Theoretical Explanation of Change in International Relations

The theoretical universe of international relations could be divided on the basis of the cognitive structures which constitute the basis of the explanations of change and development in the international politics. They give varying degrees of emphasis on the significance of power, the international system, institutions, state, regimes and ideational factors in explaining and predicting international politics. Whereas, the Realist theory emphasises the dominance of states and their behaviour at inter or intra-state level, the Liberal theory is more attentive towards ideational factors. One strand of liberal theory- Liberal Institutionalism, stresses the role of institutions in determining the behaviour and actions of actors in international relations (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff Jr. 1971, Keohane and Nye 1977, Keohane, 1988, and Moravcsik 2004). It challenges the Realist assumption that structural factors would necessarily restrain states from cooperating. In contrast, the theory is optimistic about cooperation between states, even in an anarchic international system. The theory blames lack of
institution-building and collective security regimes for continuance of hostile state behaviour. It views institutions and regimes as instruments of change in the nature of interactions among states. This chapter would first survey the different theoretical perspectives on the issue of change and continuity in the international relations and security paradigm.

A systematic study of international relations was attempted by scholars such as George F. Kennan, Nicholas Spykman, E. H. Carr, Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau around the Second World War. The attempt was posited in the context of desire to understand the dynamics of international politics on the basis of empirical reality rather than normative wishes or mere description of diplomatic history. The chief proponent of Realism, Hans J. Morgenthau, based his theory of international politics on basic human nature. His approach to international politics postulates that states, like human being, possess certain basic characteristics namely, 'will to survive' and 'will to expand'. The theory propounded by Morgenthau, which is also known as the Classical Realism or Political Realism, has six cardinal principals; however the key proposition of the theory is that state and its capabilities expressed in terms of power is the key to understanding change and continuity in the international politics. States' motivation to augment power makes international relations a game of power politics and ideational issues or nature of broad international system does not play a determining role. However, it would be insufficient to think that the only source of change in international relations and security paradigm emanates from states. Thus, later scholars of Realism tried to accommodate international system and its structural constrains also in theorising international politics.

Historically, a parallel approach to study international relations in the form of Idealism or Liberalism contested the Classical Realist assumptions. Liberalism postulates that state preferences, rather than state capabilities are the keys to state behaviour. The theory also disagrees with the Realist assumption that state is a unitary

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1 The classic work of Hans J. Morgenthau in 1949 was considered to be a new beginning in the theorisation of world politics (Morgenthau 1966).
actor. There are pluralities of actors which are involved in constituting international realities. Apart from non-state actors, preferences of states are also influenced and determined by a variety of other ideational factors and 'soft issues' such as culture, regime type, identity and economic systems. Since there are variety of actors and issues involved in international relations, the theory propounds that state is not merely a power maximising entity and there are plenty of opportunities for cooperation while there is no denying that state and power are not the only variables in determining behaviour and constituting the security paradigm. Liberalism’s tilt towards a prescriptive future based on normative desires of peace and cooperation seem less helpful to explain realities of the international relations.

Thus it was considered appropriate to modify Realism which refrains from being prescriptive and studies international relations as ‘it is’ not as ‘it should be’. Another school of international relations theory which was promulgated by Kenneth Waltz, while accepting the basic assumption of Classical Realism that state is the primary actor in international relations, argued that the source of state behaviour and consequently change, was located not in human nature but in the structure of the international system. So, the modified Realist theory was called Neorealism or Structural Realism. According to this theory, the international system consists of interacting units (states) but to understand the dynamics of their relations, rather than taking a reductionist approach, one should look at the nature of the international system. It postulates that any change at the system-structure level leads to a change in the behaviour of the units. There could be some limited interplay between units and system. However, the change at the systemic level is more overpowering than the foreign policy choices of the units. Within the broader canvas of the nature of the international system, units may enjoy limited manoeuvring space. However bilateral relations of states cannot remain unaffected by the change at the system level.

2 Reductionism refers to the tendency to understand the nature of complex things by reducing them to the interactions of their parts, or to simpler or more fundamental things. It also means a philosophical position that a complex system is nothing but the sum of its parts and that an account of it can be reduced to accounts of individual constituents. A reductionist theory is a theory of about the behaviour of parts (Waltz 1977:60).
Neorealism is critical of what they see as analytical fallacy on the part of Classical Realism which tries to understand the system by reducing it to its interacting parts and developments at the state level or even looking inside of states. So, every time a change is seen we have to look for a new variable as its cause. If the actions of unit actors affect interactions, it leads to infinite proliferation of variables, thus making any prediction about international politics almost impossible. The theory does not accept the logic that unit level actions and interactions of the actors could fully capture the change in relations of states and change at the regional level, not to say explaining system level changes. Neorealists also do not subscribe to the different levels of analyses: the national and international. They feel that different descriptive, explanatory and predictive values as mere problem of levels of analyses (Singer 1961) and the levels of analysis problem should not be considered merely a matter of choice (Singer 1961: 90).

The problem with Neorealist or Structural Realist theory is that it denies the role of agents and thereby reduces human beings to 'cultural dopes' of 'stunning mediocrity' (Giddens 1979: 52). It underestimates the individual desires and beliefs and various scholars have sought to reinterpret Neorealist theory in a manner which alights upon system and unit level problem of explanation (Archer 1985, Giddens 1979, Taylor 1989, Wendt 1987).
Another school of international relations theory, Constructivism, seeks to go beyond the narrow 'rational actor' premises of the Neorealism and Neoliberalism by looking at the construction of state identities and interests in determining inter-state relations (Katzenstein 1996, Ruggie 1998, Wendt 1987). The theory is based on the assumption that the ideational factors are significant in understanding the change and continuity in the behaviours of the actors as they mediate, how actors perceive, construct and reproduce material structures they inhabit and their own roles and identities within them. It accepts the role of deliberation, persuasion and socialization in any transformation of relationship between the states. In the long term, these factors lead to a transformation of their identities and preferences (Wendt 1999). In Constructivist analysis of international relations and behaviours of states, ideational factors are significant in tracing whether collective actors are likely to construct or diffuse enmity or amity between 'self' and 'other'. The theory subscribes that transformation in international relations is possible by diffusion of norms and identities and merely systemic change could not lead to total transformation of inter-state relations. According to Constructivists, to explain and comprehend political behaviour, it is not sufficient to look at the material and structural context of actors. It emphasizes the need to go into the ideational and cultural world to fully understand the real outcomes of the actions of the actors. Strategic engagement by the units based on these ideational and cultural bedrocks along with other economic benefits shape inter-state relations in a substantial manner.

**Figure 1.2:** Relations between material and ideational factors on actors
In short, there has been varied degree of emphasis on unit-system, military-economic and material-ideational sources to construct a better understanding of international relations and explain change therein. It is clear from the above survey that the emphasis of Neorealist on international system and the Constructivist schools on ‘soft issues’ do not provide a complete and satisfactory analysis of change and continuity in international relations. Although, international system does provide a context in which units interact with one another, issue of identity, intention, goal, desire and belief of units also play their role in determining the final outcome of their relations (Kim Hyung-kuk 1994). It is said that action of one state is contingent upon actions of other states. The significance and popularity of game theory in analysing international relations is based on the fact that the choice and action of one affects the choice and action of others (Levi 1988: 163).

