

Cooperative Denuclearization toward North Korea

Why has the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) been so defiant against the international community? What could be its external and internal motivations to carry out new missile tests, and even a new nuclear test, in spring 2009 when its economy is in shambles and a large portion of its population is starving? Why has President Barack Obama's "smart power" diplomacy, which stresses dialogue with countries with which the United States has long had difficulties, not worked well with Pyongyang so far? Why does North Korea seem to be ignoring its key ally, China, and its concerns? Beijing is now in an awkward position as North Korea looks uninterested in bestowing any credibility on China's efforts to sustain the Six-Party Talks that are aimed at denuclearizing the Korean peninsula.

It would not be irrational to assume that North Korea has made a calculated move to advance its nuclear and missile programs. Nevertheless, what could its motivation be to pull out of the Six-Party Talks? How could that possibly advance Pyongyang's interests? After quitting the talks, would North Korea be back under certain conditions? After so many false promises made by the North Korean regime, would China and the United States even be willing to resume talks? More importantly, will both countries be able to rein in North Korea more effectively? Though this paper is not optimistic about a potential reversal of

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The Washington Quarterly • 32:4 pp. 175–188
DOI: 10.1080/01636600903232251

Pyongyang's nuclear policy, it suggests a way the international community can still make the threat of sanctions more credible for security assurances.

Pyongyang's Surreal Nuclear Drive

Debates have existed for years about the strategic intentions of North Korea's push for a nuclear program.¹ One school has speculated that Pyongyang is more interested in building a relationship with Washington, with its nuclear wherewithal merely a bargaining chip. Over the years, however, North Korea's strenuous quest for nuclear weapons has persistently weakened the plausibility of this assumption. The other hypothesis stipulates that Pyongyang is interested in both nuclear weapons and improving its relationship with the United States. If it fails to get both at the same time, however, Pyongyang would give nuclear weapons a higher priority.² In other words, North Korea will continue to pursue nuclear weapons and will not yield its objective despite growing pressures.

The international community can still make the threat of sanctions more credible.

Why is North Korea determined to acquire nuclear weapons? From Pyongyang's perspective, it is assumed that nuclear weapons could strengthen its national security through nuclear deterrence and assure the independence of its foreign policies. This is actually the same logic of all existing nuclear weapons states, *de jure* or *de facto*. Pyongyang also sees itself surrounded by nuclear powers, with China and Russia as nuclear weapons states and Japan and South

Korea protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. With the end of the Cold War and subsequently its Soviet support, North Korea seems to be more nervous of its security. It could also seriously doubt China's commitment to the bilateral defense arrangement that has been in place since 1961.³ Pyongyang would feel more comfortable commanding its national security through its own means completely, in compliance with its "juche" idea, or self-reliance.

To date, North Korea has virtually used the Six-Party Talks to protect its nuclear development. While it has officially accepted the terms of the talks, which is to "denuclearize the Korean peninsula," Pyongyang has in fact interpreted this as an eventuality to be realized in the long term but not in the short term. North Korea most likely believes that if Iraq or Yugoslavia would have been successful in acquiring nuclear weapons, the United States or NATO would not have launched a military strike against them. Pyongyang, therefore, probably felt genuinely threatened when the Bush administration called Iran, Iraq, and North Korea the "axis of evil" and launched a war to topple Saddam

Hussein's regime in Iraq without legitimate United Nations backing and/or credible evidence to substantiate its preemption. Such careless actions have made acquiring nuclear weapons more attractive to North Korea. Furthermore, continuous talks assure Pyongyang that it can advance its nuclear program "peacefully," though clandestinely, as it is unlikely that the United States and its allies will strike while negotiations are underway.

More recently, the timing of the second nuclear test has also been debated. There were various speculations whether this new test was meant to assert the power of the "dear leader" Kim Jong-il, or to the contrary, his declining ability to rule, or bestowing power to his youngest son, "brilliant comrade" Kim Jong-un. Obviously, a nuclear test could boost domestic morale, especially within a society as closed as North Korea, when the country is navigating its power transition. Demonstrating military might through a nuclear blast, however, could at most produce some marginal "positive" effect on the political power shift. It is unlikely that this was a principal motivator in Pyongyang. As long as North Korea is strategically oriented for nuclear weapons, it can not certify the success of its nuclear program with only one test or even two. It is generally understood that it has enough fissile materials for some ten atomic bombs, though of low explosive power. Pyongyang, therefore, could possibly test a few more nuclear weapons and missiles before miniaturizing its warheads for delivery. For North Korea, it is simply a choice of timing.

