International Relations of the Asia-Pacific Volume 10 (2010) 93–127
doi:10.1093/irap/lcp016 Advance Access published on 10 September 2009

Collective identity formation on the Korean Peninsula: United States' different North Korea policies, Kim Dae-Jung's Sunshine Policy, and United States–South Korea–North Korea relations

Young Chul Cho

Political Science & International Studies, Yonsei University, 134 Sinchon-dong, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea 120-749
Email: youngchul.cho@gmail.com

Abstract

Focusing on the US Clinton and Bush administration's dissimilar security policies and practices toward the Korean Peninsula, this article aims to examine how the two different external security environments shaped South Korea's collective identity in relation, respectively, to the United States and North Korea, and the Sunshine Policy in different ways, with a temporal focus on the Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998–2003). In so doing, this article will investigate the following substantive questions: what are the reason and implication of harmony between South

Received 23 December 2008; Accepted 10 August 2009

Korea–US alliance identity and inter-Korean national identity in South Korea during the Clinton administration? In contrast, what are the reason and implication of discord between the two identities during the Bush administration? Related to these questions, this article presents two analytical arguments on the formation of South Korea's collective identity associated with the Sunshine Policy, along with an International Relations theoretical argument implicated in the empirical analysis.

1 Introduction

Since the Korea War started in 1950, the security culture on the Korean Peninsula has been antagonistic between the South Korea–US alliance and North Korea. To dismantle this hostile security culture (what is often called, the Cold War structure), in 1998, the Kim Dae-Jung administration (hereafter, the Kim administration) in South Korea implemented what President Kim Dae-Jung (hereafter, President Kim; quoted in Moon, 1999, p. 37) calls a 'Sunshine Policy' which 'seeks to lead North Korea down a path toward peace, reform and openness through reconciliation, interaction and cooperation with the South'. In seeking to socialize North Korea, the Sunshine Policy was also directed at regional countries in Northeast Asia, since the Cold War structure on the Korean Peninsula has existed at two layers concurrently and interactively: the inter-Korean layer, on the one hand, and the regional layer, on the other. Internationally, just as North Korea has been the United States' bete noire, America has been North Korea's loathed and feared Other since the Korean War (1950–53). This antagonistic US–North Korean relationship has often had a negative impact on South Korea's national security in a globalizing world after the Cold War, as shown in the 1994 nuclear crisis in Korea. It is also widely accepted that the variation in the US–North Korea relations has heavily influenced (and will significantly influence) progress in both inter-Korean relations and Japan–North Korea relations.

With this international dimension of Korea's Cold War structure in mind, the Kim administration urged that, by gradually reforming and opening itself, North Korea should join the international community (more specifically, the existing, American-shaped international security structure) for its own good – ensuring the North's national survival and

gaining substantial economic assistance from the outside world. At the same time, in claiming that 'North Korea is most dangerous when it is isolated' (Kim, 2004b, p. 51), the Kim administration encouraged regional countries (particularly, the United States) and international organizations to engage with North Korea – more to the point, to provide the international living space in which North Korea's external sovereignty can be recognized. Seoul believes that those two-way processes help North Korea to become a member of the international community, while easing North Korea's deep-seated fear of the hostile outside world and learning international norms. In the long run, socialized North Korea will not be an international outcast and threat to international security, thus increasing peace and stability in Korea as well as Northeast Asia. In Wendt's (1999) words, by implementing the Sunshine Policy, South Korea as a driving force attempted to transform the ossified Hobbesian security culture into the Lockean (or even Kantian) security culture in Northeast Asia. This transformative process of security culture has required a shift in the distribution of shared ideas of perceiving friend and foe in the region, which lead then to realign their collective identity among regional countries: that is, at least North Korea must come to be the friendly Other of South Korea, the United States, and Japan, even if it cannot be part of liberal, democratic 'us'. In this sense, Seoul's Sunshine Policy is not simply South Korea's tactical engagement demarche of coping with the on-going North Korean problem, but is the state-driven identity project reconfiguring the existing mapping of collective identity in Northeast Asia in the post-Cold War era of globalization. Related to the South's engagement policy toward the North, therefore, the issue of collective identity is crucial to having a more in-depth understanding of South Korea's national security today, and of the increasing dynamic of inter-Korean relations which project implications for security and diplomacy in Northeast Asia.

In traditional security studies, nonetheless, little is known of South Korea's national security associated with the Sunshine Policy in terms of its evolving collective identity in the region. To contribute to filling this gap in the literature, by addressing the question of how a significant change in the international security environment affected South Korea's national security during the Kim administration, this article is to explore the formation of South Korea's collective identity which has, in turn, informed its interest and policy at the turn of the twenty-first century. More specifically, focusing on the US Clinton and Bush administration's contrasting security policies

and practices toward the Korean Peninsula, this article aims to examine how the two different external security environments shaped South Korea's collective identity in relation, respectively, to the United States and North Korea, and the Sunshine Policy in different ways, with a temporal focus on the Kim administration (1998–2003). In so doing, this article will investigate the following substantive questions: what are the reason and implication of harmony between South Korea–US alliance identity and inter-Korean national identity in South Korea during Clinton's second term? In contrast, what are the reason and implication of discord between the two identities during Bush's first term?

In order to address the two questions and to explore the configuration of South Korea's collective identity under different regional security environments, the following analysis is organized in three sections. The first section briefly presents the central theme of sociological constructivism as this article's underpinning theoretical stance, addressing how South Korea's collective identity will be understood and used to explain US influence on the Sunshine Policy. In comparing Clinton's period with Bush's period, the second section considers the US security policy toward the Korean Peninsula to reveal the external, social security context in which South Korea acted and the Sunshine Policy had been implemented. To provide a nuanced understanding of South Korea's evolving foreign relations with its traditional ally (America) and long-term enemy (North Korea), the second section thoroughly examines the triangular interactions among the United States, South Korea, and North Korea, and its impacts on South Korea's sense of (in)security and the Sunshine Policy in chronological order. Here, methodologically, this article deals with various South Korean and the US governmental documents, media output, South Korean and the US policy-makers' remarks. The secondary literature will also be screened. On the basis of the section's detailed narrative, the final section presents two analytical arguments on the formation of South Korea's collective identity associated with the Sunshine Policy, along with an International Relations (IR) theoretical argument implicated in the empirical analysis.

2 Theoretical context

In the context of sociological (or conventional) constructivism in IR, Katzenstein (1996, p. 2) argues that 'security interests are defined by

actors who respond to cultural factors'. In this process, the concept of 'identity' is crucial, since it 'functions as a critical link between environmental structures and interests' (Jepperson *et al.*, 1996, p. 59). It is thus crucial for sociological constructivists to examine how a state identity, which in turn informs its interest and policy, are constructed, in relation to its cultural–institutional environment. In addition, from a structuralist perspective, sociological constructivism is interested in 'how *structures* of constructed meaning, embodied in norms and identities, affect what states do' (Jepperson *et al.*, 1996, p. 66). Yet, it should be note that the structures serve to produce permissive conditions for state action, rather than determine it.

This article accepts the sociological constructivist ontological assumption that 'states are ontologically prior to the states system, [and the] state is pre-social relative to other states in the same way that the human body is pre-social . . . systems of states presuppose states, and so *if* we want to analyze the structure of those systems we cannot "de-center" their elements all the way down' (Wendt, 1999, p. 198, 244). In his theoretical work, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt (1999, pp. 224–233) discusses four sorts of state identity: (1) corporate; (2) type; (3) role; and (4) collective. As Wendt (1999, p. 232) explains, 'the US cannot be a state without its monopoly on organized violence (corporate), a capitalist state without enforcing property rights (type), a hegemon without its clients (role), and a member of the West without its solidarity with other Western states (collective)'.[1]

Of these, this article focuses on the concept of collective identity to explore how South Korea's social relations with the United States and North Korea had been evolved during the Kim administration in the following section. According to Wendt (1999, p. 229), the collective identity is 'a distinct combination of role and type identities, one with the causal power to induce actors to define the welfare of the Other as part of that of the Self, to be "altruistic". Altruistic actors may still be rational, but the basis on which they calculate their interests in the group or "team."' In this sense, constructing collective identity is more external than internal, being tied to the process of positive or negative identification among states.

1 For a criticism of sociological constructivism's state-centric features, see Campbell (1998), Zehfuss (2001) and Callahan (2003).

Wendt's well-known typology of anarchical culture – Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian – implies the different level of collective identity among states. As such, the collective identity is the crucial intersubjective meanings that construct social fabric of international politics. This identity emerges from social interaction, and perhaps changes through social interactions in international relations. States interacting in a given culture come to know one another as the bearers of certain identities. When this happens, the states appeal to certain prospects as to each other's actions based on these identities (Wendt, 1999, pp. 318–343). In this respect, the collective identity subsumes reputation; having a particular collective identity is enough to supply the necessary diagnostic information about a state's likely behavior with reference to other states in particular cultures (Hopf, 1998, p. 190). In short, collective identity matters in international politics, since it informs not simply what states do and should be, but how states interpret other states' intention and action under anarchy.