Thus any attempt to comprehend dynamic of international politics could effectively take a more eclectic approach by including both system and unit levels variables in its explanation. It is said that basically, ‘structures are only instantiated by the practices of agents’ (Wendt 1987, Wendt 1999). A structure acts as a constraint, only because agents choose to be constrained. Wendt has given equal ontological status to both structure and agents and thinks that to develop a comprehensive and effective theory of international politics both system and states should be taken as the two key variables. It should not be considered as a ‘mindless synthesis’ as it ‘forces us to rethink fundamental properties of (state) agents and system structures’ (Wendt 1987: 339).

The conceptualisation of security also went along the contest between the major theoretical approaches of international politics. The basic assumptions of the major theories of international relations defined the scope and perspective to look at the issue of security at inter-state or intra-state level. In the international relations, Realist theory kept itself focused to territorial based notion of security and in a ‘self-help’ international system, augmentation or balance of power through alliances were considered to be the only methods to ensure security of a state. Liberal theory of
international relations, gradually, moved beyond the narrow scope of territorial notion of security and brought a more comprehensive notion of human security into debate. Going beyond security of state and territory, the theory sought to bring state values and identity and other soft issues into forefront. In the contest of notion of security among various international relations theories, the study of security became more nuanced and precise. To further clarify the terminology and conception of security, few key concept of security would be explained in the next section.

**Concept of the Security**

**i) Traditional Concept of Security**

The traditional concept of security, which was contemplated before the beginning of the Cold War, defined in terms of the immunity of a state or nation to threat emanating from outside its boundaries. According to Walter Lippmann, one of the foremost proponents of traditional security, ‘a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war’ (Lippman 1943: 51). In the words of Arnold Wolfers, Lippmann’s definition ‘implies that security rises and falls with the ability of a nation to deter an attack, or to defeat it. This is in accord with the traditional usage of the term’ (Wolfers 1962: 150). Simplifying the concept Talukder Maniruzzaman has stated, “By security we mean the protection and preservation of the minimum core values of any nation- political independence and territorial integrity” (Maniruzzaman 1982: 15). The traditional sense of security takes only threat to the states as the key and neglect any attempt to conceptualise security of the international system. The concept assumes that system is nothing more than sum of its units and thus by analysing security of states, system’s security could also be understand.

The theory of security according to its traditional notion divided the sources of threat into external and internal, on the basis of their origin. However, it is not easy to
draw a clear line between sources of threats as often, external threats augment the problem of insecurity that exists within the state boundaries. Also, sometimes internal threats are “externalized” by regimes, which are the targets of such threats. They do so in order to portray these threats as ‘illegitimate’ and to portray their repressive actions as ‘legitimate’. By turning a political, social or economic problem into a military one and by presenting the military threat as emanating from external sources, regimes in many third world countries try to choose an arena of confrontation with domestic dissidents that is favourable to themselves, the military arena.

ii) Changes in Conceptualising Security

Gradually in the Cold War era, the concept of security and its understanding took a shift from being state-centric to international system-centric. The shift focused on the nature of international system, which was considered to provide the context in which states perceive and prepare against threats and try to secure themselves. It does not mean a total transformation in conceptualisation of security and still the referent of security, remained the state. It only changed the outlook on the threats and security problems from a structural perspective. In the early 1970s, the Neorealist emphasis on the international system advocated that international system places constraints on the individual behaviour of states and in an anarchic international system, states react to the given structural limitations and that too depends much on capability of a state (Waltz 1979). Basically it was a shift in the level of analysis from unit to system level (Buzan, Waever and Wilde 2002: 5).

Another significant change in concept of security came with a gradual shift in the ‘referent’ of security from territory to individual and it has definitely widened the concept (Alagappa 1998). It has led to study of human security, which could be threatened from not only military threats but also from the non-military threats as well. The concept of food security, environmental, economic security, energy security etc. originated from this shift. Here it is also important to note that the concept of security is very elusive and the military dimension of security is not always the most important aspect of the security of a state. As Robert Osgood puts it, “....security, like
danger, is an uncertain quality; it is relative and not absolute; it is largely subjective and takes various forms” (Osgood 1953: 443). At times of acute economic depression or external economic turbulence, the security hierarchy ranking may shift with economic vulnerability becoming more important than military-strategic ones. In countries where ethnic fragmentation and secessionist movements endanger the social and political fabric, communal harmony and integration may become the principle value of security policy. Thus, the conception of security is context-bound also (Moon Chung-in 1993: 115).

The concept of security, which takes into consideration all the facets of security threats- military and non-military, is termed as ‘wide’ conception of security and that which takes only military threats into its purview is called ‘narrow’ conception of the security (Alagappa 1998: 34, Buzan, Waever and Wilde 2002: 2). The attempt was made to understand security in a more comprehensive and inclusive terms. The scope of security which was traditionally been related to the territory and thus it’s called the territorial concept of security, gradually became more encompassing by bringing human being at the centre of security conceptualisation. Not only physical protection of a state’s political and territorial integrity from external military attack but overall protection of multifaceted human existence became core referent of security. The concept of human security not only included territorial security but also economic security, food security, environmental security and global security as well. But in the debate of ‘wide’ versus ‘narrow’ conceptions, traditionalists have strongly reasserted conventional arguments about the enduring primacy of military security. They accept that the widening of the concept leads to a better comprehension of security but at the same time, it also leads to intellectual incoherence.

Barry Buzan has argued for retaining a distinctively military sub-field of strategic studies within a wider security studies and economic, energy, environment and food security etc. would be studied in international relations in the context of their direct military and political implications (Buzan 1995). In brief, while conceptualizing
security, primacy of military aspects should be maintained, even as the non-military aspects are also incorporated to the extent that they impinge upon the military aspects of the security in the post-Cold War era (Fierke 2007).

The contemporary study of security has also become more nuanced by looking at the cognizance level also. Arnold Wolfers has noted that security can be approached both objectively (when there is a real threat) and subjectively (when there is a perceived threat) (Wolfers 1962: 151). The distinction is crucial in formulating a concept of security that is essentially an inter-subjective concept. Even if one wanted to take a more subjective approach, it is unclear how this could be done except in cases in which the threat is unambiguous and immediate. The quantitative measurement technique is difficult to evolve to judge the ‘reality’ of threats. Even if one could solve the problem of measurement, it is not clear that the objectivist approach would be helpful because different states have different thresholds for defining a threat.

In this regard, the concept of ‘securitization’ introduced by Constructivist school of international is also brought into any study of security. According to this concept, sometimes even if there is no objective threat for the survival, states subjectively construct something as a security problem (Waever 1995). Even if the state’s subjective perception about the threshold is low or high, their assessments have real effect on their foreign policy. The distinction between the subjective and objective conceptions is useful to highlight the fact that we want to avoid a view of security that is given objectively and emphasize that security is by actors and their subjective perception. Here subjective perception counts because it makes the threat ‘real.’

Role of perception and misperception based on information, misinformation and disinformation have been brilliantly analyzed by Robert Jervis who has presented his thesis about the factors which are responsible for choosing a particular foreign policy option by a state. He has postulated that apart from the objective reality of the situation, usually actors have their subjective perception about the objective reality and it is significant to understand it to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of meaning and motive of the state. Jervis’s emphasis is similar to Max Weber’s concept of verstehen in which by empathic liaison with the actors and objective observation final conclusion is drawn (Jervis 1976).
Figure 1.3: Analytical Framework for Comprehending Security Structure of the Korean Peninsula in the Cold War and the Post-Cold War Eras
The end of the Cold War is considered to have ushered in a systemic change in international relations, which introduced a new principle of ordering in international relations. The main tenet of the Cold War international system was bipolarity and it underwent a transformation with the collapse of the USSR. According to Neorealist theory, the change will necessarily lead to a transformation in the ‘positioning of the states’ and their behaviours. On the Korean Peninsula too the effect of the end of the Cold War must be seen in terms of repositioning of states involved in the Korean issue. There was, to an extent hint of determinism of systemic change on the units, during the Cold War era, which was sufficient to explain the security paradigm in the different region.

