



New Korean Reality: Observation and Analysis of Lee Jae-myung's Diplomacy to Solve the North Korean Nuclear Issue

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Abstract. This article is a comparative analysis of the diplomatic efforts of Northeast Asian countries that South Korea faced and its responses in Northeast Asia, examining the diplomatic maneuvers and strategic interests of the Lee Jae-myung administration in the North Korean nuclear conundrum. From a realist theoretical perspective, this article analyses South Korea's approach to the nuclear issue with North Korea and compares it with those of past ROK regimes. The purpose of the report is to provide information that can contribute to an improved security environment in the region by outlining the motives and behaviors of states in making decisions. The research claims that Lee Jae-myung's administration employed a number of conceptual tools in order to claim its diplomatic independence in a multilateralist competitive environment. Those efforts involved a regional multilateral framework, the restoration of dialogue mechanisms, and step-by-step denuclearisation. But it also had to contend with the challenge of North Korea's position and the inherent fragilities of the US-ROK alliance. The approach might work, but how well it will be based on the interplay between groups and the diplomatic skill of South Korea. This article will confirm the implications of realist theorizing by cases and evaluate whether the pattern of South Korea's intricate behavior amidst multi-party intervention demonstrates the extent to which the theory can explain or examine it.

Keywords: North Korean nuclear issue, Foreign Policy in South Korea, Geo-Political Environment.

1 Introduction

North Korea and South Korea have played an active chess game of nuclear brinkmanship for the past fifty years since the Korean War.

Amid shifts in the international system and South Korean domestic politics, the North Korea policies of South Korea have been in continuous flux.

In June 2025, he was sworn in as the president of South Korea, Lee Jae-myung. In light of his policy divergence regarding the North Korean nuclear question from the previous Yoon Seok-yeol government, the new administration displayed greater ambivalence regarding South Korean foreign policy. Examining the strategic goals and

diplomatic conduct of the Lee Jae-myung government regarding the North Korean nuclear issue will serve as an indicator of the future policy direction and the degree of examining the latest trends of SK foreign policy and for that of academic is provided.

Questions and prospective considerations to this paper are: What are the strategic aims of the Lee Jae-myung government toward North Korean nuclear issue? How are the intentions reflected in acting diplomacy? What are the potential and limits to its politic in that context? and try to new perspectives on question relating North Korea implement policies? To these questions, this article expects answers to provide new insight into current South Korean foreign policy toward North Korea in the context of the new era on the Korean Peninsula. This study aims to bridge the existing gap study of the new president's novel policy directions and further validate the utility of realism conceptual lenses in real-world applications.

2 Literature Review

2.1 North Korean Nuclear Issue Study Review

In recent decades, a vast amount of work has been produced on the North Korean nuclear problem. Taking the historical background of development path of the North Korea nuclear program, the initial nuclear research, covert development, declared nuclear and missile testing, and its institution-based incentive structures, economic limitations and time-based political and international sanctions pressure are analysed [1]. In addition to the review of facts above, some literature from the security dilemma and deterrence theoreis perspective based on classic security dilemma, deterrence and counter-deterrence logic, examines why North Korea remains committed to nuclear weapons and how it utilizes such nukes to re-regulate its strategic positioning [2].

Study on the motives and history of North Korea's nuclear weapons development have been discussed in the above document. Research on South Korea's response policy is conducted based on institutionalism and the theory of international governance. From the dimensions of international institution, diplomatic negotiation mechanism, regional security architecture, nuclear disarmament mechanism, etc. the two-way negotiation mechanism and its weakness in the theatre of the North Korean nuclear problem are examined [3]. A few analysts have noted that the North Korean nuclear question is not simply a matter between North Korea and South Korea and requires further injection with a discussion of regional order and geopolitics: that is situating the North Korean nuclear issue within the context of the relations of major powers in Northeast Asia and the regional security grid, along with an analysis of the game and order construction logics of China, the U.S., Russia, Japan, South Korea and others [4].

