

THE HENRY M. JACKSON  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

# TASK FORCE REPORT



North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Understanding the Threat,  
Avoiding War, Crafting Future Options

2018





# **North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Understanding the Threat, Avoiding War, Crafting Future Options**

## **Evaluator**

Lieutenant General Stephen Lanza

Commanding General - U.S. Army I Corps, Joint Base Lewis-McChord (Ret.)

## **Faculty Advisor**

Scott L. Montgomery

## **Coordinator**

Rachel Paik

## **Editors**

Nicole Rankin

Sophie Rucki

## **Authors**

Thomas Campbell

Keiko Ichinowatari

Chris Kim

Theodore Kim

Kevin Lam

Arne Landboe

Tingting Qian

Jay Rapp

William Stewart-Wood

Cheyenne Virivong

Dennis Yeum



## Table of Contents

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Abbreviations.....</b>   | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>Introduction.....</b>  | <b>9</b>   |
| <i>Rachel Paik</i>  |            |
| <b>History of the Korean Peninsula.....</b>                             | <b>13</b>  |
| <i>Sophie Rucki</i>   |            |
| <b>US-DPRK Relations.....</b>   | <b>19</b>  |
| <i>Thomas Campbell</i>  |            |
| <b>ROK-DPRK Relations.....</b>  | <b>29</b>  |
| <i>Theodore Kim</i>   |            |
| <b>Japan-DPRK Relations.....</b>  | <b>37</b>  |
| <i>Keiko Ichinowatari</i>   |            |
| <b>China-DPRK Relations.....</b>  | <b>45</b>  |
| <i>Tingting Qian</i>  |            |
| <b>Human Rights Violations.....</b>                                     | <b>51</b>  |
| <i>Cheyenne Virivong</i>  |            |
| <b>Kim Jong-un’s Goals, Strategies, and Success.....</b>                | <b>59</b>  |
| <i>Dennis Yeum</i>  |            |
| <b>DPRK Nuclear Weapons Capability.....</b>                             | <b>67</b>  |
| <i>Jay Rapp</i>   |            |
| <b>DPRK Conventional, Chemical, and Biological Arms Capability.....</b> | <b>73</b>  |
| <i>Arne Landboe</i>   |            |
| <b>Cyber Capabilities.....</b>  | <b>83</b>  |
| <i>Kevin Lam</i>  |            |
| <b>US Diplomatic Response.....</b>                                      | <b>91</b>  |
| <i>William Stewart-Wood</i>   |            |
| <b>Record of Sanctions.....</b>   | <b>99</b>  |
| <i>Chris Kim</i>  |            |
| <b>The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Model for North Korea?.....</b>             | <b>105</b> |
| <i>Nicole Rankin</i>  |            |
| <b>Policy Recommendations .....</b>                                     | <b>111</b> |
| <i>Rachel Paik</i>  |            |



## **Abbreviations**

BMD- Ballistic Missile Defense

CCP- Communist Party of China

CEDAW- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

CRC- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child

CRPD- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CVID- Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible, Dismantlement

DDoS- Distributed Denial of Services

DMZ- Demilitarized Zone

DPRK- Democratic People's Republic of Korea

EU- European Union

GSD- General Staffed Department

HEU- Highly Enriched Uranium

IAEA- International Atomic Energy Agency

ICAN- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

ICBM- Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

ICCPR- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESC- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

JCPOA- Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

JPA- Joint Plan of Action

JSDF- Japan Self Defense Force

KEDO- Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

LWR- Light water reactor

MANPAD- Man-Portable Air Defense System

MLRS- Multiple Launch Rocket Systems

NE- North East

NKPP- Provisional People's Committee of North Korea  
NPT- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons  
NSA- National Security Agency  
NSC- National Security Council  
PDS- Public Distribution System  
RGB- Reconnaissance General Bureau  
ROK- Republic of Korea  
SAM- Surface to Air Missile  
SE- South East  
SNS- Social Network System  
SOF- Special Operations Forces  
SWIFT- Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications  
THAAD- Terminal High Altitude Area Defense  
UDHR- Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
UN- United Nations  
UNSC- United Nations Security Council  
US - United States  
USAMGIK- United States Military Government in Korea  
WPK- Workers' Party of Korea

# Introduction

*Rachel Paik*

Since its first nuclear test in 2006, North Korea has progressed rapidly and defiantly toward its goal of becoming a nuclear weapons state able to reach the continental US with its warheads. Despite many attempts at prevention, multiple US administrations have failed to achieve the Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible, Dismantlement (CVID) of the North Korean nuclear program. Against all odds, the DPRK now seems close to achieving its goal. On July 4<sup>th</sup> 2017, the DPRK showed it had likely produced a miniaturized nuclear warhead that can fit inside its missiles, crossing a key threshold on the path to becoming a full-fledged nuclear power.<sup>1</sup> In November of 2017, the Hwasong-15, an Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) based on Russian designs, demonstrated a range of 13,000 km, well in range of the US mainland. Since then, various experts and US intelligence have estimated that North Korea possesses somewhere between 20 and 60 nuclear weapons.<sup>2</sup>

In response, the Trump administration has enacted a “maximum pressure” campaign with strict sanctions to punish the DPRK for its nuclear and missile testing and to try and force them to the negotiating table. However, Pyongyang has thus far resisted talks. Despite near consistent US demands for denuclearization, it seems less and less likely that the DPRK would agree to give up their weapons due to the confidence they have cultivated through their recent progress. An important 2017 Congressional Research Service report reads that the above-described progress has “led analysts and policymakers to conclude that the window for preventing the DPRK from acquiring a nuclear missile capable of reaching the United States is closing,” if it is not already closed. They assess that, “the events of 2017 appear to have fundamentally altered U.S. perceptions of the threat the Kim Jong-Un regime poses to the continental United States and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Warrick, Joby, Ellen Nakashima, and Anna Fifield. "North Korea now making missile-ready nuclear weapons, U.S. analysts say." *The Washington Post*. August 08, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> McCurry, Justin, and Julian Borger. "North Korea missile launch: regime says new rocket can hit anywhere in US." *The Guardian*. November 29, 2017.

international community, and [US outrage over DPRK defiance] has escalated the standoff on the Korean Peninsula to levels that have arguably not been seen since 1994.”<sup>3</sup>

Another reason for the heightened tensions was the 2016 election of Donald Trump as US President. According to *The Washington Post*, Donald Trump’s provocative rhetoric has added an unpredictable element to an otherwise conventional US strategy towards Pyongyang.<sup>4</sup> The President’s aggressive and often disrespectful comments to Kim Jong Un via twitter have roused a vindictive response from the DPRK, elevating the potential for military conflict on the Korean Peninsula. Although Trump’s tweets are, for the most part, excluded from official US policy, North Korea certainly does not see things this way or take these threats lightly, while US ally ROK is often alienated by Trumps’ calls to re-ignite war on the Korean peninsula. Although Trump’s supporters say these threats are in line with his maximum pressure campaign, others fear they create an opportunity for the DPRK to create a wedge in relations between the US and the ROK. This was apparent when Kim Jong Un’s sister, Kim Yo Jong, as head of the North Korean delegation, extended an exclusive invitation to South Korean President Moon Jae-in during February’s PyeongChang Olympic games,<sup>5</sup> even while cancelling meetings with the US delegation. President Moon has been criticized for falling for Kim Yo Jong’s diplomatic charm but at this time has not yet decided how to respond.<sup>6</sup> The Trump Administration has applauded this as a show of solidarity with the US, but has neglected to appoint a South Korean ambassador despite having spent over a year in office, which shows that the US does not prioritize the consultation of Seoul.