In the bipolar world, inter-state rivalry and security got substantially affected by the Cold War global politics. Although, various ideational issues existed in the affairs of the Korean Peninsula, which according to the Constructivists, shape security paradigm of a region; during the Cold War era, the security paradigm of the peninsula became closely linekd with rivalry of the superpowers (Kim Ki-jeong 1996). It led to a situation where in many cases, the external environment became more important determinant of security than the internal one. Similarly, structural variablebes overshadowd issues of identity, culture, norms and economic factors. The rivalry between the superpowers has been reflected in all the developments of the peninsula and there are studies which claim that the inter-Korean problem was product of the external environment (Cho 1967 and Cumings 1974). The division of the peninsula, origin of two regimes in the southern and northern parts of the peninsula and cosolidation of these regimes, were products of the Cold War politics. After the end of the Japanese colonial rule, people of Korea were aspiring to create an independent and united Korea, but the role of allied power became crucial in setting up two hostile regimes in the northern and southern parts of the peninsula. In spite of all the sentiment of reunification acros the border of the peninsula, tensions, contest and

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4 Buzan and others argue that the relationship between structure and agency has not been necessarily one way. Sometime agency could also affect the nature of structure (Buzan, Jones and Little 1993).

5 Even at government level unification has always been accepted as the goal of foreign policy (Cha Victor D. 2004: 141).
hostilities between the two regimes became the main constituent of the security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula.

In the light of significance of external factors in security of the peninsula, it appeared that once the Cold War structure collapses on the peninsula, the general mood for unification will become so strong that it would be difficult for the both the governments to resist. But even after the end of the Cold War between the superpowers, the tension and hostility between North and South Korea have not decreased and the security environment of the peninsula has remained almost same as previous. Generally, it is portrayed that the weakening and finally end of the Cold War structure at the global level and its manifestation in different regions have been uniform all over the world. The peninsula presents a peculiar picture in which there are two regime contesting for the legitimate control over the peninsula and they are in no way comparable to each other.⁶ One of the regimes is considered to be a ‘rogue state’ whereas the other one is a prospering liberal democracy. When we compare the economic might of both the countries the gap is formidable.⁷

After the end of global bipolarity, although various rudiments of the previous era remained intact such as persistence of alliances and virtual division of the regional players in two camps, the intensity of division has become less binding and more porous and fluid. It has given way to inter virtual-alliance systems interactions which has potential to transform the security paradigm of the peninsula in a more substantial manner. The ideational issues and Constructivist variables such as identity, culture and economic gains have gradually become relatively more significant in the new changed international systemic context.

The propositions of Neorealist theory seemed to be insufficient to explain the continuance of the Cold War security mechanism on the peninsula. The Cold War context has given way to a new orientation. The policy of containment as a goal of foreign policy and bilateral security and defence treaties are justified on the ground of their instrumental value. ‘Conggagement’ (Suh Jae-jung 2003: 5) or ‘hawk engagement’ (Cha Victot D. 2002: 1) are basically the new terminologies of same old

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⁶ For legitimacy war between North Korea and South Korea (Park Han S. 2001).
⁷ For a comparative picture of the economic might of the two states, see (Flake 1999, Noland 2001).
thinking. The perceptual change has not taken place and put into practice to any substantial extent. If the main feature of the Cold War international system was bipolarity, its demise must have given way to end of old rivalry in the peninsular politics. Thus, it indicates that impact of bipolarity subsided other ‘soft issues’ in the security paradigm of the peninsula during the Cold War era but the end of bipolarity brought back significance of these issues in determining the Korean security paradigm.

According to Neo-liberal theory and theory of complex interdependence, though the change at the system level may not have a determining impact on the behaviour of the states but the cooperation in the ‘low politik’ may lead to cooperation in the ‘high politik’ and thus in a globalized world increasing interdependence has led to change in the behaviour of the states and their bilateral relations. The theory does accept any formulation of ‘Peripheral Realism’ and it has serious reservation about analyses which contend that Europe’s past could be Asia’s future (Kang David C. 2003). In the Korean Peninsula also, changes are visible in the form of summit meetings between the leaders of North and South Korea and gradual efforts to make South Korean foreign policy relatively autonomous from the US grand strategy for the region and peninsula (Calder 2001: 108). On the basis of these two theoretical approaches, an analytical framework emanates which is able to explain the change and continuity in the security structure of the Korean Peninsula.

A new variable has come to the scene with characterisation of few states as ‘rogue states.’ The end of the Cold War has led to emergence a new global rival in the form of these ‘rogue states’ or ‘axis of evil’. Furthermore linking few of these ‘rogue regimes’ to the international terrorism after September 11 incident has further complicated the security issue at the Korean Peninsula, as North Korea might allegedly have links with few terrorist outfits. Though the menace of terrorism is considered to be a faceless enemy, as primarily no state in the international system is openly prescribing to the terrorism as a means of foreign policy. Non-state actors have been the main harbinger of this new challenge. But at the same time some states are named to be in close alliance with these forces and again the old policy of containment of the Cold War days is again put in practice to justify the persistence of the Cold War mentality of siege.
Main Actors and Issues in the Korean Security

After the brief description of theoretical issues involved in the study and after an evolution of analytical framework, an attempt has been made in this section to introduce main actors and themes involved in the process. Security paradigm of the Korean Peninsula has been directly affected and constituted by interplay of these actors and themes in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. Thus, any study of the security paradigm of the peninsula has necessarily take them into account and revolve its investigation around them. In the following chapters, the significance of these themes and actors would definitely become more obvious.

a) Actors

In the process of study of the change and continuity in the security structure of the peninsula, one has to deal with the main external actors which are- the United States, China, Japan and Russia, apart of two hostile regimes of the peninsula. The Six-Party talks are basically recognition of this fact that any long lasting solution of the Korean problem could not be arrived at without involving these four actors.

- The United States

The US has been an important actor in the peninsula from the very division of the peninsula along the 38th parallel. It has security, economic and political interest in the affairs of the peninsula. The initial effort of the Korean people to decide their future according to their own aspiration was thwarted by the superpowers’ rivalry and though at the initial stage both the superpowers were having a kind of consensus about keeping the Korea under the trusteeship system. In the Yalta Conference, an agreement among the both superpower emerged that the peninsula would be kept under the trusteeship and only in ‘due course’ it would be left for self-rule (Cumings 1997b: 187, Cumings 1981: 105-107). The disagreement between them became apparent with the deepening of the Cold War at the global level. It is said that the US did not have any policy for the Korean Peninsula and it developed a kind of policy related to Korea when it deemed to be necessary to formulate a policy to check the

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8 The basis of inclusion of these six actors in conceptualization of the security paradigm in the peninsula is their effective and tangible roles in the process (Rhee 1984: 381).
spread of communism in the Asia along with a containment policy for the Eastern Europe (Henderson 1968: 121). The objective of American foreign policy was to create a buffer zone which would work as a bulwark against the spread of Soviet influence in the East Asian region. For this purpose, the US policy makers first tried to establish a non-communist government in the whole peninsula with all kind of inducements. When they did not succeed in their effort, even after raising the issue in the United Nations, they gave their consent for a non-communist government in the southern part of the peninsula. Rhee Syng-man government, which came in power after the first election in the peninsula under the observation of the United Nations Temporary Commission for Korea (UNTCOK), got full support from the US. The US was primarily instrumental in recognition of the Rhee government as the sole legitimate government in the peninsula. The increasing animosity between the US and Soviet Union got reflected in the peninsula and the North Korean regime under the Kim Il Sung also developed a close cooperation with the Soviet Union. The intention of Stalin was also to keep at least North Korean regime communist if the whole peninsula could not be made red. The two regimes of the peninsula became entangled in such a manner that it became difficult to say that how much the hostility between the regimes was product of their internal rivalry and how much their behaviour was product of the superpowers’ contest in the region.