Against this theoretical backdrop, as mentioned before, this article pays special attention to South Korea's collective identity formation, since it helps to explain contrasting the US North Korea policies' influence on South Korea's national security and Sunshine Policy, showing the process of South Korea's positioning of itself vis-à-vis the United States and North Korea. In this sense, to capture different pictures of South Korea's collective identity formation under different regional security environments, the following empirical section (Section 3) details the triangular interactions among the United States, South Korea, and North Korea during the Kim administration, while dividing the period of Kim into two: the Clinton administration period (1998–2000), on the one hand, the Bush administration period (2000–03), on the other. This temporal-comparative, detailed narrative traces the effects that the Clinton and Bush administration had on South Korea's relations with its core ally (America) and traditional enemy (North Korea), and the Sunshine Policy, revealing that South Korea's collective identity functioned as a critical link between its international environment and implementation of the Sunshine Policy. Section 4, then, offers a more sustained, in-depth analysis of Section 3's empirical treatment. This article will analytically present that, although South Korea–US relations appeared to be so congenial during Clinton's second term, the rift in traditional South Korea–US alliance identity against the North Korean threat was actually and paradoxically rooted in the Sunshine Policy and

Clinton's support for it. Here, the turn toward Bush's hard-line approach to North Korea made visible the hidden rift in the traditional South Korea–US alliance identity, though did not directly cause it. And, unlike the period of Clinton, South Korea's formation of collective identity was deeply unstable during Bush's first term. Under this circumstance, Seoul experienced great difficult in articulating and seeking its security interests between the United States and North Korea, and in dismantling Korea's Cold War which is the Sunshine Policy's foremost goal seemed to be untenable.

3 The two periods compared

3.1 The Clinton administration and the Sunshine Policy (1998–2000)

The Clinton policy toward the Korean Peninsula. Regarding President Kim's Sunshine Policy, the Clinton administration (WH, 1998, pp. 42–43) articulated its approach to the Korean Peninsula as follows:

> President Clinton expressed strong support for President Kim's vision of engagement and efforts toward reconciliation with the North. The United States is working to create conditions of stability by maintaining solidarity with our South Korean ally, . . . ensuring that an isolated and struggling North Korea does not opt for a military solution to its political and economic problems.

In line with this, the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (1998, p. 60) stated that the United States had sought 'to move North Korea toward a less belligerent and more open approach to the world', in partnership with South Korea, close consultation with Japan, and cooperation with China and others. Through this US stance toward the Korean Peninsula, what emerges here is the idea of a 'soft landing' approach to North Korea (Harrison, 1997). This idea assumes that, although skeptical of the North Korean regime, engagement is the realistic and rational option for preventing the rapid deterioration of military insecurity and the sudden collapse of North Korea: both cases may result in devastating outcomes in the region, such as large-scale refugee movements or the second Korean War, in which the United States should become involved. With these concerns in mind, the soft

landing approach aims to seek the gradual evolution of the North Korean regime accompanied by various economic and social reforms which help it to become a responsible member of the international community. Moreover, through the various engagement projects, North Korean reforms should closely be supported and monitored by governmental and non-governmental actors in the region (Bleiker, 2005, pp. 87–90).

In this respect, although the Clinton administration did not trust the North Korean regime to any great degree, it no longer regarded North Korea as an immutable threat per se, as during the Cold War era. In fact, Clinton's soft-landing approach and Kim's Sunshine Policy were functionally similar, both assuming that the North Korean regime could change from being a hostile rule-breaker to a less aggressive rule-abiding country. Plus, both policies sought not to demolish but reform North Korea through constructive engagement. In this sense, Seoul and Washington largely shared ideas about how to perceive and deal with Pyongyang under the Clinton administration, which considerably underpinned and consolidated a sense of 'one team', the alliance mentality between the United States and South Korea. In addition, Washington's soft-landing approach created favorable external conditions for Seoul's Sunshine Policy.

The apparent thawing of Korea's Cold War. On taking office in February 1998, President Kim actively promoted the Sunshine Policy to improve inter-Korean relations. Only 6 months later, however, the Korean Peninsula again encountered serious tensions between North Korea and its neighbors. In August 1998, *The New York Times*[2] and *The Washington Post*[3] revealed that North Korea might develop secret nuclear programs at the underground facility in Kumchangri, which was clearly interpreted as the violation of the US–North Korea Agreed Framework[4] that was designed to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis in 1994. Amid the growing skepticism about North Korea's

2 North Korea Site an A-Bomb Plant, U.S. Agencies Say, *New York Times*, 17 August 1998.

3 Activity Suggests North Koreans Building Secret Nuclear Site, *Washington Post*, 18 August 1998.

4 Available at http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/AgreedFramework.pdf (last accessed on 1 May 2006).

willingness to freeze its nuclear program, to make matters worse, on 31 August, 1998, North Korea fired a rocket into the North Pacific via the East Sea (the Sea of Japan) that the regional countries initially suspected to be a test-firing of the newly-developed medium-range Taepodong-1 ballistic missile. After firing the rocket, North Korea officially announced that it had successfully launched a satellite that was orbiting the earth. On 14 September, 1998, the US State and Defense spokespersons officially acknowledged that the firing was an abortive bid to send a satellite into orbit. Despite the fact that it was a not missile but a satellite, the perceived capabilities of the North Korean rocket, especially its range, immediately alarmed Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington (Oberdorfer, 2001, pp. 410–414; Cumings, 2004, pp. 76–89). More importantly, the North Korean rocket appeared to prove the validity of the *Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States*[5] (the so-called Rumsfeld report), published 6 weeks before the firing, which stressed the necessity of a national missile defense (NMD) plan. According to the report, 'North Korea ... poses a major threat to American interests, and potentially to the United States itself'. Although they took the North Korean rocket seriously, Kim and Clinton did not scrap the Agreed Framework and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)[6] project. If scrapped, North Korea would restart its nuclear activities without being bound by any international agreements. Moreover, the Clinton administration (DD, 1998, p. 23) saw 'a properly functioning Agreed Framework as the best vehicle available for ... creating an opening to pursue other issues of concern with the DPRK, such as missile and chemical weapons proliferation and the recovery of Korean War remains.'

However, due to the emerging North Korean missile issue and growing concerns over suspected nuclear facilities in Kumchangri, Clinton's North Korea policy became subject to severe criticism at home. In particular, the Republican-dominant Congress had always lambasted Clinton's engagement policy and the Agreed Framework since its signing in 1994. Hard-line opponents of the Clinton administration often

5 The Executive Summary of the Report available at http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/bm-threat.htm (last accessed on 9 May 2006).

6 In support of implementing the terms of the Agreed Framework, in March, 1995, the KEDO was forged by South Korea, the United States, and Japan. See http://www.kedo.org (last accessed on 1 May 2006).

insisted that Clinton's appeasement policy continued simply to pour money into North Korea, while succumbing to the North's nuclear blackmail (Oberdorfer, 2001, pp. 410–414). This situation compelled the Clinton administration to review its North Korea policy for the sake of achieving a greater consensus both at home and abroad. On 12 November 1998, following from the US Congress mandate, President Clinton appointed Dr. William Perry, former Secretary of Defense, as a special coordinator for policy toward North Korea. After the 8-month intensive policy review, on 12 October 1999, Perry issued a public version of the *Review of United States Policy toward North Korea*[7] (the so-called Perry report) to detail the United States' step-by-step measures for dealing with the North (Oberdorfer, 2001, pp. 418–423).

Here, it is necessary to look at the Perry report which directed a shift in the US policy toward North Korea. Focusing urgently on divesting North Korea of its nuclear weapons and long-range missile-related programs, the Perry report elaborated three points to be taken in any US policy toward North Korea: (1) albeit North Korea's terrible economic hardship, there is no evidence that the collapse of the regime is impending. The United States 'therefore must deal with the DPRK regime as it is, not as we would wish it to be';[8] (2) owing to the risk of a destructive war between all of stake-holders in the region, the United States is pursuing its goals with prudence and patience; and (3) despite its critics, the Agreed Framework has verifiably frozen the North Korean nuclear activities. The Agreed Framework is required to be supplemented, but the United States must not weaken or replace it. Taking these points into account, the essence of the Perry report is to offer Pyongyang a proposal with two alternative paths (Oberdorfer, 2001, pp. 418–423). The first path is completely to end the North's nuclear and missile programs in a step-by-step reciprocal manner, in exchange for full diplomatic relations with the United States, a progressive lifting of the US sanctions, and improved relations with South Korea and Japan. According to the Perry report, 'this path would lead to a stable security situation on the Korean Peninsula, creating the conditions for a more durable and lasting peace

7 Available at http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/991012_northkorea_rpt.html (last accessed on 10 May 2006).