There are still some inadequacies or gap in the review though the reviews are extensive. Analysis is sparse with respect to the new South Korean government led by Lee Jae-myung related to the North Korean nuclear issue First, there is the relative dearth of analysis of the new South Korean government led by Lee Jae-myung relating to the North Korean nuclear issue. This study had pointed out the aspects to be im-

proved or completed. Most of the articles concentrate on the policy research of the former Presidents, especially Yoon Seok-yeol and Moon Jae-in, without covering the change of policy traceable to the handover of power. The new South Korean government has responded accordingly with a shift in South Korean diplomacy. At present, there is no observation on the new Lee Jae-myung government. From the viewpoint of regional order, the ways and means of reflecting South Korea's intermediate status within the regional order on a theoretical level also required deepening.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective

In this paper to expose the strategic intention and diplomatic logic of Lee Jae-myung government will development three theoretical perspective.

Strategic Intent Analysis: This examines how state actors express their long-term objectives, seek to shape expectations, and pursue order in an anarchical international system through signaling, posturing and policy options. This article will be able to see through the South Korean government's basic incentives to their core wants.

Regional order and Geopolitical Theory: It examines the constraints on the diplomacy of small and medium states and how they are actors that position themselves in the regional order rearticulation in Northeast Asia. In order to make more realistic estimations, this theory is superimposed on the real geopolitics of South Korea.

Foreign Policy Analysis Process Model: This considers the effects of domestic politics, institutional constraints, diplomatic capabilities, and alliance constraints on state diplomatic behaviour. The article attempts a systematic mapping of the interactive mechanisms through which strategic purpose and diplomatic activity, considered under these theoretical umbrellas, may be related.

2.3 Research Gap

The research described herein addresses the identified gaps.

Underdeveloped Treatment of New Regime Policy Goals: To date, there is little public commentary on the policy goals of the Lee Jae-myung administration with regards to North Korean nukes, and strategic implications remain underanalyzed.

Not enough on implementing the policies: The bulk of the public literature concerns big diplomatic negotiations, not a lot is written about how the government manages North Korean propaganda, border incidents, and institutional changes.

Lack of policy impact evaluation and consideration on regional order: Even where policy impact assessments are found (which is not sufficiently common), they tend to have a short term focus and only loosely relate them to processes of regional order rearrangement and changing conditions of security.

Limited theoretical integration: While south Korea's north korean policy has been analysed extensively, relatively few studies offer an integrative analysis that situates models of regional order and patterns of diplomatic behaviour within the framework of strategic intent theory. To provide a prospective interpretation of North Korean nuclear policy under the Lee Jae-myung administration and discuss potential risks and regional implications, this article is based on both theoretical and empirical analyses.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This article mainly uses process-tracing with additional qualitative comparison and a case study. On the North Korean nuclear issue in particular, the paper follows the government's road from strategic intention, through policy options, diplomatic conduct, early response, to retaliation, to map out the intervening mechanisms from strategic intention to diplomatic behavior. In addition, this article analyzes the continuity and changes of the new administration by comparing the pathways of the policies of the former South Korean administrations.

With respect to operation, this study constructs the following analytical framework: strategic intention, choice of an action, action execution, diplomatic exchange, and feedback for one thing. It also carries out a hunt and tracking of the tangible diplomacy during the first Lee Jae-myung administration.

3.2 Case Selection

Since the Lee Jae-myung administration has been in its infancy and it has less than few policy implications, the following are selected as the cases in this article related to eye-catching diplomatic actions or signals of policy:

The halting of border broadcasts into North Korea [5]. It is in stark contrast to the previous Yoon Seok-yeol administration's North Korea policy direction, and the shift in policy direction under the new administration is further worth observing.

The "freeze on North Korea's nuclear production" and not instant "complete denuclearization" [6]. This forecast is representative of the South Korean government in the current situation and also contributes to understanding the diplomatic will of the South Korean government and the behavioral will of the South Korean government.

The evolution of US-ROK military exercises, military coordination, and diplomatic interactions. Diplomatic contacts or statements with China, Russia, and North Korea [7]. This event is worthy of examination, considering that the current South Korean government is tending to ease its stance and attempting to reestablish a dialogue mechanism with North Korea, while the US-ROK joint military exercises will hardly continue to provide positive utility for the policies of the present South Korean government. The military exercises are necessary, according to the SK government, underpinnings of its decision-making.

