

The Solidification of US Government's Hostile Policy Towards North Korea from the Perspective of North Korean Nuclear Issue

Rong Jiang *

Tianjin Foreign Studies University, Tianjin, China

* 905227608@qq.com

Abstract. The key to solve the North Korean nuclear issue is the United States, but the United States never gives North Korea enough credit. The United States policy framework on the North Korean nuclear issue formulated by the last three governments has shown a clear hostility. In the military field, the United States and South Korea have held regular military exercises for several years on the grounds of self-defence; in the economic field, they have imposed sanctions against the North Korean in various fields and imposed strong unilateral sanctions, maliciously attacking the North Korean economy; in the diplomatic field, on the one hand, they have emphasized international cooperation, on the other hand, it transferred the responsibility of the North Korean nuclear issue to China. The lack of attention to North Korean nuclear issue has made it difficult for the United States to build a new peace and dialogue program; the United States has not played a leading role in guiding North Korea to abandon its nuclear program. The solidification of the hostile policy made the normalization of the U.S.-North Korea relations a long way off as well as slowed down the negotiations of the North Korean Nuclear Issue directly.

Keywords: North Korea Nuclear Issue; U.S.-North Korea Relations; U.S. Hostile Policy Towards North Korea; Limitations.

1. (Introduction) The Background of the Hostile Policy of the United States and the Nuclear Strategy of North Korea

After "9.11" event, the United States' economy began to show signs of recession. The outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008 confirmed that the United States' absolute domination of international politics has become history. Although the United States is still the leading country in the world, but in the face of numerous challenges, the United States is no longer able to fully lead the world, the future world will not be a situation where the United States alone dominates. [1] In the context of dealing with a series of regional concerns, such as Syria, Afghanistan, the Iranian nuclear issue, the Ukraine crisis, and the structural dilemma of the rise of China, the United States has managed to reverse the relative decline of its dominant power. Instead, the strategic focus was projected on the Asia-Pacific region, which gave birth to the "Asia-Pacific Rebalance" strategy, corresponding to the "strategic tolerance" policy towards North Korea. That is, the United States and its neighboring allies form a joint force and guarantee the security commitment of its allies in the Asia-Pacific region, so as to draw together and consolidate the alliance, and use the power to increase pressure on North Korea with a view to reestablishing its influence in all aspects of Northeast Asia. The United States did optimize its strategic resource allocation in northeast Asia, and the U.S.-ROK alliance deepened and actively engaged in military cooperation during the administrations of Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye. However, the confrontation between North Korea and U.S.-ROK alliance are escalating with the continuous promotion of North Korea's security arsenal. In the second half of Obama's term, North Korea's "Nuclear Arsenal" expansion has threatened the U.S. indigenous security, "Asia-Pacific Rebalance" strategy finally ended in gloom.

According to William C. Wohlforth, the unipolar powers are so powerful in the unipolar system that no other union can match them. The international system at the beginning of the 21st century is an unipolar system. The United States is the first country in the world's political history to have the advantage of comprehensive strength of economics, military, politics, geopolitics and technology.[2]

Soon after taking office, the Donald Trump administration was eager to take advantage of the United States' absolute power to extricate itself from the North Korean nuclear dilemma. He pushed forward the tactic of oppressing on North Korea, exerting maximum pressure on North Korea, and demonstrating the powerful force and comprehensive strength of the United States in a "visible way" by North Korea to force it to yield to the goal of nuclear disarmament. But the policy has not met the desired effect. After the North Korean hydrogen bomb test, Donald Trump developed and implemented a "limit Contact" policy, with the ultimate goal of achieving "Complete, Verifiable and Irreversible Denuclearization"(CVID) through the path of a grand bargain, [3] with a view to resolving the Korean nuclear issue in a short period of time. However, it is difficult to reach an agreement if the structural misplacement of demand and the conflict of core interests are not resolved in the negotiations. After two times of contacts between the U.S. and the North Korea, the mutual trust between two countries has been seriously overdrawn. The U.S. has lost the North Korea's trust and the difficulty of restarting the negotiations increased.

