

The EU's Potential Role in the Six Party Talks and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis

Busan University of Foreign Studies
65 Geumsaem-ro 485 beon-gil,
Geumjeong-gu,
Busan 46234, South Korea
E-mail: andrewsmillard@hotmail.com

Andrew S. Millard
Chae-Deug Yi

International Building (Kukje-gwan),
Office 606
Pusandaehag-ro 63 beon-gil 2,
Geumjeong-gu,
Busan 46241, South Korea
E-mail: givethanks@pusan.ac.kr

Abstract: *Discourse on the Six Party Talks has focused solely on denuclearisation. Through the power struggles of the members and the refusal of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) to return to negotiations, the Six Party Talks have been stalled since 2008. Due to current increased tensions and the use of brinkmanship tactics the Talks must be restarted, albeit under a reformed shape. This paper analyses the potential role of the EU in furthering the peace process in Northeast Asia. This paper suggests that the EU needs to be more assertive and the Talks should focus on building trust and cooperation, not on the DPRK's nuclear program. With its impartiality, experience in integration and use of soft power, the EU can act as an effective mediator building trust.*

Keywords: *EU, denuclearization, DPRK, key actor, Six Party, trust*

1. Introduction

The People's Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) is on an accelerating path towards either regional conflict or internal collapse through its selfish and belligerent acts and its refusal to participate diplomatically within the international system. The leader of the DPRK, Kim Jong-un, has not only continued development programs for nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missiles, but he has done so at an increasingly alarming rate. The militarization that the DPRK is following is heading for a costly demise, not only for the DPRK, but for the region as a whole. The current situation requires a shift in the paradigm and the most effective way to do this is to revive and reform the stalled Six Party Talks (SPTs), re-energizing them with a new impetus and direction, and most importantly with a new member, the European Union (EU).

Whilst the Parties to the SPTs have all invested vast amounts of resources, the current stalemate does not look likely to be overcome anytime soon, with the ten year mark for the stalling of the Talks fast approaching. As such, reforming the Talks should be considered. The EU would be able to act as a diplomatic bridge by forming a network amongst the Parties and mediating in a non-biased and unthreatening manner. Yet to do this, the EU must also begin to reform its own foreign policy.

This paper advocates that the EU should use this opportunity of deadlock amongst Six Party members to strengthen its position on the world stage by acting as a regional balancer in the Northeast-Asian region, and as such as a global actor of influence. In order to achieve this, the EU must reframe its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) around the notion of civilian power and within this new framework it must then apply its expertise in diplomacy, development aid and forming unity through economic growth by strategically imposing itself as a new member of the Six Party Talks. By implementing a reframed foreign policy the EU can establish itself as a lead networker within the region, fostering trust and relations between the six members to the Talks and allowing progress to be made.¹

This paper does not advocate that the EU merely “observes” in any renewed Talks, but pro-actively takes a leading role in the diplomatic relations. Until now, the Six Party Talks have been dominated by the old divisions that linger from the Cold War. However, with its own history of uniting former ideologically opposite states within its own borders, as well as its lack of aggressive activity in the region, the EU is well positioned to make a significant change in the direction of the peace

¹ The scope of this paper is too narrow to discuss in detail any specific reforms to the EU's Foreign Policy.

process, a change that for now is impossible to happen with the same six members. Despite this, this paper recognizes one additional factor that may be an obstacle—the will of the EU itself to make a stand and apply itself to the Talks. Up until now, the political will of the EU has been ashamedly lacking.

This paper is, however, theoretical in methodology. The theories of realism and liberalism are no longer viable in searching for a solution. As such, this paper pushes for a constructive approach that is holistic in its understanding of the differing political ideologies, histories and cultures of all members. Since this is theoretical in approach, the paper is limited and offers theoretical arguments for the inclusion of the EU as a new approach to forging Northeast-Asian stability.

2. Literature review

Worré and Han (2012a, b) say, “As an impartial outsider, the European Union can play a uniquely constructive role in the multilateral talks for denuclearizing North Korea that no existing party can play”. This is an exemplary quote of the current “literature” on the role of the EU in the Six Party Talks and it covers the main issues of this paper. Whilst the author agrees with the “impartial outsider” part being advantageous to the EU, and to the process on the whole, the quote also gets directly to the point regarding the current focus of attention by all parties concerned, namely denuclearization.

Nicola Casarini (2014) highlights the EU’s advantages, “[n]ot only is the Union untrammelled by binding military alliances in the region, but the drive for integration and reconciliation is very much part of its DNA, while also being one of its foreign policy objectives”. This furthers the position of the EU as being a civilian power² that uses its experience in soft power politics. This idea is supported by Rem Korteweg who quotes the EEAS’s chief operating officer,

² Understanding the concept of Civilian Power Europe is key for the assumption that the EU can reframe its CFSP and remove the military aspect. The Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) provides confusion for any non-European states as to what exactly the EU’s foreign policy is, and it also is the heart of disunity within the Union, where countries such as Ireland and Spain are constitutionally neutral, and will not agree to change their constitutions to contribute to a “European army”. In the 2016 State of the Union address, Commission President Juncker demanded “ever-closer union” to be established through the formation of a “European army”. Contrastingly, President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, warned that “what we need more than ever before is a confirmation of the sense of our community” (Tusk, 2016). Clearly there is disunity within the EU and the idea of forming a common European military, which has been a highly divisive and controversial area since the 1950s, will do nothing to alleviate that.

David O’Sullivan, as saying that the absence of a military in the region is an “asset” to the EU (Korteweg, 2014).

The European Union’s foreign policy in Northeast Asia began in the early 1990s when the Cold War ended. “At the beginning of the 1990s, following the end of the Cold War, the hope was expressed that [...] the European continent [...] would become an example of international cooperation and mutual understanding” (Stadtmüller, 2002, p. 50). Combining the thoughts of Stadtmüller and Sapir³ the early 1990s proved influential in determining the direction of Asian foreign policy. Stadtmüller (2002, p. 50) adds emphasis to this point, “There must be a recognition that European security cannot be isolated from global processes and events that affect world order”.⁴

The EU has mostly developed relations in Asia through either economic trade or humanitarian aid—“the relevance and success of EU soft power policies, i.e. European economic, financial, and development assistance in the region are evident” (Berkofsky, 2014, p. 63).⁵ Over the past several years the strengthening trade links between the EU and Asia have fueled demand for Brussels to take a bigger role in Asia. Pardo (2014) states, “Brussels would like to be at the forefront of efforts to support these reforms through economic engagement”. This point is furthered by Korteweg (2014) with the idea that the EU, with its increased economic activity in the region over the past two decades needs to take a more active role—“Europe’s economic interests dictate a stronger approach”.

What is common amongst most literature regarding the EU’s presence in Asia is its focus on economic trade and development assistance, with less focus on its

³ In this instance, Sapir was the Chairman of the Group assigned to write a report commissioned by the European Commission entitled *An Agenda for a Growing Europe: The Sapir Report*. The Sapir Report focused on the growing globalization influence, stressing, “At a time when the global system is under stress from various quarters, the EU must serve as one of its anchors and help ensuring the success of the globalization process.”

⁴ In more specific notes, Stadtmüller (2002, p. 53) mentions the “growing anxiety at [...] the economic power of Asia” which reflects the later drive for bilateral and multilateral economic trade agreements with various Asian nations in the 2000s. The drive for FTAs is still continuing and the first bilateral FTA, with South Korea, came into force in 2010.

