The Korean Peninsula occupies a very important geo-strategic position where interests of four big players of the Pacific- People’s Republic of China (hereafter China), Russia, Japan and the United States come into collision.¹ Not only the great powers of the region compete in the peninsula but also the two regimes- Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Republic of Korea (South Korea), established five decades ago, have been horn-locked. Despite all the great changes in the world and in the region, such as the collapse of the Soviet bloc and end of the Cold War, post-Mao pragmatic changes in Chinese policy, the explosion of prosperity and productivity throughout the region—the security structure in Korea today continues with the components that were put in place almost 50 years ago. Not only the Korean Peninsula, but also the whole Northeast Asia region is a theatre where the sequel to the Cold War² is being most vigorously fought, following the basic termination of the Cold War confrontation characterised by bipolar rivalry for world domination (Han Zuomin 2001: 37). The Korean Peninsula has been considered to be a place ‘where the Cold War never ends’ (Cumings 1997a: 40). Mutual Defense Treaties between South Korea and the US, and Japan and the US along with heavily

¹ Nicholas Eberstadt has characterized Korea as the ‘cockpit of East Asia’, which has been central to the strategic equation in the region (Eberstadt 2002: 16)
² John Lewis Gaddis has provided the salient features of the Cold War and has defined the epoch of 1990s as a new international order, which is structurally and in some other respect different from the previous epoch. In the work his definition and characteristics of the Cold War have been presumed to be the most comprehensive and all-inclusive one (Gaddis 1997).
militarized armies of South and North Korea along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) are still symbolic of continuity of the Cold War security structure on the peninsula (Ku Chun-seo 1982, Kim Gye-dong 2000). The conflict between North Korea and South Korea, with all its ramifications, has been described as a 'conflict frozen in time' (Eberstadt 2001: 16).

However, it is not quite true to say that "nothing had changed on the Korean Peninsula since the 1953 Panmunjom armistice that ended the Korean War."3 There have been few changes, which are presently in a nascent stage but are germane to total transformation of the security scenario of the peninsula. The topic of the thesis emanates from this observation that there are few changes, which could be characterised as the beginning of the emergence of a new security structure on the peninsula; however, there are many variables of the old paradigm which still continue and let scholars characterise peninsula as a place where the Cold War never ends.

The end of the Cold War is considered to be a fundamental change in international politics, characterised as 'systemic change'. It was anticipated that it would necessarily result into the emergence of a new order- at the global level and also at the regional level.4 A series of events, which were described as part of the grand transformation or turning point, arguably, altered the distribution of power in the international system at a fundamental level. The end of the Cold War, the victory of West in the war and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and emergence of a weak Russia as it successor, whatever way one describes it, constituted a fundamental change and no state or region should be unaffected by the change (Alagappa 2003: 19). The disintegration of the Soviet Union, the German unification, the collapse of European communist states and their collective security structure, and the Warsaw pact -- have generally been viewed as marking the end of

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3 It is difficult to accept the view of Victor D. Cha that there is hidden continuity behind every perceptible change on the peninsula (Cha Victor D. 2000).

4 The scholars who have written about system changes and systemic changes postulate that a fundamental change in the organizing principles of the international system (anarchy or hierarchy) could be described as system change, whereas change in the distribution of power is systemic change (Gilpin 1981 Ikenberry 2001).
bipolar world and the emergence of the post-Cold War era. The series of interrelated developments brought about definitive disjunction in the contemporary ideological, institutional and strategic history of the Europe during about five decades of the Cold War (Gaddis 1972, May 1973 and Miller and Pruessen 1974). The impact of these developments was felt beyond Europe, although the forms and extent of disintegration of the Cold War order varied from region to region. The US as the leader of a restructured NATO emerged as the only superpower with global military and economic stakes and strategies. Its awesome nuclear and conventional striking power reinforced by a formidable network of bilateral and multinational alliance structures enabled it to pursue its objectives, strategic doctrines and policies towards the various regions and thus play a major role in shaping the post-Cold War world order.