When the Korean War began the US became the main actor in describing the situation as a product of the communist expansionist agenda. The US proactive role inside the UN and outside was clear indicator of the US stakes involved in keeping the South Korean regime safe from the ‘communist aggression.’ In the Korean War 33000 American soldiers died and about 101000 wounded and the figure shows that till that time how important the peninsula was considered in the US policy making. After the end of Korean War the US signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with South Korea in 1954. And along all upheavals, the US has been always ready to fulfil the

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9 However Cumings is not in agreement with this conception of tabula rasa and he has tried to prove the American actions were intended on the Korean issue (Cumings 1981:126).
10 The United States began to tighten its containment policy under the leadership of George Kennan and Dean Acheson. For details about the emergence and implication of American policy of containment, see (Ikenberry 2001: 384-385).
11 For details about the role of the Soviet Union in the Korean affairs during the initial years of Korean independence, see (Weathersby 2001: 161-69).
commitments made under this treaty. Even at present, 37,000 US troops are stationed in Korea. Before the Declaration of the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in 1991, US tactical nuclear weapons were also placed in Korea. The presence of American troops on the peninsula is a very significant constituent of the security structure of the peninsula.

The figures related to the close cooperation between the US and South Korea can show the extent of the US being an important player in the peninsula. The US economic assistance to South Korea from 1945 to 2000 has been around $6 billion and that is when most of the economic aid ended in the mid-1970s as South Korea reached higher levels of economic development (Niksch 2003: 1). From 1945 to 2002, The US had provided $8.8 billion military aid to South Korea. At present, the US is the second largest trading partner of Seoul (replaced as number one by China in 2002), largest export market and South Korea is the 7th largest trading partner of the US. The United States has long viewed South Korean political stability as crucial to the nation’s economic development, to maintaining the security balance on the peninsula, and to preserving peace in the Northeast Asia (Niksch 2003: 1).

A close look at the US foreign policy priorities, spelled out in different government documents, also show that the US has been involved in the security affairs of the peninsula in a very comprehensive manner. The two-war doctrine promulgated in the Quadrennial Defense Review 1997 and later revised in 2001, consider Korean Peninsula along with the Middle East as strategically very important for the US national interests. ¹² Thus, the US could considered to be some time the most important player in the constituting the security structure of the peninsula not only in the Cold War days but even today.

• China

China, though not involved in deciding the fate of the Korea in the beginning, became also greatly engaged in the events of the peninsula. Strategic and geographical location of the peninsula made it difficult for China to shy away from the upheaval of the peninsula. Gradually, China considered North Korea as ‘a shield for its strategy in

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the Northeast Asia’ (Chee 1992: 89). In the peak of the Korean War, when it became clear that the US-led forces were going to capture whole of the peninsula and cross the Yalu River, it became imperative for China to step in. It is now open secret that Chinese volunteers who fought in the favour of North Korea were part of the regular Chinese army. But after successfully pushing back the US led army, China unlike the US, withdrew its forces from the peninsula. In the Korean War, China suffered from a massive human and material loss and according to Chinese military estimates, around 2.9 million Chinese soldiers served in the conflict. Later on, China could not have shied away from the peninsular affairs also because the Chinese sacrifices during the Korean War deepened China’s sense of holding an important stake in affairs on the Korean Peninsula. So, even after withdrawal of the ‘volunteers’ from the peninsula, maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula was important for China. However, it should be remembered that in the initial years China did not have any apparent ambition to spread its influence in the peninsula and it was much more involved in its own domestic front, which needed attention at that point of time more than anything else. However, at the same time, China was also anxious about the US ‘imperialistic tendencies’ and was willing to play the role of container in the region (Whiting 1977).

Cultural affinity between China and Korea from time immemorial became the important meeting ground for North Korea and China after the division of the peninsula along ideological lines. Throughout history, Korea has been the first-tier tributary state of China. In the 19th century, China was so central to the Korean politics that Beijing virtually had total control over the foreign policy of Korea. The issue of influence over Korea led to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Notwithstanding all this, China could not be treated as an important player in constituting the security structure of the peninsula from the end of the Korean War to the emergence of rift between the China and the USSR in early 1960s over the issue

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13 The combat and non combat casualties are taken from Zhang Aiping, Chief Compiler, Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun (China’s People’s Liberation Army) vol. 1, Contemporary China Series, Beijing, Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 1994, p. 137, quoted in (Scobell 2004a: 84).
14 However, historians like Carter J, Eckert and Bruce Cumings do not subscribe to this control of China over Korean foreign policy. They write that it was a kind of inconsequential hierarchy and Korea was treated as equal if not really independent. For details see, (Harrison 2002: 309 and Eckert 2000: 120-122). But given the limited interactions of Korea to other countries during those days, China virtually had strong influence over the foreign policy choices of Korea.
of Ussuri river border. Thereafter, China started to build an informal autonomous communist alliance system of its own. North Korean leader Kim II-sung also perceived it as an opportunity to distance itself from the USSR and that became the background of signing two separate agreements by North Korea with China and the USSR in 1961. The importance of China in the Korean affairs could be gauged from the fact that the agreement with China was for an indefinite period but in case of the USSR it had to be renewed after every 25 years.

When China opted for a policy of open door in economic arena in 1978 the ideological fervour of China became less prominent. However, China continued to play a significant role in favour of North Korea on all possible fora and deliberations. After the demise of the USSR and emergence of the post-Cold War age, China established relations with South Korea and started playing a more balance role in the peninsular affairs. Officially, China supports peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula, which is arrived without the external intervention. It is difficult to say that how much this position is result of pragmatic consideration and how much it has been shaped by a genuine desire to establish long lasting peace on the peninsula. China understands that publicly opposing the unification would offend Koreans even though it thinks that a divided Korea is advantageous for it.

China might have this feeling that divided Koreas are weak and preoccupied with themselves on one of its borders. In contrast, a united Korea would be a stronger state that might turn its attention to unpleasant issues such as Korean interest in incorporating parts of Chinese territory, including Baekdu Mountain and areas of Manchuria with heavily ethnic Korean populations. North Korean hostility with the US presence in the peninsula makes China confident that Washington would be precluded to establish military base in a China’s bordering country. If South Korea gets control over the whole peninsula it might allow the American troops to establish a base there. Thus, it seems that China is content with the status quo at the divided peninsula and least interested in Korean unification.

\[15\] It is important to note that China share borders with thirteen countries and a ‘peaceful rise’ of China is only possible if it is able to maintain good border relations with the majority of these neighbouring countries.
However, the divided Koreas and a hostile North Korea also gives *raison d'être* to the US to keep its troops in the peninsula. The US National Missile Defense (NMD) and Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) programmes are being justified on the ground that due to a rogue North Korea it is pertinent on the part of the US to go for such kind of ambitious and adventurous policy options. The proactive US policy could be seen by China from the perspective of presence of North Korea as a rogue state and division of peninsula. In that case a more prudent policy option for Beijing could be to support and work for the unification and peace on the Korean Peninsula. Chinese participation in the earlier Four Party Talks and ongoing Six Party Talks could be seen in this light also. What ever be the case of Chinese intentions, it is well established that China is the second most important outside player in the peninsula in constituting the security structure and it has a ‘leverage’ (Reed 2006: 134) in pacifying and resolving the Korean problem.