Subcases allow the new government to demonstrate typical behavior on the North Korean nuclear issue. Based on the logic of these policies and actions, the strategic and operational characteristics of can be constructed.

3.3 Data Sources

The following materials were used as data:

Publicly available media reporting: International and Korean mainstream press, Xinhua News Agency, Reuters, Yonhap News Agency, and AP.

Government announcements and documents Official statements, speeches, and white papers on policy from the South Korean presidential office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Unification, and Ministry of National Defense.

Academic literature and think-tank report: Research books, journal articles, and think-tank analyses on the North Korean nuclear issue and South Korean foreign policy.

International organizations and multilateral mechanisms: Public reports of the United Nations, the IAEA, and the East Asian Security Mechanism.

Comparison Data: Comparison of past South Korean governments' policies towards North Korea.

Since the Lee Jae-myung administration has had a relatively brief duration, this article is based on a handful of public data, and it makes a preliminary analysis. It would be good if South Korea were to publish more domestic data in the future.

3.4 Analysis of Data

This article primarily applies these approaches to examine. Process tracing reveals causal mechanisms and probes alternative sequences of strategic intent through action formation, action execution, diplomatic engagement, feedback, and modification.

This allows the comparative method to highlight what the Lee Jae-myung administration shares in common, how it is distinct, and the unique features it has in relation to similar policy options considered by the Moon Jae-in and Yoon Seok-yeol administrations.

Discourse analysis examines how tone and policy goals of the government can be inferred from the language, select cues, and motifs that define speeches and statements, and diplomatic notes.

Scenario Risk Assessment: The discussions and conclusions sections model and assess various scenarios for the likelihoods, hazards, and constraints of possible policy directions.

This article aims to integrate the strategic intent and diplomatic conduct dimensions while suggesting reformist insights in the context of the emerging geopolitical landscape of the Peninsula.

4 Result

Arranged into geopolitical analysis, policy formulation and implementation, and policy outcomes, this chapter offers a preliminary assessment of the Lee Jae-myung administration's diplomatic endeavors and strategic intent concerning the North Korean nuclear issue.

4.1 Geopolitical Analysis

Before looking at what the Lee Jae-myung administration will do, it is necessary to identify the geostrategic situation on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia today, and external constraints and competition for regional order.

The North Korean Nuclear Environment and Policy Changes. North Korea's advances in nuclear and missile technology have heightened tensions in the region, particularly in recent years. It added: "In the age of old-time enemy relations, turn to irreconcilability against the US and South Korea [8]. For instance, Kim Jong-un no longer talks about peaceful reunification in his speeches, but rather refers to the South as a "hostile regime"; the North also said it would sever, even destroy roads and communication lines as a way of showing its resolve to sever ties with the South [9]. Also, North Korea's progress in its nuclear and missile programs further enhances its strategic deterrent posture in the nuclear game on the peninsula [10].

This change has forced Seoul to confront reality in its policies, as the voice of public opinion for peaceful reunification has dimmed, the hostility between the two sides has been normalized, and the road to cutting diplomatic relations has been paved with stronger and stronger stones. Along with the internal developments in North Korea, the expanding triangle cooperation among China, Russia, and North Korea brought in stronger external pressures to the situation at the peninsula. In this context, if Seoul is to preserve its strategic options, it has to be careful about how it responds in the external big-power game.

South Korea's Intermediate Role and Pressure from Great Powers. South Korea serves as an intermediary or a bridge country in the Northeast Asian geopolitical map. As a US ally, South Korea needs to serve as a USR target of the pressure US policy toward North Korea and the alliance obligations placed upon it, yet simultaneously it also shares close economic and security relations with China and Russia, and so must take into account the Beijing and Moscow interests on the DPRK issue. It is also stretching between a desire for strategic autonomy and the reality of reliance on the Korean public and policy elites [11].

