a testament to the power of collective “common sense” in shaping the way we think about particular problems. Clearly, Senator Dole and others saw the Agreed Framework as an inferior outcome, which prompts the question of how the spectrum of outcomes was defined. One way to approach this question is to ask what the framework “gave away”.⁸⁹

It would be difficult to maintain that it was money. The entire cost of the deal was estimated to be somewhere around \$5 billion, of which the US share has been approximately \$40 million per year.⁹⁰ By comparison, 1993’s Team Spirit exercise cost the US \$900 million. Direct costs of maintaining the US forces in Korea at the time of the agreement amounted to more than \$2.5 billion per year, and a precautionary build-up associated with the imposition of economic sanctions would cost several hundred million more for each year they were in place. Stationing a carrier battle group in the Sea of Japan would itself cost around 900 million per year in operating and maintenance costs.⁹¹ Another war in Korea would have “cost” as many as a million military and civilian casualties, including the lives of 80,000 to 100,000 Americans, and over \$100 billion

⁸⁹ Unfortunately, Dole didn’t specify.

⁹⁰ This is the cost for the 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil per year supplied to North Korea under the agreement. The \$40 million figure comes from Harrison (2002), 260.

⁹¹ Figures quoted in Sigal (1998), 9-10. The \$2.5 billion figure comes from John Merrill and William J. Taylor, Jr., “R.O.K.-US Security Relations in 1991,” *Korea Briefing*, 1992, ed. Donald N. Clark (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 63. The Carrier Battle Group figure comes from Government Accounting Office, *Navy Carrier Battle Groups: The Structure and Affordability of the Future Force* (Washington: Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 19.

dollars, according to estimates cited in Congressional testimony.⁹² In monetary terms, then, the Agreed Framework would have been a bargain even if the United States had to pay the entire cost.

It would also be difficult to argue that it was “security” that the US bargained away. Given the lack of viable coercive or preemptive options and the rising tensions in the summer of 1994, the failure to negotiate an agreement would likely have accelerated North Korea’s nuclear program. As Sigal points out, the threat of sanctions had, by that point, become a dangerous bluff: “Sanctions might have spurred North Korean bomb-making; they could not prevent it. Even a total trade embargo could not have kept North Korea from making nuclear arms since it already had whatever it needed to make them.”⁹³ As for pre-emption, assuming the North had succeeded in building nuclear weapons or had separated enough plutonium to do so, they almost certainly wouldn’t store them at Yongbyon. The probability that the US could both identify where they were and succeed in eliminating them is probably low, and the attempt would risk all-out war. In the words of one analyst, “Nothing less than the military defeat, occupation, and inspection of the entire country would eliminate the North’s nuclear weapons program.”⁹⁴ In the absence of an agreement, North Korea could have reprocessed the fuel from its Yongbyon reactor, and would eventually have finished construction on the two reactors it was building at the time, as well as a second reprocessing facility.⁹⁵ Altogether, this would yield enough plutonium for up to 30 bombs per year. Coupled with increasingly

⁹² Estimates by Defense Secretary William Perry and General Edward Luck, US Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, *Security Implications of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Agreement with North Korea*, 104th Congress, 1st Session, January 26, 1995, pp. 22, 32, cited in Sigal (1998), 10.

⁹³ Sigal (1998), 9.

⁹⁴ Reiss (1995), 259.

⁹⁵ US satellite had detected the construction of a second reprocessing line at Yongbyon in 1991, and the IAEA inspections of March 1994 confirmed it. Sigal (1998), 108.

antagonistic relations between the United States and North Korea, this would hardly have increased US security.

Of course, a “win” for the United States in this situation may be defined neither in monetary terms nor in terms of security. Arguably, US credibility was heavily invested in opposition to North Korea by the summer of 1994, and it could be argued that in signing the Agreed Framework the US “gave away” both moral credibility, as the world’s leading democracy, and prestige (the reputation for power), by “giving in to the demands” of a “rogue state” and a fourth rate adversary.⁹⁶ More than anything, though, this prompts a rethinking of the concept of credibility, which has traditionally been defined much too narrowly by security studies scholars. The question, in essence, is “credibility as what?”.

Credibility has traditionally been defined as synonymous with “prestige”, or the reputation for power. The basic argument about “prestige” as a requirement of effective foreign policy is that weakness in the face of aggression encourages such behaviour, and so in dealing with a threat, one must be concerned not only with that particular threat, but with all present and future threats as well. Arguably, however, credibility as a reliable negotiator or an effective agent of conflict resolution is at least as important for a superpower as the credible threat of force or coercion. The belief on the part of so-called “revisionist” states that they can get nowhere through negotiation, or that agreements

⁹⁶ The literature on ‘credibility’, ‘reputation’ or ‘prestige’ as a foreign policy requirement is large, but one of the seminal works is undoubtedly Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), esp. 55-59. See also Morgenthau (1967), 69 ff and Stanley Hoffman (1978). For a critical analyses of this concept, see Jennifer L. Milliken, “Metaphors of Prestige and Reputation in American Foreign Policy and American Realism,” in Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman, *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 217-238. I distinguish credibility and prestige here in order to capture both the moral element and the element of power.

reached are not reliable, will encourage “bad behaviour” as much as a reluctance to play hard-ball, as Morgenthau so keenly observed.⁹⁷

US credibility as a “superpower” would arguably be enhanced far more by a successful resolution to the situation than by continued opposition to the North Korean regime. This is almost certainly the case with respect to China’s perception of the United States, which is an important consideration in this case.⁹⁸ It is possible to see institutionalized co-existence with North Korea is as pragmatic, not as a threat to US democratic credentials, and US credibility as a “superpower” not as being threatened by “giving in” to Pyongyang, but rather enhanced by demonstrating the ability to participate constructively in the resolution of a tense security situation without resorting to force. In other words, it would gain credibility as an “honest broker”, something its current destabilizing role on the peninsula precludes.

With respect to the strategy of “hawk engagement”, it is interesting to note that Cha describes it as being more acceptant of the risk of conflict with the target state than other potential strategies, because it responds more toughly to provocations and more easily abandons the course of engagement. At the same time, it might be described as being less acceptant of the risk of being “duped”, “bettered”, or taken advantage of by an opponent that is held in disdain. Thus one might plausibly argue that it esteems the value of “prestige” more highly than that of peaceful or successful resolution of the situation at hand. In addition, it presumes a definition of prestige that implies either: 1) that it would be reinforced more by refusing to give in to the preferences of an opponent (based on a

⁹⁷ This refers to the expectation of justice, meaning at least partial satisfaction of claims, the maintenance of which is “the very heart of the peace-preserving functions of any state.” Morgenthau (1967), 490, 494.

⁹⁸ See Chapter 2 and Dr. Bates Gill, Testimony before the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee on “Regional Implications of the Changing Nuclear Equation on the Korean Peninsula,” March 12, 2003, <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/GillTestimony030312.pdf>.

presumption that whatever the opponent wants is not in one's interests) than by successfully resolving the situation; or 2) that it would be damaged more by being taken advantage of than by the failure to find such a resolution and the consequent persistence of an acute foreign policy problem; or perhaps both.

Dole and McCain's comments are indicative of the view that the US national interest resided in continued opposition to the North Korean regime; a view that I have argued is the dominant conception of the US national interest. Given the risk and expense involved in continuing the containment policy, it would have been equally plausible to argue that it was in US interests to seek peace through accommodation. A starting point for such a policy might have been mutual recognition and guarantees of non-aggression, as provided for in the Agreed Framework and the Joint Communiqué of June 11, 1993, indicating a willingness to co-exist. This willingness could have been signalled on the US end through a transition to a more symmetrical, "honest-broker" type military and economic relationship with the two Koreas, and on all sides by investment in the mechanisms of institutionalized co-existence between the two Koreas, leading, perhaps, to some form of confederation. As Harrison has argued, the latter would go a long way toward resolving North Korea's security concerns, since "it would institutionalize the coexistence of two separate states with differing systems until joint agreement on the terms for reunification can be negotiated, thus precluding the absorption of either side by the other." The willingness of the South to establish a confederation would signify the formal rejection of absorption as its ultimate goal, and US investment in that process would signify a similar transition in its own objectives.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Harrison (2002), 71, 77.

What we still require is an account of how the US national interest has come to be framed as it has. It is the view taken here that this process is inextricably bound up in that of describing the situation that the state faces. To borrow from Cha, there must be a story that the United States can tell itself that explains why continued opposition to North Korea is the best course of action. Thus, before a state can act, it must first describe its “surroundings”, including the description of the actors involved.¹⁰⁰ This process of description, and its relationship to the process of deciding what the national interest is, will be examined in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁰ Weldes (1999), 12-14.

Chapter 7 – The Social Structure of Enmity

What we still require is an account of how US interests have been defined in its relations with North Korea, and why. The argument of this thesis is that the United States has defined its interests in a way that implies enmity toward North Korea, and that there is a significant element of moral decision involved in this definition. The process of deciding upon the national interest, however, is inextricably bound up in that of describing the situation that the state faces. Before a state can act, it must first describe its “surroundings”, including the description of the actors involved.¹ As they relate to states’ actions, situations are described not by “neutral” observers, but by the states themselves, and are thus the product of the particular view of the world that predominates (or wins the competition) within that state or among its decision-makers. Once a state has described its place in the world, and has decided (also through description) how other actors relate to this vision, it has largely decided upon its interests with respect to those actors and their own interests.

The above suggests a strong link between “knowledge” about the world –how it works and “who” its inhabitants are – and the courses of action that are considered to be reasonable or possible in any particular case.² The process of creating knowledge about

¹ Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 14. “[T]o enable the state to make a decision or to act in a particular situation, state officials must describe to themselves the nature of the specific situation they face.” *Ibid*, 12.

² It is possible to posit this link because it has been argued above that actors have *reasons* for acting as they do; that is, that they act intentionally. See note 107 in Chapter 1.

the world (of making it intelligible) involves the assignment of meaning to the objects and practices one finds there. This process has important effects in international politics, because states, like people, “act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them.”³ Equally and conversely, “What people [or states] mean by their actions depends on what ideas inform their thinking.” These include ideas about what is valuable or worth striving for, as well as ideas about how the social world works and expectations about the actions of others.⁴

The process of creating knowledge about the world – of giving it meaning or making it intelligible – is the process of description, and in order for knowledge to become collective knowledge, public description must take place. As such, representation (discourse) establishes a connection between knowledge and collective action by making collective knowledge possible (one might say by making knowledge *intersubjective*). Representation underlies the production of knowledge, and thereby facilitates particular courses of action and precludes others.⁵ Representation also facilitates another process that, while it still involves the creation of knowledge, deserves to be treated as distinct. This is the creation of knowledge about who “we” are; the formation of audiences into collectivities that share certain ideas about the world, and certain shared meanings about who they are, and what they value, as a collectivity. The degree of importance assigned to these meanings varies, as does the intensity with which they are “felt”, or believed in, but collective action requires that they exist.

³ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization*, 46:2 (1992), 396-397.

⁴ Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 70.

⁵ Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 5.

Thus, public description of the world underlies two important political processes: identity formation and the creation of collective knowledge. The process of describing the world is difficult to analyze in a systematic way, however, because it consists of discourses that are complex, overlapping, open-ended, and interdependent.⁶ Few attempts to do so in IR have been as rigorous as Jutta Weldes' analysis of US decisions surrounding the "Cuban Missile Crisis". It is Weldes' heuristic device, the "security imaginary," that I rely upon in the discussion that follows, with some modifications suggested by the name.⁷ The security imaginary is posited as "a structure of well-established meanings and social relations out of which representations of the world of international relations are created." Because it is based on well-established meanings, the security imaginary provides the "categories of common sense for foreign policy, the intersubjective and culturally established meanings on the basis of which state officials make decisions and act". That is, it provides the "cultural raw materials" out of which particular articulations of actors and their identities, and relations between actors – including threats and interests – arise.⁸

In short, the security imaginary makes possible representations that clarify both for state officials themselves and for others who and what 'we' are, who and what

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Weldes (1999). See also Himadeep Muppidi, "Postcoloniality and the Production of Insecurity: The Persistent Puzzle of US-Indian Relations," in Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson, and Raymond Duvall, eds., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). The concept is based on Cornelius Castoriadis' notion of the "social imaginary". The latter posits an "original investment by society of the world and itself with meaning" that is not dictated by "real factors", but rather "it is... this meaning that attributes to these real factors a particular importance and a particular place in the universe constituted by a given society." Meaning is not derived from the world, but rather imposed upon it, and thereby "distinctions are made concerning what does and does not possess value... and what should and should not be done." See Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Kathleen Blamey, trans. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 128 and 145-7.

⁸ Weldes (1999), 10-12.

‘our enemies’ are, in what ways we are threatened by them, and how we might best deal with these threats.⁹

While Weldes’ framework is a vast improvement over traditional ways of thinking about the national interest,¹⁰ it remains essentially within the assumption that states’ actions can always be explained with reference to the concept of security.¹¹ Weldes argues, “The national interest... cannot help us to explain the adoption by a state of particular policies over *alternative means for achieving security*.”¹² The problem is mitigated, but not solved, by the fact that Weldes follows Connolly in broadening the notion of security/insecurity, and thus by implication the notion of threat, to include the securing of identity itself.¹³ This conception of “security” is capable of encompassing more of what is referred to here as self-assertion than the narrower notion of physical security, because it relates to the element of collective “self-esteem”, which captures elements both of self-preservation and self-assertion.¹⁴ What is still absent however, is

⁹ *Ibid*, 15.

¹⁰ See discussion in Chapter 5.

¹¹ Weldes makes two criticisms of the traditional “realist” notion of the national interest. First, its content (the security and survival of the state) is too general – so much so as to be indeterminate in any particular situation. Second, it rests on a questionable empiricist epistemology that ignores the centrality of processes of interpretation. Neither of these criticisms challenges directly the notion that security is goal with reference to which states’ actions should be interpreted. *Ibid*, 6.

¹² *Ibid*, 6, emphasis added.

¹³ Weldes argues that the US state identity was not only “central in the construction of the Cuban missile crisis and the attendant US national interest,” but it was also in large part the object being threatened and, therefore, needing to be secured. The failure to enforce the removal of the missiles from Cuba would have undermined “the very *identity* of the United States *as* the global leader, *as* the patron of freedom, and *as* the strongest and most resolute state in the free world.” Thus, irrespective of strategic considerations, the missiles had to be removed from Cuba in order to secure the US state identity. Conversely, the crisis provided the opportunity for, and was in part an exercise in, “the reproduction and reinscription of a particular, and always precarious, US state identity.” *Ibid*, 222-223, emphasis in original.