8 Dr. Perry's testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 12 October 1999. See http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1999/991012_perry_nkorea.html (last accessed on 10 May 2006).

in the long run and ending the Cold War in East Asia',[9] which is identical to the objective of the Sunshine Policy. The second path is that, if North Korea continues to pursue nuclear and missile programs, the United States and its allies would take measures to improve their own security and containment of the North, augmenting the likelihood of confrontation.

As a matter of fact, the Perry report and the Sunshine Policy shared many ideas regarding North Korea and its problems. First, like the Sunshine Policy, the Perry report believed that North Korea wants nuclear and missile programs as a deterrence because of their fear of the strong and still hostile South Korea and America. This fear has served to deepen the security dilemma in Korea, as well as Northeast Asia. In this way, it is likely that North Korea will not stop pursuing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs, unless the North's sense of insecurity vis-à-vis its neighbors remarkably lessens. Here, the United States needs to test Pyongyang's willingness to abandon its missile and nuclear programs in return for some carrots. Second, the Perry report was aware of the importance of improving the US–North Korea relations in connection with other security matters in the region, by recognizing that various regional security issues – such as the inter-Korean reconciliation and Japanese kidnapping cases – 'should be, and would be, seriously addressed as relations between the DPRK and the U.S. improve'.[10] Subsequently, the success of the Sunshine Policy is closely linked to the future direction of the US–North Korea relations. Above all, regarding the Sunshine Policy, the Perry report stated that 'the views and insights of President Kim are central to accomplishing the US security objectives on the Korean peninsula. . . . Today's ROK policy of engagement creates conditions and opportunities for U.S. policy very different from those in 1994 [the first nuclear crisis]'.[11] It is thus assumed that, to a great extant, the Sunshine Policy shaped the US security policy crucial to the regional security culture in which South Korea had been embedded. In practice, the Sunshine Policy and the Perry report reinforced each other, in the sense that both counseled cooperative

9 See http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/991012_northkorea_rpt.html (last accessed on 10 May 2006).

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

engagement with the existing regimes, such as the Agreed Framework and the KEDO (Howard, 2004, pp. 819–819; Larson *et al.*, 2004, p. 27). This policy parallel helped to consolidate South Korea's traditional, positive collective identity with the United States, while both countries had concurrently dealt with North Korea in a coordinative way.

In the process of producing the Perry report, there had also been positive signs of the improved relations between the United States and North Korea. For example, regarding the suspected nuclear activities in Kumchangri, after five rounds and more than six months of negotiations between the United States and the North Korean officials, North Korea consented to allow an external investigation team to access its suspected nuclear site in exchange for economic aid from the United States. Accordingly, 14 US inspectors visited and discovered only an unfinished site with vast, empty tunnels during their 20–24 May 1999 inspection of Kumchangri. The US State Department, then, announced that the Kumchangri facilities had nothing to do with nuclear activities (Oberdorfer, 2001, pp. 410–414). Likewise, regarding the North Korean missile, on 12 September 1999, in talks with the United States in Berlin, North Korea tentatively consented to suspend its planned missile test-firing in exchange for a US pledge to lift the economic sanctions against North Korea. Five days later, the United States partially lifted those sanctions, allowing trade and investment as well as the entry of US aircraft and maritime vessels into North Korea. In response to this, on 25 September 1999, the North Korean Foreign Minister stated that the North will not test-fire a long-range missiles, while talks are underway with the United States to resolve the issues pending between the two countries.[12] This positive tit-for-tat made the first path of the Perry report more promising.

With the favorable conditions created by the Clinton administration, on 9 April 2000, President Kim announced that he would visit Pyongyang for the inter-Korean summit which was scheduled for 13–15 June 2000. In the context of the contemporary history of Korea, the summit was the most remarkable event, since it was initiated and implemented by the Koreans

12 North Korea Said to Agree to End Missile Tests, *New York Times*, 13 September 1999; North Korea Says It Will Halt Missile Tests during U.S. Talks, *New York Times*, 25 September 1999.

themselves without external intervention or great power sponsorship, perhaps projecting the view that inter-Korean relations can indeed take place on the dyadic level (Kim, 2004c, p. 4). The United States, however, had some concerns about the rapid progress in inter-Korean relations. First, it could restrain the US policy options, such as the coercive measures suggested by the second path of the Perry report. Second, the summit might divert attention away from North Korea's WMD issues and place the United States in the role of the 'bad cop'. More importantly, swift inter-Korean reconciliation may weaken the rationale of 37,000 US troops in South Korea, in which the United States could lose some of its substantial influences in the region, particularly against China (Lee, 2002, p. 567). Taking these US concerns into account, the Kim administration kept stressing the importance of South Korea–US security cooperation in the process of dealing with North Korea. Otherwise, without reforming its system and bellicose behavior, North Korea might attempt to drive a wedge between South Korea and the United States. In addition, the Kim administration reiterated that the continued presence of US troops in East Asia, including South Korea, is vital to the peace and stability in the region and is in both Korean and American interests (Kim, 2004b). In fact, one of the striking results of the summit was that, according to President Kim (Kim, 2004b, p. 149), Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader, showed his support for the continued presence of US forces in the Korean Peninsula even after reunification. Here, both Koreas would appear to believe that the US troops should remain in Korea with a view to playing a peacekeeping or stabilizing role in Northeast Asia. For the two Koreas, the United States is still the most reliable, benign, and distant power that they can accommodate in the region. Considering all of these factors, the Sunshine Policy 'constituted the first serious attempt in fifty years to achieve North-South reconciliation *within* the existing, American-shaped Northeast Asian security structure' (Cumings, 2005, p. 503). This also implies that South Korea significantly improved its long-term, antagonistic relations with North Korea, while securing the existing, positive South Korea–US collective identity.

As for the US foremost security concern, WMD, President Kim[13] made it clear that the removal of WMD and missiles from the Korean

13 President Kim Dae-Jung's Satellite Appearance on the *CNN World Report Conference* at the CNN Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 5 May 1999.

Peninsula 'is the heart of the task of dismantling the Cold-War structure . . . and the top priority for the construction of a peace structure'. Linking the objective of the Sunshine Policy with the US security concerns, Seoul intended to show that both the United States and South Korean national interests were in tune. Moreover, unlike past administrations in South Korea, the Kim administration did not insist that the United States and Japan must come to Pyongyang via Seoul. Rather, South Korea urged the United States to expand its direct contact with North Korea. In this case, resolving the various issues through face-to-face talks with North Korea, the United States can implant an image of being a 'good cop' in both Koreas. Furthermore, Seoul believed that, in the process of the direct talks between North Korea and the United States, Pyongyang could gradually feel relieved about their regime survival without the WMD and missile programs, gaining greater economic assistance and trust from the international community and avoiding excessive dependence on China (Lee, 2002; Kim, 2004b).

At this juncture, regarding South Koreans' perceptions of the North Korean threat, which has been directly related to the underpinning of the South Korea–US alliance, it is worth looking at the impact of the increased inter-Korean exchanges directed by the Sunshine Policy and the 2000 summit on South Korea. For South Koreans, the North Korean threat has been part of their daily lives and is nothing new (Kim, 2003). Yet, due largely to the ending of the Cold War, democratization, and globalization, South Koreans have grown tired of the pointless confrontation with North Koreans for the sake of gaining legitimacy on the Korean Peninsula. For South Koreans, unlike North Korea, their country has been a decent member of the international community so that South Korea's external sovereignty is firm and unquestionable. Furthermore, thanks to its rapid economic development, most South Koreans do not regard North Korea as a proper competitor in a globalizing world, and North Korea is gradually coming to be seen as an isolated, weak country.[14] For example, according to *Joong-Ang Ilbo*'s opinion poll in August 2000, shortly after the summit (quoted in Kim, 2004a, p. 588), only 4.6 percent of the general public in South Korea saw the North as an enemy, in contrast, 49.8 percent said that the North is an equal partner of the South, and 44 percent viewed the North as a

14 In South Korea, Softer Feelings toward the North, *New York Times*, 25 October 2006.

partner that the South should help. From this vantage point, many South Koreans no longer consider North Korea's threat as deriving from its military strength, even the threat of its WMD and missile programs. Instead, growing number of South Koreans regard the North's threat and hostile strategy as being derived from its weakness, such as the instability of its system and fears of absorption and, thus, the fear of the economic costs and results of the North's economic deterioration and possible collapse far more than the risk of a renewed conflict with the North (Choo, 2003, p. 44; Snyder, 2005, p. 104). In this sense, for the South Koreans, North Korea seems to be a burden rather than an arch enemy. Overall, South Korea's long-term, antagonistic collective identity with North Korea has no longer appeared to be as powerful as it was in the Cold War period.