The context, characteristics and consequences of superpowers’ confrontation and coexistence during the Cold War have varied from region to region. Its manifestation in the Korean Peninsula has been also unique and warrants discussing the forms and features of the Cold War in the Korean Peninsula on its own terms. The pattern of changes in the strategic scenario of the peninsula in the post Cold War era could be understood in the light of the above mentioned uniqueness.

**Conceptualising Korean Security Paradigm**

There could be two points of departure while studying the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula. One, from the structural point of view, in which, the international and regional strategic ecosystem affected the making of security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula after the independence from Japanese colonial rule. Two, the indigenous variables from the Korean Peninsula also contributed in the evolutinal and sustenance of particular type of security structure on the Korean Peninsula. From the structural point view, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two states and sucked into the whirlpool of the Cold War. Rivalry between the US and USSR for dominance in the region made it almost impossible for both states of the Korean Peninsula to
consider about any kind of ‘cooperative security’ (Carter et.al. 1992 and Bean 1994) at the peninsula. Korean security paradigm was and still is product of the interplay of the external or structural as well as internal or peninsular dynamic. As describe earlier, the two set of variables kept on overlapping and deciding the continuity and change in the security paradigm of the peninsula.

The security structures that emerged on the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War days had its distinct features influenced by exogenous and indigenous factors (Kim Byoung-kuk 1995). A network of bilateral security arrangements emerged between 1950 and 1961. Though South Korea signed a security treaty with the United States\(^5\) and North Korea also signed Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union and China\(^6\) separately, both the states were reluctant to be a part of any formal alliance system. Other countries of Northeast Asia also did not become part of the formal bipolar alliances during the Cold War, as it was prevalent in the other regions of the world. Since its inception, the forms and features of the Cold War have been very different from the other regions. On the Korean Peninsula, internal rivalry between North and South Korean regimes concretized during the course of the Cold War. Mutual distrust and hostility between the regimes have characterized the process of consolidation of their position in the southern and northern part of the peninsula. Both regimes had their perceived threat from each other and their hostility supposedly threatened the regional and thereby global security. While it is true that insecurity imbedded in ‘Korean problem’ has been related to the Cold War dynamics of the international politics, the developments within the peninsula too have played a very significant role in shaping the security environment. If the reason for insecurity in the peninsula had been predominantly the Cold War, the hostility would have seized to exist after the demise of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War (Campbell and Reiss 2001: 55).

\(^5\) The US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty was signed on October 1, 1953 and after ratification it came into force on November 17, 1954. The treaty has been backbone of the relations between the two countries since then.

\(^6\) The treaties of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance were signed by North Korea separately with the USSR and the PRC in 1961.
It is also important to note that apart from exogenous and indigenous sources in the Korean security paradigm, few other conceptual issues have also been involved in the process. The first and foremost among them is the issue of 'referent' of security. The concept of security in Asia tends to recognise nation-state as the primary security referent (Waltz 1979: 85, Gilpin 1981: 116-123, Alagappa 1998: 612, Janice and Krasner 1989). It stems from the fact that the nation-state is the most valued form of political organization in the post-Colonial Asia. Indeed, the idea of nation as the basis of political community and the related construct of the nation-state are viewed as normative ideals to be achieved in the region. However, the problem is that very few Asian states are nation-states in the strict sense of term. On the one hand, many post-colonial states in Asia such as China, India and Thailand are multinational states. On the other hand, few other states such as, North and South Korea, China and Taiwan—are divided nations. The problem of dichotomy between nation and state makes it difficult to identify the security referent in these countries and states assume the status of primary security referent here. Furthermore, apart from problematic security referent, there is a tendency among governments to equate their own regime security with that of the state. Survival of the incumbent government is often articulated as vital for the survival of the state and for the well being of the people (Alagappa 1998: 614). In the above light, conceptualization of the Korean security has also been problematic due to mutual exclusive sources of threats and their perception by North and South Korean regimes.