¹⁴ See Wendt on the “needs” associated with identity in Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 231 ff., and on self-esteem in particular (*Ibid*: 236-7, 276-8). See also Jonathon Mercer, “Anarchy and identity,” *International Organization*, 49:2 (1995), 229-252; Fred C. Alford, *Group Psychology and Political Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. 48-56; and Howard Stein, “Psychological complementarity in Soviet-American relations,” *Political Psychology*, 6:2 (1985), 249-261.

the recognition that enmity might involve an element of moral decision that is *thymotic* in nature, and thus at least partially independent of concerns about security.¹⁵

At the same time, it is a relatively simple adjustment to keep in mind that the “well-established meanings” that provide the “categories of common sense for foreign policy” may not all, and may not primarily in some cases (cases of enmity), relate to security. Methodologically speaking, Weldes’ framework both permits and enables investigation of how discourses of “insecurity” interact with motivations that do not relate primarily to the securing of the self. It is a useful tool for conceptualizing the “structure of identities and interests” that constitutes enmity between actors. For reasons of simplicity, and because the model used follows that of Weldes very closely, I do not alter the terminology. It can be assumed, however, that the term “security imaginary,” as employed here, encompasses more than the notion of self-preservation.

For Weldes, the well-established meanings of the security imaginary are produced by two distinct but interrelated processes called “articulation” and “interpellation”.¹⁶ Articulation consists of the representation of the world that is confronted, and the place of the self in that world. In most states, and perhaps to an uncommon degree in the United States where the practices of the “national security state” are well entrenched, the

¹⁵ It seems to be implicit in Weldes’ work that there is an element of moral decision that is intertwined with and inseparable from the process of description, and I do not dispute that this is the way moral decision often works. The question is what motivates decision, and insecurity is not the only answer.

¹⁶ This follows Ernesto Laclau and Stuart Hall. See Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, (London: Verso, 1979); Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (London: Verso, 1985); Hall, “Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 2:2 (1985), 91-114; Hall, “The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism Among the Theorists,” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); and Lawrence Grossberg, “On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10:2 (1986), 45-60. The concept of interpellation comes from Louis Althusser, “Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation,” in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, B. Brewster, trans. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-186.

national interest is articulated mainly from within the state apparatus.¹⁷ This articulation of national interests takes place in three steps. First, state officials' representations serve to "populate the world with a variety of objects", including the "self" (the state in question) and other actors (other states and their decision makers, non-state actors, social movements, domestic publics etc.). In the process of description, each is simultaneously given an identity that endows it with certain characteristics, which range in nature from the "precise and certain" to the "vague and unsettled." Second, these representations "posit well-defined relations among these diverse objects". This stage of description takes the form of "quasi-causal" arguments, including analogies, which "may or may not be empirically valid on their own terms."¹⁸ Accurate or not, these posited relations provide "warranting conditions" that make a particular action or belief seem "reasonable," "justified," or "appropriate".¹⁹ For example, "appeasement" might be opposed on the grounds that it leads to aggression, as illustrated by the failure of the Munich Agreement. Third, Weldes argues that "in providing a vision of the world of international relations – in populating that world with objects and in supplying quasi-causal, or warranting arguments – these representations have *already* defined the national interest." Interests are implied by the identities assigned and the relations said to obtain

¹⁷ See Weldes (1999), 108; and Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977). This arrangement is not outside of or prior to the security imaginary, but is grounded in the security imaginary itself: "The US security imaginary makes possible the investment of [state] institutions with extensive authority both in defining the national interest and in identifying threats to it." This affords them recognition as "the appropriate, responsible agents with respect to the definition and the protection of the US national interest." Weldes, *ibid*, 11.

¹⁸ Weldes, *ibid*, 13. Also on the role of metaphor in international relations, see Paul A. Chilton, "The Meaning of Security," in F.A. Beer and R. Hariman, eds., *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, (East Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 193-216; and Chilton, *Security Metaphors: Cold War Discourse from Containment to Common European House* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

¹⁹ Brian Fay, *Social Theory and Political Practice* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975), 85, quoted in Weldes (1999), 12.

among them: “Once a situation has been described, that is, the national interest has already been determined.”²⁰

The above does not represent the whole story of how the national interest is decided upon, however, because there are often competing articulations of that interest. Himadeep Muppidi argues that state officials and publics are not “dupes waiting to be articulated one way or another,” but rather “amateur social theorists,” who are “all the time appropriating and reorganizing sets of available meanings to render meaningful their own lived reality and to function effectively within it.”²¹ Articulations of the national interest are thus simultaneously attempts at interpellation – at “hailing” their audiences into a particular subject position. In depicting social relations in a particular way, state officials create a particular perspective that they hope their audiences will adopt. Whether or not audiences are successfully “hailed” into that perspective depends upon the extent to which the description of social reality, and the place of the self in that reality, accords with people’s already established understandings of themselves and of how the world works. Descriptions of reality articulated from one subject position might appear quite problematic when viewed from another. In order to be successful, articulations must appear, to their audience, “to reflect the way the world really is”.²²

Since the realities of international politics do not, in most cases, present themselves directly to populations, the way in which these realities are described by state officials will often have a decisive effect on the way the population views them.

²⁰ Weldes, *ibid*, 14.

²¹ Muppidi (1999), 125.

²² Weldes (1999), 103-105. Of course, the self-understandings against which descriptions of social reality are judged are always already constructed, but if people’s understandings of the world were not “practical” in significant respects, they would not be able to “successfully negotiate” the world. As such, imaginaries “can’t be false in any simple sense”. See Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism Without Guarantees,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10:2 (1986), 30, and Weldes (1999), note 8 on p. 264.

Nevertheless, a crucial factor in the success of a particular articulation is whether or not people “recognize *themselves*” in a particular representation of their place in the world.²³ Security imaginaries come to be established because they “describe to individuals in a recognizable way the manner in which they live their lives; they construct and entail subject positions or identities from which both perceptions of the world and perceptions of the self make sense.”²⁴ In large measure, this sets the limits of the politically possible. Thus, the applicability of the alternative articulation of the nuclear confrontation and of US interests in that situation suggested at the end of the previous chapter to political practice depends largely upon whether or not the United States can “recognize itself” in an articulation that casts it in the role of a pragmatic “honest broker” in this context.

That the security imaginary sets the limits of the possible is a crucial point to understand. Weldes refers to the security imaginary as the “cultural raw materials” out of which particular articulations of identities, relations between actors, interests and threats arise.²⁵ This corresponds to Roy Bhaskar’s concept of “social forms”, the central concept in his account of social structure, which he calls the “transformational model”. The concept of social forms is built on an Aristotelian notion of social activity, “in which the paradigm is that of a sculptor at work, fashioning a product out of the material and with the tools available to him.”²⁶ Every process of productive activity requires a material as well as an efficient cause(s), and the well-established meanings present in various actors’

²³ Muppidi (1999), 125-126. See also Althusser, (1971), 174.

²⁴ Weldes (1999), 105.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 10.

²⁶ Bhaskar (1979), 43. [A]ll activity presupposes the prior existence of social forms. Thus consider saying, making and doing as characteristic modalities of human agency. People cannot communicate except by utilizing existing media, produce except by applying themselves to materials which are already formed, or act save in some or other context. Speech requires language; making materials; actions conditions; agency resources; activity rules.”

security imaginaries can be seen as material causes of their representations of international politics. This is not to say that the security imaginary “causes” the representations that arise from it in the sense that we are accustomed to speaking of causation (as efficient causation). It cannot do so, in fact, because it is not distinct from and independent of them in the way that causes must be independent of their effects. Rather, functioning as a material cause, it defines the conditions of possibility/impossibility for particular actions. It is the ideational structure from within which representations of the world of international politics and articulations of national interests are made, and without which we could not make sense of what situation is at hand and what actions are possible, appropriate, or reasonable in that situation.

It is important to note, however, that a state’s security imaginary is not a fixed and singular thing. If the function of representation is to establish a “regime of truth” (or a structure of well-established meanings) out of which “we” can act, there are frequently a number of different representations, both of a given situation and of what “we” are, that are competing for prevalence.²⁷ No discourse, including dominant or (in Gramscian terms) hegemonic ones, is ever entirely fixed. Rather, regimes of truth require constant re-articulation, and “[a]ny fixing of a discourse and the identities that are constructed by it can only be of a partial nature.”²⁸ In order to carry the day in policy debates, a particular structure of meanings must, at least temporarily, gain a certain critical mass of support in those places where policy is made, and among those whose support or acquiescence must be secured. Regimes of truth are most powerful when they constitute

²⁷ On regimes of truth and the discursive production of foreign policy, see Jennifer Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods,” *European Journal of International Relations* 5:2 (June 1999), 225-254, esp. 236-7.

²⁸ Doty (1996), 6.

a collective “common sense”. This happens when socially constructed representations of reality become naturalized or reified, or as Weldes puts it, “when [they] are treated as if they neutrally or transparently represent the real.”²⁹ Because it is no longer (for the moment) questioned, common sense critically restricts the parameters for “reasonable” action and limits possible resistance among the broader public to a given course of action.³⁰ In other words, it defines the limits of the possible by providing our “categories of practical consciousness”.³¹

It is this very element of “consciousness”, however, that introduces flexibility into the relationship between actor and social structure, in this case the security imaginary. Actors are agents because of consciousness. For Anthony Giddens, agency boils down to two attributes of actors: capability and knowledgeability.³² Capability refers to the fact that agents have the “option to act otherwise”. If there are no options, there are no agents. Knowledgeability refers to the fact that actors “know” a great deal about the social world, and that this knowledge is not incidental to its operation, but is

²⁹ Weldes (1999), 226. Weldes also makes a plausible argument that the notion of common sense itself enjoys broader acceptance in the United States because of a cultural commitment to an empiricist conception of knowledge, and in the US foreign policy establishment because of the prevalence of this epistemology within the academic study of international politics in the United States. See *ibid*, 240. This is related to the culture of scientific optimism that Morgenthau was so shocked by upon moving to the United States, prompting him to write *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

³⁰ Milliken, (1999), 237. Milliken also mentions legitimating the state as a political unit and creating “reasonable and warranted relations of domination” as effects of common sense. On the discursive production of “common sense”, see also Ole Waever, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” in Ronnie D. Lipschutz, ed., *On Security*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 46-86; and Jef Huysmans “Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 4:2 (1998), 226-55.

³¹ Hall (1986), 30; and Hall (1988), 44, cited in Weldes (1999), 226.

³² For a concise formulation of Giddens’ “structuration theory”, see Anthony Giddens, *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory* (London: MacMillan Press, 1982). More lengthy discussions are to be found in Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis* (London: MacMillan Press, 1979); and Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1984).

necessarily a part of making it what it is.³³ The relationship between actor and social structure goes both ways: “while certain social identities and practices are only possible and only make sense within the security imaginary, the security imaginary itself is reproduced through the continued performance of those practices.”³⁴ This means that those engaged in the authoritative description of the world are both “intentional actors actively engaged in the construction of meaning” and, at the same time, “always already subject to the repertoire of meaning offered by the security imaginary”.³⁵ The insight of knowledgeability is that the security imaginary itself can become the object of conscious modification. A moment of “reflexivity” is possible, in which we become aware of human authorship of realities that, though they seem to confront us as natural facts, are in fact socially constituted.³⁶

This last point leads us back to Wendt’s notion of “critical strategic practice”, carried out through the mechanism of “altercasting”. If peace between the United States and North Korea is dependent upon whether what one is and wants is compatible with what the other is and wants, then US policymakers need to consider not only what North Korea is and wants, but also what “America” is, and what it wants with respect to this

³³ Knowledgeability should not be equated with “what is known ‘consciously’” or “‘held in mind’ in a conscious way.” It is, for Giddens, of two sorts, delineated by the distinction between “discursive” and “practical” consciousness – two distinct senses in which actors are knowledgeable about the social environment in which they act. Discursive consciousness refers to “what actors are able to say about their activities”, but this is “by no means all that they ‘know’ about them.” They also have a great deal of “tacit knowledge” that may be skilfully employed in action, but which the actors are not able to formulate discursively. Giddens (1982), 9, 31. This implies limits to what can be gained from discourse analysis, and a need to look beyond it to knowledge that informs actions but is not articulated. It also, however, suggests a key link between discourse and action, because discourse is instrumental in the production of tacit knowledge.

³⁴ Muppidi (1999), 124.

³⁵ Weldes (1999), 11. Weldes argues that in the United States, where the practices of the “national security state” are well entrenched, the national interest is articulated primarily by state office holders. The US “social imaginary” invests the state with the authority “for defining the national interest and identifying threats to it”. See *Ibid.*, 11 and 108. On the national security state see Yergin (1977).

³⁶ See Wendt (1999), 76.

situation. Since actors carry many “identities”, and apply them differently to different situations, there is room for self-conscious reflection about what role the United States wants to play with respect to this conflict – in a sense, what identity it wants to assume.³⁷ There may be several possible roles that are compatible with America’s deeper sense of itself – what might be called its “core identity” – other than the one it has played up to now, in which case the implications of a change for the United States as a political community might be less drastic than conventional wisdom suggests. It may be both possible and desirable to engage in a form of “critical strategic practice” in order to alter both America’s role and, potentially, the dynamics of the situation. At the same time, following Wendt’s admonition that the success of critical strategic practice is dependent upon reciprocation,³⁸ one must also look at what North Korea “is and wants” with respect to its confrontation with the United States, and whether there is adequate flexibility in these definitions to permit another type of relationship.

The US “Security Imaginary” and Enmity with North Korea

If the United States and North Korea are enemies, the reason appears obvious from within the confines of the US security imaginary. North Korea, with its nuclear and missile programs, its provocative actions along the demilitarized zone, its inflammatory rhetoric, and its seeming defiance of efforts to verify its compliance with its commitments under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the North-South Denuclearization Agreement and the Agreed Framework, seems to have presented itself as an enemy.³⁹ The enmity between the United States and North Korea goes back

³⁷ See Wendt (1992), 398, and Chapter 4 above.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 422.

³⁹ Meier argues that Schmitt avoids the difficult question of how the determination of enmity is made by consistently portraying the enemy as having presented itself as such. See Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and*

considerably further than this, of course, to the national division of Korea and the Korean War. Furthermore, aside from a stubborn insistence about being what it is, the reason enmity persists in this case may have less to do with North Korean provocation than is commonly thought.