After the failure of the limit contact policy, the two sides maintain a high-intensity economic and low-intensity military conflict. For now, the Biden administration has focused on fighting the COVID-19 epidemic, restoring economic growth, resolving domestic racial contradiction, tackling climate change, and strengthening alliances, while moving less aggressively on North Korea's nuclear program. It is more open to contact with North Korea. In today's world, hegemony and Power politics still exist, sometimes even more so. It is manifested in: taking the western institution and ideology as the dominant force, relying on super-strong economic and military strength, arbitrarily interfering in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of "democracy", "human rights", "values", etc. , maybe even an invasion. [4] While demonstrating its willingness to talk, the Biden administration has repeatedly expressed deep concerns about its security and North Korea's "human rights problems" in its "values diplomacy". To sum up, the Biden administration's policy towards North Korea is essentially a product of a combination of "strategic patience" and "extreme pressure", that is, it does not set a high threshold of contact, but still persists in its hostile policy; It hope that the continuation of the North Korea's nuclear talks will yield "substantial" results, but it have not shown "substantial" sincerity on its own initiative.

2. Basic Contents of the U.S. Policy Toward the North Korea

The hostile color of the U.S. policy towards the North Korea is mainly manifested in the following three aspects. First, to consolidate and deepen the military alliance with South Korea, ensure security commitments to South Korea repeatedly; Seeking justification for the U.S. military's continuing presence on the peninsula and the pretext of regular U.S.–ROK military exercises to strengthen the "extended deterrence" against the North Korea. South Korea is the base for a ground war with North Korea and the primary bridgehead from which the United States blocks China, so ROK's importance to the United States is self-evident. The establishment of the joint response plan to local provocations and Park Geun-hye's two visits to the United States in 2013 and 2015 to confirm the status of the U.S.–ROK Alliance are examples of the significant deepening of the U.S.–ROK Alliance during the Park Geun-hye administration. And the alliance between the United States and South Korea has continued to develop in depth since Moon Jae-in took office. In October 2018, the U.S. and ROK Defense Ministries issued a joint statement at the 50th security meeting, reiterating that the status of the U.S. military in the ROK is unshakable and its functional positioning in responding to the situation on the peninsula will not change. [5] In this context, the joint U.S.–ROK exercise, which includes weapon of mass destruction and nuclear weapons, sought to improve the coordination and coordination of the joint military operations. The addition of the Ronald Reagan in October 2015 and the launch of the two-month vulture joint exercise in March 2017 have undoubtedly heightened tensions on the peninsula. Since the U.S. and North Korea entered the stalemate period, the scale of the military confrontation has declined but never stopped. After Biden took office, he saw the U.S.–ROK Military Exercise as central to a joint response to "External Threats". The joint command post

exercises in 2021, which took place in March and August, were small but still met with North Korean frustration.

Second, the multi-field, high-intensity economic sanction is one of the Trump cards of the U.S.' containment of North Korea, trying to lead the denuclearization of the negotiations. In economic war, the countries participating in sanctions usually hold a dominant position in international economic relations compared with the sanctioned ones. So this is primarily a privilege of the great economic powers, and is often associated with the Power Politics. [6] The United States belittled the North Korea excessively in the context of unequal hostile relations, and was particularly committed to strengthening and insisting on unilateral sanctions with a view to crushing the North Korea's economy and forcing the North Korea to consider nuclear disarmament negotiations. In particular, the targeted nature of financial sanctions has been continuously strengthened. The U.S. government has frozen the assets of individuals and trading entities such as banks and trading companies that support North Korea's nuclear proliferation activities. Its ultimate target is the political capital of the North Korean leadership. On February 12, 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a sanctions bill restricting North Korea's nuclear and satellite activities, which against individuals or entities trading with North Korea in areas such as weapon of mass destruction, military weapons and ammunition. The U.S. Treasury Department has also imposed additional sanctions against the North Korea on a number of occasions, and has pushed the Security Council to adopt a number of resolutions on sanctions against the North Korea, including resolutions 2270 and 2321, 2371, 2375 and 2397 such moves carry a distinct sense of "punishment". Economic sanctions can choke off the breakthrough of the key nuclear technology of the North Korea as well as the choke point or lifeline of the development of the whole country. The North Korean nuclear dilemma may be over if the North Korea economy flourishes since the United States leads the international countries to lift sanctions one after another. At that time, North Korea will fully enter the ranks of nuclear powers, while the U.S. will further decline in relative power, and its influence of international domination will be weakened by the challenge of North Korea's nuclear weapons. This is why the United States is not willing to ease the lifting of a number of important areas of sanctions during the U.S. -North Korea "Extreme Contact".