North Korea's Strategic Relevance to China

If North Korea is currently committed to developing nuclear weapons further, can they be stopped? China is expected to play a significant role in changing North Korea's nuclear course due to the economic bond between Beijing and Pyongyang, as well as their "traditional" bilateral defense ties. It is widely understood that China is North Korea's main outside source to access food, energy, medicine, fertilizers, and possibly cash in terms of foreign aid.⁴ Such assistance has indeed provided China with some leverage, at least in theory. As long as Beijing wishes, it can craft a policy to use some or all of these tools to affect North Korea's international behavior. For instance, China was believed to employ some tools to affect North Korea's position toward the Three-Party Talks, the precursor to the Six-Party Talks, in early spring 2003, by cutting off oil supply for three days due to "technical reasons" of the pipeline.

But what may have rendered China's efforts ineffective? China has not used all leversages it has possessed, such as food, energy, money, and many more, mainly for the sake of stability of the peninsula and its border area with North Korea. Indeed, economic sanctions could serve as a double-edged sword, either pressing North Korea to curtail its nuclear development, or potentially triggering

North Korea has virtually used the Six-Party Talks to protect its nuclear development.

a breakdown of North Korea's already fragile system, leading to an implosion that is unlikely to be contained with low cost.

The nightmare of Korean refugees pouring into China is not theoretical. It is no secret that some North Koreans have already entered China, with no permit from either government, for economic reasons.⁵

China certainly is interested in seeing

North Korea stabilize and improve its economic situation for its own peripheral security. It is in China's interest, therefore, to support a measured sanctions regime primarily targeting North Korea's nuclear and missile programs instead of its civilian sectors.

The UN Security Council sanctions resolutions 1718 and 1874, after the 2006 and 2009 nuclear tests respectively, have been crafted very cautiously for this purpose alone. Resolution 1718 was mainly designed to target North Korea's nuclear and missile development, and to bar its importation of heavy-class conventional weaponry as well as luxury items which appeal to Pyongyang's elite. It has managed not to affect North Korea's basic economic realm. In the same vein, resolution 1874 has also largely addressed North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. In particular, it has demanded that Pyongyang not conduct any further nuclear tests or use ballistic missile technology. In other words, it prohibits North Korea from shooting satellites in the future. Resolution 1874 has also banned weapons transfers of any kind from North Korea to another country, and permitted vessel inspection on the high seas when reasonable information about suspected ship cargo is available.

It is interesting to note that China's economic relations with North Korea are largely unaffected by both resolutions, as China is not linked to the latter's nuclear and missile programs. Both resolutions have not banned the transfer of small or light weapons to North Korea, though the new resolution has been more stringent in asking such transfers to be reported to a specific committee related to resolution 1718. So long as China has no need to export those restricted heavy-class conventional weapons to North Korea, such restrictions do not affect China. Though it is unclear whether China has implemented rigorous border inspection of luxurious goods to North Korea, such restrictions on luxurious pieces only affect a small group of elites in a limited way, and hence do not pose a challenge to the current Pyongyang regime.

The challenging aspect of resolution 1874 is that it has called upon all UN member states not to give new grants and financial assistance to North Korea, except for humanitarian purposes. If truly implemented, it would cut off all

foreign financial aid to North Korea, most of which comes from China. Interestingly, the same sanctions have permitted UN members to offer financial aid to North Korea for “development purposes,” which lowers the toughness of the sanctions and provides China with considerable flexibility in deciding if and what “development” assistance shall be given to Pyongyang.⁶

China will, therefore, be cautious in handling sanctions, as there is significant leeway to interpret their content. That also means they may not make North Korea more vulnerable, because of the flexibility in interpreting the sanctions, and hence may not necessarily deter North Korea from its nuclear path successfully.