The dominant portrayal of North Korea in the United States security imaginary has been that of a “rogue state”. This concept was given its original and most formulaic expression in a *Foreign Affairs* article by former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake.⁴⁰ This article was essentially a restatement of George Kennan’s argument for containment of an “outlaw empire” published in the same journal nearly 50 years previously, except this time against a “less formidable challenge”: “It is still very much within our power to prevail.”⁴¹ The term “rogue state” has since become shorthand for Lake’s portrayal of this particular group of states and of US interests in relation to them.⁴² Lake begins, however, not by presenting a picture of rogue states, but by presenting a picture of the United States and its place in the world:

The end of the Cold War and the emergence of newly independent states in eastern Europe have the potential to enlarge dramatically the family of nations now committed to the pursuit of democratic institutions, the expansion of free markets, the peaceful settlement of conflict and the promotion of collective

Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue, J. Harvey Lomax, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 18.

⁴⁰ Anthony Lake, “Confronting Backlash States,” *Foreign Affairs*, 73:2 (March/April, 1994), 45-55. See also Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” *Dispatch* (US Department of State), 4:39 (September 27, 1993), 658-64. For analysis of the US rogue state policy in the post-Cold War period, see Robert S. Litwak, *Rogue States and US Foreign Policy: Containment after the Cold War*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000); Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America’s Search for a New Foreign Policy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); Raymond Tanter, *Rogue Regimes: Terrorism and Proliferation* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1999); and Paul D. Hoyt, “The ‘Rogue State’ Image in American Foreign Policy,” *Global Society* 14:2, (2000), 297-310.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 55. See X [George F. Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” first printed in *Foreign Affairs*, 25:4 (July 1947), 572-82.

⁴² For a recent reiteration, see White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: White House, September, 2002), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html> (hereafter *National Security Strategy*).

security. For the sake of both its interests and its ideals, the United States has a special responsibility to nurture and promote these core values.⁴³

This is an effective starting point, because the central, or “nodal”, subject position in the US security imaginary is that of “the United States” itself: “Most fundamentally, the security imaginary establishes the existence of the United States *as* a subject.”⁴⁴ Lake is not looking to articulate a view of the world merely for himself, but for the United States as a political entity. As such, the first order of business is to give content to the pronoun “we” in assertions about “we, the United States” that relate to the world after the end of the Cold War. The specific content of that subject position is important, because “Each subject position or identity carries with it particular ways of functioning in the world, is located within specific power relations, and is characterized by particular interests.”⁴⁵ As per the discussion above, whether or not Lake’s articulation of the identity of the United States is successful depends not only upon how widely he is heard (and repeated), but also upon how well it accords with people’s experience and with the meanings that are already predominant in the “cultural raw materials” that constitute the security imaginary.

The content Lake assigns to the subject of the United States is that of leader in the effort to expand democracy, free markets, peace and collective security. It is an entity whose interests, ideals, and power imply a “special responsibility” to take the lead in this regard. The recent US *National Security Strategy* reiterates these themes. Similar to Lake’s article, it begins optimistically, noting the decisive victory of the “forces of freedom” in the twentieth century’s “great struggles... between liberty and

⁴³ Lake (1994), 45.

⁴⁴ Weldes (1999), 104.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 104-105, and note 9 on p. 264.

totalitarianism". Also like Lake, it then suggests that the world is converging on "a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise," and that "the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages."⁴⁶ The place of the United States in this order is unambiguous. It will, in keeping with its "heritage and principles", use its "position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence" not "to press for unilateral advantage", but rather "to create a balance of power that favors human freedom".⁴⁷ Its national security strategy will be based upon "a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests," and its aim will be "to help make the world not just safer but better."⁴⁸ America's values, and thus its interests, reside above all in the promotion of freedom, "the non-negotiable demand of human dignity; the birthright of every person". The present moment is seen as a propitious one for the triumph over the enemies of freedom, and "The United States welcomes our responsibility to lead in this great mission."⁴⁹

The link between this strategy and North Korea is made by President Bush's speech to US troops in Seoul in February 2002. The short speech refers to the defence of freedom six times, noting, "that's what you're doing here on the Korean Peninsula." It

⁴⁶ *National Security Strategy*, George W. Bush, preface. It is interesting here to note the parallels to Francis Fukuyama's book *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York, Free Press, 1992. The overarching theme of the book is a call to a renewed optimism (like that of the 19th century) on the basis of democracy's victory over its competitors. See esp. Ch. 1, "Our Pessimism," and Ch. 4, "The Worldwide Liberal Revolution".

⁴⁷ *National Security Strategy*, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, preface.

also refers to the defence of “civilization,” and to the “call of history” to do so.⁵⁰ Lake posits a similar responsibility with respect to rogue states:

As the sole superpower, the United States has a special responsibility for developing a strategy to neutralize, contain and, through selective pressure, perhaps eventually transform these backlash states into constructive members of the international community.⁵¹

The reference to United States leadership in world in US national security discourse is, of course, not new. Such references extend back at least as far as the (then confidential and now infamous) NSC 68 of 1950, which stated “The absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable” and “this fact imposes upon us, in our own interests, the responsibility of world leadership.”⁵² Similarly, President Kennedy stated in 1961, and President Bush reiterated in 2003, “Our strength as well as our convictions have impressed upon this nation the role of leader in freedom’s cause.”⁵³ This description of the US role in the world, to the extent that it is supported, has served as an enabling factor, both domestically and internationally, for actions considered off limits for other states, but it is also a double-edged sword. It confers the right and

⁵⁰ See White House, “President Speaks to US Troops in Seoul,” press release, Seoul, Korea, February 21, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/02/20020221-6.html>. Also on the call of history, see George W. Bush, “State of the Union Address,” (Washington D.C.: White House, January 29, 2002), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2002/index.html>: “History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom’s cause”; “...this will be a decisive decade in the history of liberty... we’ve been called to a unique role in human events.”

⁵¹ *National Security Strategy*, preface.

⁵² National Security Council, *NSC 68, United States Objectives and Programs for National Security: A Report to the President Pursuant to the President’s Directive of January 31, 1950*, Washington, April 7, 1950, available from the Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>.

⁵³ See John F. Kennedy, “Special Message to the Congress on Urgent National Needs,” May 25, 1961, quoted in Weldes (1999), 200, and White House, “President Salutes Sailors at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville,” press release, Jacksonville, Florida, February 13, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030213-3.html>. Kennedy continued: “No role in history could be more difficult or more important. We stand for freedom. That is our conviction for ourselves – that is our only commitment to others. No friend, no neutral and no adversary should think otherwise. We are not against any man – or any nation – or any system – except as it is hostile to freedom...”

“responsibility” to act, as well as the right to determine when action is warranted and what form it should take. It also gives to interventions under its guise the legitimacy of obligations or burdens assumed on behalf of freedom or civilization, to decisions the complexion of being at least partially disinterested, and to the maintenance and augmentation of power the justification of nobility.⁵⁴ At the same time, it presents a persistent credibility problem. Depending upon how ambitiously it is defined, the proposition of leadership has constantly (or at least regularly) to be renewed, reinforced, and reaffirmed by staking it on promises or threats with respect to situations that come up. The credibility of these threats and promises themselves then comes to be seen as essential to the credibility of the state. As such, the overarching national interest can become “precisely the [maintenance] of credibility”, a situation that carries obvious dangers of overextension, misadventures, and overly rigid foreign policy.⁵⁵ Of course, as noted in the previous chapter, “credibility” and “leadership” can be defined in more than one way.

Recently, increasing emphasis has been placed on interpellating the South Korean population into a shared identity with the United States as a partner in the defence of freedom. This reflects increasing concern with the disaffection of younger South Koreans with the American presence in South Korea and role on the peninsula, and the increasing salience of this discontent in electoral politics, which weakens South Korea’s willingness to accept US leadership vis-à-vis North Korea. Young South Koreans, particularly in Seoul, are more likely to blame the US than North Korea for the current

⁵⁴ See Weldes (1999), 199-214.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, 215-218.

“nuclear crisis”.⁵⁶ Also, in addition to recent large-scale protests (in the tens of thousands) in Seoul against the US presence and US policy toward North Korea, greater policy independence vis-à-vis the United States played a significant role in the election last fall of Roh Moo Hyun as President of the ROK. Though Roh seems to have moderated his language in recent months, he told a South Korean trade union audience this past February that “Koreans should stand together, although things will get difficult when the United States bosses us around.”⁵⁷

Noting these trends, Victor Cha recently suggested to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the US-ROK alliance should be redefined as more than a deterrent force. He argued that a new “longer-term vision of what the alliance stands for, rather than what it stands against” was urgently needed. South Korean leaders should do their part to portray the alliance as “the embodiment of values including democracy, open markets, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, human rights, rule of law, civilian control of the military, and freedom of worship in a region of the world that does not yet readily accept these values.”⁵⁸ This theme has resonated in recent speeches of US Ambassador to the ROK Thomas Hubbard, who recently told an audience of South Korean news editors that “our alliance today is built on something much stronger than our shared

⁵⁶ Norimitsu Onishi, “At 50, the Korean Truce Defines a Generation Gap,” *The New York Times*, July 26, 2003.

⁵⁷ See Howard W. French, “US Approach on North Korea Strains Alliances in Asia,” *The New York Times*, February 24, 2003; and, in contrast, Don Kirk, “North Korea’s Nuclear Statement Clouds Talks With US,” *The New York Times*, April 20, 2003; “Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea: Common Values, Principles, and Strategy,” press release, Washington, D.C., May 14, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030514-17.html>; and White House, “President Bush Delivers Remarks with South Korean President,” Press Availability with President Bush and President Roh of South Korea, Washington, D.C., the Rose Garden, press release, May 14, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030514-18.html>.

⁵⁸ Victor D. Cha, Testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, US Congress, on “Regional Implications of the Changing Nuclear Equation on the Korean Peninsula,” March 12, 2003, p. 6, available at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/ChaTestimony030312.pdf>.

concerns about security. For our alliance to last... it must continue to be founded on the shared values of the American people and the Korean people.” Concerned that the role of America’s values in its policies was being misunderstood in Korea, Hubbard set out to “broaden” that view in order to foster “a more balanced view and a deeper understanding of what President Bush is trying to accomplish in the world.” He was particularly eager that this message should reach the youth of South Korea:

I especially hope that you will carry this message to the younger generation here in Korea. What you speak and write about, and what you do not, helps to shape their perceptions and their beliefs. Although I and other US diplomats do all we can to reach out to a younger audience, none of us can be as effective as a young person’s parent, uncle, teacher, or mentor. And certainly, you leaders of journalism have an immense impact on the vision of the next generation.⁵⁹

There are good reasons to doubt the long-term effectiveness of this strategy of educating the South Korean population, because South Korean society, which is becoming increasingly assertive of its self-determinative rights, is engaged in its own process of defining its place in the world and the relationship of other actors – including the United States and North Korea – to that position. It is not inclined to think that the view from Washington permits a clearer picture of events on the Korean peninsula. In other words, South Korea has its own “security imaginary”, and it is one that is increasingly resistant to US tutelage. With respect to the place of the United States in that image, not only is there discontent with the US role in Korea at the level of “the

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, Thomas C. Hubbard, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, “U.S.- Republic of Korea: A World of Opportunity,” Remarks to Korean News Editors Association Managing Editors Semiar, Jeju-do, Korea, July 11, 2003, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2003/22456pf.htm>. Also in this vein, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz told the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry in June that the US and South Korea “are there together in Afghanistan and in Iraq because we share the same values.” He also hit on themes of gratitude arguing that it was no coincidence that many of the countries with whom the ROK was serving in those endeavours had come to its aid 50 years ago: “In a sense, it is now Korea’s turn and we are pleased that you have risen to the challenge.” U.S. Department of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, “Remarks to the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry,” Lotte Hotel, Seoul, Republic of Korea, Monday, June 2, 2003, <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2003/sp20030602-dpsecdef0264.html>.

street”, but also, at the elite level, the US preference to exert maximum pressure toward the transformation of the regime in the North goes against the predominant view of policymakers in South Korea which opposes any rapid, disruptive change in the status quo. As one China expert recently told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “In many respects, Beijing and Seoul are closer in their approach toward North Korea than Washington and Seoul”, with both preferring to downplay tensions in favour of “a more gradual and accommodating policy of political, economic, and diplomatic engagement.” While all three strongly prefer a non-nuclear North Korea, their ranking of this objective relative to others is quite different, and Seoul and Beijing often exhibit frustration with the US pursuit of “non-proliferation” objectives to the exclusion of, and in disconnection from, all others.⁶⁰ This latter tendency is rooted in the place of the “rogue state” doctrine in the US security imaginary, which has no counterpart in those of China and South Korea. The character of the “backlash states” is decisive:

[O]ur policy must face the reality of recalcitrant and outlaw states that not only choose to remain outside the family but also assault its basic values. There are few ‘backlash’ states: Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya. For now they lack the resources of a superpower, which would enable them to seriously threaten the democratic order being created around them. Nevertheless, their behavior is often aggressive and defiant... they seek to thwart or quarantine themselves from a global trend to which they seem incapable of adapting.⁶¹

Perhaps the most important element of this description of the subject position of the “backlash states” is the reason for their discontent, and whom it is directed toward.

⁶⁰ Dr. Bates Gill, Testimony before the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee on “Regional Implications of the Changing Nuclear Equation on the Korean Peninsula,” March 12, 2003, <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/GillTestimony030312.pdf>. Somewhat surprisingly, considering the clarity of his analysis, Gill’s prescription is solely that the US should “engage with China in order to gain steadily more cooperative responses from Beijing”. There is no suggestion of “learning” anything from the Chinese perspective on the situation. US “interests”, it seems, are already given, and Washington’s task is to bring China and South Korea around to their point of view.

⁶¹ Lake (1994), 45.

North Korea is not dissatisfied, for example, with the persistence of the US containment policy. Rather, it is the basic values of the “international family of nations”, which it chooses to remain outside of, that North Korea rejects and “assaults”.⁶² Hazel Smith has argued that this position entails the proposition that “the only solution to the Korean problem is eradication of the DPRK regime.”⁶³ At the very least, it implies that progress in the US-DPRK relationship requires “regime transformation” in North Korea.

According to the rogue state rubric, the regime is inflexible – “incapable of adapting” – because it is the very basic values of the new global order that it does not accept. As such, negotiating with North Korea is of little use. The only solution is confrontation – to neutralize, contain, and perhaps eventually transform it. As Lake put it:

Each backlash state is unique in its history, culture and circumstances, and US strategy has been tailored accordingly. But there are common denominators. In each case, we maintain alliances and deploy military capabilities sufficient to deter or respond to any aggressive act. We seek to contain the influence of these states, sometimes by isolation, sometimes through pressure, sometimes by diplomatic and economic measures. We encourage the rest of the international community to join us in a concerted effort.⁶⁴

Although there are “members” of the “international community of nations” who don’t measure up, the tendency with rogue states has been to see transformation to democracy and a free-market economy as a pre-requisite to “re-integration”. After all, if these are the most basic values of the international community of nations, integration into it requires a demonstration of commitment to them. Backing down from any military competition/confrontation with the Western states who lead the international order, and pre-eminently the United States, is probably even more basic. As one senior

⁶² See also *National Security Strategy*, p. 14: “[Rogue states] reject basic human rights and hate the United States and everything for which it stands.”