Third, strengthen international cooperation and force China into the "International Siege". Shifting the blame can save strategic costs more, often more economically than taking responsibility. As a leading country, the United States has the ability to assume and use the privilege to evade its own international responsibilities. If China does not meet U.S. expectations, that is, if China does not impose severe sanctions against North Korea with the aim of cracking down on the North Korea's economy, the United States began to stir up "Poor Regulation" of the "North Korean Puppet Theory" or "Connivance and Protection" of China's responsibility theory. Since the George's W Bush administration, the United States has made the North Korean Nuclear Issue the focus of high level talks between China and the United States, concluding that China's sanctions against North Korea are inadequate. While both China and the United States hold a genuine desire to denuclearize the peninsula, the United States would prefer China to move closer to the United States and its allies tightening sanctions against North Korea, while China calls for peace on the peninsula hoping that the North Korea will be given more opportunities to develop its economy and people's livelihood, and there are only moderate sanctions will be applied in some areas. Moreover, the unilateralism of "cooperate or face justice" exposes and widens the differences and contradictions between China and the United States on the North Korean Nuclear Issue. The United States uses the threat of strict "secondary sanctions" and "long-arm jurisdiction" to force China to exert pressure trying to disrupt China's resource allocation in northeast Asia. It forms a tight blockade with countries on "India-Pacific Chariots" to curb China's radiation in the western Pacific region, influence. In 2016, on the day of North Korea's nuclear test, U.S. Defense Secretary Jimmy Carter told a news conference that China should bear great responsibility for the development of the situation and should use its geographical position, history and influence to reverse it. [7] In April and November 2017, on the two Summit meetings during the Donald Trump administration, the United States emphasized the

"theory of the role of China", deliberately ignoring the special and precious historical revolutionary friendship between China and North Korea, they are trying to use China's influence on the Korean peninsula affairs to create diplomatic problems for China and make China passively involved in the quagmire of peripheral security dilemma.

3. Limitations of the U.S. Policies Towards North Korea

The three American governments not only failed to solve the North Korean nuclear issue properly, the hostile policies of reaching the same goal by different routes made the development of the North Korean nuclear issue impossible to solve. First of all, as the party of the North Korean nuclear issue, the lack of American attention to the North Korean nuclear issue has slowed down the process of North Korean nuclear negotiations. The profit-seeking of the leading country is the motive force of establishing international norms and their evolution. [8] It is in the best strategic interests of the dominant states to maintain the international order in which they dominate, since it guarantees their greatest international power. International norms have the dual functions of maintaining the stability of international order and reducing the cost of maintaining it. When some norms do more harm than good to the leading countries, the leading countries will revise the norms, thus promoting the evolution of norms. [9] The purpose of the United States' so-called strong pressure on the North Korea to maintain international order is to prevent the North Korea from breaking through the nuclear non-proliferation line and touching the vested regional interests of the United States in Northeast Asia. Even if the U.S.'s military stationed in South Korea does not withdraw from the Korean peninsula, the scale will be greatly reduced after the practical solution of the North Korean nuclear issue, and there is a risk that the US—ROK Alliance will disintegrate. In particular, the Obama administration's "Strategic Patience" missed the best opportunity to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, ultimately posing a huge threat and challenge to the security and stability of Northeast Asia. Even the Donald Trump administration, which has generated a willingness to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue once and for all, has shown a marked decline in its willingness to engage North Korea after two formal negotiations between the United States and North Korea failed to produce substantive results, this is because Donald Trump, facing a presidential election, must make some achievements in the short term to refresh the Republican Party's record and accumulate political capital. So when talks between the U.S. and North Korea fail to produce quick results, the talks lose their value. Choe Seon Hee(Korean name: 최선희), North Korea's first deputy foreign minister, said the dialogue was only a tool to deal with its political crisis and there was no need to negotiate with it. [10] Social problems such as the control of the new crown epidemic, the acute racial conflicts within U.S. society, and the accelerated control of "illegal entry" have distracted the U.S. government from its efforts to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue. As a result, the U.S.'s handling of North Korean nuclear issue during Donald Trump's presidency appears anticlimactic.