According to a noted scholars of Korean security, Moon Chung-in, the problem of security on the peninsula can be approached from four main angles- meta-structure, institutional foundation, external management and scope of security agenda (Moon Chung-in 1998: 265). Meta-structure shapes the cognitive map that guides the decision makers as they assess threats and formulate policy. In meta-structure, three elements are the most important- historical context of the threat perception, ideology and identity. Threat perceptions, ideology and identity are essential parts of the meta-structure and they are situated in a historical context and past experiences of states.
They help or sometime restrict states in identifying the source and types of threats. On the basis of past experiences, states contemplate about the future possible sources of threat too. By ideology, states tend to opt for a certain types of norms and behaviours and thus their essential security imperative and means to achieve that is very much shaped by the ideology of the states. Identity is important because it offers a critical referent for defining the contents and scope of the security in question (Moon Chung-in 1998: 265).

After identifying the source and types of present and possible threats, security policy decisions are taken through institutional means. These institutions of decision-making could be effective and democratic like in case of South Korea or they could be authoritarian like North Korea. Articulation and enforcement of security policies depend on the institutional arrangements that govern security practice (Moon Chung-in 1998: 266). The next important angle could be how the state perceives the international and regional environment. Perception about the external environment decides the nature and direction of security practice. If a state perceives that international system is anarchic, as Neorealism postulates, it would opt for a balance of power or military aggrandisement in its security policy. However, if it subscribes to liberal institutionalism ideology it may consider cooperation and interdependence as its foreign policy options. The scope of security also determines the object of the security to the state. Taking a conservative and narrow view of ‘territorial security’, a state perceives human security less significant while a broader security conception gives primacy to individual rather than territory. In case of North Korea, it is quite obvious that state puts much emphasis on security of communist ideology and regime and citizenry is given secondary importance while in South Korea, with deepening of the democratic polity gradually, security of individual has acquired more prominence.

Thus given the complexity of variables involved in making of the Korean security paradigm, it is certain that change in one or few variables would not

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7 Neorealism is sceptical about any cooperation if one accepts the basic assumption of Realism that international system is anarchic. The issue of ‘relative gain’ works as a hindrance to any cooperation between states (Grieco 1995).
necessarily bring change in the overall security structure of the country; a more nuanced approach is needed to understand Korean security paradigm in the post-Cold War era. The attempt should definitely delve into historical background and eclectic use of international relations theory. The attempt should also be careful about identifying structural and ideational issues involved to finally arrive at explanation of change and continuity in the Korean security paradigm.

Literature Survey

In various studies Korean Peninsula has been identified as a security flashpoint in Northeast Asian security during the Cold War period and even after the end of the Cold War (Brands 1976, Mach 1993, Kihl and Heyes 1997, Calder 1996 Dujarric 1998). Various factors and reasons have been identified as determining for this scenario. Rather than going deeper into the issue, the studies satisfy by saying that the actors involved in the process are reluctant to change themselves. Emergence of more alarming issues such as nuclear and missile programmes are also considered to be a product of North Korean uncouth behaviour and resistance to join mainstream international politics as a normal state. There are number of works which talk about continuity of the Cold War security structure on the Korean Peninsula (Cho Myung-hyun 1989, Cha Young-koo and Kim Tae-ho 1993, Kihl Young-whan 1994, Suh Jae-jung 1996, Cumings 1997b, Cha 2000, Moon Chung-in et.al. 2001, Han Zuomin 2001). Most of them also try to delve into the strategy to come out of the Cold War knot and become more prescriptive than analytical.