- **Japan**

In the mid of 19th century, Japan became aggressively interested in establishing in Asia a ‘co-prosperity zone’.\(^{16}\) Korea got prominence in this project and Japan tried to enter into trade with Korea during the Yi dynasty, which kept it totally cut-off from rest of the world. By successfully concluding Kanghwa Treaty with Korea in 1876, Japan entered into a trade relations with Korea. Japan emerged as victorious in the contest with China and Russia in its efforts to bring Korea under its influence zone by the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th Century.\(^{17}\) Finally, Japan as an imperial power got formal control over Korea in 1910 and shaped the future of Korea in a manner, which was unprecedented in the history. Japanese control and colonialism was so pervasive that not a single walk of Korean life remained unaffected from the Japanese influence. The thirty-five years of Japanese colonialism in Korea finally ended with defeat of Japan in the Second World War and Japan became less important as an actor in deciding the fate and future of Korea. The politics of the Cold War became more important for the peninsula in the post-War period in which Japan did

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\(^{16}\) It was a misnomer to call it Asian Co-prosperity Zone because it was basically equivalent to Japanese colonial empire. Japan worked meticulously for this project and was successfully able to accomplish it to a great extent.

\(^{17}\) Japan defeated China in 1896 and Russia in 1904 and made it presence uncontested in the Korean Peninsula.
not has much significant role to play nor it was interested in committing for any such kind of role.

From the beginning of the Cold War order, Japan, which was devastated by the wounds of the Second War, had neither resources and nor will to take part in the external affairs of the other countries. It was governed by the famous Yoshida Doctrine,\textsuperscript{18} which prescribed a foreign policy shunning international political-military commitments while concentrating on economic growth. It avoided foreign entanglements and also any collective security commitments except with the US. It has been observed, “Japanese strategists have been more willing to accept US military on their soil than they have US bankers or manufacturers” (Heginbotham and Samuels 1998: 199-200).

Among other constraints on Japanese policy, one of the most severe is the long and troubled history of Japanese-Korean relations. The burden of history and the residual suspicion of its neighbours have precluded Japan from adopting a proactive leadership role in shaping a new order in the region (Armacost and Pyle 1999: 12). Before 1965, Japan was able to communicate with Korea (that is also only with South Korea) through the US. Like South Korea, Japan was a close ally of the US in the region and it had concluded a security treaty with Washington. Being a strategic partner of the US in a virtual-alliance of Washington, Seoul and Tokyo, it played a role indirectly in deciding the security structure of the peninsula. After normalization of relations with South Korea in 1965, a new era of cooperation between South Korea and Japan began. Officially having trading relations with South Korea and growing economic might have led to Japan becoming a direct player in the affairs of the peninsula. However, a deep sense of mistrust and animosity even among the minds of South Korean general masses remained present throughout these years (Cha Victor D. 1999).

In the post-Cold War era, security understanding between the US, Japan and South Korea remained intact. However, Japan had tried to engage North Korea in a more comprehensive way. Threatened by the ‘nuclear programme of weaponisation’

\textsuperscript{18} The doctrine was named after the Prime Minister of Japan who devised the concept by taking into consideration the domestic capabilities and resources of the country and international environment.
and missile programme of North Korea, it had resorted to this policy of engagement with North Korea. In 2002, the Japanese Prime Minister visited Korea and said sorry for the Japanese colonialism in Korea during the first half of 20th century (Lee Myun-woo 2002). Basically, the utterances could be seen in the perspective of changing posture and policy of Japan for the peninsula, which was satisfied with the cultivating good relations with South Korea. Geographical proximity with North Korea and any adventurous step by Pyongyang may be dangerous for Japan and it has realised to work not only on ‘a policy of stick’ but has also resolved to go for ‘a policy of carrot’. Given a great inter-linkage between the colonial period of a country and its present and Japanese economic might Japan also becomes an actor in deciding the security structure on the peninsula.

- The USSR (Russia)

The USSR also played an important role in the affairs of the peninsula from the days of the Second World War. It were the Soviet forces, which first entered the peninsula to receive surrender from defeated Japan. The Soviet Union informed its allies of the war and did not go beyond the 38th parallel. US General MacArthur who was head of the Pacific Command, started from the American base in Okinawa and reached almost a week after the arrival of the Soviet Army in the peninsula. In the taking shape of Korean problem, the USSR became a significant external player with the US and China. Moscow was also interested in creating a buffer zone in the peninsula in the form of establishing a communist government in Korea. The beginning of the Cold War led to supporting two mutually opposite groups by the superpowers. However, in establishment of a communist government in North Korea, the Soviet Union was not so much involved as the US was involved in establishment of a ‘democratic’ government in South Korea, though through the UN. Moscow only supported a majority voice in the Korea, which very vocally surfaced in Korea in the form of establishment of People’s Committees in the length and breadth of country (Cumings 1997b: 224-28).19

19 According to Cumings the formation of People’s Committee in Korea finally culminated in establishment of communist regime in the northern portion of the peninsula. The USSR was not directly involved in the process and at least till 1940s North Korean regime was not a puppet of Moscow.
The Soviet Union tried to help North Korea in all possible ways to make a valuable partner in its fight with the US led block. In the Northeast Asia, the US was able to forge an alliance with Japan and South Korea but the Soviet Union was not able to develop any similar kind of alliance with North Korea. The situation further got complicated when China became a critique of the USSR policy and termed it as ‘social imperialist.’ Though North Korea did not go to same extent but the result of this particular situation was that no formal alliance system evolved in the Northeast Asia against the US-Japan-South Korea virtual-alliance. It was only in early 1960s that a friendship treaty was signed by the USSR with North Korea. However, notwithstanding with this fact North Korea got all kinds of support from the USSR and whenever it sought for international support on various fora like the UN, the USSR always supported it. In result, the USSR’s relations with South Korea remained strained throughout the period.

In the late 1980s, a major shift came in the policy of the USSR when it started political and economic reform in the country. Gradually, the USSR perceived economic cooperation with South Korea more beneficial than following an orthodox line. The USSR and South Korea established full diplomatic relations on September 30, 1990. South Korea gave Moscow a loan of $3 billion loan in 1991 in response (Stanley 1998: 94-95). It is said that the establishment of diplomatic relations was one of the most significant events in the two countries diplomatic history. It also signalled a turning point in the history of East Asian international relations in the last decade of the 20th century (Kim Hak-joon 1997: 637).

The change in the posture of the Soviet Union was so profound that in November 1992, South Korea and the Soviet Union signed a Treaty on the Principles of Relations (Stanley 1998: 104-105). Yeltsin government “had pursued the aim of promoting relations with Seoul while allowing the relationship with the North to deteriorate” (Buszynsky 1996: 205). When the issue of renewal of treaty between Pyongyang and Moscow came in 1996, Moscow was reluctant to extend the period of treaty and thus gradually Russia became less and less important player in the peninsula. So in the Four-Party talks to replace the Armistice Agreement with a Peace Treaty, Moscow was not being included. The marginalization of Russia in the affairs
of the peninsula could be also exemplified in the way the issues of nuclear and missile threats from North Korea were dealt with by all other actors in the peninsula.