Beijing is often expected to employ its leverages over Pyongyang. In reality, similar to all bilateral ties, the China-North Korea relationship is not a one-way street. As mentioned previously, China’s economic aid to North Korea beeps up the latter’s survival, while North Korea’s stability assures China’s peripheral security. In the security area, China and North Korea have long cherished their special relationship. As China has been adapting to a market economy through globalization, it also has been shaping a more “normal” relationship with North Korea, aspiring to transform relations with the DPRK.

Nonetheless, Beijing’s idealism in transforming its relationship with North Korea beyond an alliance has not been wholeheartedly supported by Washington, especially since it is now apparent that other alliances in the region have not only been maintained but strengthened. The problem is that the United States still primarily hedges its efforts toward China and North Korea. As Beijing critically analyzes U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan, there is a risk that Pyongyang could exploit Beijing’s uncertainty and judge its own security value in China’s strategic calculus. Even though the likelihood of China and the United States going to war with each other over Taiwan is increasingly low, both sides can not rule out that possibility completely. As a result, both sides are preparing strategies for the worst-case scenario, while strategists in Pyongyang are trying to figure out ways to take advantage of this mutual hedging between China and the United States to further their own interests.

Though Washington realizes that Taiwan’s independence could bring as much harm to the United States as any potential gains, U.S. policymakers are pursuing a policy to maintain the status quo: to encourage neither *de jure* independence nor unification of any sorts but continue to sell weapons to Taiwan at peacetime, and possibly to defend Taiwan during a crisis. For mainland China, the U.S. policy of maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait is at best to caution those

It is unlikely the political transition was a principal motivator for the second nuclear test.

pushing for *de jure* independence of Taiwan, and at worst to deter unification efforts on China's terms. While such policy may serve Beijing's interests in deterring independence in the short term, it undermines China's long-term objective of unification.

North Korea, therefore, could find itself strategically relevant to China. The sheer existence of the regime serves to check and balance U.S. military assets in South Korea. Until Beijing and Taipei can achieve a peace accord to officially terminate their civil war status, China will be unable to discount the strategic significance of North Korea.⁷ As a result, Pyongyang is racing in its nuclear weapons development against the trend of reconciliation across the Taiwan Strait, especially since the May 2008 change in the Taiwan government which now seeks better terms with mainland China.

U.S. "Benign Neglect"

Washington has long viewed North Korea as an "axis of evil" or an "outpost of tyranny."⁸ Such terminology is unhelpful while trying to resolve problems with North Korea. In this regard, the Obama administration's approach to dialogue, even with North Korea, has offered a better alternative to cope with the regime. Yet, the Obama administration seems to have taken a strange "benign neglect" stance toward North Korea under the generally positive framework of dialogue. The White House seems uninterested in engaging with North Korea further and would rather wait until either North Korea steps forward with a rational attitude or China twists its arm to act more forcefully.⁹ Though this stance was not responsible for North Korea's second nuclear test—since Pyongyang seems adamant on acquiring nuclear weapons—the current administration's "benign neglect" produces the equivalent effect of the previous administration's earlier refusal to engage bilaterally with North Korea.

The Obama administration has rightfully been focusing more on the financial and economic crises, while tackling a loaded foreign policy agenda that includes resetting relations with Russia, codifying a Strategic and Economic Dialogue mechanism with China, executing a phased withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, launching new offensives in Afghanistan, committing to climate change as well as global nuclear zero, improving relationships with allies and extending a friendly hand toward the Muslim world, and repairing ties with Cuba and Venezuela. It is hard to engage Iran and North Korea effectively given such a heavy agenda already.

It seems to some that the White House has been slow in assembling a team on North Korea. Stephen W. Bosworth was appointed as the president's special representative on North Korea policy on February 20, 2009. But Kurt M. Campbell was appointed as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific

affairs as late as June 2, 2009. Unfortunately in the meantime, North Korea quit the Six-Party Talks, shot missiles, launched a “satellite,” and conducted its second nuclear test. In addition to the competing agenda items and a slow appointments process, the Obama administration’s unwillingness to engage with North Korea earlier and more actively could have also reflected its antipathy toward Pyongyang. Its hesitance to be proactive toward North Korea may have been intended as a punitive measure against “small children demanding attention,”¹⁰ while Pyongyang expected some difference between Obama’s early actions on North Korea and the policies of former President George W. Bush, especially when Obama campaigned on the platform of change. Even if the Obama administration had not chosen an early policy of “benign neglect,” it remains unclear whether the United States may have been able to affect North Korea’s behavior and its persistence with regards to its nuclear program.