The recent dismissal of Victor Cha highlights the most worrisome aspect of Trump Administration’s policy towards North Korea. Cha reports “Trump [and his officials] maintain the rationale that a strike that demonstrates U.S. resolves to pursue ‘all options’ is necessary to give the mercurial Kim a ‘bloody nose.’ Otherwise he will remain undeterred in his nuclear

---

<sup>3</sup> McInnis, Kathleen J., Andrew Feickert, Mark E. Manyin, Steven A. Hildreth, Mary Beth D. Nikitin, and Emma Chanlett-Avery. "The North Korean Nuclear Challenge: Military Options and Issues for Congress." *The Congressional Research Service Report*, November 6, 2017, 1-66. November 6, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Rucker, Philip, and Greg Jaffe. "Trump's tweets rattle the globe, but aides say North Korea policy is carefully calibrated." *The Washington Post*. January 05, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> George, Steve, Will Ripley, and James Griffiths. "Kim Jong Un invites South Korean President Moon to Pyongyang." *CNN*. February 11, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Moon-hee, Wi, and Kim Hyoung-gu. "Moon mulls envoy to Pyongyang." *Korea JoongAng Daily*. February 13, 2018.

ambitions.”<sup>7</sup> This implies that the Trump Administration does not think diplomatic talks will effectively prevent the DPRK from developing a viable nuclear program. Based on the fact that Cha’s ambassadorial appointment was withdrawn due to his opposition to this preventative strike option, we can conclude that Donald Trump is not bluffing about his desire to rain “fire and fury” on North Korea. At the same time, Kim Jong Un does not show any signs of backing down despite facing the toughest sanctions in his nation’s history. Coupled with the fact that the US and the DPRK continue to refuse talks with one another, the situation seems ripe for conflict, putting millions of lives are at risk in this Korean conflict, (including thousands of Americans living abroad). Thus our task force seeks to make policy recommendations that will help de-escalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula and provide a foundation for future peace talks that can make progress toward the denuclearization of the North Korean program.

---

<sup>7</sup> Cha, Victor. "Opinion | Victor Cha: Giving North Korea a 'bloody nose' carries a huge risk to Americans." The Washington Post. January 30, 2018.



# History of the Korean Peninsula

*Sophie Rucki*

## Japanese Annexation of the Korean Peninsula

Between the years of 1905 and 1910, Korea was a colony of imperial Japan. In 1905, Japan had established itself as a protectorate of Korea, and in 1907, took charge of Korea's internal affairs.<sup>8</sup> In 1910, Japan officially annexed the Korean Peninsula under the Japan-Korea Treaty, becoming the official ruling power of Korea.<sup>9</sup> The Japanese desired this colony for many reasons: "to insure her own national safety; to assure enduring peace in the Far East by eliminating one of the most fruitful sources of disturbance; and to promote the welfare and prosperity of the Koreans".<sup>10</sup> Though the Korean government had officially ceded control to the Japanese, the Korean people largely resisted the annexation, and in the uprising of 1919, approximately 7,000 Koreans were killed at the hands of the oppressive Japanese regime.<sup>11</sup>

## World War II

By 1937, World War II had reached the shores of the Pacific, and by 1939, Koreans were being used to supplement the dwindling ranks of the Japanese military.<sup>12</sup> In 1944, all Korean men of age were required to contribute to the war effort, either by way of companies that supported the war, or by enlisting in the Japanese military. Between 1937 and 1945, nearly 240,000 Koreans served in the Japanese military, and thousands more women were used as *comfort women* who spent their time supporting Japanese soldiers in brothels.<sup>13</sup> Following the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, the US and the Soviet Union took control of the Korean peninsula and it was divided at the 38th parallel under General Order Number 1. Each side promptly implemented their own military government, with the US controlling the south, and the Soviets controlling the north.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Chen, Peter. "Korea in World War II." World War II Database.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Iyenaga, Toyokichi. "Japan's Annexation of Korea." *The Journal of Race Development* 3, no. 2 (1912): 201-23. doi:10.2307/29737953.

<sup>11</sup> Chen, Peter. "Korea in World War II."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "Division of Korea." New World Encyclopedia. October 17, 2017.

In 1948, the UN attempted to hold democratic elections for a unified Korea. However, a lack of cooperation pushed both the US and the Soviet Union to empower Korean leaders that best represented their interests in the Cold War. In the North, the Soviet Union supported the charismatic leader Kim Il-sung, and in the South, the US supported nationalist exile Syngman Rhee.<sup>15</sup> In August of that year, the Republic of Korea was officially formed, with Rhee claiming full control of the Korean peninsula.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after, in September, Kim formed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, likewise claiming the whole Korean peninsula.<sup>17</sup>

## **Korean War**

The US began withdrawing troops from the Korean Peninsula in 1948,<sup>18</sup> however, by 1950 the Truman Administration had shifted its focus back to Asia in the name of containment. Just one year earlier, the Chinese revolution had ended with Communist leader Mao Zedong rising to power, and Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek fleeing to Taiwan.<sup>19</sup> President Truman knew that Mao was allied with the Soviets, who were already testing an atomic bomb.<sup>20</sup> Accused as having "lost" China to the Communists, the administration felt pressured to curb Soviet influence in Asia.<sup>21</sup> The first attempt at regaining control was in 1950, when the National Security Council released the NSC 68 plan pushing for the increased US funding of containment-focused operations.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Stack, Liam. "Korean War, a 'Forgotten' Conflict That Shaped the Modern World." The New York Times. Last modified January 1, 2018.

<sup>16</sup>"Division of Korea." New World Encyclopedia.

<sup>17</sup> "History of North Korea." Liberty in North Korea. Accessed February 20, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Division of Korea." New World Encyclopedia.

<sup>19</sup> "Korean War." The George Washington University. Accessed February 20, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> "US Enters the Korean Conflict." National Archives. Last modified September 7, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> "US Enters the Korean Conflict." National Archives.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



Figure 1: Phases of the Korean War (Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/usworkjc/korean-war>).

Following the end of World War II, the division of the Korean Peninsula was marked by border skirmishes until June 25, 1950, when war officially broke out at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>23</sup> Kim Il-sung’s invasion into the south was considered a security breach, and the United Nations Security Council appointed US General MacArthur as head of the UN-led coalition.<sup>24</sup> While the US never officially declared war, it was accepted that they would lead over 15 UN countries in “police action” on the peninsula.<sup>25</sup> In September of 1950, General MacArthur led a UN victory at Incheon and promptly moved his troops north to the Chinese border (see **Figure 1**).<sup>26</sup> The UN’s mission had changed from saving South Korea, to unifying the peninsula and ridding it of communism. Soon after, Mao sent troops to help his North Korean comrades and Seoul fell to the DPRK.<sup>27</sup> The UN once again changed the objective of the war, this time with hopes of

<sup>23</sup> "History of North Korea." Liberty in North Korea.  
<sup>24</sup> "Korean War." The George Washington University.  
<sup>25</sup> "US Enters the Korean Conflict."  
<sup>26</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>27</sup> "Korean War."

negotiating for a divided Korea. However, General MacArthur refused, and was promptly relieved of command. Once UN forces retook Seoul, a conference was held to establish the status of the border, and a military stalemate was reached.

In 1952, President Eisenhower threatened to escalate the war if negotiations did not continue.<sup>28</sup> In 1953, negotiations resumed, and an armistice was signed in July, bringing a ceasefire to the armed conflict.<sup>29</sup> While the signing of the armistice marked the beginning of a shift in US foreign policy toward global containment, the armistice was by no means a peace treaty. As a result, the Korean War has never officially ended.

## **North Korea's Nuclear Program**

What came as the end of military operations on the Korean peninsula was only the beginning of Cold War interventions that would go on to shape relations in the region. In 1956, the DPRK joined the Soviets in founding the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Moscow.<sup>30</sup> Just three years later, the Soviet Union and the DPRK signed the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement<sup>31</sup> that would help the Soviets establish a nuclear research complex at Yongbyon and provide the DPRK with training and technology. While the Academy of Sciences, established in 1952, would have oversight, leader Kim Il-sung would have ultimate control over the nuclear program.<sup>32</sup> By 1962, the research center at Yongbyon was complete, and the DPRK had its first IRT-2000 reactor.<sup>33</sup> While the Soviet Union continued to supply the DPRK with nuclear materials, Mao refused to provide material to the DPRK, prompting a deterioration of relations between the two countries.<sup>34</sup>

In 1965, the DPRK was experimenting with fission technology and by the early 1970s had gained the capability to reprocess plutonium from the Soviets.<sup>35</sup> However, in 1974 the DPRK

---

<sup>28</sup> "US Enters the Korean Conflict."

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> "North Korea Nuclear Technology & Nuclear Weapons Program." Nuclear Threat Initiative. Last modified December 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Standifer, Cid. "Timeline: A Brief History of North Korea's Nuclear Weapon Development." USNI. Last modified September 5, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> "North Korea Nuclear Technology & Nuclear Weapons Program."

<sup>33</sup> Standifer, Cid. "Timeline: A Brief History of North Korea's Nuclear Weapon Development."