⁶³ Hazel Smith, “Bad, Mad, Sad or Rational Actor? Why the ‘Securitization’ Paradigm makes for Poor Policy Analysis of North Korea,” *International Affairs*, 76:3 (July 2000), 612.

⁶⁴ Lake (1994), 46.

administration official recently stated in relation to North Korea, “You can’t have re-entry into the international community of states and brandish a nuclear weapon.”⁶⁵ (For members in good standing, apparently, different rules apply.) The onus is clearly on the state that is “outside” to secure its own “re-entry”. As one analyst put it, “If the DPRK is intent on improving relations with the United States and avoiding [coercive action]... then the burden of proof is on Pyongyang to provide quid pro quos that prove the skeptics wrong.”⁶⁶

The success of the above articulation of US-North Korean relations is due primarily to two factors. First, the portrayal of the United States as the “leader in freedom’s cause” resonates with the US population – it seems to make sense of their experience. The second is that US perceptions of its relationship with North Korea are characterized by a certain ahistoricity that allows certain inaccuracies to be glossed over. A common representation of the nuclear confrontation holds that North’s Korea’s sole purpose in negotiating agreements with the United States, South Korea, and Japan is to extract financial concessions. When missile or nuclear weapons technology is involved, this is called “blackmail”. According to Larry Nicksch, “Since 1991, North Korea has sought to obtain economic benefits from the United States, South Korea, and Japan without abandoning political and military goals towards South Korea and the United States or reforming its closed, controlled society.” This objective has figured more prominently, he argues, as North Korea’s economy has deteriorated and food shortages

⁶⁵ See David E. Sanger, “US to Withdraw From Arms Accord with North Korea,” *New York Times*, October 20, 2002.

⁶⁶ Victor D. Cha, “Hawk Engagement and Preventive Defense on the Korean Peninsula,” *International Security*, 27:1 (Summer 2002), 77.

mounted.⁶⁷ In a recent *New York Times* column, William Safire combines the motivation of financial extortion with that of glory to account for North Korea's negotiating tactics: "Why isn't Pyongyang's dictator directing his extortion primarily at neighbors in South Korea, China, Russia or Japan?" he asks. His answer is that Kim Jong Il has chosen the US as its sole target in order "to humble a superpower with deep pockets".⁶⁸

Leaving aside for the moment the question of North Korea's motivations (which will be addressed below), there is a better answer to the question of why they have insisted on negotiating directly and, frequently, only with the United States. The United States is the country that has, since the 1950s, stationed nearly 40,000 troops on its border, drafted and rehearsed various scenarios for the use of overwhelming force against it including, for much of that time, the use of nuclear weapons that were deployed on the peninsula and in the region, and which has frequently expressed the desire to see it absorbed by the South. It is also the one country that could credibly provide assurances about the DPRK's security, including non-aggression by itself and South Korea. If one were to use missiles and nuclear weapons as bargaining chips, it is with such a state that one would want to do the bargaining.

Bruce Cumings observed the same kind of ahistoricity in American commentary about the first "nuclear crisis" on the peninsula, in 1993-94. Having just witnessed the first war against Iraq, Cumings observed, American analysts found it convenient to apply

⁶⁷ This is a "defensive objective" of North Korean negotiating behaviour according to Niksch. More "offensive" goals include "isolating South Korea" and "neutralizing US military power". See Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Negotiating Behaviour," in Samuel S. Kim, ed. *North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 55.

⁶⁸ William Safire, "Three-Ring Circus," *The New York Times*, January 2, 2003.

the same logic to the “next renegade state”.⁶⁹ North Korea was not the “daily enemy of 40 years’ standing”, but rather another troublemaker, motivated by who knows what, run by a “vicious dictator”, and possessing missiles, a large standing army, and perhaps soon nuclear weapons. Cumings, himself a Korean War historian, observes that reading such commentary brought him to the realization that “the Korean War existed in the American mind under ‘ancient history’ – if not under ‘never happened’.” For North Koreans, however, that war, and the 50-year legacy of tension it has left, is an ever-present reality.⁷⁰

The result of the ahistorical perspective from which the American public views North Korea, Cumings argues, is a “*tabula rasa*”, upon which any number of descriptions can be written.⁷¹ At the time of the 1993-94 nuclear crisis, the description of “rogue” or “outlaw state” seemed most appropriate, despite a certain incongruence with the historical US–DPRK relationship.⁷² This has been a significant enabling factor in securing support for Washington’s position. Most analyses of the Agreed Framework process view the United States not as a source of North Korean security concerns, but rather as the leader of the international community, heading up the non-proliferation

⁶⁹ See, for example, Leslie Gelb, “The Next Renegade State,” Op-Ed Page, *The New York Times*, April 10, 1991; and Stanley Spector and Jacqueline Smith, “North Korea: The Next Nuclear Nightmare,” *Arms Control Today* (March 1991), 8-13.

⁷⁰ “The incessant intensity of the confrontation along the Korean demilitarized zone is something the P’yongyang leadership deals with every day, as against the handful of witting Americans who know this quotidian conflict from the other side and the mass of Americans always surprised to learn that 40,000 American troops are still in Korea.” Bruce Cumings, “Nuclear Imbalance of Terror: The American Surveillance Regime and North Korea’s Nuclear Programme,” in Raju G. Thomas, ed., *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Prospects for the 21st Century* (London/New York: MacMillan/St. Martins, 1998), 212.

⁷¹ Cumings (1998), 213. Leon V. Sigal makes a similar point about American policy-makers and the foreign policy establishment, for whom “North Korea was a blank screen on which to project their own predispositions and prejudices.” Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 10.

⁷² Another was the analogy drawn by Richard Solomon, a Nixon/Bush Sr. China expert: “Not a bad way to look at it is to think of the Waco, Texas crisis, where you have a small ideological, highly armed and isolated community...” ABC *Nightline*, Nov. 16, 1993, transcript no. 3257, quoted in Cumings, *ibid*, 213.

effort on its behalf. The United States has recently reinforced this point. With the public's mind once again on Iraq, and on the gravity of "rogue states'" defiance of international arms control and disarmament regimes, the Bush administration's response to North Korea's non-compliance with the Agreed Framework and withdrawal from the NPT is to assert that "The important point for us is that this is not an issue between the United States and North Korea... North Korea is in breach of its obligation to the international community."⁷³ The US role in the "nonproliferation" effort is not analogous, for example, to that of Russia vis-à-vis Ukraine or China vis-à-vis India – a party to the mutual hostility – but is rather that of an powerful outside party bringing its capabilities to bear on behalf of the international community.⁷⁴

It might be argued by some that the above representations are merely ideological – "mere rhetoric" intended to support and enable certain policies and discredit others.⁷⁵ While there is undoubtedly a grain of truth to the suggestion that hyperbolic language is

⁷³ John Wolf, Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation, quoted in James Brooke, "White House Sticks to Decision to Avoid Talks with North Korea," *The New York Times*, January 30, 2003. Of course, the administration has also tried to distinguish the Iraq case from that of North Korea, because they were in a build-up for war with Iraq and did not wish to do the same with North Korea. See for example Michael R. Gordon, "In Bush's 'Axis of Evil,' Why Iraq Stands Out," *The New York Times*, September 9, 2002; Elisabeth Bumiller, "Bush Sees Korean Nuclear Effort as Different From Iraq's," *The New York Times*, October 22, 2002; and David E. Sanger, "President Makes Case That North Korea is No Iraq," *The New York Times*, January 1, 2003. At the same time, it suggests argues for a firm response – firmer, for example, than when India and Pakistan decided to go nuclear – by putting North Korea's weapons program implicitly in the same category as Iraq's, despite the fact that North Korea is under no similar obligation (North Korea's decision to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty has removed any legal obstacle to its development of nuclear weapons). Mazarr makes a distinction between "responsible proliferants", such as India, Pakistan, and Israel, and "rogue proliferants" such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya. See Michael J. Mazarr, "Going Just a Little Nuclear: Nonproliferation Lessons from North Korea," *International Security*, 20:2 (Fall 1995), 114, 117.

⁷⁴ Even Michael Mazarr, who has offered some of the most thoughtful analysis of the effort to resolve the North Korean nuclear question, casts the US in this role, suggesting a "requirement for US leadership" in non-proliferation efforts, as the only state that can articulate "the larger context of a coherent nonproliferation process". Mazarr (1995), 108.

⁷⁵ On the argument against discursive analysis on the basis that language used by state officials is merely rhetoric designed to persuade audiences to support particular state policies and actions, see also Weldes (1999), 114-118 and Michael Hunt, *Ideology and US foreign policy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 15 ff.

sometimes used to justify policies pursued for more mundane reasons, it begs the question of why the policy is pursued in the first place. Typically, as it was for Morgenthau, the implication is that the policy is pursued for “power political” reasons, according to the logic of *realpolitik*. These explanations, however, have been found wanting in the current case. They do not offer a compelling account of relations between the United States and North Korea, and in particular the continuation of the US containment policy and failure to implement the Agreed Framework. One gets the sense that the moral element plays a significant role in this situation; that the United States considers North Korea to be inimical to its existence as the leader in freedom’s cause. This is true in a somewhat limited sense, but its implications for US-North Korean relations are decisive. The United States does not have to succeed in causing the collapse of the DPRK, but it must not abandon the effort.⁷⁶ What is essential to the US identity is not the negation of North Korea, but opposition to North Korea. Power politics vis-à-vis North Korea becomes not just a means, but also an end in itself; something considered to be “right” and “virtuous”. What matters is “fighting the good fight.”⁷⁷ By implication, the United States presents itself to the DPRK *as an enemy*. Peaceful co-existence is off the table. As long as opposition to North Korea is seen as an essential part of what the United States is, it constitutes an existential negation of that state.

The point is that this is a function of how the United States has defined, and continues to define, its place in the world. The drive that compels the United States to oppose North Korea is not a drive for self-preservation, as evidenced by the considerable

⁷⁶ The persistence of the DPRK is problematic for the United States, but primarily, I would argue, because of the persistence of the nuclear confrontation as a “foreign policy problem”. If it were not for the weapons dynamic, opposition would be enough. Of course, this is precisely the logic that prompts the DPRK to pursue weapons.

⁷⁷ Wendt (1999), 274.

dangers involved in that endeavour, nor is it a drive for acquisition, as evidenced by the considerable expense involved and the lack of foreseeable gain even if the policy were to be successful. It is, rather, a drive of self-assertion - the assertion and actualization of a particular self that has been defined through the social and political processes conceptualized above using the heuristic device of the security imaginary. That the resulting definitions of the national interest are also thought to coincide with rationality (in terms of preservation) and morality is not surprising, but if the above is accurate, then they are primarily of *thymotic* origin. That these definitions of the national interest are not, in fact, particularly “rational” (in the narrow sense) has already been argued above, and the question of whether they are moral will be addressed in the Conclusion to this thesis. First, though, we turn to the question of whether there are any alternatives.

Altercasting, North Korea Style

If the North Korean security imaginary is North Korea’s view of the world that confronts it and its place in that world, then its referent has undergone full-scale change in the past 15 years. In the early 1990s, North Korea witnessed the collapse of Communism in Europe, suffered the loss of financial support and subsidized trade from Beijing and Moscow, and simultaneously lost the support and security backing of these two patrons in its “legitimacy competition” with the South, as implied by their normalization of relations with the ROK. At the same time, its historical adversary, the United States, emerged as the “only superpower”. Rejuvenated by its “victory” in the Cold War, and having thrown off the shadow of Vietnam with the Gulf War of 1991, the latter appeared equally determined to secure victory in its long-standing effort to see the dissolution of the DPRK. For the ruling regime, the internal environment did not look

much better. An economic crisis which lasted throughout most of the 1990s, and from which North Korea still has not emerged in a decisive fashion, coupled with flooding and drought that have caused famine conditions among the population, have caused many observers to doubt the regime's ability to maintain power. The one notable positive development has been that since 1998 the North has seen a significant mellowing in the attitude of its Southern neighbour toward itself.⁷⁸

These events, and its attempts to manage them, have had a profound effect on the way North Korea views itself and its place in the world, and by implication the way it views the United States and South Korea. This, in turn, has implications for how the US should formulate policy toward North Korea. Barring the most fortunate turns of fate, continuing to formulate policy as though North Korea had not changed in the past 20 or 30 years cannot fail to result in bad decisions. Arguably, North Korea has been engaged in a process of "altercasting" in an attempt to portray a set of roles for the United States and itself that would constitute the abandonment of enmity and permit a new "working consensus". The United States has so far been extremely reluctant to signal any acceptance of the role North Korea is casting for it.

⁷⁸ South Korea significantly obstructed US attempts to negotiate with North Korea in 1991-92 and 1994. See T.R. Reid, "South Korean Moves Said to Undermine US-N. Korea Talks," *Washington Post*, October 9, A43; and Sigal (1998), 35, 49-50, 105-7. From 1988 to 1998, South Korea pursued the policy of *Nordpolitik*, the goal of which was "In essence... to exploit DPRK isolation as the wider Communist world collapses," or in kinder terms, to encourage "pragmatism" in North Korea similar to that exhibited in the reform programs of China and Russia. See Kim Kook-chin, "Seoul's *Nordpolitik*," in Michael J. Mazarr *et al.*, eds., *Korea in 1991: The Road to Peace*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 96. Kim argues that the policy had, by 1991, started to shift "from one of cementing DPRK isolation to one of bringing North Korea out of that isolation and into the Asian mainstream." *Ibid*, 97. Selig Harrison argues, however, that it was designed to promote a gradual "managed" collapse and absorption of the North, which would be less costly than sudden absorption. See Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, 70. *Nordpolitik* was repudiated by Kim Dae Jung in his inaugural address in 1998, in which he articulated the "sunshine policy" for the first time.