The U.S.'s policy towards North Korea is old-fashioned and lack of innovative spirit is another reason why the North Korean nuclear dilemma has not been able to achieve a substantive breakthrough. In particular, the Biden administration hesitated between the failed line of "strategic patience" and "extreme pressure" and tried to piece together the "Middle Road", making conservatism rise again. Hostile policy is the only option in this situation. Tony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State, has said that U.S.'s policy and pressure on North Korea will rely on the advice of its allies, Japan and South Korea. In February 2021, shortly after taking office, Biden called Moon seeking to mend an alliance with South Korea that had been weakened by rising military spending. Biden said he would work out a framework for North Korea policy that would take ROK's input into account. On the economic front, the Biden administration has stuck to its traditional path of strong sanctions against North Korea. In June 2021, Biden announced a one year extension of the state of emergency, which naturally extended the economic sanctions. Once the United States and North Korea negotiate, the differences between the two sides are difficult to reconcile, and North Korea has repeatedly rejected the United States to extend an olive branch of dialogue. The Biden administration has made no real

breakthrough in its policy which has not appropriately eased sanctions against North Korea. They failed to show North Korea the sincerity of U. S.-North Korea contacts, and then the problem of dealing with the periodic cycle of fear of the North Korean nuclear crisis will face more constraints. Accordingly, the U. S. government's options on the path of approach are extremely limited. As things stand, the Biden administration continues the tradition of previous administrations, taking advantage of the significant power gap between the United States and North Korea. It suppress North Korea in all aspects by using their voice in the international community, the gap in their appeal, the recognition of anti-proliferation countries, and North Korea's limited international development space. With the increasing complexity of resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, unless there is a fundamental and substantial change in the direction of principle in the U.S. policy towards North Korea, there may be a new series of fluctuations and relapses in the U. S.-North Korea relations.

The United States adheres to the principle that the North Korea must abide by the United States' ideas and principles and take the lead in carrying out actions. It will severely punish the North Korea once it has nuclear and missile activities. On the general line, the punishment is excessive but the motivation is insufficient, and the reasonable and appropriate way has not been taken to guide the North Korea out of the dilemma of unbalanced security development. Compared with the United States, North Korea is a small country whose economy is heavily dependent on the external environment. Its financial, energy and high-tech resources are underdeveloped, and it has long been notorious internationally for its insistence on nuclear weapons. Therefore, the United States believes that it will leave North Korea Battle of Gaixia and isolated by increasing absolute military deterrence, cutting off sources of funding and energy imports, strengthening international siege and blockade, which will destroy the North Korea's international trade and financial system, strangling the nuclear and missile programs and even the regime's financial resources. Although North Korea's annual average trade volume has plummeted and its trade deficit has soared after the U.S. imposed comprehensive sanctions, U.S.'s move clearly underestimates North Korea's ability to withstand pressure. A single-minded crackdown will only consolidate the legacy of North Korea's "Military-First Politics" and ignoring the livelihood issues of the north which could trigger another "March of misery.". Moreover, in the area of international cooperation, the United States disregarding the interests and concerns of other countries, has imposed unilateralism and conducted "Coercive Diplomacy" to control and oppress other countries to urge North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons. This has led to frequent gaps in international cooperation between the United States and some other countries, thus providing some room for North Korea to develop its nuclear capabilities. The engagement and dialogue proposed by the government of the United States has less to do with action. The United States is more concerned with safeguarding its vested strategic interests in northeast Asia and the establishment of a nuclear non-proliferation regime. The legitimate security concerns of the North Korea and the peaceful settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue are not part of the United States' diplomatic agenda.