Against this backdrop, the Sunshine Policy and the inter-Korean summit facilitated South Koreans' strong desire to end the unnecessary inter-Korean confrontation and increase inter-Korean economic cooperation, from which both Koreas can benefit (ICG, 2004). More importantly, the Sunshine Policy and the inter-Korean summit resulted in expanding the peaceful inter-Korean exchanges, thereby enhancing the sense of brotherhood with North Koreans in need, which means that the South's collective identity in negative relation to the North took a positive turn for deepening inter-Korean reconciliation (Han, 2000–01; Suh, 2004, pp. 161–162). South Korea President Kim' speech (Kim, 2004b, pp. 129, 135–136) on returning home from the inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang on 15 June 2000, articulated the idea of an almost essentialized Korean-ness, as follows:

> The Pyongyang people are the same as us, the same nation sharing the same blood. . . . Korea is one country with one ethnic family. . . . We must consider North Koreans as our brothers and sisters. . . . treat North Korea under that assumption that there is no longer going to be any war, that we will not tolerate any unification attempt by force and, at the same time, will do no harm to the North.

From this overall perspective, many South Koreans, especially the post-Korean War generations, consisted of 80% of the population in the South, begun to view North Koreans as poor little brothers and sisters in need of the big brother's (South Korea's) help under the Kim administration. These South Korean feelings have provided an impetus to the

already emerging Korean nationalism based on a strong sense of ethnic unity against the external great powers (Kim, 2003, 2004a; Linton, 2004). Overall, the North Korean regime still poses a threat to South Korea; nevertheless, an increasing number of South Koreans have sympathized with poor North Koreans.

Meanwhile, after the inter-Korean summit in June 2000, there followed substantial progress in US–North Korea relations. On 9–12 October 2000, the North Korean Vice Marshal, Jo Myong Rok, the second most important person in the North and a top-level military figure, visited Washington to discuss the security issues of both countries with President Clinton and the Secretaries of State and Defense. In the Oval Office, on giving President Clinton a letter from his leader Kim Jong Il, Vice Marshal Jo verbally explained his objective in visiting Washington: to invite President Clinton to visit Pyongyang to resolve the differences between the United States and North Korea in a personal dialogue with Kim Jong Il. In response, President Clinton proposed to send Secretary of State Albright first to gauge the possibility of visiting Pyongyang, within his term, of which only 3 months remained (Oberdorfer, 2001, pp. 435–437). After the meeting, the *U.S.–DPRK Joint Communique*[15] was released. According to the Communique, recognizing the changed security environment on the Korean Peninsula created by the historic inter-Korean summit, both governments decided to take steps essentially to enhance their bilateral relations in order to improve the peace and security in Northeast Asia. Crucially, the Communique declared that 'neither government would have hostile intent toward the other . . . [US-North Korea] relations should be based on the principles of respect for each other's sovereignty.'

On 23 October 2000, the US Secretary of State Albright made a historic visit to North Korea, laying the foundation for a possible visit to Pyongyang by President Clinton. Regarding one of the US's primary security concerns – the North's missile programme, according to Albright, during her press conference in Pyongyang[16] – she and Kim Jong Il attended a mass performance, and, when a picture of a rocket launch appeared before the audience, Kim Jong Il turned to Albright and quipped

15 See http://www.armscontrol.org/Events/commique.asp (last accessed on 13 May 2006).

16 See http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/2000/001024b.html (last accessed on 13 May 2006).

that 'this was the first satellite and it would be the last'. Additionally, unlike the conventional negative perceptions of Kim Jong Il as an irrational, freakish, and insane figure, after their meeting, Albright described him as a rational, pragmatic, and decisive listener and interlocutor.[17] Albright finally asked President Clinton to visit Pyongyang during his remaining term of office. Despite this, Clinton decided not to visit Pyongyang due to the lack of time to prepare and to avoid constraining the options of a possible Republican successor (Harrison, 2002, p. 229).

To sum up, during the Clinton administration, there was significant progress in both inter-Korean relations and the US–North Korean relations in parallel. South Korea–US relations had also been sound as well as solid. It thus appeared that South Korea improved its negative collective identity with North Korea while securing its positive collective identity with America. Korea's Cold War apparently became phased out on the Peninsula, thus indicating that the Sunshine Policy looked be successful with the US Perry process.

3.2 The Bush administration and the Sunshine Policy (2001–2003)

The Bush policy toward the Korean Peninsula. In its presidential campaign in 2000, the Bush administration showed a wide-ranging critique of Clinton's foreign policy, called an ABC ('anything but Clinton') set of policies (Lieberthal, 2002). For example, the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (2000, p. 60) once pronounced that 'the evil twin [North Korea] of a successful [South Korean] regime just across its border'. Above all, President Bush defined North Korea as an 'axis of evil' in his 2002 State of Union address. Although North Korea has not engaged in any single terrorist plot since 1988, in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (WH, 2003), the United States pointed to North Korea as a state that sponsors global terrorism – a rogue state. All of these renderings had moved North Korea into the realm of irrationality and insanity, which often detered a diplomatic give-and-take approach to North Korea and had predisposed the US policy planners to take coercive measures against North Korea (Bleiker, 2005, p. 54;

17 See Ibid. and http://fas.org/news/dprk/2000/dprk-001102zss.htm (last accessed on 13 May 2006).

Sigal, 2005a). The above approach to North Korea, based on a kind of 'moral absolutism' (good versus evil, civilization versus barbarism), barely corresponds with both the Sunshine Policy and Clinton's soft-landing policy, whose approaches regarded North Korea as a rational actor (Moon and Bae, 2003).

Subsequently, to punish its evil other, North Korea, during its first term, the Bush administration felt compelled to take unilateral and offensive actions, such as the economic sanctions and pre-emptive military operations. For instance, the 2002 edition of *OPLAN (Operation Plan) 5027*[18] revealed that the United States can possibly carry out a pre-emptive military attack on North Korea. During its first term, the Bush administration ideologically opposed the plan of supplying material incentives that would help to prolong the North Korean regime in return for denuclearization, treating the Agreed Framework and the US–North Korea Joint Communique as petty and breakable. Furthermore, it has been said that the Bush administration had a strong intention to bring out regime change in North Korea by all possible means (Choo, 2003; Gregg, 2003). For instance, a US intelligence official who attended White House meetings in 2002 mentioned (quoted in Cha and Kang, 2003, p. 135) that 'Bush and Cheney want this guy's [Kim Jong-Il's] head on a platter. Don't be distracted by all this talk about negotiations. . . . They have a plan, and they are going to get this guy after Iraq'. Again, this hard-line stance substantially differs from the Sunshine Policy, which is aimed at regime reform in the North. It thus appeared evident that Bush's hard-line policy toward North Korea had been in great discord with Kim's Sunshine Policy. This means that Seoul and Washington hardly shared ideas about how to perceive and deal with North Korea, which, in turn, negatively affected the sense of their being 'one team' between the two allies. In addition, Washington's hard-line stance toward North Korea created unfavorable external conditions for Seoul's Sunshine Policy.

The staying power of Korea's Cold War. From the start of the Bush administration in January 2001 to the end of the Kim administration in February 2003, three critical stages can broadly be identified in the

18 This is the US–ROK Combined Forces Command Basic Warplan produced mainly by the US government. See http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oplan-5027.htm (last accessed on 10 April 2006).

social interactions between South Korea and the United States, with reference to the North Korean problem. The first was the first summit meeting between President Kim and President Bush in early March 2001, just 6 weeks after Bush's inauguration. Kim's main reason for hurrying to visit Washington was to persuade Bush to follow Clinton's ways of dealing with North Korea while the new US administration was in its malleable early period. Additionally, in visiting Washington in the very early stages of the Bush administration, Seoul wanted to send a strong message to Pyongyang that the South Korea–US alliance was firm and strong (Hwang, 2002, p. 316; Olsen, 2002). Initially, as President Kim arrived in Washington, the new Secretary of State Powell told reporters that he would proceed with the negotiations with Pyongyang on the issues of ballistic missiles that had come to a standstill during the final months of the Clinton administration. Shortly afterwards, he had to backtrack because of the hard-liners' criticism in the White House. Bush's hard-liners were worrying that Powell's statement could weaken the new administration's robust drive for the NMD project (Oberdorfer, 2002, 10–11; Olsen, 2002). During and after the summit, simply by giving his nominal support to the Sunshine Policy, President Bush made it clear that he did not like North Korea and distrusted its leader. At that time, it appeared obvious that Bush did not have a high level of interest in engagement with Pyongyang. In line with President Bush, Powell added, outside the Oval office, that the United States would 'not be naïve about the nature of the [North Korean] threat,' and that 'imminent negotiations' between Washington and Pyongyang would not take place[19] (Harnisch, 2002, pp. 865–866; Oberdorfer, 2002, pp. 10–11).

