Recasting 'Nuclear-Free Korean Peninsula' as a Sino-American language for co-ordination

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Abstract: A series of Six-Party Talks involving the United States, China, Japan, South and North Koreas, and Russia resulted in the emergence of a narrative of 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula'. Given the prevalence of nuclear weapons amidst Sino-American rivalry, the area is hardly 'nuclear-free'. Instead, the phrase has evolved into a convenient language for the US and China to signal to each other that there is a coincidence of wants in preserving the multilateral framework despite the *Realpolitik* dynamics. This article provides a Constructivist perspective to this particular aspect of Sino-American balance of power by taking the language of 'nuclear-free' seriously, recasting the narrative as a shared signifier for the US and China to co-ordinate their language despite the lingering bilateral rivalry.

The sixth round of Six-Party Talks that started in March 2007 replicated previous sets of negotiations. Talks were sporadic at best. Despite the agreement reached in the fifth round (February 2005)—e.g., the denuclearisation of Korean Peninsula; normalisation of relations between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK; North Korea); normalisation of Japan-DPRK relations; and economic assistance[1]—the US presidential elections in November 2008 added an element of uncertainty, with North Korea launching yet another missile in April 2009. In short, the numerous Six-Party Talks hosted by China failed to halt North Korea's nuclear ambitions. If anything, it was the DPRK which benefited from the Beijing talks: *status quo* is preserved while its nuclear programme continues, despite a rebuke from its only remaining ally, China.

Pyongyang's intransigence continues while Sino-American relationship undergoes various conflicts, ranging from renewed trade dispute over Chinese exports to allegations of cyber espionage involving Google, and the familiar exchange of words over American arms sale to Taiwan. President Barack Obama's audience with Dalai Lama in February 2010 elicited renewed criticisms from Beijing. Above all, China's flexing of its naval muscles in South China Sea and beyond adds potency to the resilience of balance of power considerations in the Asia-Pacific region. Their mutual scepticisms seem to endorse the view that *Realpolitik* remains the *modus operandi* in Northeast Asia, and that Realism prevails as the sole theoretical tool for interpreting Sino-American relationship.

Despite this, it is striking to note China's willingness to remain an 'honest broker' in the Six-Party framework by admonishing Kim Jong-il to be less obsessed with the purported American 'enmity'.[2] It seems as if the North Korean nuclear issue acts as an informal Sino-American vehicle for dialogue despite the sensitive bilateral relationship. In other words, North Korea provides a 'common forum' for the US and China such that they are content to be engaged in a careful co-ordination of language by reiterating their mutual desire for a 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula', despite—if not because of—the bilateral frictions elsewhere.

How are we to conceptualise the emergence of such a 'forum' amidst Sino-American balance of power? After having repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1993, and again in late 2002,[3] North Korea uses its nuclear programme as a bargaining chip to blackmail the US and its allies, not to mention China. Yet, this compels Washington and Beijing to utter similar-sounding pronouncements in such a way that the shared narrative of 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' emerges as a common signifier denoting a significant coincidence of wants between the two governments indicating their mutual anxiety that the pursuit of balance of power potentially threatens the stability of Northeast Asia. Realism as a theoretical tool might help explain some of this; but the balance of power calculations alone cannot account for the emergence of a common language. This demonstrates that the bilateral balance of power needs to be understood in a nuanced way: while *Realpolitik* is still relevant, the capacity for Washington and Beijing to share a common language within this particular context also needs to be taken seriously. As such, the current diplomatic context encourages an additional Constructivist reading on top of the familiar Realist explanation in which we need to explore the language and symbols exchanged in the process. The article aims to explore the co-ordination of language through which the US and China have come to utilise this crisis as a forum for pronouncing shared anxieties.

This article is divided into five sections. The first section provides a very brief overview of the North Korean nuclear crisis that led to the emergence of a co-ordinated language. The second section provides an account of how language needs to be taken seriously. Given the importance of perceptions in International Relations (IR), diplomatic relations can be recast as a macro-level exchange of symbols. If balance of power is a social construct,[4] then its linguistic framework can be analysed so that the inherent meanings of phrases such as 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' can

also be discerned. The third section recasts the narratives of 'nuclear-free' as a language borne of iterated interactions throughout the North Korean nuclear crisis. This shared language provides a forum for both the US and China to reassure one another that at least they can co-ordinate their pronouncements, a precious commodity given Sino-American tensions elsewhere. The fourth section is a discourse analysis on the various uses of 'nuclear-free' narratives by both Washington and Beijing, paying close attention to the language through which both governments 'talk about' nuclear weapons and regional security in Northeast Asia. Finally, the fifth section discusses the need for recasting 'nuclear-free' narratives as a common language, suggesting that the Sino-American balance of power requires a more nuanced assessment.

A Brief Background

Historically, the Korean Peninsula is considered the powder keg of Northeast Asia and the conventional wisdom considers balance of power as the *modus operandi* for engagement in the region.[5] Christopher Hughes argues that the crisis emerged after North Korea repeatedly refused International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to monitor its nuclear processing plant at Yongbyon throughout the mid-1990s, providing circumstantial evidence that Pyongyang continued with a clandestine nuclear programme.[6] President George Bush (senior) stated in November 1991 that DPRK's alleged nuclear activity constituted a threat to regional security,[7] and 'by late 1992…the IAEA had determined that North Korea had not fully declared its pre-1992 plutonium productions'.[8] Despite its sympathy towards the DPRK, China appreciated that the nuclear allegation was potentially destabilising. As Ming Liu argues,

> China's response toward the nuclear issue is clear. It represents not only a damage to North Korea's development and survival, but also a major problem for China's relations with the US and its diplomacy in the international community. At most, it is a grave threat to Chinese long-term security interests. China's Foreign Ministry described Pyongyang's action as dangerous adventurism aimed at obtaining US concessions. Some radical views even maintained that this is also an attempt to blackmail China.[9]

As such, China's involvement in the North Korean nuclear dispute is symptomatic of the larger framework of balance of power in Northeast Asia.