One can say that in the Korean Peninsula, Russian government has attempted to restore a balance between the South and North Korea at least since early 1996 (Stanley 1998: 106). Whereas it improved relations with South Korea in all the upheavals like ‘spy expulsion episode’ (Choi Seung-whan 1999), it also showed signs of improving relations with North Korea by initializing a new amity pact to replace the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, which was abrogated in 1996 (Shin Jae-hoon 1998: 26 The Korea Herald, 18 May 1999). The balance led to re-inclusion of the Soviet Union in the affairs of the peninsula; it was included as a dialogue partner in the Six-Party talks which are going on in Beijing for conclusion of a treaty.

b) Issues

The issues, which are indicatives for the study, could be classified into few broader categories. The first category could be the conceptualization of the Cold War itself by North and South Korea during the Cold War era and after the global end of the Cold War. The second category consists of the US policy for the peninsula in the Cold War era and after end of that era. The third category could be overall response of the regional powers to the security structure of the peninsula and their interventions in affairs with varied extent and effectiveness (Kim Ki-jeong 2003). For the empirical purpose, different issues like nuclear and missile programmes of North Korea, defence capabilities and preparedness of North and South Korea, financial and economic stability and crisis of the two regimes in the peninsula, and nature of regimes and virtual-alliances on the peninsula, are significant for the study. These empirical issues are a manifestation of the structural and perceptual issues involved in making of the Korean Peninsula’s security structure. However, these issues have been submerged in the actors’ role and intervention in constituting the security structure paradigm of the peninsula in the study.

i) Conceptualization of the Cold War by the Two Regimes

The Cold War came to Korea not by accident but by the plan and its effect on the security of peninsula has been enormous. Korea did not decided to become a part of
the superpowers rivalry in the post War decades but the superpowers decided to make it a battle ground for their rivalry. From Yalta to the United Nations, the Korean people’s aspirations were least taken into account; be it the issue of making Korea ready for self-rule or letting a particular form of polity emerge on the peninsula. Basically, the superpowers were interested in creating a buffer in the region. Later on they were able to establish friendly regimes in their respective zones of influence. The Cold War and hostility between the superpowers got manifested in the peninsula by a similar and some time more pronounced way between North and South Korea. The Korean War could be described as the internalization of the Cold War by the two regimes of the peninsula and concurrence perception that existence of one regime is a security threat for the other (Ku Gap-wu 2005). North and South Korea perceived each other as stooge of its patron superpowers and considered and projected itself as a genuine representative of free will of Korean people.

The Cold War became much deep rooted in the peninsula by projection of regime survival as sin-quo-non of security of the Korea by North and South Korea. South Korea got massive economic and military assistant from the US in lieu of containing North Korea in the peninsula. The Cold War was also seen as a moment of opportunity by the two regimes of the peninsula. They got generous economic and military aids from their patrons, which were perceived to be essential in the process of nation building. The regimes and political elites had less regretful view about the Cold War because it was positively contributing in survival of their rules. The security of regimes was equated with security of the states. The ruling elites of North and South Koreas both deliberately confused about security of nation, state and regime. In the post-Cold War era, though systemic changes have taken place, the regime are still not much inclined to have a re-look at their policy options of the Cold War days.

ii) The US Policy

The US policy for Korea and its place in the overall strategic interests of the Washington has played the most important role in shaping the security structure of the peninsula from the days of the Cold War till date (Eberstadt 2002 and Snyder 2004). There are evidences that the US had no clear-cut policy for Korea till the surrender of Japan in Korea to allied powers. But gradually the peninsula became a significant
strategic spot for the US in the Northeast Asian region and its alliance with South Korea and Japan and military base in Okinawa and South Korea allowed Washington to station around one lakh troops in the region to get control in any unforeseeable situation. In the Northeast Asia, a similar kind of security alliance system emerged on the US side as it had evolved in the Europe (NATO), Central Asia (CEATO) and Southeast Asia (SEATO). From the opposite side no matching formal alliance system was able to emerge. The USSR or China did not concluded any similar overtly security treaty with North Korea and this unique manifestation of the Cold War in the region put the US in a very special position by which it can influence the security scenario of the peninsula in a very significant manner.

In the initial years, South Korea was interested in acquiring domestic and international legitimacy on the ground of economic development of the country and it was much content with its own unhindered development. In the process, a foreign policy of allegiance to the US was considered to be the best option available for South Korea. American policy to station military troops in the peninsula has also influenced the security structure by generating a suspicion in the mind of North Korea about South Korea’s intentions. It has led to justification of massive defence expenditure by North Korea. The American troops in the southern part of the peninsula create a sense of security for South Korea but at the same time it has been a cause of concern for North Korea. North Korea has allegedly gone for nuclear weaponisation programme and developed its missile programme to counter the military imbalance between the two regimes, created by the presence of American troops.

Any progress in the bilateral relations between North and South Korea did not take place even when a strong sense of reunification has been ever present on both

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20 Around 37,000 US troops are in Korea where as more than 60,000 troops are in Japanese base Okinawa.
21 For a legitimacy war between the two states on the peninsula, two indicators were very important—regime performance (economic development) and ideology. Along with these two indicators, both the states kept looking for external recognition and flaunted about the number of countries which had recognized one or the other regime. For details see (Clough 1987).
22 A classic case of spiral security dilemma could be found on the peninsula when defensive security preparedness of one state could be considered by the other state as offensive posture which threatens its security and consequently the other state also gets prepared to counter it (Han Yong-sup 2005: 157-158).
23 Jae-jung suh has given details about the arms capabilities of North and South Koreas in the post-Cold War era (Suh Jae-jung 2004).
sides of the 38th parallel, because of the role of the US in the peninsular politics.\textsuperscript{24} It also provides an excuse to other regional powers to take extra interest in the affairs of the peninsula. The external actors are least concerned with the general sentiment of the people of Korea and for them their own strategic interest is most imperative than anything else. The process of rapprochement between the two regimes of the peninsula has got very much influenced by the US policy of the Cold War days. Event after the end of the Cold War at the global level, the US plays a very important role in the peninsular politics. Still there is no sign of withdrawal of American troops from the peninsula and the US has not come out of the Cold War mentality of old days. In the changed international scenario, South Korea has realised that hostility and animosity between the two regimes of the peninsula is neither good for South Korea nor its good for peninsula as a whole. So in the last decade, it has pursued a policy of creating friendly relations with North Korea. Roh Tae Woo began the ‘Nord Politik’, which was further focused and deepened by the Kim Dae-jung by his policy of ‘sunshine’ (Levin and Han 2002 and Hong Soon-young 1999: 10). All the efforts of South Korea led to a summit meeting between the leaders of the two regimes in June 2000.

The momentum in the positive direction has not been able to bring improvement in the inter Korean relations in a substantive manner and part of the blame also goes to the policy of the Washington which has kept vacillating between ‘containment’ at one time and ‘engagement’ at the other. Political rhetoric on the part of the US has also led to deterioration in the security situation of the peninsula. Branding North Korea as a ‘rogue’ regime or a part of ‘axis of evil’ has been responsible for augmenting the problem of security in the peninsula rather than resolving it.

\textsuperscript{24} With the democratization of the South Korean polity, increasingly the presence of the US has been considered to be a hindrance in the way of reunification of the peninsula (Oh John Kie-chang 1998 and Kim Jin-wung 1994).
iii) Response of the Regional Powers

Korean Peninsula is so centrally located in the Northeast Asian region that any regional power could not shy away from the developments of the peninsula. From the beginning of the Cold War it has been tied up with the superpowers rivalry in such a manner that it became very important for all the regional powers to take their stand on the issues of the peninsula very cautiously. As mentioned in the earlier section, the regional actors took the politics of the peninsula and thus their responses and policies regarding peninsula also became significance as a constituent of the security structure of the peninsula in the Cold War era as well as in the post-Cold War era.