South Korea itself is a passive participant as well as a potential order-shaper in the conversation about remaking the order on the peninsula. It is said by the researchers that if the Korean peninsula wants to create a peace system, then it needs new security mechanism, a trust mechanism, and a multilateral framework, and S. Korea is indispensable in this respect. Hence, all significant change in South Korea's policy on North Korea is not just a matter of inter-Korean relations but it also concern regional order competition [7].

Strategic and Time Windows for the New Government. Lee Jae-myung began his term during a time of rapid transformation in Northeast Asia with growing US-China rivalry, the Russo-Ukrainian war, the rise of China and the new Cold War. Against this backdrop, the new South Korean government has a certain window of opportuni-

ty: strategic containment among major powers could provide South Korea with a certain diplomatic buffer; and North Korea, which is confronting domestic economic hardships and diplomatic isolation, could also be inclined to engage, albeit temporarily. It is possible that the Lee Jae-myung government is trying to capitalize on this window before it closes, by making established facts moves in diplomacy and policy towards North Korea while the heat is still relatively low.

In general, the geopolitical landscape of the Korean Peninsula offers the Lee Jae-myung government a double-edged sword for its policy toward North Korea: it is hemmed in by the US, Japan, China and Russia, but it is also positioned to capitalize in the midst of this transitional period by gaining new diplomatic manoeuvring room.

4.2 The Policy of the Lee Jae-myung Administration in Practice

Guided by strategic considerations, the Lee Jae-myung government from day one declared and took actual steps to signal and deliver a message to North Korea. Below is a brief summary of the essential types of its diplomatic activities, which reflect an intent policy.

Extending The Olive Branch and Signaling: the Silence on Border Broadcasts to N. Korea. In June 2025, the government under Lee Jae-myung had ordered its loud-speaker broadcasts to the North Korean border to be halted. This was considered a crucial hint of its softening policy in the press [12]. When this wall comes down, it will mean several things:

Lowering the heat of confrontation: For a long time, the broadcasts to North Korea have been a kind of psychological warfare on the border and are provocative acts. The suspension of the broadcasts will trigger a release of eagerness to détente[6]. Reestablishing a climate of trust: For restoring the North-South dialogue machinery and renewing exchanges, this is a preliminary sign. Different from the previous government's style towards North Korea policy: Reading the Yoon Seok-yeol government's resumption of North Korea broadcast in 2024 and intensification of the anti-North stance as more or less restoration, the Lee Jae-myung government's action signifies a strategic recalibration of its North Korea policy [6]. Internal and external balance: This action is relatively inexpensive, and it is easy to demonstrate the new tone in the North Korea policy to domestic audiences and the world.

In terms of strategic intent, this signal-stake policy behavior act is a signification of the policy line of the government towards N. Korea in its infancy policy stage.

Toward Phased Negotiation and the Policy Declaration of “Freezing North Korea’s Nuclear Production”. The Lee Jae-myung administration has consistently stated that it will not promote rapid and full “immediate denuclearization” on the North Korean nuclear issue, but would advocate for “freezing North Korea’s nuclear production” as an interim and pragmatic option. Lee Jae-myung also mentioned on the September 21 2025 edition of the BBC that North Korea could be producing 15 to 20 nuclear weapons a year, so the short-term objective should be to freeze production

of nuclear weapons and materials [6]; at the New York Stock Exchange, he also stated that "stopping production and exports" can bring a security gain without the need to seek total eradication at the beginning [12].

This statement exemplifies the pragmatism of the Lee Jae-myung administration. It simply recognizes that full denuclearization is nearly unattainable in the near term and favors moving step by step. It is more of a "neutral or compromise" policy option, rather than non-hostile, aimed at keeping the medium of dialogue alive rather than cutting it off. This represents a South Korean government's signal adjustment, tell North Korea its willingness to lower the bar for reciprocation. This will give South Korea a diplomatic cushion so as not to create friction with the United States or Japan when it is still in developing its policy, and also enough room for future negotiation. But the statement has also generated some debate, with detractors claiming it could be seen as "coddling North Korea" or that it "weakens the hand on the negotiating table." Seoul officials themselves have objected to the "two states" idea.