Pyongyang’s Nuclear Assumptions

North Korea is likely to have made the following assumptions: the United States still poses a threat; the development of the North Korean nuclear program will reduce the military threat posed by the United States; China will be reluctant to employ full sanctions for fear of a regime collapse in North Korea, as its survival is a key interest of China; if North Korea behaves “responsibly” in the international arena it will minimize the effects of international sanctions; and finally, the international community will eventually come to terms with a nuclear North Korea.

Economic sanctions could serve as a double-edged sword.

This list of assumptions may seem to be wishful thinking by North Korea, but some of the assumptions are rational. If all of the above are valid—the United States threatens North Korea, yet is deterred by a nuclear North Korea and China is deterred by a refugee scenario and interested in using North Korea to check and balance the United States—then North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons could be inevitable. But if all the assumptions are invalid—the United States never threatens others unnecessarily while it maintains militarily credible options to defeat any nuclear proliferators; North Korean refugees fleeing to China does not make it vulnerable; the United States plans to end its interference in the affairs related to Taiwan; and the international community is convinced that North Korea is proliferating horizontally—then it is guaranteed that the world community will take concerted efforts to stop Pyongyang. But when only some of those presumptions are met, there is a great amount of uncertainty about what will happen next. Then, North Korea has

some chances to succeed, while the international community also has some opportunities to defeat its nuclear aspiration.

Does the United States Pose a Threat?

Many in the United States are convinced that the United States never threatens another sovereign country. There is no doubt that Washington has extended security to many of its allies, and offered leadership in assuring world peace and security. At the same time, there are ample examples that suggest otherwise. For instance, China is unconvinced of the validity of the U.S. stance that the sale of weapons to Taiwan is justified. At least against this backdrop of U.S. intervention, Beijing is set to develop and modernize its own small nuclear arsenal. While China is defining national security more through overall economic opening and international cooperation with the United States and others presently, it is also hedging for a potential worst-case contingency, though such a possibility is gradually declining.

The recent U.S. preemption on Iraq also weakens the argument that the United States has always helped to keep the world safer—approximately 110,000 Iraqis have died in direct confrontation since the United States launched the war in March 2003.¹¹ All of these not only give North Korea convenient excuses to go nuclear but also raise genuine security concerns about the role of the United States in the world.

Instead of debating if the United States has threatened others, this article suggests that the United States has room to improve its foreign and defense policies so as to make countries more secure by providing no true security concerns or pretexts to go nuclear. While North Korea is being sanctioned for nuclear and missile development, the United States should reflect on its own past foreign policy behavior, managing more international consultations and securing more international cooperation before kicking off major international security initiatives.

Can Pressures be Credible?

For most, North Korea's chief drive to attain nuclear weapons is for nuclear deterrence. While no country should threaten others in the first place, the fact that those who have acquired nuclear weapons have more or less been free from foreign aggression has created a dilemma. As it is incomprehensible to use nuclear weapons to settle international disputes, the power of nuclear deterrence could incite proliferation as atomic weapons could possibly deter major conventional confrontation.¹²

After the two nuclear tests, it is hard to foresee that the United States would even contemplate military surgical operations against Pyongyang. This reinforces Pyongyang's conviction of absolute security through nuclear deterrence, and is

ironically unhelpful to the notion of nonproliferation. Such phenomenon applies not only to North Korea, but to India and Pakistan as well in terms of their bilateral hostility.

Though counterproliferation can be controversial, nuclear proliferation from North Korea shall not be accepted, and the world community does have the legal tools to pressure it by resolution 1874. Building on resolutions 1540 and 1718, resolution 1874 has made remarkable progress by allowing specific searches on board North Korean vessels on the high seas, provided that reasonable information of suspicious banned goods on board is available. For example, the North Korean ship, *Kang Nam I*, returned home because no port would allow it to dock. This newly developed model of a global ban of horizontal proliferation, clearly with international navies to support it, seems successful in thwarting such a threat, at least in this case.