China and North Korea became aware of the imperative for regime survival following the fall of Berlin Wall. To that extent, Beijing's reluctance in persuading Pyongyang to forgo its nuclear programme was understandable; and the *Realpolitik* inclination within the Chinese leadership identified with North Korean nuclear calculations. For an impecunious state, the weapons of mass destruction are 'the only means of attack' available to it.[10] The inherent danger of such a zero-sum posturing suggested that once Pyongyang went nuclear, other states, notably Japan, would follow suit thereby precipitating a regional arms race. Such fears intensified following the launch of a North Korean *Taepodong* missile across Japan in August 1998.[11] A *Realpolitik* reading of Chinese foreign policy suggests that the perceived need to balance power against the American alliance compelled China to bankroll North Korea in order to sustain it as a buffer zone.

Both the US and China were reluctant to take decisive measures against North Korea, resulting in the October 1994 Framework Agreement between Washington and Pyongyang. It was agreed that, in exchange for North Korea freezing its nuclear programme, the regime was to be granted 'nuclear technology and energy supplies estimated to cost US$4 billion in total over a five-year period'.[12] While the Agreement was primarily a bilateral arrangement between the US and DPRK, allies on both sides were enlisted to help. As *The Economist* puts it, 'America, Japan, and China all have an interest in avoiding another crisis in the region whether triggered by a sudden increase in the flow of North Korean refugees or by another rocket-propelled raspberry from its unpredictable regime'.[13] China assumed the role of a broker, leading to a four-party meeting in April 1996 involving two Koreas, the US, and China providing a forum not only for them to try to iron out the differences, but also an opportunity for Beijing and Washington to engage in bilateral negotiations on wider issues.[14] In other words, the nuclear issue represented a double coincidence of wants between the US and China over Northeast Asian security in general, such that the mid-1990s precipitated a period of delicate balance of power between the two states. As for Beijing, it was felt necessary to adopt a cautious approach hoping that neither Washington nor Pyongyang walked away from the fragile negotiations.

Gary Samore notes that the admission by North Korea in October 2002 that 'it was pursuing a secret [uranium] enrichment programme took Washington by

surprise'.[15] Following the revelation, the first round of Six-Party Talks began in Beijing in August 2003 to forestall a potential downward spiral, with North Korea threatening to withdraw from the NPT by the end of the year.[16] It is within this context that the second Six-Party Talks were held in February 2004 without any discernible outcome, followed by another round of Six-Party Talks in July 2005, only to re-affirm participants' dream of 'denuclearised' Korean Peninsula.[17]

A *communiqué* was finally agreed following the end of the seventh round of talks in September 2005. In it, the participants reluctantly 'agreed to recognise the right of North Korea to develop a peaceful nuclear programme, reiterating the hopes for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.[18] A change in tactic by the Bush administration meant that the US finally acquiesced to a series of bilateral talks with the DPRK. However, Pyongyang remained defiant, detonating a nuclear device in October 2006 eliciting a furious response from China. In an uncharacteristically strong language, *Renmin Ribao* stated that 'the DPRK ignored [the] universal opposition of the international community and flagrantly conducted the nuclear test on 9 October. The Chinese government is resolutely opposed to it'.[19]

Tensions mounted over the Korean Peninsula in April 2009 when North Korea launched further missiles claiming them to be 'experimental communications satellite[s]'.[20] The arrest, and subsequent release, of two American journalists and a South Korean worker in mid-2009 represented North Korea's increasing defiance. Superficially, it seems that the Six-Party Talks are doomed to failure, exacerbated by omnipresent differences in American and Chinese approaches to sanctions.[21] Furthermore, such differences seem to vindicate balance of power considerations between the US and China as a primary mode of analysis in appreciating the North Korean nuclear crisis within the larger context of international politics in the Asia-Pacific region.

Rivalry and Common Language

The balance of power explanation seems relevant in explaining Sino-American rivalry: the very instance of nuclear standoff over the Korean Peninsula can be explained away by it; and the recurrence of diplomatic and trade disputes seem to

vindicate Realist perspectives. Indeed, balance of power considerations can be readily identified. On the one hand, there is the US alliance with its nuclear umbrella stretching to the border with North Korea. On the other hand, China poses a regional counter-weight as another nuclear power with a rising military, especially naval, presence in South China Sea and beyond.[22] Despite calls for a 'nuclear-free' Korean Peninsula, nuclear weapons proliferate in and around the region, such that it is tempting to cast away the language of 'nuclear-free' as a mere lip-service. *The Economist* admonishes the Obama administration to '[send a signal] that America will balance a rising China in such a way that China's neighbours never have to take sides'.[23] Hence, the default template for explaining the international politics of East Asia remains predominantly *Realpolitik*.

Yet, it is also the case that Beijing and Washington are careful not to escalate the friction. Alexander Wendt suggests that balance of power is a social construct:[24] any given social context is a product of socialisation by the parties involved, so that language plays an important role in it; and balance of power as a particular relationship is no exception. Power is relational, and needs multiple actors; and balance implies a cautious interaction between and among those involved. Put differently, power as a social concept means we need to be mindful of the 'psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised'—including ones engaged in balance of power dynamics.[25] Hence, we need to be aware of the inherent exchange of symbols and language, since it constitutes a crucial element within the social dimensions of balance of power in which the aim is not just about 'frustrat[ing] the threatened preponderance of others, but should recognise the responsibility not to upset the balance itself'.[26] This means that balance of power entails a careful exchange of signals. An exploration into such intangible dimensions is what is amiss with the current *Realpolitik* depiction of Northeast Asia. The penchant for straight-forward balance of power assumptions prevents us from considering how a context can gradually change over time, as participants realise the inherent dangers of the *status quo*, and seek to ameliorate some of its worst excesses, while the overall context of rivalry remains intact.

Hence, what we need is a nuanced reading of balance of power as a social relationship in which language constitutes a crucial factor. There is the temptation to enlist balance of power as the sole explanation for the North Korean crisis; but it is striking that the phrase, 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula', is frequently reiterated by

both the US and China in this particular context. Superficially, balance of power considerations seem taken for granted in explaining North Korean motives in developing its nuclear capability and the Sino-American reactions to it; but once the gaze turns on to the US and China, they reiterate similar-sounding pronouncements in favour of further negotiations instead of preparing for military conflict, at least for the time being. Regardless of what Beijing and Washington mean by the phrase; and despite the existence of conflicts elsewhere, it seems that the nuclear crisis necessitates some form of linguistic co-ordination. China and the US seem inclined towards co-ordination as a preferred mode of interaction within the prevailing balance of power. Julie Gilson argues that the US did pay attention to Chinese concerns over Washington's aggressive tactics against North Korea,[27] and that China is beginning 'to show a willingness to promote joint leadership' on the matter.[28] The meeting between Chinese and American officials in March 2010 suggests this cautious balance: US State Department spokesperson, Philip Crowley, states that 'we are focusing on the future of important issues that we can work together', while Zhao Qizheng of China People's Political Consultative Conference argues that 'two drivers [the US and China] must consult with each other to drive the car'.[29] As such, it seems that the two are exchanging tacit signals aimed at forestalling a regional nuclear arms-race.

