

E-ISSN: 2709-9369
P-ISSN: 2709-9350
www.multisubjectjournal.com
IJMT 2023; 5(5): 01-04
Received: 04-02-2023
Accepted: 07-03-2023

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Upheaval in the Korean peninsula and the changing policies of US and North Korea

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/multi.2023.v5.i5a.280>

Abstract

As of now, most people know North Korea as an evil country and all types of psycho stories are floating in the world media. Most of them are advertised by western countries and in the case of North Korea it's the US. However, many times North Korea also does terrible and unimaginable things to surprise the world. Which is a certainty to remain in the dictatorial rule of the Kim family. North Korea has always remained in unstable relations with the U.S. The change of leaders also changed the policy of the U.S. towards North Korea because both sides have always claimed to be victimized by the other and defend their actions purely for defensive purposes. Then who's the offender here and why? The answer is not simple; for this, we have to look into these two countries' historical and political aspects.

Keywords: 1994 Agreement, big and small powers, bandwagon, nuclear threat, security issues

Introduction

In April 2017, the United States of America (USA), China, Japan, South Korea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) were at war. The US sent its navy ships to the Busan port to protect South Korea and Japan from North Korea. On the other hand, North Korea's government tested so many missiles and nuclear bombs from 2007 to 2016. Now both sides claim that their activities are for purely defensive purposes. So, the question arises here if both sides are defending themselves, then who is the offender? The answer is difficult; we must look into these two countries' historical and political aspects and how the lousy situation reached this critical stage. From the end of the Korean War in 1953 until the 1980s, there were no formal diplomatic relations between the US and North Korea. In 1973 the first North Korean diplomat arrived in New York as a staffer for the North Korean permanent observer program to the United Nations, but due to the cold war, they did not succeed (addiction, lifestyle and insomnia). But this initiative started the process for formal diplomatic relations. The process of recognition of North Korea by Japan and the US took place in 1975-76.

Historical Aspects

Formal relations between the US and Korea were established in 1882 when these two countries started to trade. During Japanese imperialism, Koreans thought that the US would save them from it. However, in the later period, Japan annexed Korea, and the US did not react until the end of the Second World War when the US came to rescue the Korean peninsula. Under the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), the Korean peninsula is divided into North and South Korea. During the Korean War in 1950-53, the US-led UN army fought for South Korea and heavily bombarded North Korea. In 1953 armistice was signed, and the war stopped, but North Korea never forgot the US's role in the war. Their foreign policy turned into an anti-US-based policy. After the Korean War, North Korea came near the Soviet Union (USSR) because of its anti-US and communist approach. In the 1960s, with the help of the USSR, North Korea established a nuclear energy reactor at Yongbyon. During the 1970s, Japan and South Korea tried establishing such a reactor, but no country objected. From 1953 to 1980, North Korea neglected its relationship with the USA. In 1985, North Korea signed up for NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), so the Soviet Union agreed to help establish a nuclear energy plant near Sinpo on the east coast of North Korea. Later the USSR also cheated North Korea and did not fulfill its obligations. But that's not our area of focus or priority. We are here to see and evaluate North Korea's and the US's relationship. The American presidents at the time had different policies toward North Korea.

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Policies under different us presidents

During the period of Richard Nixon, a relationship with North Korea started. Regan's administration took modest steps to improvise formal relations with North Korea and started a dialogue because the isolation of North Korea was an increasing danger in North East Asia. In 1988 the US allowed non-governmental visits to North Korea. With the initiative of the UN, North Korea sent its diplomats to the US to break the ice between these two countries. In the following years, some progress took place. Nixon shows some positive approaches toward North Korea. The Nixon government withdrew 1/3 of its army from South Korea without raising tension in the Korean peninsula. In response, North Korea also halted the infiltration and significantly reduced its defense budget. In the Gerard Ford era (1974-1977), the US planned to give some identity to North Korea and asked the USSR and China to do the same. North Korea also proposed a peace treaty between the US and North Korea at the place of the armistice agreement.

During the period of Jimmy Carter, relations between these two countries reached the next level. North Korea wants a bilateral talk with the US, but the US wants it to be multilateral. So North Korea agreed to add China to talk. Several talks and negotiations were going on at the same time. One is to change the armistice pact to a peace treaty, and the other is with South Korea for a non-aggression pact and to reduce the arms in the Korean peninsula. Carter announced that he would withdraw its army and naval ships from the Korean peninsula. In 1977 Kim, in an interview, called President Carter "the man of justice." When Jimmy Carter visited North Korea, Kim gave him personnel assurance that he would freeze the nuclear programs. He said he was knocking on the door of the US for diplomatic and trade relations. The North Korean government press left the use of the word US imperialism and started a new term for the USSR, Soviet Domination (taken from the Chinese term Moscow hegemonism). The US officials, however, convinced the president that it was a wrong decision, so later, they dropped the plan.