Though there are number of books on the changing political dynamics of the Korean Peninsula but most of them are edited volumes. There are two lacunas in most of the studies. Firstly, they do not deal exclusively with the theme of security structure of the Korean Peninsula. Secondly, a clear theoretical and coordinated approach in disintegrating and analyzing various levels of analyses and their linkages is almost missing in most of them. Moon Chung-in and others (Moon Chung-in et.al. 2001)
have dealt with the process of ending the Cold War on the Korea Peninsula by taking into theoretical and historical perspectives but an insufficient coordination among the papers of various contributors does not bring out a systemic understanding of the changing security paradigm of the Korean security structure in the post-Cold War era. For theoretical underpinning in changing security dynamics of the Korean Peninsula, two articles contributed by David C. Kang on North Korea and Moon Chung-in on South Korea in Muthiah Alagappa’s edited Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences, seem to put a better foundation for the future study on the topic (Moon Chung-in 1998 and Kang David C. 1998). David C. Kang has been more emphatic in underlining the need for a new framework of analysis for not only changing security dynamics of the Korea Peninsula but also for whole Asia (Kang David C. 2003). Another edited volume by Cho Lee-Jay and others suffers from the first lacuna, e.g., in which without much theoretical foundation various other issues such as political systems and economic stability have been dealt with along with security variable Cho Lee-jay et.al. 2004). It is worthwhile to mention that prevalent literature on the Korean security does not take a macro-peninsular approach and mostly restricts to security situation of either North Korea or South Korea.

The next body of literature deals with regional dynamics of Korean security (Calder 1996, Mack 1993, Calder 2001, Eberstadt and Ellings 2001, Rhee Sang-woo 1984, Kim Samuel S. 2006). It overlooks the fundamental trifurcation of international, regional and inter-state levels of analyses propounded in the international relations theory to comprehend the change in the international relations. It emphasises more on the regional dynamics and its impact on the Korean security paradigm. Moreover, the studies are also insufficient to explain what could be the factors behind the changing role and equations of regional players in constituting security structure of the Korean Peninsula. There is no denial of the fact that regional equations have contributed to the change or continuity in the Korean security paradigm, however, a more comprehensive study would go deeper into all the three levels of analyses. Here, theoretical frameworks provided by Neorealist and the
Constructivist theories, which have been discussed in the previous section, are very useful.

Changing Korean security dynamics has also been studied in special reference to bilateral relations of major powers with South Korea and North Korea. The most detailed and varied bilateral studies are on the US-Korea relations and their implication for the security paradigm of the peninsula (Niksch 2003, Cho Soon-sung 1967, Cha Victor D. 2004b, Xinbo 2000, Suh Jae-jung 2003, Cha Victor D. 2002). These studies are very useful for going deeper into the US involvement in the peninsular affairs and few changes during the post-Cold War era in bilateral relations, which definitely has its bearing on the changing security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula. It is necessary to note that Washington still enjoys important commanding position in determining of the security structure of the Korean Peninsula. Another important player, which has emerged more significant in the Korean politics, is China during the post-Cold War era and various studies have embarked upon to deal with Chinese role in the security paradigm of the peninsula (Park Han-shik and Park Kyung-ay 1990, Hao J. and Z Qubing 1992, Lee Chae-jin 1999, Hart 2001, Snyder 2003). The roles of bilateral relations of two other players, Russia and Japan, have also been studied in details. But the bilateral approach misses the broader picture of Korean security paradigm and most of the time devoid of theoretical foundation and thus become less explanatory and more descriptive.

Literature of the inter-Korean relations has been in abundance after the mid 1990s and especially after the initiation of ‘sunshine policy’ under the leadership of South Korean President Kim Dae-jung in 1998 (Oberdorfer 1997, Kim Il-pyong 1998, Hahn Bae-ho and Chae Jin-lee 1999, Hamm 1999, Hamm 2001, Kim Samuel S. 2004, Han Yong-sup 2005). Samuel S. Kim has propounded that growing interactions between the two states of the Korean Peninsula have changed the security dynamics of the Korean Peninsula from the bilateral relations of the US with North and South Koreas. Undoubtedly, growing interactions between Seoul and Pyongyang has altered the security conceptualization on the Korean Peninsula but it’s premature to de-link
Korean security paradigm of the peninsula from the regional and global politics. The Six-Party negotiations on the nuclear issue of North Korea is a case for reference where despite all the progress at the inter-Korean relations front, the need for regional framework was evoked to solve the problem. Thus any comprehension of the security paradigm of the peninsula could not be devoid of security eco-system of the region and nature of international system.