Can Concerns about Refugees be Managed?

China is concerned about the consequences of a North Korean economic collapse due to excessive sanctions. Sanctions are indeed tricky as they have the potential to both reshape a policy due to coercion and trigger a catastrophe. As a neighbor of North Korea, China is concerned about Pyongyang's crash, especially with respect to refugees.

Fundamentally, the refugee issue is manageable. In the worst case of massive refugees, say an exodus of 1 percent of North Korea's population, there will be some 230,000 refugees (14 times higher than the actual number of refugees, which are reportedly 16,000). If each of them costs approximately US\$15,000 to resettle in the short term, it would cost about \$2 billion in total, amounting to approximately 0.3 percent of South Korea's gross domestic product (GDP) or 0.07 percent of China's GDP of 2008.¹³ Considering that South Korea has committed to absorbing all refugees from North Korea by itself, the cost to China's economy would be even smaller. China's real concern, therefore, over North Korea's breakdown due to harsh sanctions may not be short-term economic expenses, but the long-term economic and social cost, as well as the potential reorientation of the regional strategic landscape from a unified Korea.

Can Pyongyang Exploit the Taiwan Issue?

It seems obvious that North Korea's survival could serve China's national security interests, especially in light of the Taiwan issue and the security dilemma it poses. Despite the improvement in relations between China and the United States since 1979 and the increasing interaction and cooperation across the Pacific, the issue of Taiwan has remained a sour point. While the mainland claims Taiwan as part of China's territory, the government in Taiwan continues

China's economic relations with North Korea are largely unaffected by both resolutions.

to view itself as an independent state and the sole representative of its citizens. Though Beijing has garnered more international support than Taiwan, continued U.S. support to Taiwan, especially in terms of arms deals, has angered China on more than one occasion. More significantly, China feels that the United States is using Taiwan to indirectly threaten China and force it to take a military stance toward

Taiwan at a time when it is trying to peacefully integrate into the world's economy. As a result, China has played down the Taiwan issue so long as Taiwan does not seek *de jure* independence, while making great leaps in economic development that can be translated to comprehensive national and military strength, which will be helpful if Taiwan declares independence.

China and the United States, therefore, have a very complicated relationship. While the United States is the main source of China's economic modernization, both have hedged against uncertainty. They have made significant efforts to forge dialogues and promote communication, while each military is still built to deal with each other professionally in the battlefield. Lately there have been an increasing number of skirmishes between the two navies in the South China Sea. The U.S. armed forces feel more need to understand the development of the Chinese navy (the submarine force in particular) while the Chinese army is increasingly assertive in its claim of Chinese rights in its Special Economic Zone. This simply indicates mutual hedging and asks for a mechanism to avoid naval conflict.

But given the growing maturity of U.S.–China relations, North Korea may feel more isolated and pressed to accelerate its nuclear weapons program before it becomes a geostrategic liability to China.¹⁴ Also, the declining tension across the Taiwan Strait since the Taiwan election in May 2008 has undercut Pyongyang's chance to secure China's economic aid unconditionally. In other words, time is running short for North Korea.

Can the DPRK be a Responsible Nuclear Stakeholder?

The international community believes that North Korea will become more reckless once it acquires nuclear weapons. And this is not an unlikely outcome. North Korea is aware of the world's anxiety and the actions that follow such an outlook. As a result, it is in North Korea's interest to act cautiously with respect to its nuclear program. Neutralizing international sanctions could become its main objective. Psychologically, Pyongyang intends to force the world to accept its nuclear *fait accompli*. Assuming North Korea plays its cards right, it is not

unreasonable to believe that a future U.S. administration will eventually build normal relations with a nuclear North Korea, as the United States has done with China, India, and Pakistan at different stages.

Presently, the United States has not conditioned its relations with China, India, or Pakistan on their nuclear weapons status. The United States cooperates with both China and India in civilian nuclear sectors, as they are viewed more or less as responsible nuclear stakeholders that currently distance themselves from nuclear proliferation. Within a few years after India and Pakistan tested their nuclear weapons, the United States lifted sanctions upon them. The DPRK, therefore, has seen how quickly the United States can change when its security environment alters. Washington now even envisions Pakistan as its non-NATO ally and India as its new hedge against China. So, why can't the United States take a new approach toward North Korea, especially if Pyongyang continues to behave more responsibly after securing a rudimentary nuclear deterrent?