Accordingly, it has generally been assumed that the Kim–Bush summit reflected the divergent views between the two close allies regarding North Korea: Kim's peace-regime-oriented approach conflicted squarely with Bush's security-oriented policy. Far from shaping Bush's North Korea policy in its early stage, after the summit, Kim left feeling forlorn and humiliated, and many South Koreans felt the same (Kim, 2003, p. 4), a situation which was depicted by the media (quoted in Olsen, 2002, p. 166) as follows: 'Bush Rains on Kim's "Sunshine"', 'The new American President . . . cut out Kim's heart', and 'America has thrown cold water over the North-South rapprochement'. In this respect,

19 Bush Tells Seoul Talks with North Won't Resume Now, *New York Times*, 8 March 2001.

the first Kim–Bush summit was described as a 'diplomatic disaster' by any standard, which changed the tenor of South Korea–US relations overnight (Cumings, 2004, p. 86). Since North Korea had expected the Kim–Bush summit to construct a milieu favorable for further improving its relations with the United States after the Clinton administration, the North abruptly called off a Cabinet-level meeting with the South as a gesture of protest (Harrison, 2002, p. 90). This seemed to prove Seoul's idea that Pyongyang would significantly improve its relations with the South only if the US–North Korea relations made parallel progress.

The second stage was the Bush administration's review of the US policy toward North Korea, revealed in June 2001.[20] The outcome of the review reiterated the main points during the Kim–Bush summit in March. The Bush administration would support the Sunshine Policy – albeit by paying lip-service to it – and seek its own serious talks with North Korea, but its method would be more guarded than the Sunshine Policy. In its policy review, the Bush administration said that it would pursue 'an open, unconditional, and enhanced dialogue with North Korea' while not scrapping or renegotiating the Agreed Framework (Larson *et al*., 2004, pp. 31–32), but such a dialogue would be pursued in the context of a 'comprehensive approach' contrived to deal with a 'broad agenda' of concerns, such as the 'improved implementation of the Agreed Framework relating to North Korea's nuclear activities; verifiable constraints on North Korea's missile programs and a ban on its missile exports; and a less threatening conventional military posture'.[21] In presenting the comprehensive package deal, the Bush administration pitted itself in a 'take-it-or-leave-it' negotiating position against North Korea (Harnisch, 2002, p. 868). In response, Pyongyang accused Bush's policy review of containing unilateral and hostile conditions for North Korea. The North, then, called on Washington to implement the Agreed Framework and the US–DPRK Joint Communique 'as agreed upon' (quoted in Cha and Kang, 2003, p. 140).

Regarding the Bush administration's policy review, on the one hand, Seoul was relieved because Washington decided to continue to pursue talks

20 See *Statement by the President*. Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/06/20010611-4.html (last accessed on 15 April 2006).

21 Ibid.

with Pyongyang. On the other hand, Seoul worried about the US insistence on broadening the agenda, especially regarding conventional arms. As for this issue, President Kim, at the March summit, proposed that the United States should focus on North Korea's WMD and missile programs, while South Korea focuses on the North's conventional arms, like the period of the Clinton administration (Lee, 2003, pp. 239–240). Seoul's reason for suggesting this proposal was that, considering the 37,000 US troops in the South and the North's military inferiority, Pyongyang would not let up its conventional, combative military posture without a security guarantee from both Seoul and Washington. Therefore, implementing a conventional arms reduction presupposes a high level of trust between the South Korea–US alliance and North Korea requires more time and greater efforts. In this respect, when comprehensively addressing the North Korean problems, the conventional arms issue can block the whole talks between the United States and North Korea, which, in turn, recalls the vestige of the Cold War in Korea. In addition, many considered the US emphasis on the improved implementation of the Agreed Framework and an intrusive missile verification regime as tacit criticisms of the Sunshine Policy, and suspected that the United States intended to slow down inter-Korean reconciliation in the interests of not blurring the WMD issue and of being at the helm in the region (Larson *et al.*, 2004, p. 32; Kihl, 2005, p. 256). Combined with the first stage, the second stage gave South Koreans an impression that the role of South Korea on the Peninsula loomed large offstage, and the United States again appeared to want South Korea to remain its client state, as in the Cold War period.

The third stage was the aftermath of the US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly's visit to North Korea in October 2002. Immediately on his return from Pyongyang, Kelly startled the regional countries by stating that Kang Sok Joo, First Vice Foreign Minister of North Korea, had admitted the North's highly-enriched uranium (HEU) program. Yet, North Korea officially denied Kelly's remark, and accused the United States of fabricating it. According to North Korea, Kang Sok Joo did not admit the existence of a nuclear program in progress. Rather, Kang Sok Joo simply emphasized North Korea's sovereign entitlement to possess nuclear weapons in front of Kelly, who highhandedly exhorted North Korea to meet the US unilateral demands unconditionally if the North wanted to improve relations with the regional countries (Pollack, 2003; McCormack, 2004, pp. 160–164; Sigal, 2005b).

Despite the high level of ambiguity about North Korea's secret nuclear program in progress, the North's possible HEU program has again emerged as a bone of contention in the region, suggesting that Pyongyang has been seeking nuclear weapons and so clearly violating the Agreed Framework. Afterwards, under pressure from the United States, on 16 November 2002, the KEDO decided to suspend the annual supply of 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil to North Korea. In retaliation to this, arguing that it had not violated the Agreed Framework, North Korea removed monitoring devices at the reactor facilities in Yongbyon on 22 December. North Korea also moved 1,000 fresh fuel rods to the plant on 26 December and, 4 days later, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors were expelled from the North. On 29 December, *The New York Times*[22] reported that the Bush administration would prepare a strategy of 'tailored containment' to put maximum economic and diplomatic pressure on North Korea in order to make the North abandon its nuclear ambition (although it was scrapped soon afterwards due to the virtual lack of support from regional countries). Meanwhile, the United States sent 24 long-range bombers to Guam as well as 6 D-117 stealth aircraft and at least 10 further F-15 warplanes to South Korea. The US Secretary of State Powell (quoted in Sigal, 2005b) in February 2003 stated that 'no military option has been taken off the table, although we have no intention of attacking North Korea as a nation'. For its part, if attacked, North Korea pledged to retaliate against the United States and South Korea without hesitation. In February, North Korea further withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and reactivated the 5MWe reactor. On 9 February, *The Stars and Stripes*, [23] a US army newspaper, reported that the US–South Korean combined forces would almost certainly win against the North, while the initial North Korean attack on the South 'would be a hellacious environment'. It appeared that neither was willing to budge, and the situation had turned a deadlock into a crisis (Feffer, 2003, pp. 11–15; Lee and Moon, 2003, p. 137; Lee, 2003, pp. 261–271).

In order to see the relationship between South Korea's ideas and those of the United States, it is here necessary to explore the views of

22 Threats and Responses: Asian Arena; U.S. Readies Plan to Raise Pressure on North Koreans, *New York Times*, 29 December 2002.

23 North Korea Attack on South Would be Lethal, *Stars and Stripes*, 9 February 2003.

Washington and Seoul regarding how best to cope with the second nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. This also allows us to read what happened to South Korea's collective identity with the United States, in comparison with Clinton's period. Since the crisis began in October 2002, North Korean senior officials have publicly argued for its willingness peacefully to resolve all US security concerns through a bilateral dialogue with the United States, if the Bush administration abandons its hostile policy toward North Korea (Cha and Kang, 2003, pp. 142–144). However, clearly rejecting this offer, the Bush administration initially adopted a crime-and-punishment approach. According to this view, North Korea committed a crime by breaching the Agreed Framework, so the North should correct its bad behavior proactively. If not, North Korea should be subject to severe punishment from the United States and its allies. Therefore, for the Bush administration, negotiations with Pyongyang were seemingly unacceptable until the end of its first term: according to a US State Department spokesman in December 2002, 'We will not bargain or offer inducements for North Korea to live up to the treaties and agreements it has signed'.[24] In this respect, what the Bush administration claims was that North Korea must dismantle its all of existing nuclear programs completely, verifiably, and irreversibly, without hesitation. Only then will the United States consider whether or not to negotiate with North Korea, which was the basic stance of the Bush administration's first term (Lee and Moon, 2003, pp. 137–138; Moon, 2004, pp. 53–54; Sigal, 2005b).

This US approach has become softened in tone, through the concept of 'hawk engagement',[25] which was designed to build 'a coalition for punishment' unless North Korea meets the US unilateral demands (Cha, 2003, p. 96). In other words, by first forming a multilateral forum and then suggesting an almost unacceptable proposal to North Korea, the purpose of engaging (or negotiating) with the North is not to resolve the conflict but to produce a multilateral foundation for sanctions or military action in the future (Elich, 2004). On this coercive basis, the Bush administration had been advocating the resolution of the North Korean

24 Rumsfeld Gets Touch on North Korea, *Guardian*, 24 December 2002.

25 Victor D. Cha, politics scholar in Georgetown University, devised the concept. He served as Asian Director in the National Security Council of the Bush administration from 2004 to 2007.

nuclear issue through 'dialogue' and 'diplomacy' in cooperation with the regional countries. In so doing, the US–North Korea bilateral talks should be avoided, because these themselves can be regarded as a reward for the North's bad behavior, and may be seen as the United States recognizing North Korea's legitimacy as a sovereign state.