Joint Military Exercise and Military-Diplomatic Coordination. The Lee Jae-myung administration, while waving a diplomatic soft line, has yet to show clear indications of distancing itself from participation in joint drills with US and South Korean forces in the realm of security and military. For instance, even after he took office, the US and South Korea continued to hold joint exercises such as the Ulchi Freedom Shield as a routine matter [13]. This implies that there should be some sort of balance between détente and security responsibilities under the Lee Jae-myung administration.

Simultaneously, he said in his UN speech that the era of enmity would be terminated through "communication, normalization of relations, and denuclearization," being at the heart of the saying, and the 2018 "9.19 Military Agreement" will be restored step-by-step. Such subtle changes in discourse and military posture imply that it is attempting to signal to Pyongyang the option of peaceful coexistence without abandoning its security stance [14].

Multilateral Diplomatic Communication and Inter-Major Power Statement Re-phrasing. On the diplomatic front, the Lee Jae-myung administration has been wary of the dynamics of cooperation between China, Russia, and North Korea, and has raised its concerns publicly in the international arena. For instance, in China, ahead of his trip to the U.S, he said in public, "We are observing a growing cooperation among China, Russia, and North Korea, and that is not what we want to see." It is a diplomatic challenge to North Korea to step closer with China and Russia, and at the same time let it (North Korea) show the rest of the world that South Korea has the will to fight against major power pressures.

The government also expressed its anticipation of the dialogue and resumption of communication between North and South Korea, leading to new "peaceful coexistence and shared growth" on the Korean Peninsula. These statements are a balance of domestic diplomatic propaganda and international public relations." Moreover, the South Korean MFA and Ministry of Unification could also seek third-party diplomatic engagement and a dialogue mechanism with China, Russia, and DPRK for addi-

tional buffer and space for maneuvering in negotiation or crisis management. Although public information is limited at this point, his diplomatic comments make clear that the Lee Jae-myung administration is set on pursuing a more diplomatically independent South Korea, along a middle track.

4.3 Policy Effectiveness

Since the Lee Jae-myung administration is relatively young, it is too early to say. However, with the information from the regional diplomacy and on the ground dynamics, it can tentatively draw some conclusions and identify some risks.

The Diplomatic Easing Signal was Met with a Partial Response / Public Opinion recognition. The end of border broadcasts was taken as a sign of “new atmosphere” in the public mood. The announcement was immediately picked up by the press and was regarded as a bellwether of the Lee Jae-myung government’s North Korea policy. Domestically, the move was also slammed as a betrayal by the conservative opposition, which weighed it against the recent nonproliferation-friendly speech by Moon in the United States [15].

The inclusion in the official discourse and UN speech of a “phased solution” and “normalization of relations” further contributed to the formation of South Korea’s new image in the NK nuclear question. From the international public opinion point of view, these speeches have served to expand South Korea’s discourse space on this matter[12].

Continuing Impasse in North Korean Response and Localized Dialogue: Obstacles Remain. That expectation has not brought about meaningful dialogue from North Korea in response to South Korea’s signals of detente. North Korea has restated its commitment to nuclear weapons in closed meetings and refused to engage in direct talks with South Korea. This means South Korea’s detente policy is not Koizumi’s or the two Koreas’ policy is not yet a good or, rather, a solid policy.

Also, North Korea’s hard-edged rhetoric and increasingly hostile tone have raised the costs of reviving inter-Korean talks. There are currently no indications that North Korea is willing to advance on rebuilding trust and talking to people over the border.

Friction and Coordination in External Relations in the world economy: The US and China as a case study. The Lee Jae-myung administration has to keep its promises to the US and ensure that its performance aligns with its rhetoric. Yet its relatively dovish approach to North Korea may not sit well with some people in the US. The US still largely aims for “maximum denuclearization” and mandatory sanctions with regard to North Korea. For this reason, South Korea may be pressured by its own allies or appear to weak if it is too soft.

South Korea is reportedly attempting to maintain balance in its relations with both China and Russia through diplomatic statements and consultations. Although China

and ~Russia~ are increasingly allied, South Korea does not always agree with their approximation in regard to North Korea. So, South Korea, under the duress of great power interactions, requires minor adjustments to its diplomatic strategies.