Perhaps the most important change in North Korea's reality over the past 15 years has been its position relative to the ROK. While the North and South faced each other with relative military and economic parity during the early decades of their existence, by the early 1990s an insurmountable gap had emerged, as illustrated by the twenty-fold difference in the two countries' GDPs. Under these conditions, "even staunch ideologues... had to admit that a communist revolution in the South was no longer a viable DPRK objective." The Supreme People's Assembly abolished its Unification Committee, official propaganda started to recognize the need to "adapt existing theories to changing times", and "self-reliance," already a major point of emphasis since the state's founding, replaced communization of the Peninsula as the "ultimate revolutionary goal".⁷⁹ North Korea is a decidedly a "post-revolutionary society" struggling to redefine its revolution in terms of the very basic goal of autonomy.⁸⁰ Cha summarizes this shift nicely: "...Pyongyang's end game has changed from seeking hegemonic unification to ensuring basic survival and averting dominance by the South."⁸¹

Still, there is strong tendency on the part of analysts to see any changes in North Korea as "merely tactical" rather than "fundamental" in nature.⁸² There is a dominant presumption that North Korea is both unchanging and strategically inflexible; that it sees its course of action "not as an alternative but as an imperative".⁸³ In denying that North

⁷⁹ Cha (2002), 49-51.

⁸⁰ On North Korea as a post-revolutionary society, see Jae-Jean Suh, "North Korea's Social System," in Tae Hwan Ok and Hong Yung Lee, eds., *Prospects for Change in North Korea* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1994), 209-270, esp. 238 ff.

⁸¹ Cha (2002), 50. Cha argues that these are "precisely the type of concerns that can spur preemptive/preventive action", but they also illustrate the unwarranted nature of assumptions about continuing North Korean "revisionist" intentions, which Cha argues we should maintain. Revisionist, in this context, is generally taken to mean that it wants to "communize", or at least conquer, the South.

⁸² Han S. Park, *North Korea: The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 157; Cha (2002), 43.

⁸³ Park, *ibid.*

Korea can be an adaptive and creative agent, this line of argument permits only two possible outcomes: stasis or change imposed from the outside. North Korea's options, in turn, are only two: defiance or capitulation. There is no "third way" for North Korea. In the terms of altercasting, the "degree of freedom" allowed North Korea – the "range of behavior" the United States allows it in the encounter – is extremely small. The US proposal for a new "working consensus" (a solution to the confrontation) casts North Korea essentially in the role of the repentant and reforming wayward state. North Korean acceptance of the role would be signalled by reform along pre-ordained lines.⁸⁴

The assumption that change will come only from the outside leads the US to see change only in terms of concession to its own demands. It is a mistake, however, to expect compliance with a US or South Korean wish list to be the inevitable result of "reform" or "pragmatism" in North Korea. North Korea is not without its own "national strategy", and based on recent experience, can be expected to capitalize on opportunities for improved relations with the United States and/or South Korea when it serves its objectives, but not on any terms and at any time. This relates to another of Weinstein and Deutschberger's six "dimensions" of altercasting (dimensions of the role in which Alter is being cast), which they call "structural distance". Roughly speaking, this is the "position of relative authority Ego [North Korea] is directing Alter [the United States] to play out in the current encounter," or the amount of "authority ceded by [North Korea] to [the United States]."⁸⁵ If North Korea seems to many to have a peculiar way of signalling its desire for rapprochement, it is in large part because the "structural distance"

⁸⁴ Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger, "Some Dimensions of Altercasting," *Sociometry*, 26:4 (December 1963), 458. In typical altercasting fashion, the US has made it clear that any concessions on its own part are contingent upon the North assuming the role projected for it – the "burden of proof" is on North Korea.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 457.

implied by the role North Korea has attempted to cast for the United States approaches what might be called “structural parity”, whereas the US expectation has been that rapprochement would imply a rather greater degree of relative authority for itself with respect to North Korea’s government, economy and military. In other words, the United States has expected at least a mild form of capitulation, in recognition both of its superior strength and moral standing, while North Korea has refused to give tacit recognition to that portrayal of the situation. Missiles and nuclear weapons are not signals of North Korea’s desire for improved relations so much as symbols of the limits to the “working consensus” those relations can adopt and be consistent with the role that North Korea is casting for itself.

Over the course of the past 13 years a distinct pattern has emerged in which North Korea signals the lines along which agreements might be reached, and then waits for Washington’s response.⁸⁶ When Washington concedes, North Korea concedes, when Washington reneges, North Korea does likewise.⁸⁷ Neither is North Korea above suddenly conceding on a seemingly inflexible position if it is to its advantage to do so, particularly on peripheral issues.⁸⁸ As Carlin and Merrill put it, “at least in foreign policy, the North’s watchwords are flexibility, initiative, and maneuver. Rigidity inevitably puts the North at a disadvantage... North Korea has few enough options anyway; narrowing them further only makes matters worse.”⁸⁹ Because North Korea has

⁸⁶ For example, all of the essential elements of the 1994 Agreed Framework were informally proposed to a State Department official, Kenneth Quinnones, in Pyongyang in October 1993. See Sigal (1998), 78.

⁸⁷ This phenomenon has been extensively documented in Sigal (1998). See, for example, the diagram of “North Korea’s Tit-for-Tat Negotiating Behaviour” in Appendix I.

⁸⁸ One example would be the format of talks with the United States (bi-lateral vs. multilateral) in recent months.

⁸⁹ Robert L. Carlin and John Merrill, “North Korea’s Relations with the United States and Japan,” in Michael J. Mazarr *et. al.*, eds., *Korea in 1991: The Road to Peace* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 117-130.

often been more highly involved with the process of “negotiating” with the United States than vice-versa, this strategy of tit-for-tat has often allowed North Korea to control the direction of negotiations, though with frequent setbacks and relatively little real progress over time. The lesson for US policy of the persistence of North Korea’s “coercive bargaining” strategy is not that North Korea never changes, but that the recognition within the North Korean leadership that their situation has changed radically to their disadvantage, and that their objectives must also therefore change, does not equal a willingness to allow someone else to dictate the terms of change.

Coupled with its seemingly desperate situation, the assumption of strategic inflexibility leads to the perception that when North Korea comes to the bargaining table, it does so only out of desperation.⁹⁰ While North Korea has faced profound challenges, however, it has played its hand with determination, has usually come to the bargaining table at times of its own choosing, and has managed, in several cases, to negotiate from a position of strength.⁹¹ The assumption that North Korea is bargaining from a position of extreme weakness leads to three specific problems in US dealings with North Korea. First, it leads to the perception that North Korea has no strategy beyond desperate attempts at blackmail aimed at immediate monetary gain. Second, it has led to the failure to follow through on commitments made to North Korea, and perhaps the making of commitments without intent to carry them out, on the assumption that North Korea will

⁹⁰ See, for example, Kim Kook-chin (1991), 100; and Nicolas Eberstadt, “‘National Strategy’ in North and South Korea,” *NBR Analysis*, 7:5 (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, December 1996), 14. : “By 1993, North Korea was a country without a national strategy. To be more precise, it had a national strategy – the same one it always had – but this was almost completely irrelevant to the problems at hand. The pressing problem at hand was regime survival.”

⁹¹ Kyung-Ae Park, “North Korea’s Defensive Power and US-North Korea Relations,” *Pacific Affairs*, 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 535-553.

soon collapse. Finally, it leads to a building frustration within the American population and foreign policy establishment at being “defied” for so long by such a weak adversary.

The Changing North Korean “Security Imaginary”

Consistent with the above, one way to conceptualize North Korea’s attempts to adapt to changing realities is to look at the evolution of how it has defined its place in the world and its relationships to other actors that occupy important “nodal positions” in its security imaginary. Most relevant for US policy is how North Korea portrays its relationships with the United States and South Korea. While Western analysts have begun to recognize that “themes of change and reform have proliferated in North Korean propaganda”, it is also frequently noted that the language of change is not explicitly friendlier to the United States.⁹² Indeed, depending on recent events, on any given day one can easily find references to the “US Imperialists”, “the ringleader of imperialism,” and the “imperialists’ psychological warfare and ideological and cultural poisoning,” in the North Korean official media, sometimes accompanied by threats of fierce retaliation.⁹³ Similarly, a central element of North Korea’s definition of self is its resistance to this imperialism, even at great cost of life.⁹⁴ In the collective imagination of a state born of a national liberation struggle, the “US imperialists” have picked up where the “Japanese imperialists” left off. Its persistence in pursuing normalization with the United States suggests, however, that this is not a fixed nodal position.⁹⁵ Ultimately, it

⁹² Cha (2002), 62.

⁹³ See, for example, KCNA, “Inheriting the spirit of defense in 1950s urged,” July 22, 2003; KCNA, “DPRK highly vigilant against US psychological warfare,” July 22, 2003.

⁹⁴ KCNA, “Month of Anti-US Joint Struggle marked,” July 15, 2003; KCNA, “Inheriting the spirit of defense in 1950s urged,” July 22, 2003.

⁹⁵ Interestingly, North Korea is much less reluctant than the United States to describe the situation as mutual animosity. It has frequently referred to the breakdown of previous agreements as being caused by “the long-standing hostile relationship and distrust between the two countries,” usually as a way of prefacing specific proposals or conditions for moving forward with negotiations. KCNA, “KCNA detailed

must be evaluated in the broader context of the changing North Korean security imaginary, the dominant element of which is the determination “to live our own way”, as embodied in the “*juche* character and national identity.”⁹⁶

Just as the greatest change in North Korea’s reality has been its position vis-à-vis South Korea, it has been in its posture toward the South that we see the greatest change in North Korea’s definition of its place in the world. This shift is most evident in the changes in reunification policy observed below, but they also show up in routine characterizations of the situation on the Peninsula in the official state media. A typical portrayal is that “It is the desire of the Koreans in the north and the south to put an end to the long history of antipathy and confrontation and open a new phase of reconciliation and reunification under the banner of the June 15 Joint Declaration. But the US is working desperately to stem this trend.”⁹⁷ Specific actions of South Korean officials, such as the National Assembly’s recent passing of a resolution promising to raise “more actively the human rights issues in the north”, and the military’s designation of North Korea as its “principle enemy”, are still castigated, but blame is always ultimately attributed to the United States, and confidence expressed in the South Korean people’s rejection of such policies. The military was “acting [like] a servant pulling the nuclear war chariot of the US imperialists”, and the resolution of the National Assembly “was possible only under the strong impact of the US anti-north smear campaign.” Furthermore, “It is clear as noonday that the traitorous [Grand National Party] will be

report on circumstances of DPRK’s withdrawal from NPT,” January 22, 2003; KCNA, “Report on delay in construction of light-water reactor project issued,” May 16, 2002.

⁹⁶ KCNA, “KCNA detailed report on circumstances of DPRK’s withdrawal from NPT,” January 22, 2003; KCNA, “Koreans called upon to preserve Juche character and national identity,” July 10, 2003.

⁹⁷ KCNA, “US war scenario under fire,” July 21, 2003.

politically ostracized in the ‘general election’ to be held next year if it fails to drop its stand of submitting to America and [its] bad habit [of acting] as traitors.”⁹⁸

North Korea’s Change Dilemma

The argument that North Korea is strategically inflexible is an argument about “what” North Korea is, and to the extent that it is articulated, it is usually related to the highly ideological nature of the North Korean state. In its most essentialist form, it is an argument that North Korea has neither the will nor the ability to adapt. It is by its very nature a static entity. In a softer variant, it is suggested that North Korea cannot adapt even if it wants to because the legitimacy of the regime is bound up in a particular ideology. Related to the latter is a third argument that suggests that North Korea cannot change because its legitimacy is bound up in its competition with the South, which is in turn inextricably linked to the ideological line it has articulated in opposition to the South. I will address the argument about ideological rigidity in its own right first, and then examine it in light of the empirical record.

According to Charles Armstrong, there are three main focal points of official North Korean ideology: 1) An anti-imperialist nationalism embodied in the concept of *juche*; 2) a not particularly Marxist brand of socialism that, since the beginning of the 1990s, goes under the name of *urisik sahoejuŭi*, literally “a socialism of our style”; and 3) filial piety and hereditary leadership succession, especially since Kim Jong Il became the heir-apparent in the early 1980s.⁹⁹ The argument that North Korea is ideologically rigid

⁹⁸ KCNA, “S. Korean ‘National Assembly’ described as voting machine of US” July 4, 2003; KCNA, “Drop of ‘theory of principal enemy’ urged,” July 9, 2003. Also KCNA, “‘Theory of principal enemy’ peddled by S. Korean military refuted,” July 7, 2003.

⁹⁹ Charles A. Armstrong, “A Socialism of Our Style’: North Korean Ideology in a Post-Communist Era,” in Samuel S. Kim, ed. *North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 32.

is based on the premise that a significant departure from these tenets would cause a crisis of legitimacy for the regime. Han Park adds an additional dimension, arguing that the central element of the DPRK's identity, and thus its legitimacy, is opposition to the values of South Korea: "whatever characterizes the South is denounced and demonized in the North... Pyongyang has viewed the South as helplessly dependent on foreign power, devoid of self-respect from adopting foreign values and life styles uncritically, and saturated by materialism and consumerism." In essence, *juche*, socialism, and filial piety constitute an opposing belief system, and North Korea's reluctance to reform, for example along Chinese lines, is attributable to the need to maintain these values in opposition to those of South Korea. Thus, similar to the manner in which US legislators sense that rapprochement with North Korea would somehow compromise the American core identity as "the world's leading liberal state", North Korea's legitimacy competition has worked to constrain Pyongyang's reform explorations.¹⁰⁰ System survival requires more than keeping the leadership in power and maintaining the North's existence as a political entity. It also requires the maintenance of the characteristics upon which the regime has built its legitimacy. Survival, according to Park, requires that the North preserve its "unique and peculiar" characteristics:

The system cannot stay alive by being similar to the South; it would only be poorer, inferior, and less popular among the people... One must realize that North Koreans believe for good reason that system change means system collapse. Therefore, their resistance to change is in fact their resistance to collapse.¹⁰¹

If this view is correct, it presents an almost intractable dilemma for North Korea, because the realities of its situation clearly demand it to adapt in order to survive. Park,

¹⁰⁰ Han S. Park, "North Korean Perceptions of Self and Others: Implications for Policy Choices," *Pacific Affairs* 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 503-516. See also Roland Bleiker, "Identity and Security in Korea," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 14:1 (2001), 121-148.