<sup>34</sup> "North Korea Nuclear Technology & Nuclear Weapons Program."

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

joined the IAEA, an organization that seeks to deter the militaristic use of nuclear weapons, while advocating for the peaceful use of nuclear technology.<sup>36</sup>

Despite this seemingly cooperative gesture, the DPRK experienced a period of expansion in the 1980s that led to the refinement of yellowcake uranium, experimentation with explosives, and the fabrication of fuel rods.<sup>37</sup> In addition to the establishment of research and development institutions, the DPRK was underway with the construction of the 5WM(e) domestically sourced uranium-powered nuclear reactor.<sup>38</sup>

At the urging of the Soviet Union, the DPRK joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapons State in 1985.<sup>39</sup> The goal of the NPT is to “prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament”.<sup>40</sup> By joining the NPT, the DPRK agreed to the “peaceful use of nuclear energy” and to open its borders to IAEA inspectors.<sup>41</sup> A year later however, the DPRK had constructed a reactor capable of plutonium production, and in 1989, American intelligence sources confirmed the presence of nuclear weapons in the DPRK.<sup>42</sup>

After years of resistance to IAEA inspectors by the DPRK, US President Jimmy Carter led both countries to the Agreed Framework in 1994.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the DPRK agreed to halt its nuclear activities if the US, Japan, and the ROK assisted it in the construction of two Light Water Reactors (LWRs).<sup>44</sup> The first few years under this framework were successful. The DPRK halted plutonium production, allowed confirmation from IAEA inspectors, and construction began on the construction of the LWRs.<sup>45</sup> However, as administrations in the US, Japan, and the ROK

---

<sup>36</sup> "The IAEA Mission Statement." International Atomic Energy Agency. Accessed February 20, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> "North Korea Nuclear Technology"

<sup>38</sup> Carrel-Billiard, Francois, and Christine Wing. "North Korea and the NPT." International Peace Institute. Last modified April 2010.

<sup>39</sup> "North Korea Nuclear Technology".

<sup>40</sup> "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)." United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Accessed February 20, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)."

<sup>42</sup> Standifer, Cid.

<sup>43</sup> Carrel-Billiard, Francois, and Christine Wing. "North Korea and the NPT."

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

inevitably changed, these countries began to neglect their obligations to the DPRK. Consequently, in 2002, the US accused the DPRK of uranium enrichment, an act that violated the terms of the Agreed Framework.<sup>46</sup> In response, IAEA inspectors were shut out of the DPRK, and in 2003 the DPRK claimed that it was “no longer bound” by the NPT and announced its intent to withdraw from the treaty.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

# US-DPRK Relations

*Thomas Campbell*

The US and North Korea are two states which have never enjoyed mutual diplomatic relations and are on the brink of war. The root of the animosity these two countries have for the other can be viewed through the post-Cold War and “war on terror” frames that have dominated recent US policy. The US often pins the blame on the DPRK’s inherent opposition to the capitalist way of life, however, a more holistic review of the history of interactions between the two countries shows that ideological differences alone did not always point to conflict. An investigation of American involvement in the Korean peninsula, as well as flex points in US-DPRK relations in the past, will help reveal a path toward a historic solution for historical conflicts.

## **Establishing Relations**

The current hostility between the US and the DPRK is analogous to their first interactions in the 1940s, which were highly military in nature.<sup>48</sup> However, to fully appreciate the current dynamic, the US role in Korean independence before the split at the 38th parallel and resulting war should be examined. Throughout WWII, Korean citizens were anticipating Japan’s defeat and gaining their independence after much suffering under the harsh colonial regime. President Franklin D. Roosevelt formulated a plan to put Korea under long-term “trusteeship” by the allies before the war ended that was solidified at conferences throughout the early 1940s. During this time, various parties were concerned about one another dominating a future Korean government, and in particular, the US worried that Soviet soldiers of Korean origin would gain regional influence.<sup>49</sup>

To prevent this possibility, the US decided to act unilaterally, setting the stage for the exacerbation of tensions in the peninsula. Shortly after the Japanese announced their surrender in 1945, the US military arrived in the southern part of the country to establish a separate military government, the US Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). Though a local independent

---

<sup>48</sup>Pardo, Ramon Pacheco. *North Korea–US Relations under Kim Jong II: The Quest for Normalization?* (Taylor and Francis, 2014), 12.

<sup>49</sup> Kim, Seung-Young. "The Rise and Fall of the United States Trusteeship Plan for Korea as a Peace-maintenance Scheme," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 2 (2013): 229-230.

government, the Korean People's Republic led by longtime independence activist Lyuh Un-hyung, already existed, the inclusion of communist figures in leadership roles prompted the USAMGIK to reject this interim government's legitimacy.

This interjection of US power impacted Korean perceptions of US priorities on the peninsula for years to come. For example, USAMGIK quickly reconstituted the local police force to help maintain order. However, most of the officers were suspected collaborators of the Japanese colonial regime, which generated tremendous discontent among the population. US efforts to push Korea towards democratization also included establishing policies that were consistent with US economic ideology, such as stopping centralized distribution of rice and setting up free markets. However, the haphazard implementation of the system and its unfamiliarity among the Korean people immediately led to inflation and rice shortages, worsening living conditions and public opinion towards the provisional government.<sup>50</sup>

These pre-war incidents exacerbated tensions between the US and the Soviet administration to the north. They also give important context to the Kim regime's current perspective of the US presence in the Korean peninsula as a continuation of colonial imperialism, as many Koreans during this era felt the US sought the advancement of its own system and ideals over the needs of the people. Suffering heavy casualties from US-led attacks and the lack of a decisive end to the subsequent civil war, anti-US sentiments and strained relations between the two countries sparked.<sup>51</sup>

## **Major Events**

### *USS Pueblo Incident*

Following the Korean War, US-DPRK relations continued to be driven by military conflict over diplomatic means. The immediate post-war era was marked by the use of a new tool by North Korea to bring the US to the table, namely 'brinkmanship'. The next major interaction between the two sides was in 1968 when the *USS Pueblo*, a spying vessel sent to gather intelligence on North Korean and Soviet communications, was captured off the east coast of the peninsula by the DPRK. The US and South Korean governments immediately responded with military

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 213-215.

<sup>51</sup> Pardo 17.

preparations and calls for retaliation. In the end, the crisis brought together US and DPRK officials for a total of 29 sessions of bilateral talks. These talks were the first to occur since the 1953 armistice that were not directly related to the Korean War.<sup>52</sup> The US ultimately secured the return of the ship's crew, in exchange for a US apology to the Kim regime.<sup>53</sup> Shortly after the *USS Pueblo* incident, the North Korean military shot down a US reconnaissance plane, killing the crew. While the Nixon administration expended little energy and attention on this event, and did not respond with direct military force,<sup>54</sup> it still maneuvered resources to prepare for a potential conflict. These responses again reinforced the DPRK's habit of using brinkmanship to sway the conflict in their favor.

Prior to the capture of the *USS Pueblo*, Kim Il-sung saw that the US was becoming bogged down in southeast Asia. Confident that the US military was too preoccupied with another war to respond to aggression from North Korea, he used the *USS Pueblo* as a counter to an impending US invasion.<sup>55</sup> US policymakers viewed the incident as conspiracy related to the Vietnam War,<sup>56</sup> that demonstrated how military needs overcame political pressures. Unfortunately for the US, the DPRK was learning how to use aggressive tactics to insert itself into US affairs and gain political leverage.

### *The Vietnam War*

Despite the Johnson administration's efforts to avoid direct conflict with the DPRK, the Vietnam War became an extension of the unresolved Korean War.<sup>57</sup> Once again, the US and the ROK found themselves fighting communist aggression from one side of a divided country. From the North Korean perspective, the parallels between itself and communist North Vietnam were clear. Kim Il-sung argued that the US was flexing its imperial muscles, and condemned the lack of

---

<sup>52</sup> Pardo 20.

<sup>53</sup> Armstrong, Charles K. *Tyranny of the Weak North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.), 149-154.

<sup>54</sup> Pardo 19.

<sup>55</sup> Buzo, Adrian. *Politics and Leadership in North Korea: The Guerilla Dynasty* (2nd. ed. Routledge, 2017), 50.

<sup>56</sup> Armstrong 151.