Thus, on the one hand, we are witnessing the resilience of balancing of power dynamics. Despite Pyongyang's defiance, Beijing remains its steadfast ally, with Hu Jintao telling Kim Jong-il in October 2006 that the bilateral friendship is the 'common treasure of both nations'.[30] The American nuclear umbrella remains relevant as well. Ruan Zongze suggests that the US has steadily strengthened 'existing relations with its allies in the Asia-Pacific region such as Japan', buttressing its counter-weight against China.[31] On the other hand, it is within this context that both Beijing and Washington seemingly share a willingness to sustain the Six-Party framework, as if there is a double coincidence of wants between the US and China over the benefits of protracted negotiations despite North Korean defiance. Pyongyang's pledge never to return to the Talks seems to have hardened both the American and Chinese resolve to keep on talking for the time being.

While it is perfectly reasonable to expect the parties to maintain conversation while balance of power remains the predominant mode of interaction, the fact remains that the US and China are both reiterating the narrative of 'nuclear-free' to the extent

that this shared language seems to mean much more than what it implies on the surface. Put differently, while the 'nuclear free' narratives might be a convenient lip-service for them, it is significant that the parties seem content in being associated with it despite its vagueness. Hence, it can be argued that some kind of co-ordination is emerging from the Six-Party framework, providing Beijing and Washington with a convenient forum upon which an informal line of communication is maintained precisely because the two are engaged in rivalry elsewhere. Within this context, 'nuclear-free' seems to have gained an additional meaning symbolising American and Chinese *non*-intention of escalating this particular conflict. Balance of power might still be the *modus operandi* in Northeast Asia, but the language suggests that the parties are willing to collude with one another, at least in sending out a common message to Pyongyang—and to one another—that a military confrontation needs to be ruled out in the immediate future.

It is also the case that balance of power as a main toolkit for understanding international politics in East Asia needs a nuanced approach. Appreciating Sino-American differences in material capabilities are useful, but their use of language also needs exploration. This is why language needs to be taken seriously. Even if both Beijing and Washington consider denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula to be an impossibility, they nonetheless regurgitate 'nuclear free' in their official pronouncements. This begs the question of why this remains the case if the situation is hopeless. Perhaps 'nuclear free' is devoid of its literal meaning; but the utterance of this phrase by both the US and China seems to suggest that it entails an altogether different signal that both sides are willing to use the Six-Party framework as a precious vehicle of dialogue, precisely because the relationship is fraught with conflicts. It is through their mutual desire to minimise the potentials for escalation that a need for a common language emerges; and their interaction—both hostile and accommodating—provides the backdrop for the emergence of certain set of signifiers that both Beijing and Washington can utilise to forestall a crisis.[32] The Six-Party Talks suggest that, while balance of power remains resilient, it is also the case that co-ordination is simultaneously taking place. The common language of 'nuclear-free' acts as a signal that the US and China are sending out tacit reassurances that, in this particular context, they are willing to co-ordinate their language over Pyongyang's nuclear programme and Northeast Asian security in general.

‘Nuclear-Free’ Narratives as a Common Signifier of Mutual Anxiety

Superficially, the balance of power dynamics remain as China enhances its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. People’s Liberation Army Navy’s (PLAN) Rear Admiral, Yin Dunping, says, ‘[i]t is important to accelerate and improve the navy’s abilities to cross the ocean [to] escort, rescue and evacuate Chinese nationals abroad, maintain peace, and a variety of other military task’.[33] In response, the US Admiral, Michael Mullen, suggests that China is ‘very focused on the US navy and our bases in that part of the world’.[34] Furthermore, President Obama points out the latent zero-sum mentality within Sino-American policy circles, stating that ‘some in China think that America will try to contain China’s ambitions; some in America think that there is something to fear in a rising China’.[35] Yet, a further exploration reveals that a common language of ‘nuclear-free Korean Peninsula’ is emerging as a result of mutual anxieties shared by both Beijing and Washington. It is as if the symbolic nature of nuclear weapons and overall balance of power have mutated from being a tool of security into a vehicle of potential danger.

The threat posed by nuclear weapons is real for the actors involved, but what the nuclear weapons mean to them is also crucial in appreciating their shared anxieties. Wendt’s characterisation provides one perspective. He argues that ‘[f]ive hundred British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the US than five North Korean ones because of the shared understandings that underpin them’.[36] To be sure, nuclear weapons remain deadly and that is one of the primary reasons why states value them. Yet, it is also the case that danger can boomerang-back on to nuclear powers themselves in the form of downward spiral of threat perceptions—the security dilemma.[37] Nuclear weapons lose their efficacy as symbols of national security, and instead, re-emerge as potential drivers of insecurity, prompting a reconstruction of a different linguistic structure through which nuclear weapons are portrayed. Needless to say, both China and the US rely on them; but once proliferation of nuclear weapons reaches a certain point, the sense of enhanced security diminishes, superseded by the uncertainties of potential arms race as other players also seek to enhance their sense of security.[38] As such, Sino-American anxieties over each other’s intentions in East Asia

that fuelled nuclear proliferation in the first place evolved into their mutual concern about what might happen if North Korea is left unchecked. Hence, an interesting element of the nuclear crisis is that both China and the US seem intent on signalling that a security dilemma is emerging; and that they are ready to share a common language to minimise the inherent risks.

Thus, the narrative of denuclearisation denotes the existence of mutual fears about nuclear proliferation in the vicinity of Korean Peninsula; and the Six-Party framework presents itself as a convenient linguistic space within which the two can engage in an informal dialogue. The nuclear crisis as a significant factor within this rivalry is now returning to haunt the two regional powers with a probability of unfettered arms race in Northeast Asia. Effectively, this is an Agent-Structure issue in practice.[39] Agents reproduce structures; but there is nothing to prevent the structure from imparting contradictions between the agents' understandings of the *status quo*, on the one hand; and their desire for a more accommodating environment, on the other. The Sino-American balance of power created a particular context within which Pyongyang justifies its nuclear programme, which in turn precipitates a new international environment that Beijing and Washington find dangerous.