Internal Public Opinion and Policy Constraints. South Korea's public opinion on its North Korea policy is not monolithic. While the path of *détente*, communication, and dialogue has a broad support in the world, including in the West, there are also hardliners who are refusing any compromise or even dialogue on the North Korean matter. To a certain extent, the security-conscious public opinion and fear of North Korean nukes might limit the more moderate stance of the government.

There is also variance in opinions among the South Korean parliament, media, security agencies, and intelligence agencies, and it is possible that there will be internal checks and balances vis-à-vis the government in its efforts to push forward its policy toward North Korea. Within the government, there are also some critics of its "two states" or "phased negotiation strategy." These domestic constraints will affect policy stability in the medium-to-long term [16].

Overall, the Lee Jae-myung government has given some conciliatory signals on the North Korean nuclear issue and partially adjusted its diplomatic conduct but not towards breakthrough-type results. Whether or not it can advance dialogue, create mechanisms, and achieve substance in the future remains to be seen in the future developments of its interactions with North Korea, the United States, and other major powers.

5 Discussion

In this section, this article will discuss the rationale of strategic objectives and theory-based analysis, constraints and difficulties, and consequences on regional security.

5.1 Policy and Strategic Logic

Based on the foreign policy moves and signals of the Lee Jae-myung regime, its strategic thinking with respect to the North Korean nuclear issue can be brought into line with the following dimensions. This is foreign gradualist realism at its best.

First, gradualism is replacing rushed denuclearization. Pragmatism: Instead of lining up with the traditional or idealistic "instant-denuclearization" route, the Lee Jae-myung government is opting for the more realistic strategy akin to "production freeze" and "phased negotiations." The strategy recognizes the extremely high level of intractability of the North Korean nuclear problem. It is based on logic of making initial concessions or giving easing signals from North Korea down to a lower bar and broader negotiation.

Second, signals of a second-level strategic project -- to through on values to build trust, and to restore channels for dialogue through mechanisms. With the broadcasts to North Korea stopped, inter-Korean agreements renewed, and increasingly public announcing of official statements, the government hopes to signal *détente*. Mean-

while, it is embryonically resuming border contacts, seeking to arrange communication mechanisms, and on the middle track even striving for multilateral exchanges to prepare institutional infrastructure for dialogue.

South Korea seeks more diplomatic flexibility under US-ROK alliance in complex surroundings: The South Korean government is seeking more diplomatic flexibility under the US-ROK alliance in a complex external environment. As an ally, South Korea is forced to walk a tightrope between Washington and the United States in its North Korea policy. However, the Lee Jae-myung administration appears to want more policy autonomy through diplomatic mediation, allowing Seoul more room to maneuver on the North Korean nuclear matter instead of simply being a follower or passive participant.

South Korea also under: Why does the Lee Jae-myung administration want to 'take part' in the order in Northeast Asia while making its own voice heard? New [Administration] seeking to dissociate itself from the North Korean nuclear issue: Is it just a passive defender or more. It is seeking to be a "regional stability maintainer" and a "peaceful coexistence promoter." This enables its diplomatic engagement to be better enmeshed within a strategic framework that transcends North-South Korea relations. In the end, you want to attend to risks and tinker. Because the North Korean nuclear issue is so sensitive, any major shifts in policy could rapidly result in military or diplomatic blowback. The Lee Jae-myung administration has been cautious on first changing a few things so as to avoid high diplomatic or security costs.

This is strategic thinking that combines a moderate stance with gradualist signaling diplomacy. The northern policy of the Lee Jae-myung administration is a rational and stable approach to the north Korean nuclear issue compared to the previous South Korean administrations directly approached, hard-lined, or inconsistent in actions.