<sup>57</sup> Lee, Jae Bong. "Namhanui Beteunam Pabyeonge Gwanhayeo: Namhanui Jeokgeukjeok Jean, Migugui Murihan Yo-gu, Bukanui Pilsajeok Daeung." *Hangukdongbuganonchong* vol. 76, 2015. 104.

solidarity for the Vietnamese communists from other socialist nations.<sup>58</sup> He pledged to expend all possible efforts to help them, such as limited deployment of fighter pilots and supplies to the warzone and increased provocations along the South Korean border.<sup>59</sup> The *USS Pueblo* incident was not explicitly part of this proxy war, but it demonstrated the failure of American attempts to silo its foreign policy priorities, and the success of the North Korean regime in taking advantage of US involvement around the world.

### *Axe-Murder Incident*

Throughout the 1970s, the DPRK was trying to internationalize to keep up with its adversaries. Following rapprochement with China, the Nixon administration increased direct diplomacy with the DPRK. In 1974, President Nixon proposed a path forward to a peace agreement that would officially end the Korean War, including the complete withdrawal of US forces from Korea. This plan was eventually shattered, due to the shocking axe murders of South Korean and American soldiers on the DMZ by North Korean forces. With outrage from the international community, the US was able to extract a rare apology from the Kim regime.<sup>60</sup>

Despite this event, some US leaders continued to push for improved relations. In 1976, Jimmy Carter campaigned for president on a pledge to withdraw US forces from Korea. North Korean officials were reportedly impressed by this promise, and even tamped down their militant rhetoric following his election.<sup>61</sup> In 1977, President Carter issued a memorandum setting a timeline for total troop withdrawal. However, a strong contingent within his administration refused to forgive the so-called “axe-murder incident” and their opposition intensified after a report was released estimating that the DPRK’s military capabilities were more potent than had previously been believed. The plan also faced opposition in Congress from lawmakers who refused to expend political capital on the issue following the tiresome Vietnam War.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Lankov, Andrei. *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30.

<sup>59</sup> Lee, Jae Bong. “Namhanui Beteunam Pabyeonge Gwanhayeo”

<sup>60</sup> Armstrong 171-172.

<sup>61</sup> Armstrong 203.

<sup>62</sup> Gleysteen, William H. *Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence: Carter and Korea in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 25-27.

For decades, North Korea was learning to exploit US engagements around the world to its own advantage through brinkmanship. US responses to the above events demonstrate how US domestic politics influenced relations between the two countries. Following Carter's proposal for open relations, Ronald Reagan's election and his neoconservative foreign policy agenda marked a return to traditional Cold War posturing. Though there were new rounds of talks at various points throughout his tenure, they were offset by other antagonistic policies. These included returning nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula and increasing aid to modernize South Korea's military.<sup>63</sup> These decisions exacerbated hostilities in US-DPRK relations and gave way to the first nuclear crisis.

## **Recent Events**

Recent developments in US-DPRK relations have reinforced historical patterns in relations and increasing tensions, leading to our present dynamic. For instance, the fall of the Soviet Union had serious implications for the DPRK's self-defense. As China was left as the only potential defender against outside aggression, this change in world politics accelerated North Korea's drive to develop nuclear weapons expressly for self-defense after losing its superpower benefactor.<sup>64</sup> The collapse of the Soviet Union also brought economic hardship for North Korea. The already dwindling supply of Soviet aid, in which the regime had relied on, was completely cut off. At the same time, natural disasters struck that devastated harvests and caused the outbreak of famine in the country. Throughout the most dire period of famine, the US provided 1.7 million metric tons of food aid. Though this could be perceived as a sign of goodwill, it also may have functioned as a reward for the freezing of the nuclear program under the 1994 Agreed Framework.<sup>65</sup>

From North Korea's perspective, the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 also fit into the pattern attempting to spread the US economic model and political ideals. However, it also had serious implications for North Korea's nuclear program. North Korean officials have publicly stated that if Saddam Hussein had actually acquired weapons of mass destruction, the US might not have

---

<sup>63</sup> Armstrong 221-222.

<sup>64</sup> Pardo 28-29.

<sup>65</sup> Lankov 184-186.

invaded and removed him from power in the first place.<sup>66</sup> The consequences of the Iraq war are, arguably, motivation for the regime's recent policy to use nuclear threats to avoid military invasion.

Despite generally hostile US-DPRK relations during the Bush administration, there were a few notable diplomatic exchanges. For example, a 2008 performance by the New York Philharmonic in Pyongyang, one of the largest groups of American visitors in years, was symbolically important.<sup>67</sup> However, the significance of this event was overshadowed by the DPRK's nuclear ambitions and the fall of the Six-Party denuclearization talks due to domestic political uncertainty on both sides, including Kim Jong-il's poor health and the impending US presidential election.<sup>68</sup>

At the end of the second Bush administration, there was hope that a new president could wipe the slate clean and bring about a new phase in US-DPRK relations. Like Carter, Barack Obama capitalized on voters' frustrations with quagmire wars during his campaign, and specifically promised a new approach to North Korea that would diverge from the Bush administration's hardline rhetoric. However, following his election, President Obama neglected to order a new policy review on the question of North Korea. In addition, the new administration was less willing to sacrifice political capital on such an unpopular issue. Obama's "strategic patience" policy effectually maintained tenuous relations with North Korea despite less overt provocations.<sup>69</sup>

In contrast, even before his 2016 election, Donald Trump made it clear that dealing with North Korea was a top priority, and made inflammatory and threatening remarks against the regime.<sup>70</sup> In response, Kim Jong-un accelerated nuclear tests in retaliation against Trump's insults, with a complete freeze in bilateral and multilateral relations. Furthermore, observers worry that

---

<sup>66</sup> Lankov 183.

<sup>67</sup> Daniel J. Wakin, "North Korea Welcomes New York Philharmonic," *New York Times*, February 26, 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "In Setback for Bush, Korea Nuclear Talks Collapse," *New York Times*, December 11, 2008.

<sup>69</sup> John Delury, "The Disappointments of Disengagement: Assessing Obama's North Korea Policy," *Asian Perspective* 37, no. 2 (2013): 156-157.

<sup>70</sup> Jung H. Pak, *Regime Insecurity or Regime Resilience? North Korea's Grand Strategy in the Context of Nuclear and Missile Development*, Brookings, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/regime-insecurity-or-regime-resilience-north-koreas-grand-strategy-in-the-context-of-nuclear-and-missile-development/>.

Trump's over-the-top, bellicose rhetoric is in fact fitting in with the regime's portrayal of the US as an aggressor, and contributing to its propaganda campaigns at home.<sup>71</sup>

The acts of individuals, especially Americans traveling in or around the DPRK, have also had impacts on relations. Otto Warmbier, a student visiting North Korea, was detained in 2016 and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor for engaging in unauthorized activities. After his case became worldwide news, the regime sent him back to the US in poor health, and he passed away soon after. Coinciding with Trump's increasing antagonism toward the regime, this degraded North Korea's reputation and aided the Trump administration's efforts to gain international support for the latest rounds of tough sanctions.<sup>72</sup>

The events of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea offered new possibilities and challenges for US relations. As high-level meetings occurred between North Korean visitors and South Korean officials, Vice President Mike Pence continued to criticize North's human rights record during his trip to the games. Pence was reportedly scheduled to meet with the North Korean delegation, but the meetings were cancelled at the last minute due to his unfavorable rhetoric.<sup>73</sup> Whether or not this decision was North Korean posturing for propaganda or an overture to new high-level meetings remains to be seen.

## **Media Portrayal and Perception**

The role of the media in shaping broader perceptions of the DPRK is significant in how it has shaped the US image of the regime as isolated and irrational, desensitizing US citizens to ever more extreme rhetoric. In addition, the lack of available information about the rest of the country causes negative associations and stereotypes about the leaders to be projected on all people in the DPRK.