Cooperative, not Confrontational, Nonproliferation

North Korea is unlikely to give up its nuclear program any time soon because it not only meets its own interests but also allows it to exploit distrust and hedging among major powers. While North Korea's philosophy of nuclear weapons is hard to change, the external world could still adjust their stance toward each other to improve the chances of collectively deterring Pyongyang and reducing the vulnerability of their own discord in reining in the hermit kingdom.

The Obama administration should extend its approach of dialogue to North Korea, noting that "benign neglect" is rather passive and ineffective. In addition to congressional visits, the White House should send senior officials to Pyongyang for direct dialogue, making clear that the United States does not want to threaten North Korea. The administration should also facilitate reciprocal high-level visits of North Korean officials to the United States.

China needs to employ an enhanced version of a carrot-and-stick strategy as well. It should not let the refugee issue dictate its sanctions policy. Once committed, China should implement its obligations fully under those relevant sanctions resolutions of the Security Council. It should also reaffirm its security commitment made in its mutual assistance treaty with North Korea in 1961. A mutual defense arrangement is not necessarily a Cold War product, but for legitimacy, it has to be for defensive purposes only.¹⁵ The new terms should only commit China to defending North Korea if Pyongyang adheres to various Security Council resolutions.

China and the United States should realize that their hedging relationship could benefit North Korea and prolong its ability to adhere to a nuclear course. Washington's declaratory stance not to support Taiwan's independence is

commendable, but its continuing sale of weapons to Taiwan, Pyongyang's role to check U.S. armed forces in South Korea, and the difficulty for Beijing to deny Pyongyang's strategic value all contribute to the difficulties in denuclearizing North Korea.

Moscow should also reassert its role in the peninsula, especially while U.S.–China relations remain complicated.¹⁶ Russia and China share many common interests in defusing the peninsula, and have less suspicion between them on respective interests in the region. Russia does not need to restore the Soviet type of relationship with North Korea, but it could actually help lead a mechanism offering collective security assurances to North Korea if it abandons its nuclear weapons program. Globally de-emphasizing nuclear weapons is helpful in dissuading North Korea's drive for nuclear weapons. The present U.S.–Russia momentum to further cut their strategic arsenals, therefore, empowers the mission of the Six-Party Talks. The United States and other nuclear powers should take a

China should not let the refugee issue dictate its sanctions policy.

leadership role in advancing global nuclear arms control and disarmament. Furthermore, those nuclear weapons states would be in a better position if they ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), while demanding North Korea halt its nuclear tests.¹⁷

Tokyo benefits if Pyongyang denuclearizes, so Japan should contribute as a stakeholder, not necessarily to North Korea's hard security directly, but to its civilian energy needs and finances involved. Japan deserves sympathy for its citizens abducted, but to raise it at the talks only helps North Korea derail the negotiations. The talks should deal with nuclear disarmament specifically while abductees and similar issues should be addressed in another setting.

Seoul's position is the most sensitive due to its Korean ethnicity and its dependence on the United States for security. The current South Korean administration is still learning how to deal with its northern counterpart in an equal and mutually respectful way. It would be helpful if President Lee Myung-Bak's government could maintain a low-key approach in inter-Korean affairs.

The chances that North Korea will abandon its nuclear quest in the short-term do not seem likely. Various stakeholders, however, could still challenge the impossible by further adjusting their relationship with North Korea, employing more credible incentives and disincentives, as well as adjusting their relationships with each other to be less susceptible to North Korean manipulation. While China could toughen its implementation of the sanctions mandated by the Security Council, it could also reassure North Korea with security commitments

bound by a bilateral treaty, in a mutually defensive manner. The United States needs to fundamentally change its disrespectful handling of some of China's crucial domestic affairs, relieving Beijing's security concerns. Theoretically, there is still a way to help solve the North Korean nuclear quandary, but those outside actors need to be truly cooperative, rather than being conservative, unconstructive in certain aspects, and mutually hedging their relationship that subsequently works to North Korea's benefit.