David Campbell argues that '[d]anger is not an objective condition. It is not a thing that exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat',[40] to the extent that '[a]nything *can* be a risk'.[41] The centrepiece of debate within Six-Party Talks entails the US arguing that North Korean nuclear programme threatens the stability of Northeast Asia, something to which Beijing tacitly agrees, on the one hand; while the DPRK emphasises that it is designed as a defensive posture, *vis-à-vis*, the US, on the other. Yet, it must be recognised that both arguments pay lip service to the recognition that denuclearisation is a necessity.[42] This is why the language of 'nuclear-free' needs to be taken seriously. The narrative might be a lip-service; but the fact remains that this vacuous phrase is reiterated in various policy pronouncements as a convenient signifier. Furthermore, the Sino-American reiteration of this phrase provides an interesting instance of co-ordination in an otherwise sensitive and adversarial relationship. The Obama administration seems particularly intent on sending out the 'right' signals, with President Obama stating that '[t]he relationship between the US and China will shape the 21st century, which makes it as important as any bilateral relationship in the world… That is the responsibility that together we bear',[43] casting the bilateral relationship as 'partners out of necessity, but also out of

opportunity'.[44] Hence, it is not as if peace is breaking out over Northeast Asia; but it also adds certain symbolism to the narratives of 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula'. It is an ambitious term and it is uncertain whether or not the interlocutors believe what they say. Whatever its meaning, it has been reified into a language through which China and the US preserve dialogue while animosities continue elsewhere.

To be sure, a Constructivist reading of the standoff does not predict an amicable outcome. Realists such as David Jones and Michael Smith quote Alastair Iain Johnston in deriding Constructivism's 'mythic "story about path dependence and mutual constitution" between the purported identity construction in East Asia on the one hand, and the reality of East Asian regionalism on the other'.[45] Yet, it is striking to note that the narrative of 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' exists despite such Realist scepticisms. A penchant for balance of power considerations treats the narratives of 'nuclear-free' as mere lip-service, but this only begs the question of why they bother with such a language. Rather, their mutual desire for a common signifier needs to be taken seriously. While the interests of Beijing and Washington differ, it is a puzzle to see the two states uttering very similar narratives. Thus, only by appreciating the potentials for the emergence of a common platform can we make sense of this coincidence. The crucial point is that Sino-American balance of power and the associated sensitivities are real; but it is within these structural confines that a co-ordinated language emerges. This is one more reason why we need to delve into the very language upon which the Sino-American balance of power is constructed

Jutta Weldes *et al.* argue that, '[a]ctors and their insecurities are naturalised in the sense that they are treated as facts that, because they are given by the nature of the interstate system, can be taken for granted'.[46] The North Korean nuclear crisis is an end product of this taken-for-grantedness: nuclear weapons were taken for granted as enhancing security. The problem emerges once such assumption boomerangs back to re-emerge as the very source of regional insecurity already made volatile as a result of other conflicts. This reified danger and the perceived need to ameliorate it partly explains China's penchant for performing the role of an honest broker.[47] Also, it is plausible to suggest that the realisation of the *status quo* as risky and unsustainable compelled the US to claim in July 2005 that, it has 'no intention to attack or invade [DPRK]', enticing North Korea to agree to the longer-term goal of 'denuclearisation of Korean peninsula'.[48] In the previous rounds, similar acknowledgements to the limits of balance of power were made. China recognised the potentials for an arms

race in Northeast Asia in April 2000;[49] and North Korea announced in February 2004 that all it wanted was a 'security assurance'—something they still desire.[50] As Roy argues, Beijing understands that DPRK's adventures can potentially hurt itself, rather than strengthen its national interest in the longer run.[51] Pre-9/11, Norman Levin notes that Beijing played a 'generally constructive role in supporting efforts to draw North Korea into the world community.'[52] The irony is that, following 9/11, Pyongyang's stance effectively brought together rivals, inadvertently encouraging co-ordination between the US and China in this particular crisis. Hence, while a Realist theorising would have predicted an arms race in Northeast Asia, the result is that major actors are applying brakes on this purportedly dangerous momentum.[53]

'Nuclear-Free Korean Peninsula' as a Shared Language

The language of 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' as a familiar signifier within Sino-American foreign policy pronouncements is most apparent in the October 1994 *Agreed Framework on the Nuclear Issue* between the US and the DPRK. While the bulk of the document focuses on the technicalities of providing North Korea with light-water reactors (LWRs), there are numerous references to the idea of creating a 'nuclear-free' peninsula. The second paragraph of the Preamble refers to 'the June 11, 1993 Joint Statement of the US and the DPRK to achieve peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula', and that the parties have 'decided to take the following actions for the resolution of the nuclear issue'. After discussing the technical details of LWR provision, Paragraph III stipulates that:

> III. Both sides will work together for peace and security of a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.
>
> 1. The US will provide formal assurance to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the US.
> 2. The DPRK will consistently take steps to implement the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.
> 3. The DPRK will engage in North-South dialogue, as this agreed framework will help create an atmosphere that promotes such a dialogue.

The *Agreed Framework* implies a tacit compact between the US and DPRK that a nuclear standoff somehow needs to be ameliorated. China, too, seems to appreciate

that the vague language of 'nuclear-free' can be leveraged to send a signal that multi-party framework needs to be preserved. On the one hand, Beijing's stance is that developing states have the right to pursue a safe nuclear programme;[54] but on the other hand, the Chinese foreign ministry had to point out in January 2003—after Pyongyang announced its withdrawal from the NPT—that 'we hope to continue to safeguard the universality of the NPT and will continue to work for the peaceful solution of the nuclear question of the DPRK'.[55] Hence, the North Korean nuclear issue seems to have prescribed China's preference into pursuing the role of an honest broker as its national interest.