5.2 Theoretical Analysis

Theoretical implications in the direction of strategy of the approach of the Lee Jae-myung administration in the North Korean nuclear issue can be discussed from the following perspectives through integrating the already stated theoretical lenses:

Strategic intent theory means that the Lee Jae-myung government tried to clarify its vision and preferred policies for a long-term in its signaling behavior. The action-as-signal model is a major component of strategic intent theory. Its signalling behaviour provides a soft-landing space for its policy path without inviting strong counter-moves. The key power balance and shifting dynamics in Northeast Asia are undeniably linked to South Korea's take on the North Korean nuclear question. Due to the US and China competition, and China changing its stance toward the North Korean issue, and Russia changing its policy for East Asia, South Korea's North policy is under constraint and can be varied according to external influences. The Lee Jae-myung administration sought to carve out more autonomy in this chess game.

The government's decisions on the North Korean nuclear issue are path-dependent and institutionally constrained by such factors as public opinion, diplomatic assets, alliance constraints, and the domestic politics of South Korea. Policy options cannot be

ipso facto completely open; rather, they entail competing options and schemes of adaptation and accommodation within constraints.

A phased, incremental negotiating model: One simply can not get everything denuclearized all at once. Establishing intermediate goals (such as a production freeze) and taking a step-by-step strategy are appropriate way to handle such situations. This policy is being politically promoted by the Lee Jae-myung administration. When all is said and done, the Lee Jae-myung administration's strategy is theoretically sound: It seeks to discover a somewhat firm path in complex geopolitical constraints and communicate via institutional adjustments and strategic signals. If successful, the approach could also provide new insight into a "risk-managed diplomatic approach" to the nuclear issue with North Korea.

5.3 Limitations and Challenges

Yet between strategic intent and policy implementation as outlined above, there are a great many risks and challenges.

Dithering and recalcitrance of DPRK reactions have been problems for ROK government's success. North Korea's fundamental strategic objectives revolve around deterrence and its own survival as an institution, and in the past it has provided little or nothing in the way of answers to South Korea's conciliatory overtures. Rather than as an important engagement, Lee Jae-myung's signal-straddling posture could be seen as a sign of weakness or a test.

But the US-ROK alliance also constrains South Korea. US backing for punitive sanctions and for a forced denuclearization path may conflict with South Korea's comparatively softer approach to North Korea. There could be times when the US would pressurize South Korea in high-level talks or emergencies, limiting Seoul's autonomy.

The South Korean government must face down domestic political and public opposition due to the political structure of the country. South Koreans are still worried about the North Korean nuclear threat and they strongly feel one way or the other about it. You could be criticized and politically pressured if you appear too "soft on North Korea." Perhaps the compromise-approach might be subject to healthy check and balance through Congress, the media, and security establishments. The biggest problem right now is that it is very hard to restore trust. Even if South Korea sends friendly signals to North Korea, it is still unclear whether North Korea will come to talk to South Korea, meet in dialogue, or converge in any way. "To rebuild this system, trust is needed, and there is been a dearth of trust in Korean relations."

Meanwhile outside the game is South Korea's own increasingly confounding strategic calculations. Sharing or hedging logic may not align with South Korea's strategy since China and Russia have their own stakes in North Korean policies. South Korea too may be seen as playing up to one side in its North Korea policy if it starts meddling too much in the great power game and that could bring diplomatic pressure or retaliation.

So this means that the Lee Jae-myung administration's strategic path carries with it some risk. North Korean responses, US-South Korean coordination, China-Russia cooperation, and internally it must have coherence, are all vital to its success.

5.4 Implications for Regional Security Theory

While the perils of the above strategy are not to be underestimated, the following effects on North East Asian and world security may be brought by part success in Lee Jae-myung administration's prevention of North Korean nuclear policy:

This may so some distance to answering the question are there any lessons which may be drawn from that regarding tactical or pragmatic diplomacy policy. It is a very effective approach for countries to take in dealing with nuclear issues with North Korea, in particular as realists suppose hard-line diplomacy has been a winning strategy. South Korea might be able to provide a model for such mild diplomacy in its gradual, pragmatic approach if it can investigate such a slow realistic strategy. It could also codify efforts to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. The nuclear issue might not be completely solved, but if inter-Korean dialogue, communication, and border consultation mechanisms can be restored incrementally, it would contribute to reducing chances of sudden conflict and to regional crisis management.