⁵ In the European Commission’s report *International Cooperation and Development: Fighting Poverty in a changing World*, the EU announced its mechanisms for providing economic assistance to developing nations. In Asia it does so through the Development Cooperation Instrument which operates on a broad range of areas, although is “complemented by instruments with a thematic focus, open to all developing countries”, one of these “themes of focus being ‘the instrument contributing to stability and peace’”.

political and security concerns. Nicole Alec du Flers and Elfriede Regelsberger attempt to give a brief overview of relations between the EU and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the evolution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Once again, literature on the relationship between the EU and ASEAN members (since 1997 we can also say between ASEAN+3) shows both the deepening economic relations as well as the commitment to sustainable peace.

3. Failure of the Six Party Talks

The North Korean leaders have invested heavily in building up their armed forces since the 1970s.⁶ A report published in April, 2015, by South Korea's Yonhap News Agency, showed that in 2014, North Korea "spent US\$10.2 billion for national defense last year" (Oh, 2015). Given the estimate of the DPRK's Gross National Income to be 30.9 billion dollars that equates to a substantial 33% of government resources.⁷

The military has dominated North Korean domestic politics for so long now that the regime's military-first policy is determining the outcome of all negotiations. Given the Juche ideology this will be very difficult, if nigh impossible, to overcome. In order to achieve a positive breakthrough the focus must therefore shift away from denuclearization and move towards economic reform and assistance. However, the literature and reports that discuss the Six Party Talks all focus on the principle of denuclearization.

The majority of recent literature on the SPTs also indicates that, as this paper assumes, the North Korean regime will not give up on its nuclear program (Chen, 2015; Cossa, 2012). The report by Chen (2015) quotes one of China's highest public officials, Liu Yunshan, as saying that the Chinese government is now

⁶ Victor Cha (2012) gives a brief overview of how spending on the military increased so much in the late 1960s and 1970s that it forced the regime to borrow heavily from abroad, leading to the build-up of massive debts that it was both unwilling and unable to service—as Cha puts it, one of the DPRK's "5 bad decisions". Figures from Cha show that between 1968 and 1979 the North outspent the South on military provisions, despite having a population only half the size, by increasing the number of troops from 485,000 to 720,000, as well as investing in new military equipment. (Cha, 2012, pp. 108–157)

⁷ In comparison, in 2013, the USA spent only 3.8% of its GDP on its military, China spent only 2.0% and Russia awarded its military budget 4.1% of GDP (Frohlich & Kent, 2014).

shifting its focus from denuclearization to “stability of the Korean peninsula”. This shift in policy shows a realistic stance towards the North and it opens the door for negotiations in a new direction—one that is not focused on the abandonment of the North’s nuclear program.

John Park (2005) notes that, “despite extensive diplomatic efforts [...], domestic policy constraints, differing priorities, and conflicting historical analogies among each of the countries have brought vastly differing perspectives to the multilateral negotiating table”. He carries on saying that these differences have thus “severely restricted” Beijing’s influence in bringing about a solution to the nuclear crisis. Samuel Kim’s work, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers* (Kim, S., 2007) provides a detailed look at the policies of the Parties towards North Korea and this highlights the diversity in approach of each. Kim Sung-chull and David Kang (2010) also researched the state policies towards North Korea when they edited an overview of the SPTs and focused on an engagement-based approach rather than coercion. In the introduction they state, “there has been little sustained effort either to explore the theoretical logic of engagement or to assess whether or not—and if so in what ways—engagement has worked on the Korean peninsula” (Kim & Kang, 2010, p. 3). This is crucial, since the Talks have shifted away from trust-building and have become almost completely focused on denuclearization, and in doing so that has created an atmosphere less-conducive to trust-building.

Despite the Six Party Talks having stalled back in 2008, an article on American Foreign Policy, written in 2012, showed that at that time Pyongyang was willing to return to the Talks. Cossa (2012, p. 28) also described the Talks as the “the best, and perhaps the only, vehicle for dealing with the long-standing nuclear crisis”. In April 2015, the US, Japan, China, Russia, and South Korea all came to a consensus on restarting the negotiations (Munroe & Blanchard, 2015). Pyongyang has also expressed interest in returning to the table, although only if the US and South Korea cease their annual joint military drills. The US and South Korea refused and carried out the drills in September 2016, despite strong opposition from the North. This show of military might, right on the border with the DPRK, is furthering the mistrust and militaristic tension between the two sides.⁸The USA

⁸ In 2011, South Korean President Park Geun-hye gave a speech in which she spoke about the building of trust between powers in Northeast Asia, most notably building trust between North and South Korea. Moreover, the President also gave several examples of how other conflicts have been resolved through ‘trustpolitik’—her biggest example was the European Union. “In the 1950s, European nations overcame a half century of warfare to create what would later become the European Union. Although Asia’s cultural, historical, and geopolitical environment is unique, the continent can learn from these precedents, particularly Europe’s experience.”(Park, 2011)

has been demanding the dismantlement of the Yongbyeon nuclear power facility in North Korea since the 1994 Agreed Framework. However, as Kim Jungsup (2007, p. 73) cites, when the North Korean government requested permission to inspect facilities in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) to ensure that the USA had removed all of its nuclear weapons from the peninsula, its request was met with only limited agreement, with Seoul and Washington agreeing only to allow inspections under “managed access”. Unimpressed with limited access to South Korean military bases the North refused the offer. Given this sort of situation, the USA and its allies have refused to build up trust between themselves and the North Korean leadership. As various sources indicate, the US is known to have had almost 1,000 nuclear warheads on the peninsula (Davenport, 2015; Kim, J., 2007; Kihl & Hayes, 1997).

Moreover, Cossa (2012, p. 28) gives a description of the DPRK as having “played” the various members of the Six Party Talks over the past several decades, in order to survive. This deceitful history of relations between the DPRK and the other five members does not set a positive tone for any possible future talks. The EU, on the other hand, has a very short and, based on its development aid record, a much more positive history with the North.⁹ In effect, the EU would take an engaging approach to the Talks, something which in itself has been a key characteristic from the start.

Based on these poor relations with North Korea, the negative atmosphere that exists between various members of the Talks and the DPRK’s ability to manipulate its counterparts does not provide for a fruitful negotiating table. The addition of the EU as a non-biased mediator is therefore vital to ensure success if the Talks should resume. Buszynski (2013) explores former US Secretary of State Powell’s proposal for increasing the number of parties in the Talks. The possibilities range from including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to Australia, to India, to the EU.

The literature surrounding the EU’s role is somewhat limited, however, as Worré and Han (2012a, b) mentioned; almost all literature notes that the EU has had an “observer” role and has been very inactive in its position over participation in the Talks. Berkofsky (2009) writes that “the EU has never [...] made any clear efforts to become actively involved”. This is where all literature stops. Nowhere in any literature can it be seen where the author expressly encourages the EU

⁹ North Korea was one of the biggest recipients of aid in Northeast Asia in the 1990s. “Since 1995, over €366m in aid has been provided”, whilst more recently in 2011 a further 10 million euros in emergency aid was offered in response to severe flooding in the country. (EEAS, n.d., b).

to take a more active role. This paper demands that the EU play a much more active role in the Talks, due to its past experience in dealing with unification and peacemaking, its strong and deepening alliances with all members of the Talks, and its growing economic interest in Asia. This new role should not be asked of the EU, but instead the EU needs to exert force and re-ignite the peace process just as Jacques Delors helped re-ignite the integration process in Europe in the 1980s. The EU can be the actor to continue and re-introduce the engagement aspect of the Talks, shifting focus away from denuclearization. In doing so trust will form.