Even if 'nuclear-free' is a lip-service, it nevertheless constitutes a central signifier in the language of Six-Party framework. The *Joint Statement* at the fourth round in September 2005 sates that they were held 'for the cause of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula' to promote 'denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula'.[56] The then-Vice President Hu Jintao reiterated similar sentiments. In May 2002, he stated that the 'aim of China's foreign policy is to safeguard world peace' and that 'it is in the common interests of China and the US to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula'.[57] At the close of the fifth round of talks in February 2007, the participants reiterated their commitment towards 'a major and solid stride…towards the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula'.[58] Within the larger framework of regional security in Northeast Asia, Hu noted in May 2002 that, 'for various reasons, China and the US do not see eye to eye on some issues. Yet we can, through dialogue on an equal footing, increase our understanding, expand areas of agreement and generally reduce our differences'.[59] Victor Cha argues that China's goal is 'non-confrontational solution and a "cherishing" of the Agreed Framework'.[60] The narratives of denuclearisation have become a convenient tool for the antagonists to reassure one another of their intentions—or *non*-intention—in light of their mutual misgivings. This denotes a set of emerging parameters within which the North Korean nuclear issue is to be framed; and in turn both the US and China are beginning to leverage the North Korean crisis into a valuable forum for informal dialogue.

Soeya Yoshihide suggests that China understands the magnitude of nuclear allegations against Pyongyang, and realises its ramifications not only for the stability of the Korean Peninsula, but also for the region as a whole.[61] David Kang doubts the validity of balance of power assumptions in Northeast Asian IR in general, arguing that 'China seems no more revisionist or adventurous now than it was before the end

of the Cold War. And no Asian country appears to be balancing against it'.[62] David Shambaugh argues that China, along with the US, 'share a common desire for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region',[63] making it easier for the US and China to employ similar language,[64] with Ruan Zongze adding that despite the strengthening of US-Japan alliance, both Beijing and Washington are trying to allay mutual fears.[65] As such, Beijing seems confident in preserving its status as an honest broker since this role comes with a sense of reassurance and intent in upholding the language of denuclearisation. This is apparent in Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing's audience with Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang in March 2004 to lure North Korea back to the negotiating table,[66] as well as Chinese delight in seeing the atmosphere improve slightly during July 2005,[67] before Pyongyang's renewed intransigence by 2009. Despite its fragile nature, the symbolism itself that the talks are alive is enough to satisfy Chinese self-confidence in sustaining the momentum.

Dovetailing of The Sino-American Language

China's resolve during the round of negotiations in July 2005 cannot simply be brushed aside as mere posturing, for that fails to address why China jealously guards its stance as an honest broker, given that a failure can diminish Beijing's status and confidence. Acknowledging US concerns over alleged uranium enrichment programme during February 2004 is a strong indication that China is keen to keep the narratives of 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' alive.[68] As Alastair Iain Johnston puts it, 'China's leaders prefer the geopolitical status quo',[69] and hence shares an interest with the US and Japan in 'supporting the institutions designed to (restrain) North Korea' from tipping the nuclear balance.[70] Adam Ward also argues that, 'Washington and Beijing both view Pyongyang as a menace to regional security, and they share a commitment to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula'.[71] Hence, it seems that China is content to exploit the nuclear crisis as a convenient forum to maintain a particular linguistic framework along with the US.

Back in 1997, Joseph Nye noted that 'the US has rejected the argument that conflict with China is inevitable', given the multitude of problems that can only be ameliorated through co-ordination rather than conflict.[72] A closer inspection of

Chinese actions casts doubts over whether *Realpolitik* thinking alone can explain the complexities of collusion amidst conflicts. Kyung-won Kim argues that,

> At the moment, the assumption that 'order' does not mean a hegemonic hierarchy seems to have freed the region's major powers from the kind of compulsion or supremacy that characterised Asian international relations in the past.[73]

Sung-Joo Han adds that '[i]n the short- to medium-term, China has the most to gain diplomatically from improved relations between North and South Korea', and that, '[i]t is a great irony that Korea today represents the principal strategic area where Chinese and US interests coincide and the two countries cooperate'.[74]

This is the case even amid the transition from a Clintonian 'strategic partnership' to 'strategic competition' under the Bush administration, and then on to the Obama administration's enthusiasm for closer bilateral relations. Indeed, the US finds it expedient to exploit China's self-professed role as an honest broker. Ward notes that 'Beijing secured US participation in the talks by arguing that these would, through China's participation, be multilateral than bilateral as Pyongyang had insisted'.[75] The linguistic space provided by the backdrop of 9/11, as well as the North Korean nuclear programme, made dialogue between Washington and Beijing less cumbersome, since their shared threat perception made the two aware that only through co-ordinated language can the threat of North Korean nuclear weapons be addressed. Alternatively, a Sino-American split over North Korea implies a forfeiture of prospects for future co-ordination.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry stated in November 2000 that China 'has always been devoted to peace and stability on the [Korean] peninsula' and it is 'willing to continue to play a constructive role for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula'.[76] Furthermore, Qin Gam, the spokesperson for the Chinese delegation to the fifth round, noted in July 2005 that 'since the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is complicated, it is normal for parties concerned to have different stances…. The heads of six delegations also agreed to "fish together"'.[77] In highlighting the linkage between the nuclear crisis and the need for wider Sino-American dialogue, Premier Wen Jiabao argued in September 2008 that the US and China

> may not see eye to eye on certain issues. This is nothing terrible. As long as we engage in dialogue and consultation on the basis of equality and mutual respect, we will be able to gradually dispel misgivings and enhance mutual trust.[78]

The Obama administration follows a similar line of argument, with Hillary Clinton stating in an interview to a Japanese journalist in February 2009 that 'the six-party talks are a good forum', adding that 'Japan, China, and the United States have a lot of concerns in common', leaving open the possibility of a 'trilateral dialogue'.[79] In another interview to CNN, she argues that 'North Korea can be either of those ["tyrannical unpredictable country" or "a country that has the ability to act rationally"]'.[80] *The New York Times* quotes her as saying that 'the most immediate issue is to continue the disarmament of their nuclear facilities and to get a complete and verifiable agreement as to the end of their nuclear program', but adding that 'North Korea is on China's border, and I want to understand better what the Chinese believe is doable'.[81]

As such, the North Korean nuclear issue is emblematic of contemporary balance of power in Northeast Asia: that both Beijing and Washington remain weary of one another on the wider issues of security in Northeast Asia; but where their mutual anxieties and interests coincide, balance of power necessitates a particular linguistic device to maintain it. In other words, balance of power is not just about the tangible effects of differences in material capabilities, but it also involves the employment of intangibles such as language and symbols. Hence, the Sino-American balance of power is one form of a social relationship based around a particular linguistic framework.

