

**Abstract: US Domestic Politics' Impact on North Korea Policy - An Historical Perspective
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The US political reaction to the Korean War made containment the core of US policy until 1972. Regional security cooperation consisted of a polarized treaty system designed to deter a second Korean War. The US and Japan's shift to engaging China after 1972, and the Cold War's end made expanded security cooperation possible. The DPRK's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal focused regional concerns on a new shared goal - making the Korean Peninsula nuclear free. After the successful US-DPRK negotiations forged the Agreed Framework, US and ROK opponents of engagement impeded its implementation until the Bush Administration reverted to containment of the DPRK in 2002. This prompted China to host the Six Party Talks which recast security cooperation as a multilateral diplomatic endeavor that used economic and diplomatic inducements, i.e. engagement, to end the DPRK nuclear program. Conventional wisdom holds that the talks failed because Pyongyang failed to fulfill its international commitments. While this is a partial explanation, failure was equally a result of Washington, Seoul and Tokyo's inability, because of domestic politics, to sustain consensus on how to deal with Pyongyang. If the Six Party Talks resume, the outcome will depend on whether politicians in Washington, Seoul and Tokyo will support engagement of the DPRK.