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Final Essay

The school of thought I found to be most useful in understanding states and the implications of their actions in international politics was Realism. Through the lens of realism, I was able to use the balance of power and security dilemma concepts to understand the complex situations that are Iran and North Korea's Nuclearization attempts. Firstly, to understand Iran's position internationally and to determine what drives their actions they must be viewed using the balance of power concept under realist theory. Iran is in the already destabilized middle east in which acquisition of weapons of mass destruction has the potential to significantly shift the balance of power of the region, and potentially the world, towards Iran. Under the realist perspective states are viewed as existing in an anarchical environment which pits State versus State. It is imperative that states operating in anarchical environments look to shift the balance of power to themselves as a means of protection, in Iran's case they believe that the best means of shifting power towards themselves is through nuclearization. Under realism it is likewise assumed that states are guided by national interest, as such it is clear that Iran has calculated that the best means to self-protection is not through international organizations or law, but instead is through nuclearization to shift Iran's position of power further ahead of other states within the middle east and even in the international stage. Though Iran must consider retaliation from other international actors like the US military, it is clear they have determined that shifting the balance of power through nuclearization is their best option for competing on the international stage.

The second area of International politics I was able to understand through the lens of realism was North Korea's Nuclearization attempts. Using the security dilemma under realism I was able to get a better grasp of North Korea's position internationally and what the purpose of their nuclearization attempts are. Firstly, the balance of power concept certainly plays a role with North Korea, if North Korea can nuclearize then it shifts the balance of power on the international scale to accommodate for North Korea. Unlike Iran though, the balance of power concept is not what drives North Korea's Nuclearization attempts, instead it is the security dilemma. Under neo-realist theory the fact that states operate in anarchical environments necessitates a constant strive for survival. Striving for survival in combination with states being guided by national interest clearly indicates why North Korea is so keen on Nuclearization. North Korea in its current position is in a constant security threat on the international stage, under neo-realist theory though nuclear weapons dissuade states from going to war under the threat of mutually assured destruction. It is obvious that in North Korea's current position they are under constant strain from other states and that their attempts to nuclearize are directly derived from the principle of the security dilemma. Contrary to Iran's attempts to nuclearize while shifting the balance of power is within North Korea's interest, it is not the concept that pushes North Korea's attempts to nuclearize instead it is security under which they face constant pressure from other international states. (526 words)