The concerted efforts at bringing North Korea back into the multi-party framework exemplify the emergence of a common forum for Sino-American conversation. In essence, both Beijing and Washington are comfortable in using a shared language to entice Pyongyang back into negotiations.[82] On the one hand, Pyongyang's efforts at driving a wedge through the alliance after the July 2005 meeting had exposed an inherent fragility in the Six-Party framework; but on the other hand, it also revealed that the actors are still intent on reiterating the language of denuclearisation amidst North Korean defiance.[83] The perseverance of this new signifier in light of difficulties and challenges is a good indication of its resilience.

Nuclear Crisis as a Precious Linguistic Space

The emergence of 'nuclear-free' as a common language and the Six-Party framework as a convenient forum for the US and China does not indicate an advent of bilateral *rapprochement*. Indeed rivalries remain elsewhere: apart from China's maritime ambitions, the 2007 financial crisis revealed the influence of China as the biggest creditor of US debt, encouraging Beijing to challenge Washington's fiscal and monetary policies; the resurgence of a likely trade war between the two states over American allegations of Chinese dumping; as well as the row over carbon emissions representing shifting Sino-American influence in international conferences, among other disagreements. These indicate the persistence of bilateral sources of conflict; hence, it is significant that the North Korean nuclear issue still concentrates the minds in Beijing and Washington to reproduce the mutual language of co-ordination.

Japan's National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS) is nervously observing this. The 2009 *Higashi-Ajia senryaku gaikan* (*East Asian Strategic Review*) suggests that the final days of Bush Administration recast China as a 'responsible stakeholder' spanning political, economic, and strategic areas. It argues that China remains a potential threat to the US, but this in turn encourages the view that a better line of communication needs to be maintained, evidenced by the US-China memorandum of understanding in March 2008 establishing a hotline.[84] Furthermore, NIDS suggests that the Chinese leadership insists on a 'peaceful rise';[85] and refers to Hu Jintao's statement in January 2008 stipulating that China is 'determined to contribute towards a harmonious world'.[86] As if to underline its intentions, the PLAN invited USS Fitzgerald belonging to the US Seventh Fleet to the port city of Qingdao in April 2009 as part of China's 60th anniversary celebrations.[87]

While I am not suggesting that this semblance of *rapprochement* in 2009 is the direct result of shared anxieties over North Korea, it is worth pointing out that it parallels the emergence of a shared language over Korean Peninsula. The ability of the US and China to collude over North Korea is an indication that this balance of power is significantly more nuanced than a mere series of *quid-pro-quo*. Differences persist; but there are also signs that the coincidence of mutual interests exists. Ruan captures this ambivalence well, arguing that,

> For the foreseeable future, the China-US relationship will generally remain stable—yet also uncertain in some areas. China consistently adheres to seeking cooperation on the issues of common concern while maintaining different views from the world's sole superpower in some areas of dispute.[88]

President Obama admits to this ambivalence. In November 2009, he stated that,

> The rise of a strong, prosperous China can be a source of strength for the community of nations…. I know there are many who question how the United States perceives China's emergence. But in an inter-connected world, power does not need to be a zero-sum game, and nations need not fear the success of another. Cultivating spheres of co-operation—not competing spheres of influence—will lead to progress in the Asia-Pacific.[89]

This inherent optimism within the Obama administration is reiterated in other pronouncements. Secretary of State Clinton pointed out that,

> We are asking our partners to help dissuade all nations from facilitating, directly or indirectly, North Korea's attempts to enhance and proliferate its nuclear and missile technologies.[90]

Meanwhile, Shi Yinhong describes Beijing's position as 'still want[ing] to leave some room for financial transactions for normal trade' with Pyongyang,[91] and while the US wants to do something on most issues', including North Korea, 'China can deliver much less than the US expects'.[92] Despite such differences, China is able to respond to the narrative of harmony. The Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Qin Gang, responded to the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874 in June 2009 by suggesting that,

> China wishes to reiterate that to bring about denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, oppose nuclear proliferation and safeguard peace and stability on the Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is in the common interests of all parties.[93]

President Hu underlined this in November 2009, when he stated that,

> Given our differences in national conditions, it is only normal that our two sides may disagree on some issues, [but] what is important is to respect and accommodate each other's core interests and major concerns.[94]

Hence, the language of reassurance is shared by the US and China as the two governments reiterate their intentions to co-ordinate over North Korea and to promote stability in Northeast Asia. This seems unattainable given Pyongyang's intransigence; and the Sino-American conviction that balance of power as a primary mode of interaction still prevails. This makes it all the more significant that the language of nuclear crisis is converging.

The common concerns shared by Beijing and Washington seem to have dovetailed nicely into a convergence of mutual anxieties; and that the North Korean nuclear issue emerged as a convenient forum within which both governments are able to reiterate similar-sounding aspirations, while the familiar balance of power dynamics are played out elsewhere. Pyongyang's continued defiance remains their primary concern; yet, the US and Chinese efforts at reassuring one another over their non-intention to escalate the crisis lend themselves to the argument that the North Korean nuclear issue as a product of Sino-American balance of power nevertheless requires a nuanced reading of how shared linguistic space emerges amid rivalry. 'Nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' as a condition remains a distant dream, but as a set of narratives, it provides a significant scope for permitting two rivals to co-ordinate their pronouncements with a scope for certain spill-overs into other aspects of their relationship in the Asia-Pacific region.