Perhaps it will also make theory fit in a multipolar regional order. It could distract itself from solving the nuclear problem with North Korea by engaging with them separately. If it is given some diplomatic leeway in its North Korea policy, Seoul could conceivably play a greater role in peacekeeping and in acting as a mediator among the countries in northeast Asian order. This would be good for the growth of regional multilateral dialogue mechanisms.

If South Korea is able to maintain a degree of independence in its policy even as the US, China, and Russia increasingly contend for dominance in Northeast Asia, it could help it to withstand outside pressure and not be so easily pressed into a role. And the Lee Jae-myung administration's model could be one that other small and medium-sized countries follow in their diplomatic endeavours as well, if this approach of his have success. Finally, it is necessary to enhance the notion of safety, trust, and china-ness. The North Korean nuclear question continues attributable to barriers in security concerns, absence of trust-building mechanisms, and institutional obstacles. If St. can examine real-world solutions on building trust and designing institutions, it will contribute in a significant way to what the academic community can understand are the institutional underpinnings of complex global issues.

To summarize, if South Korea can achieve a relatively stable resolution to the North Korean nuclear problem, its consequences can extend further than the two Koreas and contribute to the security in all of Northeast Asian in good posture. Weaving the intricate global context and internal and external forces in the medium-strong state model might also increase realism and, in turn, help create an alternative approach to crisis management that is not based solely on the sphere of power confrontation.

6 Conclusion

This article offers a preliminary evaluation and analysis of the Lee Jae-myung administration's strategic intention and diplomatic practice toward the North Korean nuclear issue. We arrive at the following important inferences from an analysis of the policy responses, geopolitical context, and initial policy feedback: Lee Jae-myung has a vastly contrasting opinion on the nuclear issue with North Korea compared to the previous leader. Despite taking advantage of diplomatic freedom and a phased strategy to halt the progress of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, he continues to face difficulties both within and outside the country, and more observation is required to see how well he fares eventually.

The approach of the Lee Jae-myung administration towards the North Korean nuclear problem is a departure from its traditional hard-line stance. It is combined with a gradual strategy and signal diplomacy. Its strategic objectives are to gain additional diplomatic room, to reestablish communication channels, and to identify a solution to the conflict between alliances and autonomy.

Among a few special cases in the South Korean government that implements its policies are stopping border broadcasts, focusing on production freezes, restoring agreements between North and South Korea, and changing diplomatic statements. These measures indicate that the country wants to achieve its strategic goals through diplomacy. Because North Korea has done very little in response and there are many constraints on and within policy, policy efficacy is nascent. To achieve true success and collaborate on multifarious levels, cooperation will have to be long and arduously-bred.

In fact, especially, this is the path. It may be a new template for way to deal diplomatically with in the context of shifting order in the region North Korea. It demonstrates how South Korea can attempt to maintain a degree of independence in the face of diffusion among great powers in the strategic landscape. But there are a number of pitfalls and challenges that you cannot ignore: the North is going to be intransigent; there are divergences between US and South Korean policy; there is a diplomatic system of checks and balances; the bar for rebuilding institutions is very high; great power competition brings interference."

Topics for future research may include: First, empirical validation of the policy direction of the Lee Jae-myung administration could be examined if agreement or further negotiation on the North Korean nuclear issue becomes feasible in the next years. Second, to more accurately trace the policy making process, such a study could tap into extensive South Korean government documents diplomatic memoranda and records of negotiations, etc.. Third, one could also carry out a cross-national analysis of South Korea's North Korean nuclear policy with that of China, Japan, and the United States to analyze strategic differences and mutual influence on the issue. Fourth, the study of South Korea's strategic evolution and function in Northeast Asian order reconstruction could be furthered from an order perspective.

To put it simply, the possibility that the "new pattern on the peninsula" will be formed is raised by the fact that the Lee Jae-myung government reveals^stop diplomatic activity on the North Korean nuclear problem. "Assembled, its policy track is a

road of thorns," however, it is a worthy object of further attention, assessment and contemplation by academia and policy communities.

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