In response, although South Korea agreed that North Korea's WMD program must eventually be dismantled, they were perplexed by the Bush administration's accusation of North Korea's secret nuclear program. First, the United States itself did not sincerely comply with the terms of the Agreed Framework: for example, the non-delivery of a light-water reactor (LWR) by 2003, the premature demand for an obligatory inspection of the nuclear facilities that should have occurred only after the delivery of key components of LWR, the US nuclear threat to North Korea in its official documents, and US unwillingness to make progress in the normalization of relations with North Korea (Cha and Kang, 2003, pp. 136–139; Moon and Bae, 2003, p. 13). Second, simply considering the verbal exchanges between Kelly and Kang Sok Joo, it was unclear whether North Korea had implemented the HEU program after signing the Agreed Framework. As a good ally, South Korea felt compelled to take the US claim at face value. Yet, the Bush administration could not show any convincing evidence of North Korea's HEU program (Elich, 2004; Harrison, 2005, 2006). It thus seemed to Seoul that Washington established Kang Sok Joo's ambiguous remarks as fact on the ground without requiring appropriate verification, and then pushed the entire situation toward a crisis. Moreover, the unilateral and hard-line US approach based on the feeble proof was likely to invite North Korea's infamous brinkmanship. Subsequently, regardless of South Korea's will, the Korean Peninsula became unstable and insecure, and South Korea's effort to dismantle the Cold War structure was likely to prove fruitless.

Combined with its bafflement of the US accusation of North Korea's HEU program, South Korea was worried that an aggressive pursuit of the US crime-and-punishment approach[26] might push North Korea into

26 According to the *U.S. News and World Report*'s article, 'Upping the Ante for Kim Jong Il: Pentagon Plan 5030, a New Blueprint for Facing down North Korea', on 21 July 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld ordered the U.S. military commanders to create a new war plan, known as *Operation Plan (OPLAN) 5030*, the elements of which are 'so aggressive that they could provoke a war'.

a tight corner and provoke it into making a rash reaction.[27] The result of this would be devastating for not only North Korea but also South Korea. For Seoul, the right response of the South Korea–US alliance is thus to deter North Korea's high-risk actions, but also to provide other exits. Averting war is the foremost security priority of the South Koreans (Choo, 2003). For this reason, during the Bush administration's first term, the South Koreans were at a loss and ruffled feathers whenever the Bush administration referred to military options for changing the regime in North Korea. Related to this, Snyder (2005, p. 105), who represented the Asia Foundation in Seoul from 2000 to 2004, pinpoints the feelings of most South Koreans regarding the Bush administration's North Korea policy as follows:

> One of the greatest sources of frustration within South Korea, especially when tensions escalate, is the relative lack of independent options or leverage available. The South Korean public's desire to see tensions between the United States and North Korea resolved and the perception that the Bush administration has been excessively and needlessly provocative in its hard line toward North Korea, which could entrap South Korea in a potential conflict rather than enhance its stability, exacerbate this problem.

In this sense, during its first term, the Bush administration appeared unilaterally to seek its national interests, such as the non-proliferation of WMD at the expense of her 50-year loyal ally's (South Korea's) national interests. This public perception enhanced the growing anti-American (more correctly, anti-Bush administration) sentiment in South Korea, which, in turn, weakened the alliance between South Korea and the United States (Choo, 2003; Woo-Cumings, 2005). In addition, the US possible hard-line methods of dealing with North Korea reinforced the South Korean fear of conflict escalation leading to a possible war, which, in turn, helped to form a warmonger image of the United States, impeding inter-Korean reconciliation (Moon, 2004, p. 54). For instance, in the past, South Koreans generally showed that their strong public support

27 On 6 February 2003, in a BBC interview, Ri Pyong Gap, Deputy Director of the North Korean Foreign Ministry, warned, 'A preemptive attack is not something only the United States can do. We can also do that when it is a matter of life and death' (Quoted in Sigal, 2005b).

for the South Korea–US alliance increased whenever North Korea caused security problems. In 2002, despite the exacerbating North Korea's nuclear issue, far from any signs of supporting the alliance, anti-American sentiment became pervasive in South Korea, ratchetting up with other incidents of the same year, such as the tragic death of the two schoolgirls by a US military vehicle and the semi-forced acquisition of out-of-date American warplanes (Lee and Jeong, 2003). According to Callup Korea Survey conducted in December, 2002 (quoted in Kim, 2003, p. 2), compared with 37 percent of South Korean respondents negative of North Korea, more than 53 percent had a negative image of the United States, up from 15 percent in 1994. In particular, the survey revealed that 76 percent of the 20s and 67 percent of the 30s showed negative attitudes toward America, and only 56 percent of respondents wanted to maintain the South Korea–US alliance, down from 89 percent in 1999. During Bush's first term, South Korea's collective identity with the United States was not as seemingly positive as during Clinton's second period. Rather, it appeared to become contested.

In addition, the United States, as an impeder of improving inter-Korean relations, became an obvious target of Korean nationalism linked with anti-Americanism. This nationalism, then, tends to encourage the South Koreans to seek to improve relations with North Korea on their own, particularly if South Koreans regard the United States as purposely attempting to keep them divided from their national brethren across the 38th parallel (Kim, 2004c, p. 17). In a similar vein, through the lenses of Korean nationalism accompanied by anti-Americanism, the entire Korean Peninsula has been 'a pawn in America's projection of power in East Asia and the world. This affronts Korea's sense of ethnicity, pride in its accomplishments, and self-perception as a small nation whose sovereignty has been repeatedly violated by its more powerful neighbors throughout it history' (Linton, 2004, p. 13). As might be expected, this version of Korean nationalism is difficult to align with the existing, and still powerful, discourse of the South Korea–US alliance in a negative relationship to North Korea. In reality, since Bush took office in 2001, in South Korea, there has been serious tension between those who support the South Korea–US alliance and those who support the inter-Korean reconciliation. More specifically, although these two camps have often been in opposition, Bush's security policy and practices have made South Korea's domestic friction more explicit and intensified. It

has thus appeared in South Korea that one cannot be both pro-American and pro-North Korean at the same time until recently.

To sum up, during the Bush administration, the US–North Korean relations returned to the pattern of the Cold War structure. Associated with this, inter-Korean relations appeared to make little progress. South Korea–US relations had also appeared to be cacophonous. It has been suggested that the South became trapped between its most important ally (the United States) and brother over the 38th parallel (the North), and Seoul barely achieved the Sunshine Policy's main objective – to dismantle the Cold War structure.

4 South Korea's collective identity formation and the Sunshine Policy

Based on the detailed narrative in the previous section, this section presents two analytical arguments on the formation of South Korea's collective identity associated with the Sunshine Policy, along with an IR theoretical argument implicated in the empirical analysis. The first analytical argument is as follows: the South Korean–the US collective actions of engagement toward North Korea have begun to erode their traditional alliance identity against North Korea and have encouraged the latent Korean nationalism embracing North Korea. In spite of this, in South Korea, there was no serious friction between these two seemingly conflicting identities during the Clinton administration. Rather, there was a delicate, stable balance and even harmony between South Korea–US alliance identity and inter-Korean national identity. To put it more specifically, Kim–Clinton's well-coordinated efforts to engage with North Korea improved inter-Korean relations, which has, in turn, contributed to increasing the South Korean sense of 'we-feeling' in relation to North Korea. This growing identification has begun to erode South Korea's traditional, solid collective identity with the United States, because the South Korea–US alliance identity has been firmly based on the common perception of threat from North Korea since the Korean War (1950–53). Over the last five decades, for South Korea, explicitly claiming the anti-communist ideology and adopting American priorities, such as liberal democracy and free-market economy, the robust alliance bond with the United States has become a core part of its state identity. The alliance identity has been unquestionable until relatively recently.

Considering all of these factors, the irony is that Kim–Clinton's sound teamwork in addressing the existing North Korean threat, in fact, weakened the long-term foundation of their alliance identity pitted against the common threat, North Korea, while providing a good condition for lifting up Korean Peninsular pan-nationalism. In this sense, Clinton's engagement policy as South Korea's important external environment caused variation in the character of South Korea's statehood vis-à-vis the United States and North Korea within the existing American-shaped East Asian security structure. This is not to say that South Korea was purely structure-receptive but the international security environment largely helped (or empowered) South Korea to implement the Sunshine Policy that has increased the South's positive identification with the North.