4. Revival of the Six Party Talks

Developments in the DPRK's nuclear weapons program have been continual since the stalling of the Talks in 2008, thus providing the opportunity for patient diplomacy. However, the recent acceleration in ICBM and nuclear warhead technological developments in the North have caused tensions to increase to almost Cuban-missile-crisis levels of brinkmanship.¹⁰ The technological advances that the North has pursued have increased the threat to a wider geographical area, no longer remaining within the Northeast Asian region, but now potentially reaching the US mainland. As a result, the incumbent administration in the US has shown a much tougher stance towards belligerence and violations of international sanctions. US President Trump has shown his military intentions by sending three aircraft carriers to the region (the USS *Carl Vinson*, US *Ronald Reagan* and USS *Nimitz*) and an accompanying fleet of destroyers and cruisers. On the diplomatic side, President Trump addressed the UN General Assembly in September, 2017, and reiterated the US position that military action is a very strong possibility if North Korea continues its development and testing programs. Further increasing the tensions, North Korean diplomats, as well as DPRK leader Kim Jong-un, have taken a stronger, more defiant stance, vowing to not only continue their development programs, but that President Trump's actions are leading to "making our rockets visit to the entire US mainland inevitable all the more".¹¹

¹⁰ In July, 2017, the DPRK successfully tested its first ICBM, following this test with further launches of ICBMs in late July and mid-September. In addition, the testing of more powerful engines has been publicized, along with physical evidence to suggest that in early September the sixth nuclear test was carried out—the fourth and fifth nuclear tests both took place in 2016, three years after the previous one.

¹¹ The words of North Korea Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho, speaking at the 72nd UN General Assembly meeting, September 2017.

Internationally, there has also been strong condemnation of the North's actions, including a more assertive tone from China, which has declared it will comply with the latest UN-imposed sanctions, introduced after the sixth nuclear weapons test at the start of September.¹² However, any negative economic effects that could be felt in China may cause a rethink by the top leadership in China, especially given the Communist Party's leadership reshuffle will happen in October. Russia also backed the new round of sanctions, although importantly after the initial US request of a total ban on oil exports to the DPRK were amended to a limit of exports. Japan has committed itself to trying to resolve the dispute, in particular because the testing of ICBM missiles in September flew directly over Japan.

Of course, we should remember that sanctions alone will not stop the DPRK.¹³ Tae Hwan Kwak (2016, pp. 31, 32) points out the ineffectiveness thus far, "The US has imposed sanctions against North Korea since the 1950s, but they have not prevented Pyongyang from acquiring long-range missiles and nuclear weapons, nor have they led to the collapse of the regime". Kwak (2016) continues that for sanctions to be effective two factors must be considered: the below-subsistence-level living standards in the North that pre-exist any sanctions, and how far both China and the RoK will comply with sanctions (*Ibid.*) Based on this assessment, South Korea could also play a significant role, since the incumbent President of South Korea, Moon Jae-in, was elected in May under a campaign of engagement with the DPRK. With a center-left President now leading South Korea, promising a more engaging relationship with the DPRK, it may now be possible for the EU to "socialize" Northeast Asia.¹⁴

What is clear is the reality that between 2003 and 2008 the lack of outside actors in the Talks created a forum that was divided from the start and never had a chance of bridging those divides. The current globalized climate combined with increased escalating tensions requires a constructivist attitude that incorporates

¹² The sanctions include a drastic reduction in exports of oil and liquefied gas to the DPRK, of which China is the main exporter, as well as textiles. According to one report, the sanctions on textiles alone could cost the DPRK up to 700 million dollars per year, whilst the limiting of oil exports to 200 million barrels a year will see a drastic reduction of around 400 million barrels compared to 2016. For more details, see BBC, 2017.

¹³ A report by the Targeted Sanctions Consortium (TSC) highlighted a growing awareness of the overall ineffectiveness in sanctions. According to their findings, which analysed 22 targeted sanctions regimes enacted by the UN since 1990, the sanction regimes were "effective in coercing a change in behavior only 10% of the time" (TSC, 2013, p. 40).

¹⁴ Diez and Tocci (2017, p. 256) note that through the EU-ASEAN forum "the EU's efforts at socialization have principally targeted ASEAN member states rather than also China or North Korea".

outside actors with experience in functional integration and harmonizing vastly different economic, political and social systems.

5. Relations with Korea and KEDO

Despite growing isolationist policies and continued international condemnation, the North Korean regime refuses to forego its development of nuclear weapons and missile technology. 2016 saw the testing of its first hydrogen nuclear weapon; in January 2016, the subsequent testing of long-range ballistic missiles thereafter, and a fifth nuclear test in September 2016. Early 2017 has seen no deceleration in this respect. This is a clear indication that the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is in no way concerned about the sanctions that have been imposed on it by the international community.¹⁵

The European Union is in a unique position in that it is considered to be a non-threatening, unbiased party within the region, one that “does not polarize domestic opinion the same way as the US does” (Wissenbach, 2015, p. 526). It also played a minor role, mostly financial support, in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) that was established to fulfill the obligations of the 1994 Agreed Framework. Although only a small part of the overall framework and thus incomparable with the larger SPT framework, the participation of the EU in KEDO can be used as a stepping-stone. By working with the other parties through KEDO, the EU not only built a presence in the region, but also showed its commitment to furthering peace and stability through non-military means.

5.1 The EU and KEDO

The Six Party Talks began in 2003 as a result of the failure of the 1994 Agreed Framework¹⁶, an agreement signed between the DPRK and the USA that halted the nuclear weapons and energy program in North Korea in return for energy assistance from the USA and various members of the international community

¹⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the sanctions imposed see Arms Control Association: ‘Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy’.

¹⁶ The Agreed Framework was signed on October 21, 1994 by both the USA and DPRK. A simple summary of the agreement by Larry Nicksch (2004) states that the Framework “provides for the shutdown of North Korea’s nuclear facilities in return for the annual delivery of to North Korea of 500,000 tons of heavy oil and the construction in North Korea of two light water nuclear reactors. The United States pledged to issue a nuclear security guarantee to North Korea as North Korea complied with its 1992 safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.” (Nicksch, 2004)

through the creation of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).

KEDO was established in March 1995 with South Korea, Japan, and the USA as the “original members”, although when the EU joined in September, 1997, it was allowed to enter “as a full member of the Executive Board, on the same terms as the original members” (European Commission, 1997). Two things stand out: firstly, that the EU showed hesitation in joining from the start, and secondly, that even though it did join late, the original members recognized the value of having the EU working alongside them and so afforded the EU equal status.

The EU had been providing humanitarian aid to the DPRK since 1995 when severe famine afflicted the country. As a result, the EU should have been ready to join KEDO immediately and provide assistance on nuclear energy through its own experience with EURATOM.¹⁷ As a result, the EU has a wealth of experience in dealing with the building, functioning and dismantling of nuclear facilities, as well as the disposal of nuclear waste. This should have provided KEDO with the ideal set-up to complete the obligations of the Agreed Framework agreement successfully.

The European Union played a very minor role in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. With its wealth of experience in building nuclear reactors in Europe¹⁸ and maintaining their safe use and secure disposal of waste the EU should have exerted more of a presence in the Talks. Yet through the decade that the EU was involved in KEDO's construction in the North it achieved very little, other than providing financial assistance, and even then only on a comparably small scale. On the other hand, its experience and networking may prove invaluable in future Talks.

Since the introduction of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 1992 the EU has been committed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Moreover, since the ‘war on terror’ began in the early 2000s, many states have been increasingly concerned about the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons to terrorist states or organizations. As a result, the EU has played an increasingly

¹⁷ EURATOM is the European Atomic Energy Community. It was created in 1957 as one of the founding treaties that were signed to create the European Economic Community. It has changed little over the years and the main objectives remain nuclear safety, nuclear safeguards and nuclear security. The European Atomic Energy Community is highly knowledgeable and experienced in dealing with what the European Commission calls, ‘nuclear safety’, ‘nuclear safeguards’ and ‘nuclear security’. (European Commission ‘Energy: Nuclear Energy’, see www.euratom.org.)