The reputation of North Korea and its people as exceptionally threatening began with US coverage of the Korean War. Harrowing accounts by US soldiers taken prisoner, combined with

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ruediger, Frank. "Kim Jong-un's 2018 New Year's Speech: Self-Confidence After a Tough Year," *38 North*, January 3, 2018, <https://www.38north.org/2018/01/rfrank010318/>.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, David. "North Korea Canceled Mike Pence Meeting Last Minute, White House Says." *Guardian*, February 20, 2018.

daily news of high casualty rates, painted a picture of a brutal, merciless enemy.<sup>74</sup> Ironically, the media also portrayed the DPRK as a puppet state of the Soviet Union, in line with the incipient Cold War narrative. In short, most Americans viewed the Soviet Union as the main threat on the horizon, and North Korea only concerned them for its contributions to the spread of communism and Soviet competition with the US. Others were concerned about China's influence on the DPRK, due to its significant intervention during the Korean War. In reality, Kim Il-sung was able to leverage relations with both China and the Soviet Union to his advantage. However, media coverage in government circles presumed that the DPRK was stuck under the thumbs of both China and the Soviet Union. Moreover, this view was shared by anti-communist politicians in South Korea. At the Geneva Conference in 1954, ROK Foreign Minister Byeon Yeong-tae dismissed North Korea as merely a "satellite's satellite".<sup>75</sup> This attitude confirmed US policymakers' beliefs, and gave them an excuse to underestimate North Korea's capabilities.

Numerous large-scale studies of the content of North Korean coverage show how these historical biases continue to manifest themselves and shape perception and policy today. A study covering the past few decades found that US news outlets referred to North Korea together with the burgeoning terrorist threats and related groups that also dominated the news at that time. This contrasted with the South Korean press, which often framed the DPRK's actions in the historical context of the Cold War rather than more the recent "war on terror".<sup>76</sup> American media narratives on North Korea also suffer from a lack of diversity in topics that garner coverage.

The relationship between US policy and media narratives on North Korea was demonstrated in 2003 by President George W. Bush's use of the infamous phrase "axis of evil". Collectively referring to the DPRK, Iraq, and Iran, as an coalition of evil, terrorist regimes. Bush clearly intended to shape media narratives by associating the regime with other rogue states. The "axis of evil" also became a precursor for military intervention, which was long threatened against Iran and became reality in Iraq. President Trump has used overt rhetoric in promising a rain of "fire and fury" if North Korea continues to pursue its nuclear ambitions. This language has been

---

<sup>74</sup> Gauthier, Brandon. "A Tortured Relic: The Lasting Legacy of the Korean War and Portrayals of 'North Korea' in the US Media, 1953-1962," *The Journal of American - East Asian Relations* 22, no. 4 (2015): 345.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>76</sup> Dai, Jia and Kideuk Hyun, "Global Risk, Domestic Framing: Coverage of the North Korean Nuclear Test by US, Chinese, and South Korean News Agencies," *Asian Journal of Communication* 20, no. 3 (2010): 310-311.

weaponized by the DPRK propaganda to paint the US as an aggressor who threatens North Korea's national security. Historians, as well as media critics, have often noted that a war of words tends to precede any war of soldiers. Media-savvy US president Donald Trump has consistently used global coverage of his statements to exacerbate tensions in the current crisis.

## **Analysis**

It would not be a stretch to conclude that the US is farther than it has ever been from achieving peaceful relations with North Korea. History shows that fear and misperceptions have consistently defined US-DPRK interactions since the Korean War. If US policymakers intend to address all of the problems in US-DPRK relations, then they must also be willing to examine the history of the country's involvement in Korea's affairs in total. While most Americans probably have some idea of the US role in the Korean War and the resulting devastation, there are many other blind spots in their understanding of the two countries' shared history. Read with a knowledge of the USAMGIK's rejection of local governance and ineffective policies, the anti-imperialist bromides from the North Korean regime are not merely empty propaganda, but a partial reflection of historical fears and biases that are still alive today. Similarly, the historical efforts by the DPRK to achieve bilateral relations with the US should not be forgotten. These historical factors have shaped the current level of animosity in US-DPRK relations, and could also hold the key to moving relations past the current stalemate.

It is also clear that domestic politics have played a significant role in shaping US attitudes toward North Korea. Recent scholarship has shown several instances where the prevalence of other political priorities at home has driven politicians to either take the path of least resistance or ignore North Korea altogether in their foreign policy. Conversely, the strained relations have been interpreted as being solely indicative of the general North Korean line, but was later revealed to be influenced by internal political pressures, such as the 1969 downing of an American airplane. Policymakers will have to take both sides into account when anticipating reactions to new policy ideas.

Finally, US officials should examine the approach toward North Korea more holistically within the larger scheme of US foreign policy. As the example of the Vietnam showed, the North Korean regime is adept at manipulating US interests in other regions that normally would not be

associated with the DPRK. Indeed, the policy of “strategic patience” failed to pay off in part because North Korea was able to insert itself into other US operations and magnify threats outside of the region, despite US attempts to isolate Pyongyang. US leaders should include North Korea in their calculations about world affairs, and understand its activism as a function of its long-term goals and historical legacy, in order to avoid the perpetuation of relations over the past half-century.

# ROK-DPRK Relations

*Theodore Kim*

Following independence from Japan and the Korean War, conflict between the northern and southern governments has been persistent. Border conflicts along the DMZ and changes among the international community has shaped policy decisions about the unification of the two Koreas. Both sides have claimed to be the legitimate and “true” Korea, leading to the increased conflict and dispute between the two.

## Growing Tensions

President Syngman Rhee initiated an anti-communist ideology following the Korean War. In his 1954 New Year speech, President Rhee expressed that South Korea should “not waste time and effort on meaningless talks. We should rather rise and fight our foe, the communists, for world peace”.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, North Korea attempted to diminish the credibility of the South Korean government by engaging with South Korean citizens to convince them of the superiority of North Korean system. In 1972, negotiations between North and South Korea led to the signing of a joint statement that discussed steps toward a peaceful unification. However, this statement deteriorated due to ideological differences between ROK president Park Chung-hee and DPRK leader Kim Il-sung, and the belief that it would not prevent hostility.

Entrenched in hostile relations, South Korea took steps to normalize relations with North Korea’s allies, the Soviet Union and China, in hopes of riding the peninsula of the Kim regime. In 1988, the Olympics were held in Seoul to symbolize peaceful coexistence between communist and capitalist nations. However, brought on aggressive retaliation from North Korea such as the Rangoon Bombing incident<sup>78</sup> and the 1994 nuclear test, showing that North Korea would not give up its regime, despite the loss of backing from its allies.

---

<sup>77</sup> “남북통일을 완수 국가의 만세기초 세우자. [Let’s Achieve Unification for Our Nation]” NAVER Newslibrary, 동아일보 [Dong Ah Il Bo], 1 Jan. 1953, Accessed January 20, 2018.

<sup>78</sup> Bombing in Rangoon that killed South Koreans and four Burmese. It was an assassination attempt against Chun Doo-hwan, the fifth president of South Korea.

### *Mutual Threat Perception*

Due to the outbreak of war, each side viewed the other as a security threat. After the DPRK assassination attempt of President Park Chung-hee in 1968, the South Korean government expanded its reserve forces and increased its defense budget to establish a military branch capable of deterring the DPRK. Additionally, after Saigon fell to communism and Kim Il-sung visited Beijing,<sup>79</sup> South Korea requested that the US reaffirm its commitments to the 1953 mutual defense treaty. In response, the US reviewed the treaty and sent supplies to modernize the South Korean army. To this day, military exercises between US and South Korea are conducted in response to the numerous missile tests from the North and the persistent security threat it causes.

### *Sunshine Policy*

In 2000, President Kim Dae-jung initiated the Sunshine Policy (formally named the Comprehensive Engagement Policy towards North Korea) as a promise to pursue peace in the Korean peninsula.<sup>80</sup> One of the central lines of the policy was that “the South actively seek cooperation and will not attempt to absorb the North in any way.” This differed from previous policies, considering that the wider consensus in South Korea still held to the “collapse-and-absorption scenario”.<sup>81</sup> The Sunshine policy prevented further tensions in inter-Korean relations and sought to engage North Korea economically and culturally. This effort was recognized by the international community, leading to President Kim Dae-jung being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, despite the policy’s intentions, there were more than 10 major provocations from North Korea between 1998-2006, such the Second Battle of Yeonpyeong in 2002, where six men were killed, and 19 were wounded. In addition, the DPRK executed its first nuclear

---

<sup>79</sup> Kim Il-Sung visited Beijing in 1975. In the immediate wake of revolutionary victories in Vietnam and Cambodia, Kim had made a trip to China. He asked for Beijing’s assistance in liberating South through a renewed military campaign

<sup>80</sup> Bae, Hyun-jung. "Full text of Moon's speech at the Korber Foundation." *The Korea Herald*. July 7, 2017. Accessed January 25, 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Min, Jesse “The Sunshine Policy of South Korea” Stanford University, March 13, 2017. Accessed February 22, 2018.

experiment in 2006, leading to criticisms that the financial aid was being used for nuclear development instead of its intended humanitarian purposes.<sup>82</sup>

Due to North Korea's continual military provocation and nuclear development, President Lee Myung-bak abandoned the Sunshine policy. Shortly after, the *Cheonan* incident<sup>83</sup> and Bombardment of Yeonpyeong<sup>84</sup> caused a divide in South Korean public opinion on foreign policy towards North Korea. One side supported the Sunshine Policy because they felt peace should take priority, but the other side supported President Lee's decision to ban it because North Korea was still developing nuclear weapons.