In addition, given the above irony, it is probable that the more South Korea and the United States collectively pursue their engagement policies toward North Korea, the more South Korea–US firm alliance identity is unstable or requires modification. During the Clinton administration, however, South Korea's collective identity with the United States (the alliance identity) was stable for the following reasons. First, Seoul and Washington extensively shared ideas about how to perceive and deal with the North Korean problem. These shared ideas supported the sense of one team between Seoul and Washington. Without a certain level of shared ideas, there will be a lack of solidarity among the intentional actors within a given social system. Second, the improved US–North Korean relations produced an image of the United States as a peace-maker on the Korean Peninsula. This image of United States scarcely conflicted with the growing Korean nationalism. During Clinton's period, these two points in part provided South Korea with the conditions for the stable coexistence of two seemingly conflicting identities (the alliance identity versus Korean nationalism), by treating the United States as a reliable peace-keeper in the region and North Korea as the same, but poor Korean nation who is in need of the South's help. Note that South Korea's collective identity in the region was constantly negotiated during the Clinton administration, even if the processes were sufficiently stable and the national interests informed by the changing collective identity appeared to be self-evident.

The second analytical argument is that, due largely to a turnabout in the international security environment that began with the Bush

administration in 2001, South Korea's collective identity has became deeply contested between (1) the alliance security bond with the United States and (2) the nationalist bond with North Korea. Moreover, this contested identity under the changed external environment made it difficult for South Korea to define its national interests neatly and also made the Sunshine Policy appear untenable during Bush's first term. Distancing itself from Clinton, the Bush administration's ideas of North Korea redefined the meaning and content of the US power, the strategy by which the United States pursued their interests, and US national interests themselves in Northeast Asia. Because of this, there was a sharp reduction in the distribution of shared ideas between Kim and Bush, with reference to how to perceive and deal with North Korea. For the Bush administration, particularly after 9/11, the crucial security concern had been completely, verifiably, and irreversibly to dismantle the WMD program and to prevent North Korea from passing on WMD to terrorists. To achieve this goal, during its first term, the Bush administration tended to believe that the fundamental solution is regime change in North Korea, rather than a negotiated dismantling of the WMD program in the North using a give-and-take approach. At this juncture, most South Koreans were really worried that 'the American [Bush's] approach could well lead to war or the collapse of North Korea, either of which, they believe, would decimate everything South Korea has built in recent years' (Abramowitz and Bosworth, 2003, p. 123). In this sense, paradoxically, the United States, who has been a guarantor of South Korea's security since the Korean War, emerged as a major source of insecurity in South Korean mind-sets: South Korea's staunch ally, the United States, could pose a threat to South Korea's national security. Hence, unlike the Clinton period, Seoul found it challenging to think of themselves as working in a team with the Washington, which implies the faltering of South Korea's long-term alliance partnership with America.

Above all, the glue of the South Korea–US alliance, the common threat perception from North Korea, began to lose some of its binding power as inter-Korean relations improved and as Seoul and Washington pursued different (or incompatible) policies toward North Korea (Oberdorfer, 2002). And, for the South Koreans, a long-term image of the United States as a security guarantor and ally against the North Korean threat simultaneously clashed with the growing image of the United States as an impeder of inter-Korean reconciliation. Here, in

South Korea, Bush's hard-line policy toward North Korea has caused deep disagreement between those who support the idea of embracing their Northern brothers and those who call for an amelioration of the security alliance with the United States against Pyongyang (Kim, 2003). This is not to say that the Bush administration fully forged the schism in South Korea, but they deepened and clearly disclosed the dormant internal conflict in the South. The two opposite groups in South Korea have different sets of national interests: Korean nationalists argue for peace and unification while the proponents of the South Korea–US alliance argue for stability and security. In this respect, pro-America means anti-North Korea, and vice versa. Moreover, regarding how to perceive and deal with North Korea, the gap between the two conflicting groups has been difficult to lessen (IFES, 2004).

Under the circumstances, South Korean society has badly polarized according to one's ideology (Hahm, 2005), and one feels at times compelled to choose either side. Related to this, South Korea's collective identity in the region has seriously become contested since the start of the Bush administration in 2001. It is in this context that, when articulating and seeking its national interests, the Kim administration was caught on the two horns of a dilemma, seeking to dismantle the Cold War structure by alleviating tension between the United States and North Korea, on the one hand, while trying to cater to US interests in standing with the Bush administration in favor of securing an alliance on the other. Having great difficulty in finding a compromise vis-à-vis the different domestic and international actors, it was difficult for the Kim administration to define its national interests neatly. It thus seemed that the national interests were no longer taken for granted, as they had been in the Cold War period. During Bush's first term, the Kim administration failed to resolve the above dilemma on its own. Furthermore, contested South Korea's collective identity and the changed external environment made the Sunshine Policy appear untenable. In this respect, South Korea's collective identity and national interests have socially been constructed by the particular way in which South Korea interacts with the other regional actors, particularly the United States.

Theoretically, this section's two analytical, empirical arguments highlight the lacuna of realism in IR. Realism points out that, although the core of interests may consist in an identity, the boundaries of the Self do not change as often as the constructivists suggest. Hence, it is less

problematic for IR students to treat interests as fixed (Mearsheimer, 1994). As this section has shown, however, the boundaries of South Korea as the Self have been at stake and therefore have changed in interaction, so that, in interacting, South Korea has witnessed variations in its collective identity with the United States and North Korea. This also reveals that South Korea as an actor is deeply social rather than simply atomistically egoistic, in the sense that its identity has been shaped by cultural or institutional elements of the security environment. Furthermore, as the second analytical argument has vividly shown, South Korea's contested collective identity informed by a shift in the external environment has had on its national interests and Sunshine Policy in a way to get South Korea stranded in between alliance and nationalism. All of this considered, South Korea's national interests are not pre-determined prior to its social interaction with other countries. Rather, they are endogenous to such interaction, and changeable according to identity variation. Hence, the national interest itself needs to be explained, rather than being merely seen as an explanatory variable, as realists often do.

5 Conclusion

Focusing on the Clinton and Bush administration's security policies and practices toward the Korean Peninsula, this article has shown the ways in which international factors affected the configuration of South Korea's collective identity associated with the Sunshine Policy during the Kim administration (1998–2003). It has been argued that the rift in traditional South Korea–US alliance identity against the North Korean threat was actually and paradoxically rooted in the Sunshine Policy and Clinton's support for it. This is the case because this engagement policy constellation played a key role in encouraging inter-Korean national identity that has lifted up a 'we-feeling' between the two Koreas. Yet, during the Clinton administration, there was a delicate, stable balance and even harmony between two seemingly conflicting identities – the alliance identity against North Korea versus Korean nationalism embracing North Korea – for the following reasons. First, Kim and Clinton extensively shared ideas about how to perceive and deal with North Korea. Second, the United States was seen as a facilitator of the inter-Korean reconciliation in South Korea.

Despite initial parallels between Clinton's engagement with North Korea and Kim's Sunshine Policy, South Korea's and the US policies began to diverge with the inauguration of the Bush administration, which, in turn, negatively affected the sense of their being 'one team' between the two staunch allies in dealing with North Korea. Indeed, the turn toward Bush's hard-line approach to North Korea made visible the hidden rift in the traditional South Korea–US alliance identity against North Korea, though did not directly cause it. Moreover, as Bush's aggressive approach was perceived as detrimental to South Korea's national security and inter-Korean reconciliation, the United States (South Korea's long-term security guarantor) ironically became a major source of insecurity in South Korean mind-sets. Against this backdrop, it has been argued that, during Bush's first term, South Korea's collective identity was deeply contested between: (1) the alliance security bond with the United States and (2) the nationalist bond with North Korea, which means that South Korean society has become badly polarized, according to one's ideology. In this context, the Kim administration experienced great difficult in articulating and seeking its national interests between the United States and North Korea. Under the changed external environment, polarized South Korean society made the Sunshine Policy appear untenable.

This empirical analysis has revealed that the boundaries of South Korea as the Self have been at stake and therefore have changed in interaction, so that, in interacting, South Korea has witnessed variations in its collective identity with the United States and North Korea. South Korea's collective identity is thus in perpetual process, and so are its national interests affecting security policy in the region. Subsequently, South Korea's national interest itself needs to be explained in relation to its collective identity formation under certain cultural–institutional environments, rather than being merely seen as an explanatory variable of its action. Moreover, the evolving formation of South Korea's collective identity in the post-Cold War era of globalization may continue to have on not only inter-Korean relations but also its relations with regional countries. In a similar vein, arguably, South Korea's collective identity is closely tied to its foreign and unification policy outlook; therefore, South Korea's collective identity formation should be considered to have important policy implications.

Acknowledgments

Earlier drafts of this article were presented at the 20th 2006 IPSA World Congress in Fukuoka and the 48th 2007 ISA Annual Convention in Chicago. I would like to thank William A. Callahan, Dennis Florig, and Ted Hopf for their critical, constructive comments on earlier drafts of this article. I also wish to thank two anonymous reviewers of IRAP for their incisive, insightful comments on this article. All errors are my responsibility.

References

Abramowitz, M. and Bosworth, S. (2003) 'Adjusting to the new Asia', *Foreign Affairs*, 82, 119–131.