¹⁸ According to the European Nuclear Society (ENS), as of June 2015, there were 185 nuclear reactors operating in Europe, with a further 17 under construction. (ENS, n.d.)

larger role in global non-proliferation activities on multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, “[t]he EU’s participation in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), in particular, demonstrates its support for the global non-proliferation norm and its preference for a multilateral approach” (Yoon & Suh, 2015, p. 406).

Since the DPRK is primarily focused on developing weapons, and not providing constant energy supplies to its citizens, we can once again make the assertion that in a realistic model of the situation, the DPRK will under no circumstances give up its nuclear weapons program. Yoon and Suh (2015, p. 406) also mention that “the EU strongly urged North Korea to abide by the commitments it made under the NPT and other international treaties”. Clearly, the DPRK will not listen to any state or organization over its nuclear weapons program. The Six-Party Talks, should they restart under the networking of the EU need to focus on new policies, not denuclearization.

5.2 Lessons from KEDO

Despite the fact that KEDO failed, it still represents a milestone in the relations between the EU and the Six Party members, as well as providing valuable lessons for future negotiations and cooperation. This paper suggests the following lessons should be considered;

The first lesson learned is joining the project from the start.¹⁹The EU was not a member of KEDO from the start, but joined the Executive Board of KEDO two years after the project began. Having joined in 1997, the atmosphere had arguably dampened and the momentum had been somewhat lost. Even though the SPTs already exist, they have been stalled since 2008 and a gap of eight years is more than enough to represent a new start.

The second lesson that can be learned from the failure of KEDO is the need to maintain “sustained, high-level political leadership” (Stanley Foundation, 2006). The paper from the Stanley Foundation provides strong arguments for the lead to be taken by the EU in any future multilateral organizations similar to KEDO. The report criticized the leadership of KEDO’s Executive Board for: allowing KEDO to develop as a “technical organization rather than one integral to the ongoing and successful fulfillment of the Agreed Framework in its broadest

¹⁹ Even though it can be argued that the EU will also be joining the Six Parties Talks later than the other actors, the Talks have been stalled since 2008 and as such an extended period has provided a significant gap allowing any renewed Talks including the EU to start afresh.

sense”;²⁰ non-conformity over issues such as financial contributions and technical assistance: and the ease at which the policies of each Board member changed due to external circumstances.²⁰

The third lesson that should be learned is not to focus on technical operations. The Agreed Framework was a deal to provide the DPRK with two light-water reactors in exchange for the DPRK’s regime closing down its nuclear facility at Yongbyeon. This was too specific to the nuclear aspect and not a solution that could have produced spillovers within the North Korean economy.

The fourth lesson learned is that KEDO was too democratic and lacked official leadership; essentially too many cooks.²¹ Future projects must be coordinated through one main channel under a common policy that all members agree to maintain and adhere to.

The fifth lesson is for a steadfast approach to fulfilling the agreement. The author suggests that KEDO’s failure to carry on with its project, even despite the DPRK’s violations, shows a lack of commitment to peace in the region.

6. Beyond a dichotomy between realism and liberalism

This paper takes the stance that up until the present, the Six Party Talks have been based around two competing theories of international relations, namely realism and liberalism: realism on the basis of the strands of defensive and structural realism; and liberalism based around the idealistic approach of the Parties for denuclearization. In particular, the ‘security dilemma’ is particularly evident in Northeast Asia. Taking this into account, and the high possibility that militarism will lead to an eventual conflict, the EU is primed to step in and counter the growing military forces with its functionalist “civilian power”. In order to do so a constructive framework must be developed and implemented.

²⁰ One example given was the reaction of Japan to the North’s missile test in 1999, when it decided to freeze funding for the project.

²¹ Specifically regarding the EU, Smith (2004, pp. 203–218) says, “the EU’s involvement in KEDO also strongly depended on the US lobbying the Commission”, whilst within the EU there was an ongoing debate about whether individual Member States of the EU should represent the body, or whether, through the CFSP, the EU should be represented as a unified group.

6.1 Room for constructivism

Friedrichs' analysis of theoretical approaches to European integration also follows the social constructivist approach since "European integration is a contested ground where different theoretical approaches are competing for the most convincing account of an empirical domain" (Friedrichs, 2004, pp. 106–107). In 1986, John Ruggie, along with Friedrich Kratochwil, argued that the neorealist and neoliberal theories alone could not explain how states transform and systems change, since Waltz's theory of neorealism is "unable to explain 'systems change', especially the transition from one form of states system to another" (Hobson, 2000, p. 184).²² Cox (1986) also argues that Waltz's theory cannot explain international change due to its "static continuity".

The Western approaches to regionalism and globalization are well documented with the aforementioned liberal and realist approaches, as well as the world order based on polarity. In addition, the dominance of the Western powers economically through institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund which induce economic interdependence is not new but needs addressing and comparing with Asian ways. Once we can differentiate between the social systems in each region, then it becomes clearer that simply applying Western approaches to Northeast Asia, and in particular, the Six Party Talks, will not work and as such a more constructive approach needs to be applied.

Peter Katzenstein's (2005) *A World of Regions* gives a detailed analysis of America's "Imperium" since the end of the Cold War and how that has affected the regions of Europe and Asia.²³ Supporting Katzenstein's work, Martin Jacques' (2009) *When China Rules the World* describes how the rise of China as a global superpower both economically and politically is the start of the end of Western global order and the start of a new world order. Effectively, Jacques was implying that the American "Imperium" advocated by Katzenstein is coming to an end.

²² Prior to this work, in 1982, John Ruggie wrote an article on embedded liberalism in the post-war period, arguing that when states transform in the international economic field the regimes must understand and find acceptable the regimes, that state-society relations are just as important, if not more so, than material power distribution capabilities, and finally that the transformation is systematic and not reductionist (Ruggie, 1982).

²³ This is important as America's post-WWII actions in the international arena have been considered by critics to be too aggressive and the USA is now witnessing what Chalmers Johnson (2000; 2004) calls 'Blowback' against the US government.

Katzenstein's focus on regionalism in the modern international system focuses on what he describes as "porousness", referring to the fact that through globalization regions that are "closed" and do not interact with others suffer as a result, whereas those regions which are more open, for example Europe and Asia, undergo transformations.²⁴

However, the difficulty in combining the approaches of liberalism and realism are summed up by Martin Jacques (2009), who notes that in the modern world there is not one system, or "western modernity" as he calls it, but instead there are multiple "modernities", i.e. systems, emerging with the different regions. The question thus arises, how do these different systems cooperate and co-exist? Through social constructivism we can try and build a relationship between the regions that develops respect, trust and knowledge through epistemological constructivism.

7. Traditional factors

Takeshi Hamashita (1997) studied the impact of Western systems on the East Asian structure, establishing that the presence of the Europeans and their dominance was not the sole reason why the structure of East Asia changed in the late nineteenth century.²⁵ Hamashita (1997, p. 113) notes, that prior to the entry of the Europeans in the nineteenth century Asia had been overseen by a "long-

²⁴ Defining globalization, I take it to be the intensification of social, cultural, economic and political relations between states, regardless of distance between them. This definition is based on the definitions by leading scholars Giddens (1990), Cox (1994), and Scholte (1997). Internationalization is defined nicely by Katzenstein (2005, p. 13) as "territorially based exchanges across borders" and "continuities in the evolution of the international state system." Internationalization can therefore be seen as being based more on political and economic relations whilst limiting social and cultural interactions.