Ronald Reagan became president in 1981 and ruled till 1989. The Reagan administration shifted the US policy once again and, in the early 1980s, increased the no. of heavily established armed forces in South Korea. From this time, North Korea also had to change its policies and start tilting toward the USSR. After a few years, Reagan tried to give some concessions to North Korea as he ended the US ban on North Korea for commercial transactions. He also allowed non-governmental visits to North Korea for study, research, sports, cultural exchange, etc. President George H.

W. Bush, during his era till 1989, did not regulate these facilities in North Korea. So again, North Korea started shifting towards the USSR, but simultaneously, the USSR collapsed. Now North Korea has only one choice left, shift to China.

Bill Clinton was president for two terms, from 1993 to 2001. So many promises were given to North Korea, but none were applied to ground level. They took some steps, but that was too late or very slow in progress. The policy of this government was to hold the situation as it was, as it was. In 1993 IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) demanded North Korea full access to its land to visit any place at any time. They also requested a free pass for all nuclear energy power plants and Yongbyon. This demand never came from the IAEA to any sovereign country earlier.

No country can give this type of right to any outsider. So North Korea threatened the US that they would back out from the NPT. The UN Security Council was ready to put sanctions on North Korea, but China threatened the council that it would use the veto on it. "After the cold war, two major crises happened. The first one in 1994 nearly led the Korean peninsula to war. Later it was followed by an agreement that (apparently) ended North Korea's nuclear programs and opened the path of peace and normal relations with other countries. In 1994 both countries agreed to an agreement. Two light water reactors for energy power plants were promised to be established by the end of the year 2003, with formal assurance not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against North Korea. In reply, North Korea agreed to stop its reactors related to nuclear bombs. They promised they would demolish them when the light water nuclear reactor is completed and allow the IAEA to monitor the freeze with full cooperation. Both countries agreed to work towards full normalization of political and economic relations and to reduce the barriers to trade and investment. Later Japan and South Korea gave the fund according to the agreement, but the US delayed in implementation and construction of LWRs (Light Water Reactor). The US did not withdraw its military from the peninsula nor lower the sanctions or trade restrictions; that was the main reason behind no progress in a peace treaty. The US accused North Korea of another secret nuclear program he made at Yongbyon and renewed the threat against North Korea. US and North Korea talks again came on track; then North Korea demanded that the two light water reactors be established in North Korea according to the agreement. "Again, the Clinton government's continuation of the containment policy had failed, and alternatives had not been readied." Without any choice, the US and North Korea agreed that the written framework should be in shape.

Relation from Bad to Worse

President George W. Bush's administration took the relationship between these two countries to the worst level. Bush openly called North Korea "The Axis of Evil" with Iran and Iraq, and US minister Condoleezza Rice referenced "outpost of tyranny"; both show a hostile policy towards North Korea. It is usual for such an isolated country to have suspicions about a world power. From time to time, the US tried to assure that they have no hostile policy towards North Korea, although it had only a hostile policy towards nuclear weapons. He adopted a very ruthless policy towards North Korea. In 2007 the sixth six-party talks took place, and they concluded that "after dismantling its nuclear weapons, North Korea will get the concession as energy security and discussion will continue on sanctions ending with the removal of North Korea from the terrorist countries list." These conditions clearly show that North Korea should take all initial steps without any guarantee of reciprocation from the US. The Bush administration often had no option but to give befitting replies to North Korean infuriating actions. After North Korea's revelation of its nuclear program based on uranium which was a violation of the 1994 agreed framework, political thinkers also found the Bush management accountable for it. Again in 2005, both countries agreed on a joint statement over the watershed roadmap agreement. In exchange, North Korea agreed to dismantle its nuclear programs and the denuclearization process to start. For their effort, they were promised energy

and considerable economic help. Normalization of political relations with Japan and the United States, a new treaty to end the Korean war, and the making of a new northeast Asian policy and security of the North Korean regime, food, and a new relationship with the international community. They wanted to cash the nuclear deal in the best way. They were offered the same twice, according to Victor D. Cha, in 1994, agreed to a framework where Clinton offered heavy fuel oil, economic assistance, and energy assistance in exchange for denuclearization and the frozen status of the Yongbyon nuclear power plant. Again in 2005, six-party joint statements offered all benefits in return for denuclearization. North Korea demanded from Bush management to establish the light water reactor for the nuclear energy power plant, as promised during the 1994 agreed framework. But they never fulfilled the promise.

There is one more possibility that North Korea wanted something more, that America should confirm North Korea as a nuclear country, as they have done for Pakistan and India. It's a well-known fact of the US-India civil nuclear energy agreement not to count a part of India's reactors (8 of 22) under international inspection. North Korea would undoubtedly want a bigger deal in return even for these concessions, including nuclear energy establishment, help to revive economic development, normal relations with the United States and other parts of the world community, and a treaty to end the Korean war. They also want the house of Kim Jong-il to rule forever. They need a particular preference for their regime security assurance from the US. But this was more problematic for the US to give.