Albright, M.K. (1998) 'The testing of American foreign policy', *Foreign Affairs*, 77, 50–64.

Bleiker, R. (2005) *Divided Korea: Toward a Culture of Reconciliation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Callahan, W.A. (2003) 'Beyond cosmopolitanism and nationalism: diasporic Chinese and neo-nationalism in China and Thailand', *International Organization*, 57, 481–517.

Campbell, D. (1998) *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Cha, V. (2003) 'Why we must pursue "hawk engagement"', in V.D. Cha and D.C. Kang (eds), *Nuclear North Korea: a Debate on Engagement Strategies*, pp. 70–100. New York: Columbia University Press.

Cha, V. and Kang, D. (2003) 'Hyperbole dominates: the 2003 nuclear crisis', in V.D. Cha and D.C. Kang (eds), *Nuclear North Korea: a Debate on Engagement Strategies*, pp. 128–160. New York: Columbia University Press.

Choo, Y.S. (2003) 'Handling North Korea: strategy and issues', *SAIS Review*, XXIII, 43–51.

Cumings, B. (2004) *North Korea: another Country*. New York: The New Press.

Cumings, B. (2005) *Korea's Place in the Sun: a Modern History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

DD (Department of Defense USA) (1998) *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia–Pacific Region*. Available at http://www.dod.mil/pubs/easr98/easr98.pdf (last accessed on 28 June 2007).

Elich, G. (2004) *Hawk Engagement: a Dangerous Turn in US Plans for North Korea*. Available at http://globalresearch.ca/articles/ELI411A.html (last accessed on 20 May 2006).

Feffer, J. (2003) *North Korea South Korea: U.S. Policy at a Time of Crisis*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Gregg, D.P. (2003) 'Regime change: what dose it mean for North Korea, removal or reform?', *The Korea Society Quarterly*, 4, 4–5.

Hahm, C.B. (2005) The two South Koreas: a house divided, *The Washington Quarterly*, 28, 57–72.

Han, S.J. (2000–01) 'The Koreas' new century', *Survival*, 42, 85–95.

Harnisch, S. (2002) 'U.S.–North Korean relations under the Bush administration', *Asian Survey*, 42, 856–882.

Harrison, S.S. (1997) 'Promoting a soft landing in Korea', *Foreign Policy*, 106, 56–75.

Harrison, S.S. (2002) *Korean Endgame: a Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Harrison, S.S. (2005) 'Did North Korea cheat?', *Foreign Affairs*, 84, 99–110.

Harrison, S.S. (2006) *The New Face of the South Korea–U.S. Alliance and the North Korea Question. Japan Focus*. Available at http://japanfocus.org/article.asp?id=588 (last accessed on 10 May 2006).

Hopf, T. (1998) 'The promise of constructivism in international relations theory', *International Security*, 23, 171–200.

Howard, P. (2004) 'Why not invade North Korea? Threats, language games, and U.S. foreign policy', *International Studies Quarterly*, 48, 805–828.

Hwang, B.Y. (2002) 'Conclusion: conference summary', in C.I. Moon and D.I. Steinberg (eds), *Korea in Transition: Three Years under the Kim Dae-Jung Government*, pp. 307–351. Seoul: Yonsei University Press.

ICG (International Crisis Group) (2004) *Korea Backgrounder: How the South Views Its Brother from another Planet. Asian Report No. 89*. Seoul/Brussels: ICG.

IFES (The Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyung-Nam University) (ed.) (2004) *Namnam Galdeung: Jindan Mich Haesobangan (The South–South Conflict: Diagnosis and Solution)*. Seoul: The Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyung-Nam University.

Jepperson, R.L., Wendt, A. and Katzenstein, P.J. (1996) 'Norms, identity, and culture in national security', in P.J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. pp. 33–75. New York: Columbia University Press.

Katzenstein, P.J. (1996) 'Introduction: alternative perspectives on national security', in P.J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, pp. 1–32. Columbia University Press.

Kihl, Y.W. (2005) *Transforming Korean Politics: Democracy, Reform, and Culture*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.

Kim, C.N. (2003) *Changing Korean Perceptions of the Post-Cold War Era and the U.S.–ROK Alliance, AsiaPacific No. 67*. Honolulu: The East-West Center.

Kim, C.N. (2004a) 'The Sunshine Policy and its impacts on South Korea's relations with major powers', *Korea Observer*, 35, 581–616.

Kim, D.J. (2004b) *The 21st Century and the Korean People: Selected Speeches of Kim Dae-Jung, 1998–2004*. Seoul: Hakgojae.

Kim, S.S. (2004c) 'Introduction: managing the Korean conflict', in S.S. Kim (ed.), *Inter-Korean Relations: Problems and Prospects*, pp. 1–20. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Larson, E.V., Levin, N.D., Baik, S.H. and Savych, B. (2004) *Ambivalent Allies? A Study of South Korea Attitudes toward the U.S.* Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.

Lee, H.Y. (2002) 'The North–South Korean summit and the international environment', in Korean National Commission for UNESCO (ed.), *Korean Politics: Striving for Democracy and Unification*, pp. 555–583. Seoul: Hollym.

Lee, J.H. and Moon, C.I. (2003) 'The North Korean nuclear crisis revisited: the case for a negotiated settlement', *Security Dialogue*, 34, 135–151.

Lee, N.Y. and Jeong, H.W. (2003) 'Anti-Americanism and the ROK–U.S. Alliance', *East Asia Review*, 15, 23–46.

Lee, W.S. (2003) *Haesbyeotjungchaegeul Wihan Byeonlon [Pleading for the Sunshine Policy]*. Seoul: PilMaek.

Lieberthal, K. (2002) 'The United States and Asia in 2001: changing agendas', *Asian Survey*, 42, 1–13.

Linton, S. (2004) 'Whither the alliance?', *The Korea Society Quarterly*, 4, 4–13.

McCormack, G. (2004) *Target North Korea: Pushing North Korea to the Brink of Nuclear Catastrophe*. New York: Nation Books.

Mearsheimer, J.J. (1994) 'The False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security*, 19, 5–49.

Moon, C.I. (1999) 'Understanding the DJ doctrine: The Sunshine Policy and the Korean Peninsula', in C.I. Moon and D.I. Steinberg (eds), *Kim Dae-Jung Government and Sunshine Policy: Promises and Challenges*, pp. 35–56. Seoul: Yonsei University Press.

Moon, C.I. (2004) 'Changing South Korean perception of the United States since September 11', *AZIYA KENKYU (Asian Studies)*, 50, 45–57.

Moon, C.I. and Bae, J.Y. (2003) 'The Bush doctrine and the North Korean nuclear crisis', *Asian Perspective*, 27, 9–45.

Oberdorfer, D. (2001) *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*. USA: Basic Books.

Oberdorfer, D. (2002) 'Korea and the United States: Partnership under stress', *The Korea Society Quarterly*, 3, 6–15.

Olsen, E.A. (2002) 'U.S. policy toward the inter-Korean dialogue', in O. Kongdan and R.C. Hassig (eds), *Korea Briefing 2000–2001: First Step toward Reconciliation and Reunification*, pp. 149–179. New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Pollack, J.D. (2003) 'The United States, North Korea, and the end of the Agreed Framework', *Naval War College Review*. LVI, Available at http://www.nwc.navy.mil/press/Review/2003/Summer/art1-su3.htm (last accessed on 10 May 2006).

Rice, C. (2000) 'Promoting the national interests', *Foreign Affairs*, 79, 45–62.

Sigal, L.V. (2005a) 'A rogue by any other name', *Foreign Service Journal*, 82, 37–44.

Sigal, L.V. (2005b) 'Misplaying North Korea and losing friends and influence in Northeast Asia'. Available at http://northkorea.ssrc.org/Sigal (last accessed on 18 May 2006).

Snyder, S. (2005) 'South Korea's squeeze play', *The Washington Quarterly*, 28, 93–106.

Suh, J.J. (2004) 'Bound to Last?: The U.S.–Korea alliance and analytical eclecticism', in J.J. Suh, P.J. Katzenstein and A. Carlson (eds), *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wendt, A. (1999) *Social Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

WH (The White House, USA) (1998) *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*. Available at http://clinton2.nara.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/documents/nssr.pdf (last accessed on 28 June 2007).

WH (The White House, USA) (2003) *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. Available at http://www.iwar.org.uk/homesec/resources/counter-terror/counter_terrorism_strategy.pdf (last accessed on 28 June 2007).

Woo-Cumings, M. (2005) 'Unilateralism and its discontents: the passing of the Cold War alliance and changing public opinion in the Republic of Korea', in D.I. Steinberg (ed.), *Korean Attitudes toward the United States: Changing Dynamics*, pp. 56–79. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

Zehfuss, M. (2001) 'Constructivism and identity: a dangerous liaison', *European Journal of International Relations*, 7, 315–348.