After the failure of the Sunshine Policy, relations reverted to their historical hostility, and the South Koreans began to deny the legitimacy of North Korea and demanded increases in national security. In 2016, President Park Geun-hye made the decision to install the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea as the ultimate safety solution for protecting South Korea from DPRK attacks. South Korean citizens quickly began showing support for a tough, military policy towards the DPRK, however, this led to policy disputes among the other NE Asian nations.<sup>85</sup> While the US wanted to keep the THAAD system, China felt THAAD threatened its security and boycotted South Korean trade in response. This situation showed the ROK the potential consequences of prioritizing its national security over the international power balance in NE Asia.

## **Significance of International Events**

While some underestimate the influence of international events, international events have a powerful influence in South Korea. South Korea is always affected by US decisionmaking. During the Cold War, South Korea served as a frontline defense against the communist regimes in North Korea, China, and Soviet Union. South Korea also developed substantial military

---

<sup>82</sup> Min, Jesse "The Sunshine Policy of South Korea"

<sup>83</sup> *ROKS Cheonan* sinking occurred on 26 March 2010. Military intelligence gathered information shows that a torpedo fired from a North Korean submarine.

<sup>84</sup> North Korea bombs South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island. Two South Korean soldiers were killed and a dozen injured after North Korea fired dozens of artillery shells onto a South Korean island setting more than 60 houses ablaze.

<sup>85</sup> Cheong, Si-hang "사드 찬성 여론, 북 미사일 위협 현실화에 71%로 역대 최대치 [Maximum 71% are agreed to install THAAD after North Korean missile test]" Aug 3rd, 2017, Accessed February 14th, 2018.

defense systems in preparation for war, and received much aid and support from the US Army. After the Nixon doctrine was enacted<sup>86</sup>, South Korean disdain towards the US grew significantly. Nixon's decision to retreat from Vietnam implied that US could also withdraw troops from South Korea in anytime. As a result, South Korea, prepared to create a clandestine weapons program, using nuclear technology purchased from France, to guarantee its own security. This created potential for a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. Fortunately, Germany helped relieve some of the tensions on the Korean peninsula. Nordpolitik was formed from the idea of Ostpolitik<sup>87</sup>. The symbolic destruction of the Berlin wall unified the formerly communist Germany with its democratic counterpart. This revolutionary event revived hopes that unification could one day be feasible in Korea as well.

## **Media's Role**

As South Korean government plays a huge role in ROK-DPRK relations, the media likewise plays an important role in shaping South Korean public perspective towards North Korea. The media is entrusted to check facts. In the past, people relied solely on newspapers to get information. However, after the 2015 MERS incident<sup>88</sup> and the 2016 South Korean political scandal<sup>89</sup>, the media and government have become untrustworthy sources. Therefore, a lot more people are relying on information they share directly each other. Even the elderly are using Social Network System (SNS) sharing news and information which are not often checked for accuracy.<sup>90</sup> For example, during 2017 presidential campaign, fake news had become a huge

---

<sup>86</sup> Nixon Doctrine meant that each ally nation was in charge of its own security in general, but United States would act as a nuclear umbrella when requested.

<sup>87</sup> The foreign policy of détente opened relations with Eastern Germany with West Germany in the 1960s

<sup>88</sup> An outbreak of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus occurred in South Korea from May 2015 to July 2015. The virus, which causes Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), was a newly emerged betacoronavirus that was first identified in a patient from Saudi Arabia in April 2012. From the outbreak, a total of 186 cases have been infected, with a death toll of 36. Ministry of Health and Welfare did not disclose the relevant information to the public at the beginning of the outbreak. According to them, disclosing the names of medical institutions that are hospitalizing the MERS patient might cause unnecessary anxiety to the facility users.

Such action was not welcomed by the public and the Ministry's action to regulate the outbreak was heavily criticized due to its inability to properly disclose the information to hospitals and municipal government.

<sup>89</sup> Political scandal involves the influence of Choi Soon-sil over president Park Geun-hye

<sup>90</sup> Ahn, Ho-lim. "Social Media and Democracy." YTN Radio, YTN, 29 Jan. 2018, Accessed February 13, 2018.

problem<sup>91</sup>. Sin Yeonhui was accused by spreading fake news.<sup>92</sup> This shows that a large proportion of South Korean citizens rely on SNS to get news.

Public skepticism towards news articles and increasing on reliance on SNS has created deep divisions in government policy. Communication inside SNS systems allows users to express radical and polarizing opinions in closed community, which distorts perspectives of real issues. In addition, uncertainty over North Korea's action and intentions has further divided public opinion. As the ROK media is being saturated with conspiracy theories and data smog,<sup>93</sup> South Koreans are realizing that their news is failing to accurately report the current crisis.<sup>94</sup>

On the positive side, South Koreans are starting to pay more attention to North Korea. For example, a popular TV show aired in 2011 called “Now I am on My Way to Meet You (이제 만나러 갑니다)” shared the stories of North Korean defectors.<sup>95</sup> In addition, there was a North Korean Human Rights International Film Festival (NHIFF)<sup>96</sup> held in South Korea.<sup>97</sup> The general public in South Korea has started to become aware of this issue and this has brought the North Korean issue to the attention of the international community.<sup>98</sup> In March of 2013, the United Nations Human Rights Council established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations in North Korea and recognized defectors.<sup>99</sup> However, there is still an increasing population in South Korea that does not support reunification.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Kretschmer, Fabian. “Fake News in Korea.” DW.COM, Deutsche Welle, 23 Apr. 2017, Accessed February 13, 2018.

<sup>92</sup> Kim, Min kyoung. “문 대통령 허위 비방' 신연희 강남구청장에 징역 1년 구형.” 한겨레, The Hankyoreh, 3 Dec. 2017, Accessed February 13, 2018.

<sup>93</sup> Ahn, Ho-lim, “Social Media and Democracy”

<sup>94</sup> Mitchell, Amy, et al. “Publics Globally Want Unbiased News Coverage, but Are Divided on Whether Their News Media Deliver.” Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, 11 Jan. 2018.

<sup>95</sup> Miller, Babara. “Seeking a Reunited Korea through Reality TV.” ABC News, ABC, 5 Sept. 2017..

<sup>96</sup> Human Rights Film Festival presents movies and documentaries dealing with human right issues.

<sup>97</sup> Yoo, Se-hui “2011 북한인권 국제영화제 개막 [2011 NHIFF Grand Opening]” DailyNK 11 Nov, 2011.

<sup>98</sup> Miller, “Seeking a Reunited Korea through Reality TV.”

<sup>99</sup> OHCHR. “Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.” OHCHR | Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, UN Human Rights.

<sup>100</sup> Sang-hun, Choe. “Olympic Dreams of a United Korea? Many in South Say, 'No, Thanks'.” The New York Times, The New York Times, January 28, 2018.

## Recent Policies

Despite years of tough conservative policy and experimenting with the liberal Sunshine policy, Inter-Korean relations have failed to improve. The current ROK President Moon Jae-in has started a new proactive engagement policy toward North Korea.<sup>101</sup> The Sunshine Policy didn't bring any changes from North Korea but developing nuclear weapon and the tough policy inhibited communication and increased hostility between two nations. Thus, President Moon expressed his willingness towards peaceful negotiations with the North Korea.<sup>102</sup> Additionally, President Moon is trying to bring international attention to achieve peace in Korean peninsula. This effort included going to Germany to address the current situation in the Korean peninsula.<sup>103</sup> Currently, it is unclear whether the Moon's policy is working, however, Kim Jong-un has ordered an open a line of communication with the South.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, North and South Korea displayed a sign of unification by participating as one team in Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.<sup>105</sup> Kim Yo-jong appeared as the head of the delegation and met with President Moon to personally invite him to a summit in Pyongyang, showing that North Korea is welcoming communication with Seoul. At the same time, many are skeptical about the sincerity of Kim Yo-jong's diplomatic outreach. Due to past experiences,<sup>106</sup> many South Koreans believe that North Korea has no intention giving up their nuclear weapons program and this "peaceful approach" is part of a larger scheme to curry favors from the South

## Analysis

The "us versus them" Cold War mentality is still present today, and South Korea is often portrayed in the US media as passive compared to their aggressive Northern counterpart. South Korean policies however have always been proactive and defensive to DPRK aggressions. This

---

<sup>101</sup> Persio, Sofia Lotto. "With North Korea, South Korea's Moon Jae-in Wants to Make Peace, Not War." Newsweek, Newsweek, 5 Sept. 2017.