²⁵ It should be pointed out that Northeast Asia remained fairly untouched by colonial Europe, whereas Southeast Asia was more prone to colonization. The heavy influence of the Dutch in Japan in the nineteenth century and the willingness of the Japanese to open up and allow more trade, and the trade control that the British applied over China following the Opium Wars in the 1840s were symbolic of European dominance globally, but otherwise Northeast Asia remained isolated. After the Meiji restoration in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Japan then embarked upon a Western-style expansion through imperialism, dominating the region until the end of WWII. The end of WWII then saw the onset of the Cold War and the ideological struggle between communism and capitalism which divided Asia. The importance of this is that Asia has always been relatively outside of the imperial sphere of influence of Europe.

established, Sinocentric, tributary system”. When the Europeans arrived in the region and began to exert some influence, Hamashita continues, it coincided with a policy shift within the Ching dynasty that had been imposed following a mercantilist approach, but backfired causing many Chinese to trade privately overseas. Yet before the arrival of the Europeans the Chinese had dominated Asian politics. (Hamashita, 1997)

The tributary system²⁶ is considered to be the standard explanation of how Asian politics was dominated by the Chinese. Scheidel’s (2011) concise description of the evolution of the two systems draws on several important factors. Firstly, the European system is fragmented, with the powers competing amongst themselves, eventually settling on sovereign rights. Secondly, the modern concept of a nation-state was born in Europe—which is widely accepted as the Westphalian system—but this differs greatly from the Asian system of a core-oriented empire. Thirdly, the duration that the Asians have been able to maintain some semblance of a united—and I use the word ‘united’ lightly—system for far longer (by over a thousand years) than that of the western, European states.²⁷ Fourthly, despite the interruption of Japanese imperialism and the newly introduced communist ideology, the current People’s Republic of China (PRC) is still inextricably linked with its history not only of leading Asia, but of also creating a “oneness” amongst the different nations. Based on this, it is more logical to conclude that the Chinese should be the actor that forges unity amongst all Northeast Asian states. What has changed has been the dominant entry into Asia of the USA with its aggressive foreign policy and strategic targeting of certain states, leading to a fractured Asian system. Katzenstein mentions that Germany, in Europe, and Japan, in Asia, became “client states” allowing the Americans to occupy their territories and having high influence over their domestic affairs.²⁸

With the end of WWII and the defeat of Japan and the end of colonization, Asia was left in a political no man’s land. After two thousand years of Chinese

²⁶ The tributary system is described by Suzuki (2009, p. 141) as being “based on ritualistic, hierarchical Confucian social norms” in which “tributary states either needed to be treated as ‘independent’ sovereign entities or be incorporated into the father/elder brother state”.

²⁷ Even the European Union has only been in existence for 70 years and it is showing signs of disunity, most strikingly symbolized by the UK’s exit referendum.

With regards to the USA, it too has only a short history of approximately 200 years, but even in its early years it could not maintain unity amongst all of the states, leading in the 1860s to secession of 11 states from the Union and starting a civil war.

²⁸ In the same sense, South Korea can also be considered a “client state” of the USA and as such a sort of neo-colony of the USA. This is important in understanding why the Republic of Korea is so conformative to US approaches, but also why the North Koreans are so threatened by US hegemony and dominance.

dominance and the subsequent rise and decline of European dominance, the post-WWII period saw the start of the state-centric approach, something completely alien to most Asian nations.²⁹ The Americans in particular seized the opportunity to impose Western liberal values and international institutional approaches on to the region. In doing so, certain nation-states became easy targets for the USA to dominate under neo-imperialist tendencies. Citing Vernon (1971; 1977), Katzenstein notes, "After 1945, the growth of American multinational corporation supported both liberal arguments that sovereignty was "at bay" and realist ones that a political "storm" was brewing over multinational corporations.

The EU, on the other hand, pre-occupied with their own economic and political rebuilding after World War II and subsequent withdrawal from their Asian colonies, in effect abandoned Asia during the Cold War and only returned with renewed interest in the 1990s once the Asian Tigers and China were beginning to boom economically.

8. Social constructivism

As stated by Smith (1997, p. 183), social constructivism is useful in that it "sits precisely at the intersection between the two sets of approaches." What Smith is referring to here by "the two approaches" are the rationalist approach of neo-realism and neo-liberalism, and the reflective approach of historical³⁰ sociology and normative theory. In addition, one of the leading scholars on constructivism, Nicholas Onuf (1998) points out that even though constructivism is not a theory itself, it "makes it feasible to theorize about matters that seem to be unrelated because the concepts and propositions normally used to talk about such matters are also unrelated." (Onuf, 1998, p. 58)

The Asians have historically followed a tributary system based on the Chinese civilization state, whereas oppositely, the Western countries have followed a treaty-based system which protects sovereignty in a legally binding manner. The state-centric approach has slowly begun to lose steam in many Western countries,

²⁹ As Gerrit Gong (1984) implies in his book, *The Standard of Civilization*, the change in political systems in Japan was fairly rapid, whereas in China the transformation to a more "civilized" European-style state was much slower, with the Europeans only considering China to be civilized in the Western-sense by 1943.

³⁰ See Gaddis, 1996, for a detailed analysis of the importance of historical studies to the study of international relations.

where post-WWII liberalism has seen not only economic interdependence emerge, but also the realization that cooperating on certain issues is more effective than working independently—one of the best examples is the fight against terrorism. Within Europe the Mitranian approach of functionalism has seen the state-centered European nations take the rational choice to share sovereignty and integrate economically, politically and socially, albeit through a system of legally-based treaties encompassing a strong institutional structure.

For Asia, the sovereign states must now also start to adapt to the globalizing world and system. Whilst defending their own traditional form of political and social interactions, they must balance opening up to integrate themselves in the multilateral fora and IGOs to be considered as equals in the international system, whilst simultaneously protecting their sovereign rights.

9. EU as a neutral umpire in Northeast Asia

9.1 Perspectives of the Parties

This section takes a brief look at the perspectives of each party with regards to their relations with both the EU and North Korea. First, the EU's relations with the DPRK can be described as favourable to a coordinating role in future Talks. The EU is seen as a civilian entity that promotes values of democracy and non-discrimination through its foreign policy tools of trade and cooperation agreements. Thus far, other than KEDO, it has had very little political interaction with the DPRK, especially since 2011, but on the other hand has provided large amounts of aid over the past several years. It could promote a networking system through the newly established EEAS. However, a sticking point could be the declarations against the DPRK's nuclear program and its general support for sanctions against the regime.

The US' perspective is somewhat different. As the initiator of the SPTs in 2003, with its unwavering demand for CVID, and its strong security links with South Korea and Japan, it is unlikely that the US will cede any influential position to the EU. This is further hindered by the decline in relations between the EU and the USA in recent years, most notably regarding the US' frustration at decision-making procedures within the Union. However, the US does recognize the EU as playing a vital role in global humanitarian aid and this could be the stepping stone for further cooperation.