Among the regional powers, the role of China has been most important for the historical and cultural reasons and also because of its emergence as a possible challenge for the US in the region. The US programme of Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) in the region is basically targeted against China and official proclamation that it is designed for the rogue states like North Korea is not much convincing. There is also a belief that China enjoys leverage over North Korea and its role in resolving the Korea problem and establishment of a peace regime in the peninsula is very important.

Japan has also been trying to become a ‘normal state’ and it has actively participated in the Korea Energy Development Organization (KEDO), which was established under the provisions of Nuclear Accord concluded between North Korea and the US. Japan has also tried to establish bilateral relations with North Korea when Japanese Prime Minister visited North Korea in 2002. Japan is also apparently keen in resolution of the Korean problem because an instable peninsula would create a security threat, given the geographical proximity. Japan looks sincere in its participation in the Six Party talks, which are going on in Beijing.

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25 Don Oberdorfer describes Korea as a country of the wrong size in the wrong place (Oberdorfer 1997: 7).
26 Korean Peninsula Development Organization was created in accordance with the Nuclear Accord between North Korea and the US in October 1994. In the accord, North Korea agreed to dismantle its heavy water based nuclear programme; in lieu it had to get two light water nuclear reactors of 1000 MW capacity each. For building light water reactors, an international consortium was to be established and that was KEDO.
The role of Russia has got diminished to a substantial extent in the post-Cold War Northeast Asia, but gradual economic recovery and stabilization in the country make it again an important player in the region and security structure of the peninsula would be shaped and decided also by the Russian participation in the process. Russian President Vladimir Putin has realised the importance of Russia’s relationship with North Korea and has been trying to re-inculcate faith of Pyongyang in Moscow. In recent years Putin has been ‘a highly active new geo-politician (Calder 2001: 106-107).

iv) Empirical Issues

a. Nuclear and Missile Programme of North Korea

Presence of tactical nuclear weapons in the peninsula has been an important determinant in the security structure of Korea. In the Korean War itself, the US threatened to use nuclear weapons against North Korea and the incentive or impetus to North Korea for a nuclear weapon programme could be traced from that date. It was considered to be an easy, effective and cheap option to threaten the enemy (Mazarr 1995). A fear psychosis of these threats was further augmented by the ‘open secret’ of presence of tactical nuclear weapons of the US in the peninsula. Behind all the defence preparedness of North Korea, the threat of these weapons has been always present. Thus, the step, which insured security of one regime, was considered to be a source of insecurity for the other. To counter the imbalance the other regime resorted to the other means of advancements in the conventional arms build-up. A situation of classical security dilemma emerged out of these preparedness and counter preparedness in the peninsula.

In the 1970s, the news that South Korea was also contemplating to opt for a nuclear weaponisation programme made the situation again alarming for the North Korean policy makers.27 It is said that North Korean nuclear programme has been a product of its perception about the developments on nuclear front in the peninsula. At the junction of the Cold War to a new post-Cold War era, the North Korean nuclear weapon programme became focus of attention and in later days surfaced as the key

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27 South Korea’s first commercial nuclear reactor Kori became operational in 1978. Moreover, South Korea also had two small reactors TRIGA Mark II and TRIGA Mark III and one small fuel fabrication plant. In the wake of Guam Doctrine, it seriously thought to work toward weaponisation (Yager 1980: 49).
empirical determinant of the Korean security structure. However, the programme was a mere manifestation of deep-rooted hostility between the two regimes and should not be seen as coming out from a vacuum. It has been a response to a certain political and economic environment, which had been evolving from a long time. It does not mean that in any way one can justify the North Korea nuclear weapon programme but it only emphasizes the need to look at it in a more comprehensive and neutral manner and to take the threat perceptions of other state also into account. Even after the Nuclear Accord between the US and North Korea on 12 October 1994, the issue has not been able to totally subside because basically it was a treatment to the symptom and not the disease itself. When the second nuclear crisis has erupted on the peninsula, one could realise that issues had not changed much. Still the main players of the peninsular affairs have not come out of the old mind set of the Cold War days. Although, a roadmap to denuclearise North Korea has been agreed upon in the Six-Party talks on February 13, 2007, the implementation process has to pass through a difficult phase, given the lack of trust among the actors of the Korean affairs.

The missile development by North Korea and its export to some other countries are also another important empirical issue in defining the security structure of the peninsula. North Korean Rodong I and II and recently acquired Taepodong I and ongoing Taepodong II missiles have been source of security concern for not only South Korea but also for the other neighbouring countries like Japan. In August 1998 North Korea test-fired a rocket which was meant for sending satellite in the space through the outer space of Japan, it became the central issue of concern for further negotiations with North Korea. Again by considerable engagement, the issue was resolved temporarily when North Korea pledged for self-imposed moratorium on its missile programme. The missile issue is also important for its implication beyond the peninsula when it is exported to some other countries like Iran, Sudan, Pakistan and Egypt. There is threat that it would nullify the effort made under the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), an informal arrangement to check the spread of

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28 In September 1999 after Berlin agreement with the US, North Korea put a self moratorium on missile testing and in response it demanded for relaxation in economic and political sanctions. When the US-North Korea relations again soured after eruption of 'second nuclear' crisis in late 2002 and subsequent hostility, North Korea announced in 2004 that it was no longer bound by its commitment for self-moratorium.
missiles having range of more the 300 kilometres. The export of missile by North Korea may create imbalance in the other regions of the world and it would be detrimental for the peace and security of the world at large. Given the geographical proximity of Japan and South Korea with North Korea, it could be grave threat for the peninsular security and may have a spiral effect on the armament process of peninsula.

b. Defence Capabilities and Preparedness of North and South Korea

The process of armament in the peninsula has been greatly affected by the hostility between the two regimes of the peninsula and by the Cold War security structure. From the inception of two regimes in the peninsula, the security dilemma between them led to a massive expenditure in the defence preparedness. In the Cold War era both got generous help and assistance from the US and the USSR. In case of South Korea, the American presence led to a unique kind of arrangement in which it was not directly bothered about its security. The security treaty between South Korea and the US signed in 1954 has been a strong foundation on the basis of which South Korean defence preparedness should be seen. It also provides an insight to judge the defence capabilities of the two regimes. North Korea could not sign similar treaty with its allies like China and the Soviet Union. Although an informal understanding existed between them regarding security of the North Korean regime, it cannot match with the US-Japan-South Korea virtual-alliance.

When the differences between the Soviet Union and China became more apparent in early 1960s, North Korea followed a formal path of self-reliance in the military preparedness too. The policy of Juche was extended to the defence field and a policy of self-reliance in military (Jawi) was formulated. The North Korean expenditure on the defence preparedness became so high that it is said to be one of the reasons which led to economic crisis in the country. In the post-Cold War world, North Korea was denied the assistance it was getting from its friendly countries like China and the erstwhile Soviet Union. Thus, North Korea was caught in a situation in which it had no option but to look beyond the conventional arms. The emphasis on the

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29 Hamm Taik-young and Kent E. Calder have given a picture of North and South Korean defence preparedness (Hamm Taik-young 1999 and Calder 1996: 148).
nuclear weapons and missile programme was product of this sense of desperation on the part of North Korea. The process was further accentuated with the waves of flood and draught related economic problems (Cumings Meredith Woo 2001).