¹⁰¹ Park (2002), 149.

in fact, asserts at one and the same time that the effort to survive prevents change, and that change is a requirement for survival. While regime legitimacy is anchored primarily in the *juche* ideology, as opposed to performance in generating prosperity for example, “Ideology alone cannot be a sufficient basis for regime legitimacy,” and “people’s basic needs cannot go unmet indefinitely.”¹⁰² All human beings, he argues, naturally demand certain rights; “there must be a limit to ordinary people’s tolerance of hardship.”¹⁰³ Chris Rhodes goes further in suggesting that DPRK official ideology has always included a tacit expectation that the population should be “employed, fed, clothed, and housed,” which suggests that regime legitimacy has always, to some degree, been tied to performance.¹⁰⁴ North Korea, it seems, must find a “golden mean” that allows for pragmatic measures for economic growth without radically disrupting the equilibrium of the system.¹⁰⁵ In reality, I would suggest, Park’s construction of North Korea’s dilemma is too rigid, because it portrays the competition between the Koreas in essentialist terms. The effort to redefine its relationship with the South has, in fact, been a crucial part of North Korea’s efforts to manage the challenges to its survival.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 159, 165.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁰⁴ Chris Rhodes, “The Juche Idea and its Role in the North Korean Political Economy,” in Hazel Smith et. al, eds., *North Korea in the New World Order* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 142. Samuel Kim makes a similar point, with different emphasis, arguing that Kim Jong Il, lacking “his father’s charisma, authority, and power... has no choice but to shift decisively from charismatic or revolutionary legitimation to performance-based legitimation. And yet... [he] is of two minds on opening and reform.” Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea in 1994: Brinkmanship, Breakdown, and Breakthrough,” *Asian Survey*, 35:1 (January 1995), 27.

¹⁰⁵ Park (2002), 178.

¹⁰⁶ Chris Rhodes’ observation about economic challenges to regime stability rings true of other challenges as well: “A political economy is not a natural system in which cause – economic problems – is linked to an effect – political upheaval – in a regular and constant manner. Performers know about such links, and use that knowledge to manage them. The future of North Korea depends heavily on such management.” Rhodes (1996), 151.

Managing Change

It is often noted that Kim Jong Il relies heavily on his father's legacy as a legitimating factor for his leadership, but it is not often recognized how much support the elder Kim retained.¹⁰⁷ The anti-imperial (read anti-Japan) and anti-feudal themes of the national liberation movement resonated deeply with the North Korean population, most of whom owned no land and many of whom lived in abject poverty.¹⁰⁸ The support garnered during the liberation and the early "reforms" (democratic, agrarian, and industrial) remained largely intact throughout Kim Il Sung's reign, and Kim seems to have enjoyed "virtually unswerving loyalty" within the North Korean population into the 1990s.¹⁰⁹ Loyalty to Kim Il Sung and loyalty to the government of the DPRK, however, do not appear to be completely synonymous, despite the latter's best efforts to fuse the two.¹¹⁰ The rise to power of Kim Jong Il, a transition that began in the mid-1970s, seems in retrospect to have provided both an opportunity to distinguish the two loyalties, and a basis for comparison that did not previously exist.¹¹¹ But while the attempt to pass

¹⁰⁷ Han Park argues that "there is no post-Kim Il Sung era in North Korea and there never will be one as long as the regime itself survives." Park (2000), 508. Scott Snyder argues that "the legacy of Kim Il Sung's leadership and thought is the foundation of state power in the D.P.R.K... Kim Jong Il's genealogical relationship to Kim Il Sung and his grooming as successor for over two decades are the critical pillars of Kim Jong Il's power as North Korea's supreme political ruler." Scott Snyder, "North Korea's Challenge of Regime Survival: Internal Problems and Implications for the Future," *Pacific Affairs*, 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 519.

¹⁰⁸ At the time of liberation, nearly 80% of the population were tenant farmers. Less than 4% of the population owned 58.2% of the total arable land. 62.4% of all industries were owned by Japanese, and Japanese investments accounted for 91.2% of all paid-in capital in these industries. On March 1, 1946, the Samil Independence Day, approximately three million tenant farmers demonstrated across the country, demanding the confiscation and free distribution to farmers of "lands owned by pro-Japanese people, national traitors, and large and/or absentee landowners." Suh (1994), 225-227.

¹⁰⁹ Suh, (1994), 209-270.

¹¹⁰ These attempts are ongoing. See, for example, KCNA, "Month of Anti-US Joint Struggle marked," July 15, 2003: "President Kim Il Sung is the invincible and iron-willed commander who defeated two imperialisms, US and Japan, in one generation... The friendly Korean people are now firmly defending the sovereignty of the country and dignity of the nation as they are led by leader Kim Jong Il who is identical with Kim Il Sung."

¹¹¹ That is, "although they have no way to compare their conditions with external ones... the North Korean people nevertheless are able to feel their plight by comparing the present with the past." Suh (1994), 249,

legitimacy from father to son has not been entirely straightforward, Kim Jong Il's success in consolidating and retaining power suggests that the effort may have been more successful than previously thought. In any case, the legacy of Kim Il Sung has been constantly invoked as a legitimating force for Kim Jong Il's leadership, and it is something the regime continues to have to manage carefully.

As part of his effort to do so, Kim Jong Il has undertaken a shift in the power structure of the North Korean state. In broad terms, this can be characterized as a gradual shift of power from the state to the party and then to the military - in particular the National Defense Commission (NDC) - that took place during the 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the "military-first" principle of "North-Korean style socialism" and the exercise of power by Kim Jong Il as Chairman of the NDC rather than as President or General Secretary of the Workers Party.¹¹² The 1998 'Kim Il Sung Constitution' formalized the shift in power to the military by making Kim Il Sung 'the eternal President of the Republic' - thereby abolishing the presidential system - and making the NDC the nerve centre of the state. This made Kim Jong Il the *de facto* Head of State, but "without

251-252. Suh cites defectors' testimony to suggest that people associate North Korea's economic decline with Kim Jong Il's rise to power, and look back fondly on the 1960s and 70s, when rice and meat seemed plentiful.

¹¹² See Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1999: Bringing the Grand Chollima March Back In," *Asian Survey* 40:1 (January/February 2000), 152-154. In the case of the party, no party congress has been held since 1980, despite a requirement in the party's charter that it be held every five years. The party's Central Committee and Political Bureau (Politburo) also seem to have fallen by the wayside. Neither met in 1999 at all, despite requirements in the Party Charter that the Central Committee meet at least once every six months, and the Politburo every month. The Party had no formal head at all from July 1994 to October 1997, when Kim Jong Il assumed the position of General Secretary. He did so without the anticipated mechanism of a plenary session of the Central Committee. As for the state, the most powerful organ in the North Korean political system, the Presidium of the Politburo, declined in membership from five in 1980 to just one, Kim Jong Il, by 1995. See *Ibid*, and Harrison (2002), 63.

ceremonial duties or formal accountability.”¹¹³ In the words of one analyst, “North Korea has already had a bloodless military coup”.¹¹⁴

This shift has no doubt reduced the chances of an embarrassing power struggle during the succession from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong Il, but there are good indications that there may be something more at stake in the marginalization of the party; namely, a shift of power into more pragmatic hands.¹¹⁵ A Party Congress had reportedly been planned for sometime in the fall of 2000 (by that time 15 years overdue), but, according to Kim Jong Il, was cancelled due to changes in the North-South relationship following the historic June summit in Pyongyang. Such a Congress would have endangered the progress made there, because the pre-amble of the party’s Charter still states that the party’s “ultimate task” is “to imbue the entire society with the *Juche* ideology while, at the same time, establishing a Communist society throughout the country.” In fact, Kim Jong Il noted, “there are many radical and militant expressions” in the Charter, but the effort to have them changed would be perceived as a purge of Kim Il Sung loyalists – a battle Kim Jong Il cannot afford to fight.¹¹⁶ A Party Congress would have raised external

¹¹³ Kim (2000), 153.

¹¹⁴ Harrison (2002), 53.

¹¹⁵ Dae-Sook Suh, for one, does not think there was much chance of such a struggle, given that Kim Jong Il had been working on his succession for nearly two decades. With respect to the party, his strategy appears to have been to make all of the necessary ‘personnel changes’ between August 1982 and December 1993 (a total of 261 in the Central Committee), leaving members of his father’s generation loyal to him in place, and then to allow its composition to remain largely the same while marginalizing it as a whole in the mid-1990s. With respect to the military, he promoted 524 young colonels to the rank of general in April of 1992, and made another round of promotions in April of 1997, promoting fifty generals, four to the rank of vice-marshal. Still, he chose a member of his father’s generation to replace the deceased minister of the People’s Armed Forces in 1995 (who died soon after as well). His overall strategy seems to have been calculated to bring in a new ‘Kim Jong Il’ guard while retaining as many loyal members of the old guard as possible in order to display continuity, respect, and filial piety, and at the same time dealing harshly with the disloyal. See Dae-Sook Suh, “Kim Jong Il and New Leadership in North Korea,” in Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee, *North Korea After Kim Il Sung* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), esp. 24-29.

¹¹⁶ Transcript of interview with Kim Jong Il, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report/East Asia* (DREA), August 13, 2000, cited in Kim (2000), 25. Ironically, Kim Dae Jung’s attempts

expectations for changes to the Party Charter, drawing unwelcome attention to the issue and potentially slowing the momentum gained at the June summit.

The power shift also seems to have facilitated the removal of economic control from party ideologues. Out of 23 vice and deputy ministers appointed in 1998 to ministries dealing with the economy, sixteen were new appointees, leading to a more technocratic bureaucracy.¹¹⁷ Samuel Kim argues that the party – largely removed from the levers of power – has redefined itself in the role of “ideological cheerleader” for the military-first policy of “our style socialism”.¹¹⁸ Socialism cannot collapse, it is argued, as long as the military-first principle is in place, even if the people are ill prepared politically and ideologically. This is said to be “a serious lesson drawn from the history of socialist politics in the 20th century.”¹¹⁹

Managing Kim Il Sung’s legacy, however, is not merely a matter of managing the old guard party loyalists. Armstrong argues that “the basis of legitimacy for the successor is intimately bound to the perpetuation of the *ideological line* articulated by Kim Il Sung.”¹²⁰ Thus, the other two fundamental elements of North Korean official ideology, *juche* and socialism, are also bound up in Kim Il Sung’s legacy. There seems to be a near-consensus among analysts that *juche* is the more serious. As Armstrong has pointed out:

North Korean propaganda has spent much more time insisting on the DPRK’s adherence to socialism than describing exactly what ‘socialism of our style’

to change Article 2 of South Korea’s anti-communist “National Security Law”, which designates North Korea as an “illegitimate entity”, were blocked by the National Assembly. See Harrison (2002), 95.

¹¹⁷ Harrison (2002), 37. Kim Jong Il expressed frustration with party ideologues in the above-cited August 2000 interview with the South Korean media.

¹¹⁸ Namely, “that ‘the military is the party, the people, and the nation’ and that ‘our party’s policy of giving priority to [the] army is invincible’ and ‘the perfect mode of politics in our times’.” Kim (2000), 154. Internal quotes are from KCNA, June 16, 1999.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Armstrong (1998), 38.

means in concrete terms, except that it is unique, inseparable from the leadership of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, and ‘people-centred’, exactly the same things the DPRK has said about *juche* for decades.¹²¹

The word *juche* – usually translated as “self-reliance” – first appeared in the modern North Korean political lexicon in the 1950s, was enshrined as the “guiding principle of politics” in the 1972 DPRK Constitution, and has replaced all references to Marxism-Leninism in the 1992 Constitution.¹²² Armstrong argues that the legitimacy of the regime is so bound up in adherence to *juche* that “both in the domestic and foreign policy realms, the North Korean leadership cannot express any policy which rejects or deviates widely from [its] principles.”¹²³ Han Park suggests that even at a conservative estimate, 20-30 percent of the North Korean population might be “true believers” in *juche*, and that, importantly, these are also the most fervent supporters of the Kim leadership.¹²⁴ While *juche* has been undergoing a sort of transition away from “metaphysics” and toward a more “practical socialism” since the defection of one of its primary exponents to Seoul in 1997, it still has deep roots in the society, and the regime’s legitimacy continues to be rooted in it. As such, the latter will continue to have to justify its policies in the terms of *juche*. In addition, while at first glance *juche* would seem to be somewhat of a liability in North Korea’s current position, it continues to serve an

¹²¹ Armstrong (1998), 41. See, for example, KCNA, “Koreans called upon to preserve Juche character and national identity,” July 10, 2003: “Ours is socialism based on national independence, socialism strong in Juche character and national identity. This is a brilliant result of President Kim Il Sung’s faith of independence and patriotic will.”

¹²² The term has been used by Korean nationalists since the early twentieth-century to refer to “the national subjectivity, political independence and self-identity of the Korean people.” Historically, it has often been counterposed to *sadae*, the traditional Confucian expression for Korea’s subordination to China that translates as ‘serving the great’. See Armstrong (1998), 36. In the North Korean context, an institution of higher learning was devoted completely to its teaching (the now defunct Academy of Juche Studies, inst. 1987), and several hundred leading scholars are thought to have been involved in its advancement and refinement. See Han S. Park, “The Nature and Evolution of Juche Ideology,” in Han S. Park, ed., *North Korea: Ideology, Politics, Economy*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1996), 10.

¹²³ Armstrong (1998), 34. See also Park, *Ibid*, 10.

¹²⁴ Park, *ibid*, 17; Park (2000), 506. The defection mentioned is that of Hwang Jang Yop in April 1997.

important ideological function in maintaining support within the population for a policy course that involves continuing sacrifice but avoids outright capitulation to outside demands.

Western observers usually interpret *juche* to mean economic autarky and international isolation. A number of scholars have recently disputed the necessity of this connection, but there does seem to be a strong historical correlation.¹²⁵ North Korea is considered to be the world's most autarkic economy, and statements by its leaders have historically suggested a strong connection between *juche* and isolation.¹²⁶ Marcus Noland notes that North Korea did not even join "its Communist brethren" in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and that the timing of its own central plans was designed to frustrate linkage with other planned economies.¹²⁷ Kim Jong Il has attributed the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe to "ideological corruption" and "pro-Western materialism", and Kim Il Sung told a 1975 party gathering that economic self-reliance is the material basis of *Chajusong*, or overall independence in international relations: "Failing economic independence, subordination to another country is

¹²⁵ See, for example, Armstrong (1998); Frederick Nixon and Paul Collins, "Economic Reform in North Korea", in Hazel Smith *et al.*, eds., *North Korea in the New World Order*, (London: Macmillan, 1996), 154-168; Hazel Smith, "North Korean Foreign Policy in the 1990s: the Realist approach," in *ibid*; and Park (1996).