The relations between the DPRK and RoK have been inconsistent over the

Table 1. Relations between members of the Six Party Talks and the EU, and relations between North Korea and the members

Country	Relations with the DPRK	Relations with the EU
EU	Official declarations regarding DPRK activities only, with no direct participation Seen by the DPRK as a civilian power FTA with South Korea shows it wants to maintain peace and stability Lack of political ties with South Korea shows no bias towards South Supports international sanctions against DPRK Continued donations of humanitarian aid and support through ECHO Network of information through EEAS	N/A
DPRK	N/A	Limited relations Meetings at foreign minister level DPRK introducing more SEZs to promote trade DPRK supported EU's request for enhanced observer status in UNGA Between 2001–2011 increased levels of trust and cooperation
USA	No clear strategy to deal with DPRK in the past CVID since 2003, created internal division in US, no room for negotiation Invited Six Parties to Talks in 2003 Continued annual joint military drills with South Korea—increases security concern for DPRK	Relations with EU not as strong as in the past—increased frustration at EU decision making, US pivot to Asia Foreign policies are not aligned—US favors hard power approach NATO playing a bigger role in Asia-Pacific US advocates EU role in humanitarian aid—recognizes as global actor in this area
South Korea	Inconsistent policy to DPRK Aggression/absorption up to mid-1990s Engagement/Sunshine Policy: 1997–2007 Distrust/aggression under Lee Myung-Bak Trustpolitik under Park Geun-hye Public opinion towards Nordpolitik is vital	2000—EU had improved relations through Sunshine Policy 2001—cooperation agreement signed South Korea—EU FTA signed—first major FTA signed in Asia by EU
China	Chinese support for DPRK in UNSC China is losing patience with DPRK over nuclear testing China swinging towards improved relations with South Korea under Xi Jinping Officially supports denuclearization	Important trade relationship Arms embargo on China since 1989—non-binding China/EU definitions on multilateralism and democratization differ EU–Taiwan relations could be problematic Improved relations through EEAS
Japan	Concern about constitutional change to Article IX Stationing of US troops in Japan Ongoing dispute over abducted Japanese citizens in the 1980s Nuclear weapons program	Trade-based relationship Cooperation agreement in force since 1991 2001—Action Plan for cooperation Does not see EU as a global actor
Russia	Russia wants stabilization in NEA Preference for denuclearization, but main concern is for stability on Korean peninsula Ukraine crisis has pushed Russia to follow improved relations with the DPRK	Ukraine crisis—sanctions causing economic and political problems Russian military activity in European airspace/waters

previous three decades, and a call for a more consistent, bipartisan policy is needed. In addition, public opinion regarding improved relations is necessary, especially given the current lack of trust in domestic Korean politics. For the EU–RoK relations, the FTA has proven successful and relations could be further enhanced if the RoK were to be more engaging towards the DPRK.

The key actor of China is becoming an important pivot between success and failure in any talks. Its past consistency in backing the North in the UNSC is being put to the test by the DPRK's continued defiance of international sanctions, causing frustration and tension between the DPRK and China. With regards to the EU–China relationship, the ongoing arms embargo against China could reduce cooperation and trust-building, whilst the situation regarding Taiwan could be an unwanted distraction and source of conflict. More importantly, the Chinese government is now coming to realise that denuclearization is not possible and maintaining stability should be the main goal. This is similar to the thinking of Russia.

Russia is less concerned with denuclearization, but more concerned about maintaining stability in the region. Moreover, the relations between Russia and the DPRK are improving, thanks to the declining relations between the EU and Russia over the Ukraine crisis.

Finally, whilst EU–Japan relations are fairly good, the Japanese do not recognize the EU as an international actor, diminishing its potential role. More worryingly, the DPRK has yet to satisfy the Japanese government with regards to a solution to the kidnapping of Japanese citizens in the 1980s.

9.2 Experience in international negotiations

The EU has been active over the past 13 years in its pursuit of gaining a reputation as an international actor. To date the EU has participated in a total of 32 operations, of those 15 have been completed and 17 are currently ongoing. Of those 32 operations, the majority have been civilian operations (21 out of 32), undertaking such tasks as advising police teams (Proxima, Kosovo, 2004–2005), monitoring peace agreements (Aceh, Indonesia, 2005–2006) and civilian security reform (Ukraine, current).³¹ The EU is clearly better suited to performing civilian (advisory and monitoring) tasks.

However, the current missions being undertaken by the EU do not compare with

³¹ For more detailed information see the European External Action Service's website <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>

negotiating mechanisms. In terms of negotiating in multilateral fora, the EU is less experienced.

The best example of the EU taking a role in international negotiations is the recent resolution to Iran's nuclear program in July, 2014. The High Representative was very keen to highlight the role that the EU had taken in the negotiations, effectively remarking that the EU had been the breakthrough in the negotiations based on its policy of "effective multilateralism". An article in *The Economist* highlighted the significant role of the EU, "But it was the EU's embargo on Iranian oil exports rather than American sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table and paved the way for the recent nuclear deal" (*The Economist*, 2016).

Indonesia is another good example of where the EU has strengthened its foreign policy image. Involved not only in the independence movement of East Timor, the EU has in recent years involved itself with the development of the social structure in Indonesia, in particular through education. Yet it is ironic that the EU relations with Indonesia are actually more difficult to build, than those of Northeast Asia-EU relations. Camroux and Srikandini (2015, pp. 555–558) put this down to colonial history, where individual European nations inflicted more political control over their colonies, whereas the Europeans in Northeast Asia had more of an impact on civilization. The two scholars suggest, "the esteem in which other Europeans (the Dutch) are held in Indonesia is significantly lower" (Camroux and Srikandini, 2015, p. 556). In terms of building good relations with the Southeast Asian nations, relations with Indonesia³² are vital to enhancing the role of the EU within the ARF.

EU–India and EU–Pakistan relations also highlight the weakness and strength of the EU's foreign policy experience. India has emerged as a rapidly growing economic power, whilst Pakistan has been involved in security issues, both with India and also through terrorist connections. The fact that both India and Pakistan have been nuclear powers since 1998 also adds to the importance of the

³² Between the 1970s and 1990s the biggest cause of conflict between the two was not the lack of democracy or poor human rights record of Suharto's dictatorship, but the occupation of East Timor, at that point still a colony of Portugal. The Portuguese made this a top priority of discussion when it acceded to the Community in 1986 and in the 1991, when the Dili massacre occurred, the Commission was moved to take more action against the Indonesian government. After a referendum on independence took place in 1999 the UN led a peace-keeping mission in East Timor, and the Portuguese accounted for the largest share of EU aid to the area. The 2004 earthquake and tsunami then further enhanced the EU's presence and its development aid and it maintained a peace-keeping force that monitored the province until 2012.

relations with the EU in regards to the SPTs and the experience it could offer. The EU's relationship with India has not been successful to date. Allen (2015, p. 573) sums up the current situation, "it is difficult to locate specific global issues in which the EU and India might profitably seek to work together". The US, with its vast military resources and military power, has provided India with a stronger partnership framework, to the detriment of the EU–India relationship, which until now has remained one of simple trade and investment.³³

In Islam's (2015, p. 598) paper on the EU–Pakistan relationship criticism is also made: "one reason for the EU's failure to draw up a strong partnership with Pakistan is the lack of coordination among national European governments and the EU and the need for stronger coherence of the EU policies". However, where Islam, the EEAS and Sultana (2013) do write positively about the actions of the EU is the area of humanitarian and development aid, in particular aid given post-2010 when flooding caused severe damage and food shortage. Islam describes the EU as a more "credible" partner, noting in a similar vein to that of the North Koreans that "European countries are regarded by many in Pakistan with much less hostility than America" and in terms of democratization citing Abbasi (2009), "the EU has also built up credit among Pakistan's political elite [...] by focusing on the need to hold free and fair elections, insisting on the independence of the judiciary and building of stronger civilian institutions" (Islam, 2015, pp. 596–597). The relevance to the Six Party Talks is that the EU has to persuade the current six members that it has a pivotal role to play in peacemaking in the region. Since the SPTs have thus far included only the region's major security actors the EU has not been considered of any value in the past. However, with the current situation at crisis-point, the start of a new paradigm is emerging.

9.3 Regional context: ASEAN Regional Forum

The objectives of ASEAN in the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 centered around preventive diplomacy and regional peace-building, as well as maintaining independence away from the deepening ideological divide between the capitalist West and the communist East. These basic objectives remain the same, and they have been carried over to the security framework of the ARF. The ARF's objectives were officially declared in the inaugural meeting of the members in Bangkok, in 1994. The two objectives are: "to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern;

³³ For more details on the economic and trade relations see the official overview of EU–India relations as detailed by the Indian government in MEA, 2015.

and to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region” (ASEAN, 2011).