Conclusion

The two main regional players in Northeast Asia—the US and China—both seem intent on preserving the momentum that emerged following a series of negotiations over Pyongyang's nuclear allegations even in light of its continuing defiance after its most recent missile test in April 2009. The multilateral framework involving six states is suspended at the time of writing; but there is a faint hope that the Six-Party framework is still alive. Looking back, the September 2005 agreement with North Korea in which Pyongyang signalled that it *might* be ready to consider dismantling its nuclear programme turns out to be premature:[95] while it was a positive step forward back then, the process has now stalled.[96] Yet, the November 2005 meeting that adjourned no sooner than it had convened bought time for China to 'save face' and

maintain some semblance of integrity. It shows that China is still steadfast on its self-proclaimed role as an honest broker determined to preserve the discussions by urging the hermit kingdom to subscribe to the current multilateral framework in future rounds,[97] this being the case even in mid-2009 after North Korea released two US journalists and a South Korean worker following overtures by both the Obama and Lee Myong-bak administrations. Despite this, the significance of the North Korean issue lies not only in its potential to upset the *status quo* in Northeast Asia, but also in the way narratives of 'nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' has become a common language for the US and China to signal each other that they share common anxieties. This is a significant departure from the conventional wisdom of *Realpolitik* suggesting that the region survived to become the sole remaining battlefront of the Cold War.[98]

This is not to deny that the balance of power considerations need to be discarded. Indeed, China's naval strategy suggests that it is an increasingly useful conceptual tool for explaining the current developments in Northeast Asia.[99] Balance of power explanations are still relevant, but when we turn our attention to the language of 'nuclear free Korean Peninsula', we also witness the seeming collusion of mutual anxieties between Washington and Beijing. Hence, we can observe both the US and China reiterating the phrase as a convenient signifier to signal that the *status quo* is potentially detrimental. This seems to indicate the dovetailing of mutual anxieties in and around the Korean Peninsula providing Beijing and Washington with a forum for them to engage in reassuring one another of their *non*-intentions in escalating the crisis; and to exploit the existing line of communication to avert unnecessary conflict.

The proponents of security community must await the current arrangement to evolve into a more formalised institution capable of identifying common threats and reacting in a co-ordinated fashion, let alone, define exactly what is meant by 'nuclear-free' Korean Peninsula. This might not materialise in the end. The current arrangement falls well short of collective identity formation allowing participants to engage with one another with full confidence.[100] The North Korean missile tests in July 2006 and April 2009 seem to have delayed further progress, if not presaging an end to the multilateral framework. The nuclear test in October 2006 proved to be a significant breach of trust between Pyongyang and Beijing, with the latter calling it a 'brazen act' that ignores the longstanding opposition by international community[101]—

an ‘unusually harsh words from North Korea’s biggest provider of aid and its only friend’.[102] But the way in which the international community keeps on addressing this concern suggests that a focus on the collusion of Sino-American language is still a relevant mode of analysis over what the parties are trying to achieve.[103] While pessimism lingers following repeated assertion by Pyongyang that it will never return to the Six-Party Talks, once the gaze is turned on to the emerging linguistic framework between the US and China, unfettered pessimism seems less justifiable. Sino-American balance of power lingers; but informal lines of communication also remain open for the time being; and when it comes to North Korea, they seem comfortable enough in sharing this language, however unrealisable the objective might be. An introspection into the way participants at the multilateral talks behaved suggests an emergence of a forum in which the parties agree on the importance of co-ordinated approach to North Korea by shunting aside old rivalries, however temporary that might be.

The implications are significant. The seemingly *Realpolitik* outlook of international relations in Northeast Asia nevertheless instantiates an emergence of a common, normative, framework. Put differently, balance of power needs to be recast as a form of macro-level social relations in which common language needs to be taken seriously if we are to adequately appreciate its ramifications. It is all too tempting to treat the US and China as rivals: their interests diverge on many fronts, but they are also keen not to push their differences too far.[104] No doubt this is astute bargaining. Yet, it is equally necessary to explore their shared use of a similar set of signifiers within a particular framework. As such, this mode of analysis lends itself to taking ambiguities seriously, enabling us to observe the subtleties of informal institutional structures in East Asia. There is no indication of how long China will stick to its role as an honest broker; but its current adherence to it is noteworthy. Such is the significance of the manner in which governments around the Asia-Pacific region, including the US, are behaving today that warrants an infusion of Constructivist nuance into the prevailing *Realpolitik* considerations.

Notes

[1] Hiraiwa Shunji, 'Kita-Chosen kaku-mondai to 6-sha kyogi', *Ajia kenkyu*, 53: 3 (2007), p. 40.

[2] Hu Jintao quoted in *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 12 May 2004, p. 3.

[3] Jurists debate whether North Korea has satisfied the legal procedures for withdrawal from the NPT following its denunciation in 1993, in effect putting into question whether Pyongyang is still bound by the treaty or not. See Gary Samore, 'Korean Nuclear Crisis', *Survival*, 45:1 (2003), p. 16.

[4] See Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46:2 (1992), pp. 391-425.

[5] See for example, Victor D. Cha, 'Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea', *International Studies Quarterly*, 44:2 (2000), pp. 261-91; and David C. Kang, 'International Relations Theory and the Second Korean War', *International Studies Quarterly*, 47:3 (2003), pp. 301-24.

[6] Christopher W. Hughes, 'The North Korean Nuclear Crisis and Japanese Security', Survival, 38:2 (1996), pp. 79-80.

[7] Tanaka, *Anzen hosho*, p. 332.

[8] Gary Samore, 'The Korean Nuclear Crisis', *Survival*, 45:1 (2003), p. 9.

[9] Ming Liu, 'China and the North Korean Crisis: facing test and Transition', *Pacific Affairs*, 76:3 (2003), p. 357.

[10] 'A Survey of the Koreas', *The Economist*, 10 July 1999, p. 15.

[11] 'A Survey of the Koreas,' *The Economist*, 10 July 1999, p. 16.

[12] Hughes, 'The North Korean Crisis', p. 86.

[13] *The Economist*, 15 April 2000, pp. 22-24.

[14] Kurata Hideya, 'Chosen hanto heiwa-taisei juritsu-mondai no kihanteki kozo: aihansuru "heiwa-shosho" gainen no kosaku', *Kokusai mondai* (474), September 1994, pp. 24-25.

[15] Gary Samore, 'The Korean Nuclear Crisis', *Survival*, 45:1 (2003), pp. 12.

[16] Gary Samore, 'The Korean Nuclear Crisis', *Survival*, 45:1 (2003), pp. 13-16.

[17] *The Economist*, 24 September 2005, pp. 29-30.

[18] Hiraiwa, 'Kita-Chosen', p. 34.

[19] Quoted in Gregory J. Moore, 'How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese "Duplicity" on the North Korean Nuclear Issue', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 8:1 (2008), p. 11.

[20] *The Economist*, 11 April 2009, p. 25.

[21] *Financial Times*, 25/26 July 2009, p. 7.