¹²⁶ Marcus Noland, "Prospects for the North Korean Economy," in Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee, *North Korea After Kim Il Sung*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 39. The measure used is international trade share (exports plus imports) as a percentage of GDP. Noland estimates North Korea's at about 12%, as compared to 50-60% for South Korea. Notably, it does not include arms exports or informal trade with China (smuggling), and much of North Korea's trade (as much as two-thirds) is still done on a barter basis, so true terms of trade are difficult to calculate. Also, the DPRK regards trade statistics as classified information, so figures must be aggregated from data submitted by trading partners. See *Ibid*, 39-42.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 40. Hazel Smith attributes the DPRK's non-participation in COMECON to a rejection of the 'socialist international division of labour' (i.e. becoming a cheap supplier of raw good to Russia in return for Russian machinery) in favour of re-industrialization. See Smith (1996), 97.

unavoidable and freedom from colonial slavery is impossible. Economic dependence leads to political subordination, and economic inequality leads to political inequality.”¹²⁸

What is important for the limits to change is not so much how *juche* has been articulated in the past, however, but how static that interpretation is. Armstrong argues that it is “at least potentially, a flexible concept that is not inherently inimicable to engagement with the global capitalist economy,” and that “in the 1990s the DPRK has gone to great pains to justify economic political ties with the capitalist West on the basis of [it].”¹²⁹ Park argues that the “exclusive nationalism” and “anti-foreignism” traditionally associated with the notion of “self-reliance” in North Korea have proved counterproductive, and that efforts have recently been directed at reinterpreting self-reliance in broader terms to mean opposition to the domination of man in any form, including by economic poverty, political subjugation, military domination, or even nature.¹³⁰ Two internal discursive resources, each a part of the “value system” that has been articulated in association with *juche*, seem to present the possibility for reinterpretation. The first is that *juche sasang* (thought) “reverses the historical materialism of Marx,” denouncing the latter “unequivocally” and emphasizing “the

¹²⁸ Armstrong (1998), 37, and Kim Il Sung, *On the Non-Aligned Movement* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 15, quoted in Smith, (1996), 97.

¹²⁹ Armstrong (1998), 33. Up until the late 1990s, the regime did not give clear indications that it intended to pursue the path of reform, and so it was not clear whether it would try to revise the ideology, or try to persist without doing so. Recent signals seem to give a clear indication that North Korea intends, at least to some degree and however awkwardly at first, to pursue a path of “opening” similar to that engaged in by China since the late 1970s. These include high profile visits to China’s Free Economic Zones, more flattering statements about China’s reform, in place of the pointed criticisms that were levelled in earlier years, and the slate of economic reforms enacted in July of 2002. See below.

¹³⁰ See Park (1996), 12. The dangers of such an ideology for a regime that relies so heavily on social control hardly need to be mentioned, but it does provide a certain flexibility in defining the “struggles of the revolution”. Emancipation from the domination of nature is the object of the “Three Revolutions Campaign” (science, technology, and culture) associated with the beginning of Kim Jong Il’s rise to power.

ideological over the material, thought over matter, superstructure over base.”¹³¹ Thus, it is the consciousness of the people, not the relations of production or of trade, that ultimately matters, and this allows North Korea greater flexibility on the specifics of economic policy. The second is the concept of *Changuisong*, or creativity. *Changuisong* is “dynamic and scientific”, in contrast to *Uisiksong*, which is “static and philosophical”, and it is this quality that enables one to apply abstract principles, including *juche* and socialism, to concrete reality “by creatively adapting the principles to the specific condition of the society.”¹³² It is this concept that has been employed most prominently in the service of reform in recent years, and it was given popular expression in the 2001 New Year’s editorial of the party organ, *Nodong Sinmun*:

The most important task to be accomplished with priority, precisely, is to effect fundamental innovations in the ideological viewpoint of people and their way of thinking, struggle ethos, and work attitude in such a way that meets the requirements of the new century.... It is impossible to advance the revolution even a step further if we should get complacent with our past achievements or be enslaved to outdated ideas and stick to the outmoded style and attitude in our work.¹³³

While the broader discussion of the movement toward reform in North Korea is useful, we should be wary of drawing too direct a link between North Korea’s willingness to undertake economic “reform and opening” and “friendlier” foreign policy intentions toward the United States and South Korea.¹³⁴ It is worth noting that North Korea has undertaken several cautious steps toward economic reform and restructuring –

¹³¹ Park, *ibid*, 13, Armstrong, (1998), 35. The central concept here is that of *Uisiksong*, or ‘consciousness’, which determines the course of history and underlies all other structures.

¹³² Park, *Ibid*, 14.

¹³³ *Nodong Sinmun*, “Let Us See and Solve All Problems from a New Viewpoint and a New Attitude,” January 9, 2001, p. 1, in FBIS-EAS-2001-0118.

¹³⁴ The notion that “marketization” constitutes the *sine qua non* of change in North Korea deserves greater scrutiny not only because it has the potential to skew evaluations of change, but more importantly because it is likely to lead to unrealistic demands on the part of outside agents, and thus to reinforce isolationist tendencies in Pyongyang.

what one analyst has called “reform by stealth”, or the tacit encouragement of change in the economy “without incurring the political costs of confronting the Old Guard in a formal doctrinal debate.”¹³⁵ This process was both intensified and made more public and explicit with the announcement of a new “economic adjustment policy” on July 1, 2002, probably reflecting the increasing influence of reformers within the government.¹³⁶

While market changes, or at least attempts at change, are significant in that they exhibit a certain degree of ideological flexibility, however, they are not necessarily linked with concessions to Washington, and in fact the two may in some ways be inversely related, at least in the short term.¹³⁷ We are more concerned here with evaluating the argument about ideological rigidity in relation to the charge that North Korea is “strategically uncompromising”.¹³⁸ This seems to be the dominant perspective within the US foreign policy establishment, but it has not gone entirely unchallenged.

¹³⁵ Harrison (2002), 26 and Ch. 4 generally. See also Phillip Park, “The Future of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 31:1 (2001), 104-120. Park argues that North Korea is flexible enough to implement economic reform as the internal and external environment requires, but that “[from] the North Koreans’ point of view, the whole world is against their national sovereignty.” This deeply engrained “siege mentality”, he argues, will cause North Korea to be extremely sensitive to issues of sovereignty as it implements reforms.

¹³⁶ This plan included a substantial increase in both prices and wages, a shift in the price-fixing mechanism to allow more local control, changes in the distribution system to allow both limited profit mechanisms and independent sourcing of essential goods, a decentralization of national planning, and an increase both in the autonomy and the requirement of self-reliance of individual enterprises. For early evaluations, see Hong Ihk-pyo, “A Shift Toward Capitalism? Recent Reforms in North Korea,” *East Asian Review*, 14:4 (winter 2002), 93-106; Jun-chul Lee, “The Implications of North Korea’s Reform Program and Its Effects on State Capacity,” *Korea and World Affairs* 26:3 (Fall 2002), 357-364. They also reportedly included significant streamlining and greater technocratic control of industry. See Erich Weingartner, “Understanding North Korea: Perception vs. Reality,” *Behind the Headlines*, 60:1 (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Autumn 2002), 10. *Choson Shinbo*, the organ of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, described it as “a new economic management system that pursues profits within the socialist planned economy”. *Choson Shinbo*, July 26, 2002, quoted in Hong, *Ibid*, 103-104.

¹³⁷ For example, In the context of US containment efforts, North Korean officials might reasonably be worried that market-oriented economic reform will be perceived in the US and by hardliners within the DPRK as capitulation to US demands. In such circumstances, continuing the economic reform program may require displays of North Korean independence and determination elsewhere, including the scoring of “diplomatic victories”.

¹³⁸ See Park (2002), 149.

One dissenting opinion was expressed by two State Department analysts, Robert Carlin and John Merrill, in a 1991 article that emphasized North Korea's flexibility in defining and pursuing its objectives.¹³⁹ Carlin and Merrill identified independence, reunification and ideology as the three most important "engines" of North Korean foreign policy, and argued that North Korea had demonstrated flexibility with respect to all three. Independence, for example, "has never been a fixed state" for North Korea, but rather "a process, requiring constant movement, numerous course corrections, and an ongoing evaluation of international developments."¹⁴⁰ Similarly, while reunification has been a constant cornerstone of North Korean policy, "it has when necessary changed the definition or its functional understanding of the term in order to allow itself room to pursue a variety of policies, not all of which have been completely consonant with the goal of quickly ending the national division."¹⁴¹

Carlin and Merrill also noted North Korean flexibility with respect to several "articles of faith" such as single entry of the Koreans into the UN, reunification by confederation, and the withdrawal of US troops. With respect to the latter, Kim Dae Jung reports that he made the case for a continued US military presence in Korea after

¹³⁹ Carlin and Merrill (1991), 117-130. Carlin and Merrill were both at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). Another notable dissenting voice was Kenneth Quinones, who worked the State Department's North Korea desk during this period. Selig Harrison reports that Carlin, Merrill and Quinones strongly expressed their disagreement with the prevailing view of North Korea to Robert Galucci when he took over the North Korea file in 1993, and that Galucci took them seriously. See Harrison (2002), 209; and Sigal (1998), ch. 3.

¹⁴⁰ They continue "Indeed, the North has always acted as if it believed that no one set of policies could ensure its independence, and that independence could never be defined in absolute terms." Carlin and Merrill (1991), 118.

¹⁴¹ With respect to ideology, they argued that while the DPRK has taken ideology seriously as more than "a ploy to put an intellectual patina on crudely calculated decisions," Kim Il Sung was not an ideologue, and so ideology should not be given "more than its due" in explaining North Korean foreign policy behaviour. *Ibid*, 119, 120.

reunification, and that Kim Jong Il “had a very positive response”.¹⁴² Carlin and Merrill argue that when there is movement on such fundamental objectives, “it is a matter of some consequence, not just of tactical convenience.” They also called into question the image of a North Korea implacably opposed to the United States, arguing that “The North Koreans have worked assiduously to engage the United States over the past five or six years. It must strike them as terribly slow going. Yet, they have kept at it, and it is worth asking why.”¹⁴³ The answer, I would suggest, has to do with a shift in the way North Korea pursues its fiercely guarded independence; one summed up by the principle of peaceful coexistence.

Coexistence with North Korea

Perhaps the most significant change has been in the way North Korea views the process of reunification. The North has gradually shifted toward the objective of confederal institutions that allow the separate regimes to coexist for an indefinite period. The North’s legitimacy has always been dependent on the credibility of its commitment to reunification, and, when it was in a stronger position vis-à-vis the South, this commitment was expressed in uncompromising reunification proposals based on the notion of a unitary, centralized confederation (much like a federation).¹⁴⁴ While it continues to speak of reunification as the ultimate national goal, it has adapted its

¹⁴² In Kim Dae Jung’s words, “the two sides concurred that the US military presence on the Korean peninsula should continue for stability on the peninsula and Northeast Asia.” See Kim Dae Jung, *Nobel Lecture*, Oslo, December 10, 2000, available at <http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/2000/dae-jung-lecture.html>.

¹⁴³ Carlin and Merrill (1991), 119-122. The authors point out that the standard answer, that in engaging the US the North hoped to minimize the importance of South Korea seemed to be excluded by the fact that since 1984 the DPRK had shown increasing readiness to deal with the ROK, including in the form of prime ministerial talks. “Given the lengths to which the North appears willing to go, it strains credulity to say the Pyongyang is doing all this just to undermine Seoul’s standing – especially when, as in the prime ministerial talks, the symbolism of its actions has been just the opposite.”

¹⁴⁴ Harrison (2002), 75.

functional understanding of that objective both in order to adapt to changing circumstances and to allow itself greater flexibility.¹⁴⁵

The 1972 DPRK Constitution cleared the way for a confederal solution to the national division by officially changing the DPRK capital from Seoul to Pyongyang, and revising stated national objectives to the complete victory of socialism in the northern half of the Peninsula, and driving out foreign forces nationwide.¹⁴⁶ Its 1980 proposal for a “Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo” (DCRK) signalled another major shift in this direction. It envisioned confederation not as a “way station on the road to reunification”, as previous proposals had, but as “the end point of reunification itself.” In addition, it lengthened the time horizon for reunification, opened the way for Pyongyang to deal with Seoul as an equal, and made it possible for the North to begin to recognize the ROK as a legitimate negotiating partner.¹⁴⁷ At the June 2000 North-South summit meeting Kim Jong Il proposed a form of “loose form of federation” very similar to the South’s (under Kim Dae Jung) formula of “one people, two systems, two independent governments” as a pre-unification stage.¹⁴⁸ From the North Korean perspective, the “looser” any potential confederation is the better, because the more tightly knit it is the more the South will tend to dominate.

¹⁴⁵ Carlin and Merrill (1991), 119.

¹⁴⁶ Harrison (2002), 75.

¹⁴⁷ Carlin and Merrill (1991), 119.

¹⁴⁸ See Kim Dae Jung (2000). At a symposium hosted by the Carnegie Foundation in Washington in June 1991, former North Korean vice foreign minister Han Si Hac elaborated the North Korean notion of confederation at that time. He suggested a loose confederal state, limited at first to a coordinating function, with all entities in North and South ongoing and independent military and diplomatic affairs maintained for the present. Full confederation, he suggested, would occur when the confederal government had full powers of diplomacy and defense. Clearly, the most important element of confederation for North Korea is not the institutional arrangements that would result, but the recognition of legitimacy that it would imply. As to the “communization of the South, aside from the obvious fact that the North has no “capability at all” to do so, Han suggested that this would be counter-productive, since “we want to improve our relations with many countries that have large investments in the South, especially the United States and Japan.” Quoted in Harrison (2002), 76.

The North was originally confident of reunifying on their own terms, seeing their system (with some apparent justification) as economically stronger and politically more stable. South Korean military regimes between 1961 and 1987 generally saw North Korean reunification proposals as dangerous, because they could potentially lead to Northern dominance by military and economic means.¹⁴⁹ Syngman Rhee's refusal to sign the armistice and his "March North" slogan were intended to head off reunification, and the brief interlude of relative free speech which followed Rhee's overthrow in 1960 was put to an end by military coup largely because of a "reunification uproar" among South Korean students.¹⁵⁰ The new government of General Park Chung Hee instituted the infamous anti-communist National Security Law, authorizing arrest for any activity alleged to show sympathy for or cooperation with Pyongyang, and Park made his thoughts on reunification clear in his 1971 New Year's press conference: "[T]he easiest road to unification is to strengthen our national power. When our power surpasses that of North Korea, and when the urge for freedom moves from the Republic to the North of Korea, Kim Il Sung's dictatorial system will surely collapse."¹⁵¹ While South Korean reunification policy became somewhat less paranoid after 1988, reflecting the South's increasing confidence in its bargaining position vis-à-vis the North, the goal of absorption

¹⁴⁹ Harrison (2002), 69.

¹⁵⁰ Student groups set a meeting for Panmunjom on May 20, 1961, and then rallied in Seoul for government approval of it on May 14. The military leaders involved in Gen. Park Chung Hee's May 16 military coup "made no secret of the fact that the reunification uproar was the critical factor precipitating their decision to act." This reunification "uproar" was attributable in part to a confederation proposal by US Senator Mike Mansfield based on "neutralization on the Austrian pattern" which "became the intellectual fashion overnight". . Park instituted a new National Reunification Board in 1969, but his nominee for head of this body was thus dismissed within a year (Feb 1970), seemingly because he took the objective of the position seriously. See Harrison (2002), 78-9.