The ARF's objectives can be seen to follow the ASEAN Way of consensus and non-interference. For the European Union, this could be effective because the objectives follow the basic idea of soft power, albeit to a much lesser degree. The EU would have the main objective of building trust between all members based on the common interest of sustainable peace in the region. The big advantage that the EU does have over the ARF in the region is that it already has a high level of trust from North Korea. It can use this to develop what Ko (2004) describes as a security community through the concept of security cooperation. Reiterer (2015) notes the strength of the EU's “comprehensive foreign policy [which] is not limited to crisis management, but covers the full range of diplomacy, development and defense” (Reiterer, 2015, p. 9).

The European External Action Service suggests that the role of the ARF will only increase in the region and it has started to build long-term strategies to establish itself as a major player in security-building in the region. This will benefit both the EU and the ARF.

The ARF has often been criticized for its lack of results in actualizing security in the region, in particular, as Marchi (2015, p. 7) notes, “the ASEAN Regional Forum has proved incapable of addressing hard security issues”. Following its initial establishment, the ARF was a dialogue-based forum and as such, little in the way of action has been taken, other than ministerial meetings. Berger (2015) makes the point that “ Since the 21st ARF meeting, the range of activities encompasses a much wider scope, including counter terrorism, cyber security, HADR, transnational crime and drug trafficking, non-proliferation and disarmament, maritime environmental protection and maritime security”. Lee, J. K. S. (2015, p. 23) makes the point that the ARF was initially founded in 1994 order to create “a security institution in Asia to tackle traditional security issues”.

Over the past few decades, however, there have been several conflicts between members of the ARF with regards to territory within the South China Sea (SCS).³⁴ These trouble spots are helpful in ascertaining the usefulness/effectiveness of the ARF in dealing with disputes of a large scale, as well as balancing the needs of the individual parties. It can be noted that most, if not all, major disputes involve

³⁴ Work by Lee Chul-Ho (2010) on the Northeast Asian region has highlighted the importance of the South China Sea, Yellow Sea region as a corridor of conflict. Lee takes a historical and systematic overview of the region, looking at China's tributary, civilization-state system.

China. Lee, C. H. (2010) notes that China has been able to influence the ARF by keeping certain disputes outside of the ARF's scope and as such ensuring international pressure is kept to a minimum, "Operating as an inclusive forum, the ARF acceded to China's request to keep the issue outside of the ARF's meeting agenda". China is being seen as a dominating power in the region.³⁵

The weaknesses of the ARF in implementing practical solutions to regional disputes, and its weakness in standing up to pressure from powerful states, like China, adds to the argument for implementing the EU in the role of networker in the Six Party Talks. The EU, whilst not without its own lack of experience, is a strong, institutionalized organization that has the ability to build trust and confidence among all members, whilst withstanding any pressure externally from individual states. It also has the resources to be able to put into place any practical measures. The ARF has shown no strength in standing up to Beijing, even when the US pushed for South China Sea disputes to be re-introduced into the ARF framework.

A good example that shows not only the networking role of the EU in Asia, but also its ability to build trust among other actors in the region (including the ARF) has been Myanmar. In 2001, the European Commission wrote a communication in which it stated that it wanted to "help to identify areas where ASEAN and the EU could work together on global security questions", as well as "play a pro-active role in regional cooperation fora such as the ARF, and in inter-regional dialogues such as ASEM" (Communication COM/2001/0469 final). Marchi gives an overview of the relationship that the EU built up with the ARF, that eventually lead to the slow process of bringing democracy to Myanmar. However, it should also be noted that the coordination between the ARF and the EU was arguably simpler than that needed on the Korean Peninsula.

³⁵ In 2013, the Chinese established a new Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) which was highly objected to by the neighboring nations, notably South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, as well as the US. In a Congressional Report over the ADIZ, the reactions of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are noted, with all objecting to the sudden change. However, the report also makes important points regarding the ever-improving relationship between South Korea and China, as well as the fact that Japan's response was much more critical of the newly established ADIZ compared to South Korea. From the point of view of the US, the restrained reaction from the South Koreans "was short-sighted and raised questions about South Korea's strategic alignment" (Rinehart & Elias, 2015, p. 21). The closer relationship to China may be damaging for its relations with the US, however, in the context of this paper, further improving diplomacy between South Korea and China could be highly influential in the SPTs, since both South Korea and China have strong links with the EU.

10. Building a framework to overcome obstacles

Thus far, this paper has suggested using the EU's experiences in KEDO and the ARF as stepping stones for a bigger role in Northeast Asia, along with its hefty weight as a civilian power and non-aggressive history in the region. However, with the number of Parties involved and differences in historical and political identities it is not that simple and a more rigid framework is needed for this to happen. Moreover, the SPTs to date have not been inclusive of exogenous actors. Any shift in the paradigm will require a great effort by the EU's institutions, but one which must be careful to avoid any sense of re-emerging European imperialistic tendencies.

The framework that would be conducive to success would have to overcome several obstacles;

Firstly, the EU must endeavour to establish a stronger presence in the region. It has been doing this since the Lisbon Treaty came into force, whereby the European External Action Service (EEAS) has established "embassies" in each of the Parties, with the exception of the DPRK. When establishing a presence it must also begin to exert its values and incorporate them into its activities with each state.

Secondly, the Six Parties must agree to allow the EU to act as the networker/arbitrer between them. This would not mean that the EU will act as the head negotiator, but simply that it will coordinate the interests of each Party and work to find a suitable solution. The USA and China are obstacles to this, in that they may fear a reduction in influence. In particular, as Rae (2017) mentioned, "In 2014, President Xi gave a speech conjuring up the image of an 'Asian Dream' whereby Asian people would manage their own security with China in a leading role." This does not bode well for a more inclusive forum of outside actors and so, in order for the EU to assume the mantle of networker, it must incentivize the Parties.³⁶ Since the EU is considered to be a trade superpower it should use this and offer the Parties better trading terms. Currently only South Korea has an FTA with the EU, whilst China, the USA and Japan are all in negotiations and Russia is suffering from sanctions incurred over the Ukraine/Crimea crisis. The EU must weigh the costs of preferential trade deals with global political influence.

³⁶ Other incentives could include: an end to the arms embargo being imposed on China; favourable conditions for FDI into the EU; increased FDI to the members; relaxing of non-tariff barriers based on EU values; and reductions of any trade restrictions in place.

Thirdly, inter-regional conflicts/disputes should be kept out of the SPTs. For example, the territorial dispute over Dokdo/Takeshima between South Korea and Japan, the Senkaku islands dispute, and so on. These disputes, whilst needing of permanent solution, are not directly related to the SPTs and as such the SPTs should focus solely on the issues involving the DPRK. Disputes involving the DPRK, for example, the dispute between Japan and North Korea regarding the abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1980s should be resolved/discussed as part of the SPTs. This will further trust-building and provide a more stable environment once the Talks are concluded.

Fourthly, there must be a clear commitment from all states to return to the negotiating table with an open mind towards finding a solution. Until now, there has been no 'Zone of Possible Agreement' between the Parties, since there has been a clear divide on the issue of denuclearisation. As such, the Parties must be willing to concede at least a little. If not, a failure such as that seen in Reykjavik in 1985 will be the only outcome.

Fifth, the Talks should be conducted over one lengthy meeting, not regular short meetings. Difficult negotiations in history have been more successful when carried out in one go, rather than intermittent meetings.³⁷

Finally, the Talks should not focus on denuclearization. It is clear that the DPRK will not give up on its program, especially since it is now in the final stages of completion. The Parties must all focus on prevention of their use and constructing a peace framework that ensures any tensions do not escalate.