4. Conclusion

The stalemate of the North Korean nuclear situation poses a long-term threat to the United States and other countries in northeast Asia. The nuclear policy of the United States is the backbone of the interaction between the two countries. However, in recent years, the United States government is faced with many pressing issues such as the war against terrorism, the fierce competition between China and the United States, and the loosening of the Alliance system led by the United States. The internal contradictions are also increasingly prominent: economic recovery, epidemic control, illegal entry and other social governance issues emerge one after another. Against this background, the United States is inevitably becoming less concerned about the North Korean nuclear issue, and the annual increase in North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities has made the North Korean nuclear situation increasingly appear to be out of the control of the United States. There have been a number of changes in the U.S. administration that have resulted in a lack of coherence in its policies towards

North Korea, and each new administration takes some time to develop and fill in the new policy framework for North Korea. However these policies are much the same, neither is out of the hostile mode toward the North Korea: military deterrence (including war intimidation) , high-intensity sanctions and strikes in various fields of the economy, and diplomatic isolation of the North Korea by uniting several countries, in the hope that North Korea will abandon its nuclear program if it collapses or if it is not able to bear the pressure. The U.S. government chose hostile "strategic patience" at a time when the North Korean nuclear issue was expected to be resolved smoothly, failed to nip the immature North Korean missile development in the bud, and instead opened the prelude to high-intensity sanctions, missed the perfect opportunity to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. As a small country, North Korea has a low fault-tolerance rate and high cost of trial and error. The North Korea has taken advantage of the time gap between the change of the U.S. government, seized every opportunity to develop nuclear weapons, and gradually adapted to the hostile U.S. policy of taking sanctions as the main path. Therefore, the ossified hostile policy of the United States towards the North Korea is making the nuclear situation of the North Korea more difficult and complicated, and the United States will pay more price for the North Korea to stop and freeze its nuclear weapons.

References

- [1] Ruan Jianping, contemporary world economy and politics, Wuhan University Press, 2012, p. 53.
- [2] William C. Wohlforth. "The Stability of a Unipolar World". *International Security*,1999,24(1):22-33.
- [3] Li Li, Jandbin: the Donald Trump administration's adjustment to North Korea Policy, *International Forum*, 20212, p. 34.
- [4] Ruan Jianping, contemporary world economy and politics, Wuhan University Press, 2012, p. 62.
- [5] Lv Chunyan, on the new trend of the Korean-American Alliance under the turn of the peninsula situation, *Journal of Northeast Asia*, No. 1,2020, p. 44.
- [6] Li Shaojun, an introduction to international politics (third edition), Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2009, p. 258.
- [7] Zhou Zhiran et al., "China's responsibility" in western advocacy of North Korea nuclear issue, *Global Times*, Sept. 12,2016(2021, Oct. 16), <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/9cakrnjxytb>.
- [8] Yan Xuetong and Yang Yuan, an analysis of international relations (second edition), Peking University Press, 2013, p. 287.
- [9] Yan Xuetong, a theory of international relations based on moral realism, *studies of international problems*, No. 5,2014, p. 113.
- [10] Choe Seon Hee, first deputy minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK: there is no need to sit with the U.S., <http://www.kcna.kp/kcna.user.article.retrieveviewinfolist.kcmsf#this>, 2021,17 October 2020.