Similarly, the studies that deal specifically about North Korea as a ‘rogue’ state and nature of threat posed by North Korea to peninsular security because of internal problems such as economic and political crises or adamant pursuance on nuclear and missile programme, also misses the broader picture of peninsula security structure. North Korean internal weakness or uncouth behaviour, exemplified in the economic and food crises as well as nuclear and missile programmes are manifestation of a particular security paradigm which has shown some shred of change but still no fundamental transformation from the Cold War days. Most of the scholars, who subscribe to this view, inadvertently accept the assumption that there has not been any substantial change in the security paradigm of the peninsula. Scholars such as Nicholas Eberstadt state that no change is possible in the security situation of the peninsula until North Korean communist regime collapses (Eberstadt 1999: 1-24).

There are some insightful works in Korean language on the Korean security, which are useful for the study. Kim Hak-seong and Park Geon-young provide theoretical models for building a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and seek for a new approach for the same. However their works do not examine the process of continuity and change in the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula (Kim Hak-Seong 2000, Park Geon-young 1999). In another set of works, Kim Di-jeong (1998) and Hong Yong-pyo (2000) argue for a positive approach in future to shift the traditional territory-based security conceptualisation in the region. They recommend that if Korea wants to move beyond its Cold War security paradigm, it needs to opt
for a broader concept of security, putting emphasis on human security through a cooperative security mechanism.

**Rationale of Study**

The survey of body literature available on the topic makes it warranted to have a comprehensive understanding of the changing but not so-changing security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula. For that any study must be posited in the theoretical frameworks which provide not only descriptive but also explanatory value to the study. Secondly, the levels of analyses should also consistently guide the research on the topic. This study tries to analyze change and continuity in the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula from the Cold War era to the post-Cold War world by keeping all the variables into consideration. The Neorealist or Constructivist theories of the international relations do not seem to be sufficient to explain the security dynamics of the peninsula exclusively. So, the study takes an eclectic theoretical approach to comprehend the changing but still continuing security paradigm of the Korean security structure in the post-Cold War era. The study is an attempt to utilise international relations theories to explain the unique Korean experience and rather than taking a reductionist theoretical approach, the specificity of Korean situation is given due attention.

**Research Methods and Key Variables:**

The proposed study would follow theoretical and empirical approaches to probe into the issues related to the security of the Korean Peninsula in the post-Cold War era. Decision making theories and role of perceptions and misperceptions will be used in the study. To study the subjective, complex, and dynamic developments in the region qualitative method like non-participant observation of major current events, interview
with premier decision makers and scholars of the field with both open and close-ended questions will be used.

It is noteworthy that available literature on the topic is mostly written from the western conception of security paradigm in the peninsula. Though they might be objective on their own account, to cross the limit of their "positional objectivity" a cross-comparison of viewpoints and different versions of security perceptions of Korea in this regard would be studied. In this process, primary sources like government documents and secondary sources, like books and articles, will be utilized.

In the study the dependent variable security structure of the Korean Peninsula is the main focus of enquiry. The continuity and change in dependent variable have been seen from the perspective of Realist and Constructivist theories of international relations along with coming up of China as a neutral arbitrator in the process. The independent variables which have been probed to be having their impact on the dependent variables of the security structure of the peninsula are the international system, role of regional actors, inter-Korean relations and domestic factors in North and South Koreas (See, Figure: 1.2). Arguments presented in the thesis emanate from the following research questions and hypotheses based on these research questions:

**Research Questions**

- During the Cold War, how much peninsular security structure was different or unique in nature? Whether this uniqueness could be contributed to the specificity of the Korean problem or it was a part of region specific security structure established in the various regions by intermingling of domestic (regional) and systemic dynamics and also by various elements such as culture, norm, identity and historical experiences?