10.1 Towards alternative strategies

Without doubt, the ascendance of the European Union to lead networker in the Six Party Talks will not be straightforward. It is unlikely that the USA will simply hand over the leadership role to the European Union and take a less assertive role. After all, the Bush administration was the initiator of bringing in additional parties to the talks. Since Obama took office in 2008, the foreign policy of the US has also swung from Europe to Asia, signifying an increasing interest in the region politically, economically and militarily. Any suggestion that the EU should act as the head-networker will surely be refused. An official statement from National Security Advisor Susan Rice, following the February 2016 satellite launch by the DPRK stated that,

³⁷ Stanton's (2011) is an informative work on the negotiating tactics/methods of eight of recent history's most important negotiations.

The United States is fully committed to the security of our allies in the region, and we will take all necessary steps to defend ourselves and our allies and respond to North Korean provocations. We call upon the international community to stand together and demonstrate to North Korea that its reckless actions must have serious consequences.
(The White House, 2016)

Whilst Rice did mention that the “international community” must act with one voice, there is no suggestion that such cooperation should be under the leadership of anyone other than the US.³⁸

Regional organizations may also account for a further stumbling block. ASEAN is well known for conducting its internal politics in a non-Western style, preferring to follow consensus based rules, with a firm stance on non-interventionism. “The ‘ASEAN Way’, ultimately, is likely to limit the EU’s role within the ARF” (Weber, 2010, p. 344). Even if the EU was to receive the backing of the ARF, it must then also consider the various other multilateral organizations within the region: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which also works to make “joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region” (Renard, 2013, p. 360), but which is mostly driven by China, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), in which the EU is an official observer, but whose main objectives include “non-interference in the internal affairs of other states” (Renard, 2013, p. 365) and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), although ASEM is predominantly an informal forum for engaging Europe and Asia.

The will of the North Korean regime is also a potential wall. The strong stance of the EU towards enforcing international laws and obligations could be interpreted by the DPRK as being too aggressive. The EU must be careful not to be overly aligned with the policies of the United States. Immediately following the satellite launch by the North in February 2016, High Representative Federica Mogherini released a statement saying that, “The European Union is in close contact with all its partners and we will work with the UN Security Council,

³⁸ EU–US relations are also important. Konrad Jarausch depicts poor relations, “[l]ong hoping for more continental support for its policies, Washington has become annoyed with the European Union’s slow decision-making processes. Mutual irritation is not just a byproduct of personal estrangement among leaders on both sides of the Atlantic—Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron are no George Bush and Tony Blair—but is rather the result of a deeper divergence that has built up for several decades” (Jarausch, 2015). Oppositely, Andrew Moravcsik (2010, p. 205) argues that in terms of military decisions the two have been almost inseparable since the end of the Cold War.

which will meet later today in an emergency session, to address this latest act.” (EEAS, 2016) Following the sixth nuclear test, Mogherini restated a similar line, “Our European line is very clear on this, more economic pressure, more diplomatic pressure, unity with the regional and international partners” (Yonhap News, 2017).

10.2 Alternative strategies

Based on the refusal of North Korea’s leadership to follow international law and accept the United Nation’s sanctions, there exist very few options that will be fruitful in developing peaceful and sustainable relations with the DPRK. Whilst this author fully supports the idea of an EU-led multilateral negotiating mechanism, the reality is that the aforementioned difficulties may make such talks impossible to achieve. If so, what other possible alternatives could be implemented?

There are several alternatives to bringing about a change in Northeast Asia. However, all come with difficulty and some require drastic policy and political change. The author recommends four alternatives, should the EU-lead system not come to fruition:

1. Maintain the current Six Party Talks with the EU as an outside observer. Since this is already established and involves the biggest powers in the region—economically and politically—the Talks could resume immediately if the DPRK agrees to return.
2. Institutionalize and expand the Six Party Talks by asking multilateral bodies to participate, for instance ARF, SCO. The possibilities for this include allowing additional influential nation states within the region to join, for instance Australia, India, Indonesia, and so on, however, there have been fewer calls to include the multilateral organizations of the SCO, ARF, SAARC and EU to begin active members of the negotiations. By asking these bodies to join, policy could also be introduced, forming institutions that are to work on the sole purpose of resolving the stalemate.
3. Reversal of pro-North Korean policies by Russia and China. Whilst the UN sanctions over the past years have more often than not been approved by both Russia and China there remains a strong partnership between the DPRK and China/Russia that is hindering attempts at a peaceful solution.
4. Internal revolution within the DPRK. Whilst the most drastic and unstable of all alternatives, this suggestion is also one of the most likely to bring

about real change within the country and allow the state to open its borders and reform democratically.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Six-Party Talks are finely balanced. Despite having been stalled since 2008 they have not been fully abandoned and the possibility of future negotiations is very much alive. However, there also needs to be reform in the Talks that allows for objective reasoning and unbiased appraisal. This can only be achieved by expanding the number of members and allowing a non-regional actor to act as an impartial arbiter.

The current situation requires that the North Korean problem find a resolution. Previous attempts at negotiation have been ineffective and the deadlock has proven impossible to break. A new paradigm of talks, based not on denuclearization but on constructing a peace that brings stability to the Northeast Asian region, is vital. This can only be achieved with the European Union working as a networker. No other regional organization or single nation-state has the resources or influence to bring about change.

One thing is for certain—the DPRK does possess nuclear weapons and is fast approaching the technology to deliver these warheads over long distances. This is a game-changer, both expanding the potential threat outside of Northeast Asia, as well as catapulting the status of North Korea to a nuclear military state that can no longer be considered a frustrating annoyance. As a result, any future negotiations need to shift their focus away from the nuclear weapons program, to developing an environment in which the DPRK feels secure enough that it does not need to use them. The EU, whilst lacking in international negotiation experience, does have 70 years of maintaining peace and stability, and it has gained support in the wider region through the ARF, as well as in Northeast Asia through its limited role in KEDO.

However, this paper is highly theoretical, with few concrete actions to help support the ideas. Furthermore, the expansion of the Six Party Talks to include the EU has several limitations. The EU is not committed to entering the Six Party Talks and as of yet, has shown little willingness to do so. Only a strong shift in policy will allow this to happen. Moreover, this paper assumes that the EU will act as one singular entity, whereas in reality EU members have widely varying stances on foreign policy. Moreover, if the EU were to be more pro-active, it

must also offer incentives to the current members, to allow it the chance to make a breakthrough. China and the USA must be persuaded to forego their own foreign policies and North Korea policies in favour of regional stability.

A further limitation to this study is the lack of literature on the role of the EU in the Six Party Talks. This is based on the fact that the EU has played an insignificant part in the process so far, however further studies are required to boost awareness and encourage the EU to take further action. With BREXIT on the agenda possible reforms to the CFSP could well facilitate a new EU foreign policy framework.

Andrew Millard, PhD is assistant professor at Busan University of Foreign Studies, South Korea, where he specializes in international politics, diplomacy and European Union studies. He has lived in South Korea since 2006 and as such he is now focusing his research on Korean and Northeast Asian politics. With his background in European Union studies, he has worked closely with the European Chamber of Commerce in Korea and also teaches European Union policy courses at Pusan National University. Assistant Professor Millard is building a profile to become an expert in Korean politics in order to build stronger connections with Europe.

Chae-Deug Yi, PhD is professor at the College of Economics and International Trade at Pusan National University, South Korea, as well as Director of the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence. He has been a visiting Professor at UC Berkeley and Duke University, USA, and Yeonbeon University of Science and Technology, China. Professor Yi has published extensively in journals around the world.

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