¹⁵¹ Harrison (2002), 79-80.

expressed by Park remained essentially unaltered until Kim Dae Jung's articulation of the "sunshine policy" in 1998.¹⁵²

In essence, North and South Korea have largely "traded places" since 1987, with the South becoming increasingly confident in dealing with the North, and the North increasingly insecure in dealing with the South.¹⁵³ For this reason, North Korea has also been sceptical of the "sunshine policy", often portraying it as a more subtle strategy for absorption. Nevertheless, it has been willing to explore the opening it provides for improved relations with the South. It seems increasingly willing to engage with the South, perhaps because it sees the South's engagement policy as at least potentially ingenuous. In addition to any intrinsic benefits of this process, North Korea enjoys a certain amount of sympathy in certain segments of the South Korean population, in particular among the young, and has been eager to cultivate that and, recently, to use it to its advantage in its ongoing confrontation with the United States. Kim Jong Il's acceptance of Kim Dae Jung's summit proposal in 2000 came at a time when negotiations with Washington were at a halt, and came very close to paying big dividends in that regard.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, North Korea's willingness to have South Korea (as well as China, Russia and Japan) at the table in recent talks with the United States probably

¹⁵² For a synopsis of the reunification policies of the Chun Doo Hwan military regime (1979-1988), the Roh Tae Woo government (1988-1993), and the Kim Young Sam government (1993-1998), see *ibid*, 80-82. See also Harrison's characterization of the changes in Kim Dae Jung's longstanding confederation proposal after his election. The most significant of these was the shift to a "step by step" formula, with reconciliation and cooperation leading toward confederation rather than confederation as the framework for reconciliation and cooperation. This cost him credibility in Pyongyang, where "step-by-step" has generally been seen as synonymous with "gradual absorption", but he had a point. Back-channel diplomacy had revealed a lack of interest in the North to move quickly toward confederation, and as Kim put it, "If we don't get a positive response, that would be a problem for us. When we say something, we should be confident that they'll accept." See *ibid*, 75 and 83-88.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 69-70.

¹⁵⁴ The bigger dividends were probably in relations with Europe, the majority of the countries of which North Korea has since established diplomatic relations, as well as the European Union itself. The summit, and the relaxation of US sanctions at Kim Dae Jung's urging that followed, seemed to be an international signal that it was time for Western countries to adjust their view of the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

reflects the fact that the new government in the South has made its opposition to Washington's strident position well known.

The crucial point is that confederation now constitutes, in North Korea's perspective, a "way out" that would allow it to maintain a large measure of autonomy. It would go a long way to alleviating its security concerns vis-à-vis that South because, in the form the North has in mind, it would institutionalize coexistence as two separate states with differing systems, at least until the terms of eventual reunification can be negotiated. It is essentially a "live and let live" solution to the tensions on the peninsula, at least in the short term, and the South's acceptance of it would "signify the formal rejection of absorption as its ultimate goal."¹⁵⁵ North Korean official pronouncements consistently portray it as such:

The proposal for a confederation based on the idea of coexistence of two systems, can be said to be a reasonable way to eliminate the last legacies of the cold war. As for the 'unification of systems' or the 'unification by absorption' which some people are talking about, they all presuppose, no matter what their ways and means are, that one side conquers the other side.¹⁵⁶

All of this indicates that there may be another role that the United States can play on the Korean peninsula besides the one that it has played essentially since the national division in 1945 – that of patron of the ROK (though sometimes a restraining patron) and enemy of the DPRK. Should the United States decide to make the switch to a more even-handed "honest broker" role on the peninsula, however, the lesson of the above for US

¹⁵⁵ Harrison (2002), 77. It would also signify movement away from the notion that South Korea encapsulates "the true Korean identity", and from the objective of moving "back" to what Korea is supposed to have once been – a politically, culturally, and ethnically homogeneous society. See *ibid*, 99-100 and Roy Richard Grinker *Korea and its Futures: Unification and the Unfinished War* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998).

¹⁵⁶ "Confederation is a Unique Realistic Solution to the Korean Problem in the post-Cold War Period," *Bulletin d'Information*, Délégation Générale de la RPD de Corée en France, no. 02/0193, 22 January 1993, quoted in Rhodes (1996), 139.

policy is not that it should push for early reunification of the “Korean nation”, but that they should facilitate that process rather than obstruct it. Neither of the Koreas is eager to move too quickly in that direction, the North for “security” reasons and the South for economic ones. Normalization with Washington and Tokyo, as well as the stabilization of its economy through trade and infrastructure improvements would go a long way to overcoming the reluctance of both Koreas to move along the road toward confederation.¹⁵⁷ As Selig Harrison has argued, the institutionalized co-existence of the two Koreas is a prerequisite for stability on the Peninsula. “It is putting the cart before the horse to press the North for arms control and tension-reduction measures before the issue of confederation versus absorption is resolved. Faced with the threat of absorption, the North will remain in a defensive mode and reluctant to modify its military posture.”¹⁵⁸ Or, as the North Korean foreign minister recently put it: “The settlement of all problems with the DPRK, a small country, should be based on removing any threat to its sovereignty and right to existence. [These might be ensured by] negotiations or the use of deterrent force... but the DPRK wants the former, as far as possible.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ On the South Korean side, a major obstacle is the National Security Law, which remains in force and unchanged. Attempts by the Kim Dae Jung government to revise it even in very modest ways were blocked not only by the opposition, but by Kim’s coalition partners, and in particular former Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil, the conservative leader of Chunchon province. Kim proposed to change Article 7, which provides for up to seven years imprisonment or even death for vaguely defined “anti-state” and “espionage” activities that “praise” and “benefit” North Korea, such that it would apply only to those who join groups for those purposes or engage in them in an organized fashion. He also proposed to change Article 2, which defines North Korea as an “illegitimate entity” after the June 2000 summit. Both proposals were defeated. See Harrison (2002), 93 ff.

¹⁵⁸ Harrison, *ibid*, 101.

¹⁵⁹ North Korean Foreign Ministry Statement, Pyongyang, October 25, 2002, printed in KCNA, “Conclusion of Non-Aggression Treaty between DPRK and US Called For,” October 25, 2002.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

The analysis of the preceding seven chapters suggests that the conflict between the United States and North Korea, and thus “the North Korea problem” for US foreign-policy makers, persists because of enmity. That is, it results not from the quest for “security”, but from the assertion and actualization of particular definitions of the US and North Korean “selves” that are inimical to one another. In particular, the US containment policy toward North Korea persists because of a definition of the United States and of its interests that requires opposition to the existence of the DPRK. The United States wants security, but not at the cost of “legitimizing” the North Korean regime. This formula presents the United States to North Korea as an enemy. At the same time, North Korea’s objective for some time has been to end its lifelong enmity with the United States without capitulating. North Korea wants security, but not at the cost of giving up its jealously guarded “independence”. There is an element of self-preservation and an element of self-assertion in both postures.

The policy recommendation offered here is that the United States should take North Korea up on its offer for peaceful co-existence. There are two considerations that remain to be drawn out in this regard. This first is whether it is politically possible. The second is whether it is morally justifiable.

For Schmitt, of course, the notion that enmity can be “reconsidered” would seem nonsensical. Enmity is not susceptible to scrutiny or reconsideration. The other either is

or is not the enemy, and the only choice is how to respond to this reality. As Leo Strauss pointed out, however, this formulation obscures the element of moral decision involved in the determination of enmity. It has been argued above that the latter involves both the determination that the other is inimical, in a concrete and existential sense to what “we” are, or what we see ourselves as in the process of becoming, and the decision to uncompromisingly oppose the other rather than to adapt our notion of self to accommodate it. The existential negation that is a part of enmity by definition is not necessarily a permanent one, because what the actors “are” in relation to each other (not just what they want) is subject to change. This is the insight of “critical strategic practice”.

The essence of critical strategic practice is a changing of the roles that both actors play in the relationship, implying a change in the way they define themselves in relation to the ongoing encounter. This represents a change in the structure of identities and interests that makes up the relationship – a transformation of social structure through changes in social practices. The decision to undertake such a role change has at least two preconditions. First, a reason to think of oneself in novel terms, generally as a result of new social situations that cannot be managed in terms of pre-existing self-conceptions, and second, the expectation that some benefit will result from such a role change.¹ I would argue that the above offers ample reason for the United States to rethink its role on the Korean peninsula, because it has met with very little success in “managing” the situation based on existing self-conceptions. Furthermore, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that North Korea is willing to opt for peaceful co-existence – indeed, that it has

¹ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics,” *International Organization*, 46:2 (Spring 1992), 419.

been offering peaceful co-existence for over a decade – and that each of the other parties now engaged in talks with the United States and North Korea would welcome a shift in the US self-conception along the lines suggested here. As such, there is a reasonable expectation of a substantial benefit of such a role shift.

To be politically viable, such a move would require the successful articulation of an account of the situation, and of the identity of the United States in relation to it, that permits peaceful co-existence with North Korea. As I see it, this shift requires only relatively minor changes in the definitions currently dominant within the U.S. “security imaginary”. In the case of US identity, the shift consists mostly in adopting a more comprehensive and balanced view of credibility. This view would see institutionalized co-existence with North Korea as pragmatic, not as a threat to US democratic credentials, and US credibility as a “superpower” as being enhanced by constructive participation in the resolution of a persistent conflict without resort to force, not as being threatened by “giving in” to Pyongyang. Some may prefer to see larger changes in the US conception of its role in the world, but these are the minimum requirements for the shift under consideration here. With respect to the US view of North Korea, the shift requires the rejection of categories such as “rogue state” and “implacable enemy” in favour of a more genuine consideration of what North Korea’s motivations and objectives are. It requires seeing North Korea as an entity that is at least capable of having genuine concerns and interests, and which engages in conscious consideration of how to pursue them.

These streams of thought are already present in the US foreign policy discourse, and have been given prominent expression in both the Perry Commission and Armitage group reports of 1999, as well as in the Agreed Framework itself and the June 1993 US-

DPRK Joint Statement. Nevertheless, this way of thinking has never successfully defined the US national interest for any considerable length of time. Its primary opposition for much of the period considered above has come from Congress, and it is unquestionably the case that the support of Congress would be required for a sustained policy of rapprochement and engagement with North Korea. It is notable, however, that the administration that signed the Agreed Framework was itself somewhat of an “overnight convert”, and failed to make a compelling case to Congress for the agreement either while negotiations were under way or after the framework was signed. The policy shift recommended here would require the repetitive, sustained articulation of an alternative view of the realities of the situation and the roles of both the United States and North Korea in it. The preceding analysis suggests good empirical grounds for such an alternative articulation.

The final consideration is whether such a shift can be considered morally justifiable. It has been argued above that enmity involves a significant element of moral decision. Such an argument should, it seems, take a moral position. What, then, are we to make of the argument that the North Korean regime is evil, and should be opposed by all available means? This position is typically associated with “moral conservatives” in the United States, but it has been given more nuanced expression by Robert Bedeski, who argues from the “human security” perspective that tolerating the continued division of Korea “condemns nearly twenty-four million persons to unspeakable conditions, oppression, starvation, and poverty under the thumb of the last remaining terrorist/totalitarian regime, while the other half of the peninsula remains thriving and

free.”² Bedeski argues that this fact has been neglected in analysis in the hope that “interaction with the international community will induce change” – a hope he fears may amount to wishful thinking. The problem with “engagement”, he says, is that even minimal interaction accords some degree of legitimacy, and any aid helps to reinforce the power of “perhaps the most repugnant regime in the world today”. “Soft diplomacy” is unlikely to have much influence, and so beyond solving the current crisis, “the only just solution is the dissolution of the present North Korean regime.”³

It is difficult to take issue with Bedeski’s characterization of the North Korean regime. There is still much we don’t know about its inner workings, but there seems to be good evidence that it treats political dissidents harshly, that concentration camps exist, and that social control plays a prominent role in its form of government.⁴ There are solid reasons to believe that the perpetuation of the current DPRK regime means that people who should not have to will continue to suffer in gulag-like prisons, that some are likely to be executed for political dissidence, and that millions of others will continue to suffer an unacceptable level of dominance by the state.

Those who argue for peace must be willing to look these realities in the eye, and this, in my experience, is profoundly unsettling. At the same time, those who argue for the continuation of containment and pressure toward North Korea must look squarely at the reality that this course of action has so far only perpetuated and exacerbated tensions on the peninsula, and seems almost certain to continue to do so for as long as the North

² Robert E. Bedeski, “Peace and Neutrality on the Korean Peninsula: A Role for Canada?” *Pacific Affairs*, 73:4 (Winter 2000/01), 569.

³ Bedeski (2000/01), 557.

⁴ For a sobering overview of social control in the DPRK, see Jae-Jean Suh, “North Korea’s Social System,” in Tae Hwan Ok and Hong Yung Lee, eds., *Prospects for Change in North Korea*, (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1994), 209-270.

Korean regime can hold out. It also runs the real risk of a second, and almost unimaginably devastating, war on the Korean Peninsula, because North Korea steadfastly refuses to accept it – a fact of which its nuclear and missile programs are only the most prominent reminders. The argument is not that morality is not relevant to matters of “power politics”, but that it is not always, perhaps not often, well served by the crusading spirit. Containment has almost certainly strengthened the hands of those opposed to change in North Korea and reconciliation with the South over the past two decades, and required the more reform-minded to legitimate themselves by scoring diplomatic “victories” over the DPRK’s “opponents”. Arguably, the climate in North Korea has been ripe for change since at least the beginning of the 1990s, and the effect of the containment policy has been to slow it. Any benefits, therefore, have not been to the North Korean people, but reside only in the avoidance of damage to the US reputation and sense of self.

This argument is a decidedly liberal one, and it is probably also one that Hans Morgenthau would have agreed with. It is a recommendation to seek peace, and follow it, offered not because there are no other legitimate considerations in international politics, but because I find no compelling considerations to override it in this case. The moral argument alone seems to warrant a re-examination of how US interests have been conceived in this situation, but the argument for a change in policy above has not been primarily moral in orientation. Rather, it resides in the fact that the current policy has not served US interests well. It has perpetuated an acute foreign policy problem, increased the perception of threat of the American population, given rise to a potentially dangerous sense of frustration at being for so long defied by such a seemingly unworthy opponent,

and threatens to do damage to US credibility unmatched, perhaps, even by the Vietnam War if things go badly. Enmity, whether that of aggression or resistance, is always both a moral and a strategic decision, and if it cannot be justified in terms of either, then it ceases to be justifiable.

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