- Whether the Cold War security structure of the peninsula has altered in the post-Cold War era?
After the end of the Cold War at the global level, what have been the reasons for continuance or change in the Korean security paradigm?

To get an insight of the theoretical issues related to the fact that whether systemic changes are deterministic in nature and if yes, how can one explain the changes in the perceptions of the different players of the peninsula?

**Hypotheses**

- The security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula was constituted in a significant manner by the manifestation of the Cold War on the peninsula.

- But even in the post-Cold War era, the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula has not been totally transformed and there are many elements of continuity which could be better explained by the role of soft issues like culture, norms, identity and historical experiences of the actors involved in constituting the security paradigm.

- It seems from the experience of the peninsula that changes at the systemic level are not deterministic in nature but they do have a significant impact on the behaviour of the states.

- Most significant change in the security structure of the Korean Peninsula has been a greater involvement of China, which emanates from emerging new security architecture in the Asia-Pacific around China. However, it does not mean that the US role has diminished in constituting the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula.

**Framework of Study**

In the First Chapter, a brief survey of international relations theory has been done to identify the source of change in the international politics and to understand dynamics of the East Asian Politics. Emphasising the need for an eclectic approach to capture the dynamics of transition of security dynamics of Korean Peninsula from the Cold
War to the post-Cold War, it has been argued that variables of change identified in the Neorealist and Constructivist theories are both helpful in the attempt. The chapter also describes evolution of the concept of security from traditional territorial based to contemporary comprehensive one. It is notable that referent of security has changed significantly in the debate, but the overlapping and distortions among state, regime and people as referents still continue in actually policy making of governments. The evolution of the concept has been also posited in the context of the Cold War and its end. Various key concepts of the security studies, such as subjective and objective perceptions of security threat have been used to bring in the concept of 'securitization' into the debate. On the basis of theoretical background, analytical framework of the study has been built in the next section of the chapter. The chapter concludes with a description of an inconclusive list of main actors and issues which were and have been part of making of the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula. Finally, the rationale of study, along with hypotheses and research questions, has been described.

In the Second Chapter, historical background of arrival of the Cold War in Asia and furthermore on the Korean Peninsula and its impact on determining security paradigm of the peninsula has been described. In the next session while describing the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War, role of alliance systems, regional actors namely the US, China, the USSR and Japan, inter-Korea contest for legitimacy and supremacy, as well as domestic issues have been discussed. In the conclusion it has been observed that during the Cold War era, the security paradigm of the peninsula was shaped more by the international systematic factors of the Cold War than other ideational issues and domestic politics.

In the Third Chapter, the change and continuity in the alliance systems, and role of the US in the inter-Korean relations, which were the main determining factor of the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula, have been presented. Most of these variables were present in the Cold War era and they have been still dominating the
security dynamics of the peninsula with few changes. In the chapter, both continuity and change in these variables have been projected.

In the Fourth Chapter, the change and continuity in the role of other regional players such as China, Japan and Russia has been discussed in determining the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula. The chapter also presents role of inter-Korean relations and domestic issues, specifically their ideational aspects have been presented.

The Fifth Chapter explores the emerging contours of security scenario in the Asia-Pacific and its implication for the Korean security paradigm. In the context, the growing significance of China in the defining security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula has been discussed. The study postulates that the most significant changes which have taken place in the security dynamics of the peninsula in the post-Cold War era are the result of gradually coming in of China. However, it does not mean that the role of the US has become less central. The next significant change has been coming in of the issues of economic gain, identity and culture in constituting security paradigm of the peninsula in the post-Cold War era.

In the Conclusion, the study brings out elements of continuity and change in the Korean security paradigm. The chapter also provides theoretical explanations of the factors of continuity and change and more importantly their inter-linkages. It would be a humble submission of the study that change and continuity of the Korean security paradigm could be better understood by applying an eclectic theoretical approach of international relations theory.