<sup>102</sup> George, Steve. "South Korean Leader Welcomes North Korean Olympic Participation." CNN, Cable News Network, 2 Jan. 2018.

<sup>103</sup> Bae, "Full text of Moon's speech at the Korber Foundation"

<sup>104</sup> Whiteman, Hilary, and Lauren Said-Moorhouse. "N. Korea Calls the South in Diplomatic Breakthrough." CNN, Cable News Network, 3 Jan. 2018.

<sup>105</sup> Rich, Motoko. "Olympics Open With Koreas Marching Together, Offering Hope for Peace." Asia Pacific - The New York Times, The New York Times, 9 Feb. 2018.

<sup>106</sup> "Winter Olympics: Friendly North Korea 'Is Fake', Says Former Bomber." BBC News, BBC, 5 Feb. 2018.

demonstrates that South Korea is dynamic in their policies, and wishes to respond to North Korea's aggression. This inaccurate portrayal of South Korea could as passive or weak may lead to miscalculated decisionmaking in US foreign policy.

In terms of mutual threat perception, the DPRK and ROK have focused on addressing their own fears. Since North Korea lack a defensive ally, North Korea persisted on developing a nuclear weapon without realizing the threat and fear this caused in the international community. Despite the hostile circumstances of today's situation, a conversation between the two countries is necessary to either develop a peace treaty or simply preventing the situation from worsening. The talks would have two major possible outcomes: the South could provoke the North causing them to further their developments, or they could come to some sort of agreement on freezing the North Korean nuclear program in exchange for domestic development aid. While President Lee Myung-bak simply waited for North Korea to reform itself, there was a Bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island and two more nuclear tests in 2009 and 2013. These events had increased public fear and showed the importance of conversation with the DPRK to prevent another military move.

Looking back, it can be argued that North Korea is employing similar isolation policies. Just Kim Il-sung tried to isolate South Korean government and engage the South Korean citizens during the postwar period, North Korea is taking chances to make America appear isolated in the Trump Administration. During Kim Jong-un's 2018 New Year speech, he mentioned that peace on Korean peninsula should be determined by Koreans. We saw how Kim Jong-un tried to engage South Korea and play for "peace" during the winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, while employing harsh rhetoric toward the United States, and threatening to use nuclear weapons. Based on past experiences, once again the uncertainty of North Korean intentions creates skepticism in South Korea. It seems probable that one goal of Kim's "charm offensive" aimed at South Korea is to buy time while it further develops its nuclear and missile programs. Regarding any near-term summit, Pyongyang doesn't offer or participate in such meeting just to be nice. South and the US should be ready for demands to be made by North Korea in exchange for better relations, not an actual freeze of its weapons-related programs.

In conclusion, South Korea is in a fragile state. The citizens hardly trust the national media and have split opinions on most of their policies towards North Korea. Rising anti-American

sentiments in South Korea and less communication among its people make it more like that radical actions will take place. Through threats of nuclear war, Kim Jong-un is bringing up the question of national self-determination. Many South Koreans are attracted to the peaceful method suggested by North Korea and blame the US for its brash warmongering that now threatens their safety. However, the ROK is also aware that the DPRK still possesses nuclear weapons and therefore it is still risky to lower its guard against North Korea. South Korean analysts are preparing for the possibility of more missile tests and cyber-attacks.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> “전문가 56.5%, 평창올림픽 후 남북 관계 개선 [56.5% of Expert says that South and North Korean relation has improved after Pyeongchang Olympic]” 8 Feb, 2018.

# Japan-DPRK Relations

*Keiko Ichinowatari*

## Background

### *Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Japan and Korea share a long history of exchange and conflict, but Japan's period of colonial rule in the Korean Peninsula (1910-1945) continues to cast a shadow over current Japan-North Korea relations. During the colonial period, Japan implemented forcible assimilation policies towards the people in ways such as assigning Koreans Japanese names, and by banning the teaching of Korean history and language.<sup>108</sup> Bruce Cumings, an American historian on East Asia, characterizes the occupation as "akin to the Nazi occupation of France, in the way it dug in deeply and gnawed at the Korean national consciousness ever since."<sup>109</sup> Many Korean guerilla groups formed during the 1930s in resistance to the colonial rule; one of them was led by Kim Il-sung.<sup>110</sup>

Although Japan officially became a non-combatant state due to the original US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty in 1951, the country played a crucial role in the Korean War.<sup>111</sup> Tokyo served as the base of operations for the "United Nations Command, which oversaw the military activities of the multinational force fighting on the South Korean side in the war."<sup>112</sup>

### *Post-WWII*

Since the end of World War II and the division of Korea, Japan-DPRK relations have mostly been defined by tension and distrust. However, there were occasional periods of tentative engagement between North Korea and Japan until the early 2000s through informal diplomatic relations and trade links.

---

<sup>108</sup> Caprio, Mark. Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945 E. CAPRIO. 1st edition., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009. 81.

<sup>109</sup> Cumings, Bruce. The Korean War: A History. First edition., Modern Library, 2010. 44.

<sup>110</sup> Cumings, Bruce. Korea's Place In the Sun : A Modern History. W.W. Norton, 1997.

<sup>111</sup> "The US-Japan Security Alliance." Council on Foreign Relations.

<sup>112</sup> Morris-Suzuki, Tessa.1\_Re-Imagining\_Part\_I.Pdf.

After the signing of the US-DPRK Agreed Framework to halt the North Korea's nuclear program in 1994, Japan helped finance the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), and provided food-aid to the DPRK for famine relief in 1995-96.<sup>113</sup> In 1998, Japan temporarily froze its funding to KEDO and issued sanctions on North Korea after a test-fire of a Taepo Dong-1 missile over Japanese territory, but resumed dialogue and food aid in 2000.<sup>114</sup>

The starting point of the deterioration of current Japan-DPRK relations began in 2002 when North Korea admitted to and apologized for the past abductions of 17 Japanese Citizens in the 1970's and 1980's. While there have been theories, such as using the abductees as language trainers for North Korean spies, the motives for the abductions are not clear.<sup>115</sup> In October of 2002, North Korea allowed 5 of the 17 abductees to travel to Japan under the belief that Japan would send them back to North Korea. However, the Japanese government refused and instead demanded repatriation for the victims' families still residing in North Korea.<sup>116</sup> Following the incident, the US accused North Korea of violating the Agreed Framework, and in response, the DPRK nullified the agreement and withdrew from the NPT in 2003.<sup>117</sup> Negotiations over the new nuclear crisis took place at the Six Party Talks, which also ended in failure after years of unsuccessful dialogues.

Japan eventually banned all funding and trade with North Korea after the DPRK tested a nuclear device in 2006.<sup>118</sup> Since then, fueled by the missiles fired over Japan in the last two years, Japan-DPRK relations has continued to deteriorate. Along with its nuclear development, Japan today views North Korea as an imminent security threat.

## **Major Issues**

The key issues between Japan and North Korea have been national security and the abductions of Japanese citizens. Following its first nuclear test in 2013, North Korea conducted its sixth

---

<sup>113</sup> Blomquist, Rachel, and Daniel Wertz. "An Overview of North Korea-Japan Relations." The National Committee on North Korea, June 2015.

<sup>114</sup> "The US-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance." Arms Control Association, Aug. 2017.

<sup>115</sup> "Japan-North Korea Relations (Overview)." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 20 Nov. 2015.

<sup>116</sup> Abduction of Japanese Citizens by North Korea (Overview).

<sup>117</sup> "The US-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance." Arms Control Association, Aug. 2017.