Notes

1. See Shen Dingli, "Three Unsettled Debates on the Korean Nuclear Issues," *Global Times*, April 27, 2009, p. 11, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/roll/2009-04/444636.html> (last accessed on July 24, 2009) (in Chinese).
2. Shen Dingli, "NK's Realism is Certain to Lead It to Quit the Six-Party Talks," *Oriental Morning Post*, April 15, 2009, p. A22, http://epaper.dfdaily.com/dfzb/html/2009-04/15/content_124956.htm (in Chinese).
3. On July 11, 1961, China and North Korea signed the "PRC-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance." Article II of the treaty commits to maximum efforts, such as military aid, should any party be attacked or invaded.
4. See David Shambaugh, "China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the Long Term," *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no.2 (Spring 2003): 43–56, http://www.twq.com/03spring/docs/03spring_shambaugh.pdf.
5. See Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Hunger and Human Rights: The Politics of Famine in North Korea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2005), <http://www.hrnk.org/hunger/hungerReport05.pdf>.
6. UN Security Council Resolution 1784, S/RES/1784 (2009), June 12, 2009, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/368/49/PDF/N0936849.pdf?OpenElement>. In article 19, the resolution has called upon "Member States and international financial and credit institutions not to enter into new commitments for grants, financial assistance, or concessional loans to the DPRK, except for humanitarian and developmental purposes directly addressing the needs of the civilian population, or the promotion of denuclearization, and also calls upon States to exercise enhanced vigilance with a view to reducing current commitments."
7. See Shen Dingli, "North Korea's Strategic Significance to China," *China Security* (Autumn 2006): 19–34.
8. These are the terms of the then-President George W. Bush and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. See Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, "President Delivers State of the Union Address," January 29, 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>; "Opening Statement by Dr. Condoleezza Rice," confirmation hearing for secretary of state, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 18, 2005, <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2005/RiceTestimony050118.pdf>.
9. "N. Korea Challenges U.S.'s 'Benign Neglect' Policy With Second Nuclear Test," *The Hankyoreh*, May 26, 2009, http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/357029.html.
10. "Clinton Likens North Korea to an Unruly Child," Reuters, July 20, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2009/07/20/world/international-korea-north-clinton.html>.

11. See “More Than 100,000 Iraqis Have Died in Iraq War,” Associated Press, April 23, 2009, <http://newsone.blackplanet.com/world/ap-reports-that-more-than-100000-iraqis-have-died-in-iraq-war/>.
12. See Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*, 2nd edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002). But this is not necessarily always been the case. The China-Soviet conflict over Ussuri area in 1969, and the Pakistan-India conflict over Kargil in 1999 were examples that nuclear weapons might not always deter conventional conflict.
13. South Korea and China’s gross domestic product in 2008 was \$947 billion and \$4.4 trillion, respectively. See World Bank, World Development Indicators Database, Web site, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:20535285~menuPK:1192694~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html>. In addition, according to a Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH news dispatch of July 18, 2009, so far about 16,000 North Korean refugees have arrived in South Korea, and after receiving job training, each of them receives some \$15,000 for resettlement. See “Korean Refugees Hard to Merge into South Korean Society,” *Caokao Xiaoxi* (Reference News), July 20, 2009, p. 3 (in Chinese).
14. Zhan Debin, “Is DPRK China’s Strategic Burden?,” June 3, 2009, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/roll/2009-06/478242.html> (in Chinese).
15. See Dingli Shen, “Can Alliances Combat Contemporary Threats?” *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 165–179, http://www.twq.com/04spring/docs/04spring_shen.pdf.
16. See Igor Khripunov, “Russia’s Approaches to the North Korean Nuclear Weapons Program: Between Multipolarity and Breakup of the Nonproliferation Regime” (paper, Seoul, South Korea, July 7, 2009) (presented at 2009 Korea Research Institute for Strategy Symposium on “The Strategic Balance in Northeast Asia and North Korea’s Nuclear Armament”) (hard copy with author).
17. Obama called on the U.S. Congress to ratify the CTBT in a speech in Prague, Czech Republic, on April 1, 2009. A recent influential, congressionally-sponsored study, however, could not conclude that the United States would indeed ratify the treaty. See *America’s Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United State* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2009), pp. 81–87.