Political thinkers suggest that regimes' nuclear programs were derived from insecurity. They had a petite number of friends during the cold war and even fewer after the cold war. So, the US never took steps to fulfill its promises to North Korea, as in the case of LWRs or heavy fuel oil shipments. Every time the president changed and also changed the policies. So North Korea also had to change its policies. The concept of trust never developed between these two countries. The US policies show that they only want to hold the situation as long as possible.

Small countries are always suspicious and careful about their security from big powers; as Randall L. Shweller says in his article bandwagoning and profit, that small states always try to bandwagon or balance with big powers for their security. Suppose we take this theory from the North Korean aspect, then we can see that it always tried to balance a bandwagon with big powers from its independence. Due to its anti-communist ideology, the US never supported North Korea. Later, their policies kept changing in good and bad relations with North Korea. Their shifting policies made North Korea uncomfortable, and until the 1990s, North Korea depended on the USSR for security purposes. After the decline of the USSR, it casually shifted towards China. China already has many disputes with neighboring countries and with North Korea too. North Korea also had terrible experiences with its relationship with the US, USSR, and China. That's why they do not believe in any foreign power. Also, they strongly believe that their Juche ideology means self-reliance. Following this policy, they started making their country entirely dependent upon their armaments and bombs. The nuclear policy of North Korea is one of the most significant parts of it. Many reports say that North Korea was responsible for stopping the talks between the US and North Korea, but we can say

that the US was equally responsible for it. The western media targeted North Korea for many years and is still doing the same. They show that North Korea is an alone, horrifying, and mysterious country. They portrayed a negative image of North Korea for several years. Now, this Performa is established.

Security Issues

Security issues were always a big priority for smaller countries. In the 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR, new countries like Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan got control over nuclear weapons. The whole concentration of the US deviated towards this area. The memorandum between the big powers like Russia, the US, and the UK was signed for the security purpose of these countries, and they gave back the nuclear weapons to Russia. The memo was that no country would use force or nuclear weapons toward these countries. But in 2014, Crimea, a part of Ukraine, was taken away by Russians. Except for some sanctions, no country did anything to help Ukraine on the ground. After these incidents, how can small countries believe in 'big powers' that do not keep their promises? North Korea believes in no one, so they made their nuclear weapons. These big powers look first at their self-interest, then think about others. There were many allegations made about North Korea that they were making nuclear weapons; sometimes, US ministers also said that North Korea had already made it, and sometimes they have given the number of nuclear weapons also which North Korea carries. This concept got more decisive in the 1990s. The Clinton administration says that they issued general concerns with Pakistan about nuclear collaboration with North Korea. Pakistan never accepted that they gave North Korea's nuclear weapon technology in a trade-off with North Korean missiles. They denied the charges by saying that whatever they bought from North Korea was openly dealt with money. But as the report says, "North Korea only succeeded in making nuclear weapons when Pakistani nuclear physicist Abdul Qadeer Khan helped them as he accepted."

After the collapse of the 1994 agreement, North Korea reprocessed approx. 8000 uranium rods. About North Korea's nuclear risks, the world media wrote many things. Although one crucial issue has been disregarded, how much believable evidence was there to prove America's uranium allegation? While we all know about what happened in Iraq, the Bush administration misinterpreted and distorted the truth and clues intelligence gave to attack Iraq. At the same time, North Korea never accepted or denied the accusations, which is part of their foreign policy to protect the country from the fear of nuclear weapons that others can only guess. China also argues (June 7, 2007) that the US had not presented any satisfying proof of North Korean nuclear programs. Yes, limited evidence was provided by South Korea and Japan regarding North Korea's attempt to purchase nuclear equipment. The US has been making such accusations since the late 1970s, but as we know, North Korea became a nuclear power in late 2000.

Conclusion

We cannot justify the acts done by North Korean leaders during the ages. Their acts left a terrible impact on the world community. We can count on their way to punish for small mistakes, the killing of high-level military officials and involvement in the attack on North Korean fugitives on

other countries' land and nuclear tests. Different countries play different roles during this time. The US applied both ways of negotiations and sanctions to stop North Korea from making nuclear weapons. Their Chinese counterparts helped them to bring North Korea to the conference table. Now world leaders have many more important things to resolve. They know what a nuclear weapon of mass destruction can do within minutes. The US is interested in securing WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction) and related materials, and South Korea sees their peaceful future in restoring peninsular stability. China's interest is in securing its borders against the mass influence of refugees. So we can say that if superpowers force smaller countries to choose the US, Russia, or Chinese block, there can be some misunderstanding. Many small countries want to live peacefully and without any group or block. But if you put pressure on them, then they must find their way to survive within the new rules.

On the other hand, North Korea indeed made many mistakes, but the world community can deal with that in other ways. The nuclear threat is not one of them; they also need to revive their Juche ideology and make new relations with the rest of the world. Again, they also need support from big powers because, without their permission, many countries will not be able to start a new relationship with North Korea.

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