In the South Korean case, security assurance from the US and Japan remained intact along with its spectacular economic growth beginning from the early 1970s to mid 1990s. All these factors led South Korea to spend less percentage of GDP on defence, yet having a clear margin over the North Korean defence expenditure in absolute terms. In the post-Cold War era also the commitment level of the US has not gone down and a sense of insecurity, which developed in case of North Korea, has been absent in case of South Korea. To decipher the change and continuity in the security structure of the peninsula, change and continuity in the defence preparedness and capabilities of the two regimes and their support systems would constitute a significant empirical variable.

c. Financial and Economic Vulnerability of Two Regimes

Although economic and financial aspects of security are also important components in any conceptualization of comprehensive human security, the study is focused on the military security only, taking the conventional notion of security into consideration. However, the economic and financial vulnerabilities, which have their direct bearing on the military security, cannot be left out of the scope of the study. In the early days of state formation in Korea economic development was considered by both the regimes as one of the means to acquire legitimacy. After the Korean War, North and South Koreas contested furiously in the arena of economic development. In the first two decades, North Korean performance on the economic front was better than South Korea, but in the 1970s South Korea under the leadership of Park Chung-hee, emerged as tough competitor of North Korea.

Gradually, Seoul decisively surpassed Pyongyang on economic development front. A sense of insecurity developed in the mind of North Korea policy makers and the arena contest was again diverted to hard-core security issues. Thus, in the Cold War and post-Cold War era both security issues have been closely linked with the economic vulnerability of the regimes. More aggressive military posture of North
Korea in the post-Cold War world is not totally delinked with the economic crisis in the early and mid-1990s in North Korea. The export of missile technology by North Korea could be a cheap means to earn foreign currency, which is the dire need of Pyongyang in this miserable economic condition.\textsuperscript{30}

Given the economic crisis of North Korea, different actors of the peninsular politics started positioning themselves for a soft landing of North Korea. The security threat from the explosion and implosion of North Korea became the most probable crisis to be prepared for. In the meantime, South Korea financial crisis, which erupted in 1997 led to a suspicion that Seoul is not in a condition to offer any non-reciprocal concession to North Korea which was considered to be important to pursue a policy of engagement.\textsuperscript{31}

For the establishment of a peace regime in the Korean Peninsula a major consideration has been the cost of the reunification and who is going to bear this cost (Noland 2001, Eberstadt 1994 Choe and Huff 2002). The drive and zeal to go for addressing the crucial knots of the Korean problem, the economic issues have been significant and still they play an important role. The study will look into the economic strength and weaknesses of the two regimes, which have influenced their security policy options in the Cold War days and in the post-Cold War era.

d. Nature of Regimes and their Alliance Systems

The nature of regime led to belief that a certain kinds of regimes are less prone to go to war with each other. In his ‘democratic peace’ thesis Bruce Russet has formulated that deepening of democracy in a country makes difficult for regimes to opt for war (Russet 1993 and Choi Ajin 2003). There could be a debate about the thesis but there could be no denial from the fact that many times, certain regimes tend to equate threats to their regimes as threats for the state itself. In the case of Korea too, a reification of regimes became one of the major sources of conflict in the peninsula. North and South Korean political elites, which have been in power, presented the

\textsuperscript{30} North Korea supplied WMD to few Middle East countries only to get monetary benefit (Noland 2002: 173).

\textsuperscript{31} South Korea has been pursuing policy of engagement through economic means in recent decade. During the South Korean economic crisis in 1997, there was some suspicion over this strategy but President Kim Dae Jung made it clear from the very beginning that his government would work for a ‘comprehensive reciprocity’ which meant providing North Korea economic assistance without conditionality (Gills 1996).
threats to their regimes as the threats for the state itself, which was only partially true. The North Korea regime practices a close polity in which differences in opinions are being crushed and the threat perceptions are fully determined by the ruling elites of the country. On the basis of thus determined threats the state goes for defending its national interests, which are again solely decided by them.

In North Korea, Kim Il-sung and communist party had total control over the issue pertaining to national security. Even after the death of the great leader, the nature of regime has not changed much and irrational behaviour on the part of regime may lead to crisis situation for the peace and security of the peninsula. The allegation that North Korean regime is a 'rogue' regime and it is part of 'axis of evil' in the post-Cold War era is basically continuance of the old thinking that nature of North Korea regime per-se is a danger for the security and peace of the peninsula. Deepening of democracy in South Korea could be equated with a change in the nature of regime in the country. There is belief that it may lead to a strong sense of urgency and sensitivity on the part of the South Korean government to work for the reunification of the peninsula. The support for the sunshine policy of South Korea comes from the fact that the people of the Korea have a deep desire for a better relation with North Korea. It makes South Korea more eager to cooperate with North Korea on the basis of principle of non-reciprocity. A further complication in ascertaining the security structure of the peninsula emanates from growing anti-Americanism in Seoul. It has been there in psyche of the South Korean people during the Cold War days but gradually the role of China as an 'honest broker' in the Korean affairs has got more currency in recent past, especially its role in the on going Six-Party talks to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue.\(^{32}\)

Relative autonomy of its foreign policy and a more reconciliatory role of South Korea in comparison to the US has led to a rethink by the strategic thinkers about the fate of security alliance between the US and South Korea. The changing nature of South Korean regime along with a persisting and non-changing nature of North Korean regime makes it necessary for any study of Korean security to take

\(^{32}\) Yiwei Wang has elaborately discusses the role of China in the Six-Party talks and considers it to be very constructive for the peace building in the Northeast Asia (Wang Yiwei 2005).
cognizance of nature of regimes in past and present. The nature of regimes is also closely linked with the virtual-alliance systems and any change in nature of regimes may lead to change in these two virtual-alliance systems resulting in an overall change in security structure itself.

Concluding Remarks

A study of all the variables and the constants of the constituents of Korean Peninsula’s security structure in the post-Cold War era needs various inter-linkages and under currents to be probed upon. On the basis of role of various actors of the peninsula in the light of issues mentioned, the signs of change and continuity in the security structure of the peninsula could be seen more comprehensively. Although it is not an easy task to go along with all the variables throughout the study, however, an attempt has been made to include some significant issues which constitute or influence the security structure of the peninsula. While analysing the role of identified actors these issues have been probed upon. The study of change and continuity in the security structure of the Korean Peninsula in post-Cold War era and identification of variables involved would lead to a comprehensive picture for what should be done next to establish a peace regime on the peninsula, which has been suffering from almost a century, first by the colonial exploitation of Japan and then in the vortex of the Cold War.

All the attempts of peace building on the Korean Peninsula could not succeed without an understanding of what are the factors which are fundamental to the problem. Unsuccessful attempt to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953 by a peace treaty by the Four-Party talks, intermittent eruption of North Korean nuclear and missile problems and stagnated Six-Party talks are clear evidence of the fact that the actors involved are not able to comprehend the basic issues involved in the security structure of the peninsula. The actors have to realise in a more clear term what has changed in the Korean security dynamics and what still needs to be resolved to come out of their Cold War mindset. The Korean security structure, which has been claimed to be going through a phase of transition, needs to be analysed in a proper
theoretical perspective to transcend undue euphemism of the post-Cold War or pessimism of 'where the Cold War never ends.' The study seeks to open the debate about the security environment of the peninsula in a manner which would lead to arriving at an understanding based on theoretical foundation of international relations and empirical observations of the behaviours of the states.