[22] See *Financial Times*, 13 July 2009, p. 7.

[23] *The Economist*, 14 November 2009, p. 75.

[24] See Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It'.

[25] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (6th Ed, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson) (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1985), p. 32.

[26] Hedley Bull, *Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (2nd Ed)(London: MacMillan, 1995), p. 102.

[27] Julie Gilson, 'Strategic Regionalism in East Asia', *Review of International Studies*, 33:1 (2007), p. 155.

[28] Gilson, 'Strategic Regionalism', p. 159.

[29] BBC News Online, 4 March 2010. <news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/8546805.stm>. Accessed 4 March 2010.

[30] Hu Jin-tao quoted in *The Economist*, 11 April 2009, pp. 25-26.

[31] Ruan Zongze, 'China-EU-US Relations: Shaping a Constructive Future', in David Shambaugh et al. (eds), *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 292.

[32] For theoretical discussions on language and action, see for example John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1995).

[33] Quoted in *Financial Times*, 13 July 2009, p. 7.

[34] Mullen quoted in Gideon Ramcharan, 'China Makes Gains in Its Bid to be The Next Top Dog', *Financial Times*, 15 September 2009, p. 13.

[35] Quoted in *Financial Times*, 28 July 2009, p. 5.

[36] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 255.

[37] See Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

[38] See Alan Collins, 'Forming a Security Community: Lessons from ASEAN', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 7:2 (2007), pp. 204-5.

[39] See Margaret S. Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory* (rev. ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

[40] David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Rev. ed)(Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1998), p. 1.

[41] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p.2.

[42] See for example, the goal of 'peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula' in the *Agreed Framework*.

[43] Obama quoted in *Financial Times*, 28 July 2009, p. 5.

[44] Obama, quoted in *Financial Times*, 28 July 2009, p. 5.

[45] David Martin Jones and Michael L. R. Smith, 'Constructing Communities: The Curious Case of East Asian Regionalism', *Review of International Studies*, 33:1 (2007), p. 167.

[46] Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson, and Raymond Duvall, 'Introduction' in Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson, and Raymond Duvall (eds), *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 17.

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[48] *The Economist*, 30 July 2005, p. 30.

[49] *The Economist*, 15 April 2000, p. 24.

[50] *The Economist*, 28 February 2004, p. 32.

[51] Roy, 'China's Reaction to American Predominance', p. 63.

[52] Norman D. Levin, 'What If North Korea Survives?', *Survival*, 39:4 (1997-98), p. 171.

[53] See for example, Roy, 'North Korea'; and Cha, 'Engaging North Korea Credibly'.

[54] Chinese Foreign Ministry, 'China's Non-Proliferation Policy and Measures',
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[57] Chinese Foreign Ministry. <www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t25070>. Accessed 20 February 2009.

[58] Chinese Foreign Ministry. <www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/yzs/gjlb/2701/2703/t298177.htm>. Accessed 13 may 2008.

[59] Chinese Foreign Ministry. <www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/zyjh/t25070>. Accessed 20 February 2009

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[63] David Shambaugh, 'Sino-American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors', *Survival*, 42:1 (2002), p. 101.

[64] For the implications of post-Koizumi thaw in bilateral relations, see *The Economist*, 7 October 2006, pp. 29-31.

[65] Ruan Zongze, 'China-EU-US Relations: Shaping a Constructive Future', in Shambaugh et al. (eds), *China-Europe Relations*, p. 292.

[66] *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 25 March 2004, p. 8.

[67] *The Economist*, 30 July 2005, p. 30.

[68] See *The Economist*, 21 February 2004, p. 32; and *The Economist*, 28 February 2004, p. 32.

[69] Johnston, 'Is China a Status Quo Power?', p. 40.

[70] Johnston, 'Is China a Status Quo Power?', p. 41.

[71] Adam Ward, 'China and America: Trouble Ahead?', *Survival*, 45:3 (2003), p. 48.

[72] Joseph S. Nye, 'China's Re-emergence and The Future of The Asia-Pacific', *Survival*, 39:4 (1997), p. 76.

[73] Kyung-Won Kim, 'Maintaining Asia's Current Peace', *Survival*, 39:4 (1997-98), p. 53.

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[76] Chinese Foreign Ministry. <www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/yzs/gjlb/2701/2704/t15898.htm>. Accessed 13 May 2008.

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[81] Hillary Clinton quoted in *The New York Times* (Web edition), 21 February 2009. <www.nytimes.com/2009/02/21/word/asia/21diplo.html?ref=world&pagewanted=print>. Accessed 20 February 2009.

[82] See Victor D. Cha, 'Engaging North Korea Credibly', *Survival*, 42:2 (2000), p. 146.

[83] See *The Economist*, 11 February 2006, pp. 61-62.

[84] NIDS, *Higashi-Ajia senryaku gaikan 2009* (Tokyo: NIDS, 2009), pp. 216-17.

[85] NIDS, *Senryaku gaikan*, p. 113.

[86] NIDS, *Senryaku gaikan*, p. 114.

[87] *The Economist*, 25 April 2009, p. 63.

[88] Ruan Zongze, 'China-EU-US Relations: Shaping a Constructive Future', in David Shambaugh *et al*. (eds), *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 293.

[89] Obama quoted in *Financial Times*, 12 November 2009, p. 6.

[90] Quoted in *Financial Times*, 25/26 July 2009, p. 7.

[91] Quoted in *Financial Times*, 25/26 July 2009, p. 7.

[92] Quoted in *Financial Times*, 16 November 2009, p. 6.

[93] Chinese Foreign Ministry, <www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/t567565.htm>, 13 June 2009. Accessed 18 June 2009.

[94] Quoted in *Financial Times*, 18 November 2009, p. 5.

[95] *The Economist*, 11 February 2006, p. 61.

[96] See *Nihon Keizai shimbun*, 20 September 2005, p. 1.

[97] See *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 5 May 2004, p. 2.

[98] See for example Ross, 'The Geography of the Peace'.

[99] *Financial Times*, 13 July 2009, p. 7.

[100] Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *American Political Science Review*, 88:2 (1994), pp. 384-96.

[101] *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 10 October 2006 (Evening edition), p. 2.

[102] *The Economist*, 14 October 2006, p. 25.

[103] See *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 6 July 2006, p. 1.

[104] *Financial Times*, 30 October 2009, p. 12.