<sup>118</sup> "Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)." Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), 26 Aug. 2011.

nuclear test in September 2017, stating it had successfully tested a hydrogen bomb.<sup>119</sup> Starting with the two missile launches in 2012, North Korea continued to launch ballistic missiles in 2014 and 2015 in violation of the UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>120</sup> Due to the caused by recent events, the security situation surrounding Japan has reached unprecedented threat levels not see since the end of World War II. North Korea's nuclear development not only poses a threat to Japan's national security but also a global threat to the entire international community. Furthermore, the continued advancement of its nuclear program fundamentally threatens the NPT regime.

Regarding the abductions of Japanese citizens, North Korea has not provided any convincing evidence or satisfactory accounts. Along with the release of the 5 acknowledged victims in 2002, North Korea also provided death certificates and bones for other abductees. However, the death certificates were identified as fake and DNA tests indicated the bones did not come from the other abductees and therefore, the Japanese government did not officially acknowledge the deaths.<sup>121</sup> “The abductions are a critical issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of Japanese citizens.”<sup>122</sup> The Japanese government continues to call for the return of the remaining abductees.

## **Abe's Diplomatic and Military Defense Plans**

Traditionally, Japan's goal has always been the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. However, as a result of the constraints of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, Japan is unable to make any ultimate decisions regarding North Korea. To be clear, Japan can play a crucial role as a support to US and South Korea troops – just as they did during the Korean War - but nothing more. Due to the limited options available, Japan is taking diplomatic and military measures to ensure that they don't find themselves in this sort of situation again in the future. In his September 2017 dissolution speech, Prime Minister Abe clearly stated that “there can be no normalization of Japan-DPRK relations” until North Korea abandons its nuclear program and

---

<sup>119</sup>Berlinger, Joshua, and Taehoon Lee. “Nuclear Test Conducted by North Korea, Country Claims; South Korea Responds with Drills.” CNN, 4 Sept. 2017.

<sup>120</sup> “北朝鮮基礎データ | 外務省.” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 9 Feb. 2017.

<sup>121</sup> Rich, Motoko. “For Families of Japanese Abducted by North Korea, Trump Visit Brings Spotlight.” The New York Times, 23 Nov. 2017.

<sup>122</sup> “Abductions of Japanese Citizens by North Korea.” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 6 Nov. 2017.

returns all abductees to Japan.<sup>123</sup> At the diplomatic level, the Japanese government plans to continue adding maximum pressure on North Korea alongside the international community until North Korea changes its nuclear and abduction policies. At the United Nations Security Council Briefing on Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea that took place in December 2017, Taro Kono, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan further promoted Abe's plans. He stressed that "sanctions are the tool to curb North Korea's nuclear programs by drastically reducing its foreign currency earnings," and strongly urged all Member States to take measures to "stop the movement of persons, goods and funds to North Korea, including severing diplomatic ties".<sup>124</sup>

Japan technically does not have a military due to the post-WWII constitution which prevents remilitarization. Instead, the Ministry of Defense established the Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) in 1954. However, in response to the recent threats from North Korea, Abe's government revived the discussion to push for a change in Japan's constitution and allow the country to actively defend itself against external threats.<sup>125</sup> Although Japan began developing the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system in 2004, present missile defense capabilities are still very limited.<sup>126</sup> By August of 2017 Japan had two missile defense systems: the ship-based SM-3 missiles deployed on Aegis destroyers, and the Patriot PAC-3s. Currently, Japan is planning to install another layer of defense known as the Aegis Ashore system, and wants to advance its radar system.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> "Press Conference by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe." Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 25 Sept. 2017.

<sup>124</sup> "Threats and Challenges Posed by North Korea to International Peace and Security." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 15 Dec. 2017.

<sup>125</sup> Westcott, Ben. "Japan Split over How to Deal with North Korean Missile Launches." CNN, 15 Sept. 2017.

<sup>126</sup> Response to Ballistic Missile Attacks. Pdf.

<sup>127</sup> Sakai, Kohei. "Japan to Deploy New Land-Based Missile Defense System." Nikkei Asian Review, 17 Aug. 2017.

## Role of Media

*“Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression are guaranteed. No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated” (Article 21, Constitution of Japan).<sup>128</sup>*

Despite the constitutional Article on the Freedom of Press, there have been signs of deteriorating media freedom in Japan. Since Prime Minister Abe took office in 2012 the government began to attack “politically biased” broadcast networks such as TV Asahi, and removed outspoken TV anchors and high-profile media critics.<sup>129</sup> The administration additionally suppresses the media by controlling access to inside information via the Press Clubs.<sup>130</sup> The exclusive system grants quick access of information to news groups, and as a result, news reports tend to be similar in scope and depth because reporters have become reluctant to investigate and criticize government authorities. Such circumstances currently affect the Japanese media’s portrayal of the nuclear crisis in North Korea.

Popular Japanese media currently portrays the overall level of threat on the nuclear crisis as low. On January 16<sup>th</sup> 2018, a Japanese public broadcaster (NHK) sent a mistaken North Korea Missile alert, urging the citizens to seek immediate shelter. The false alarm was corrected after a few minutes and NHK issued an apology on air, though there were no further apologies or broadcasts on the incident since then.<sup>131</sup> The media’s tendency to lightly brush off such events can greatly affect the people’s awareness on current events and their overall situation. At the same time, the news media’s tendency to mainly portray foreign powers’ interactions with North Korea has created a discourse that the Japanese government genuinely sees the nuclear crisis as a problem between the United States and North Korea. This is made apparent through media stories that criticize Trump’s unsuccessful interactions with Kim Jong-un, and stories on how North Korea blames Trump for the nuclear crisis.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> “THE CONSTITUTION OF JAPAN.”

<sup>129</sup> Fackler, Martin. “The Silencing of Japan’s Free Press – Foreign Policy.” *Foreign Policy*, May 27, 2016.

<sup>130</sup> Takahara, Kanako. “Press Clubs: Exclusive Access to, Pipelines for Info.” *The Japan Times*, 2007.

<sup>131</sup> NHKが「北朝鮮ミサイル発射」と誤報 番組で謝罪. 16 Jan. 2018,

<sup>132</sup> トランプ大統領のアジア歴訪後、北朝鮮問題はどうか変化する？. 14 Nov. 2017.

Complacent media discourse has caused concern that the Japan government is not prioritizing diplomatic negotiations because it believes it plays a mere spectator role in the nuclear crisis. The idea has now recently gained public support after prime minister Abe declined to meet with Beatrice Fihn, the executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), an anti-nuclear weapons group that won the Nobel Peace Prize last year.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, the media does elaborate on Prime Minister Abe's strategy or future plans to deal with the North Korean crisis. Instead, it focuses on the relations between other foreign powers with North Korea. The interactions between Trump and Abe tells us that Japan will follow through with any decision the United States makes, whether it be to keep pressuring North Korea or go into all-out war. Hence, the discourse that Japan is acting more as a passive spectator – not as a proactive player in said issue. Contrary to the media's low threat portrayal of the nuclear crisis, overall perceived level of threat among Japanese citizens may be different. While the Abe administration tightly controls the media landscape, the people are turning to the internet for uncensored information with deeper analytical insight. Social media sites such as Twitter act as major sources of public opinion, and major online newspaper sites such as Yomiuri and Sankei Shimbun provide sections where news articles are discussed in analytical detail by experts on said fields.

## **Analysis**

In the current situation, Japan has limited options apart from leaving ultimate decisions up to the US, South Korea, and China. Not only does the Constitution ban the country from creating an army, Japan's diplomatic relations with neighboring South Korea and China are likewise poor. Unless the Constitution is revised, the few options available for Japan includes: refraining from provocative behavior and improving diplomatic relations with South Korea, North Korea, and China.

Japan presently remains an “observer,” but things may change if more missiles and nuclear tests occur. Abe is already pushing to revise the constitution and it is clear that he will continue to do so. If he is successful there is a possibility that Japan will have a military once again.

---

<sup>133</sup> “ICAN事務局長が広島に 首相との面会、政府「困難」.” 朝日新聞デジタル, 15 Jan. 2018.

If Japan's definition of becoming a "proactive player" includes reviving a military, it should remain separate from the core situation. Having a self-defense force and having a military are two completely different things. Creating a military sends the message to Japan's neighbors that they are preparing for attack. This will only heighten current tensions in NE Asia. Instead, Japan should become a "proactive player" by actively seeking diplomatic relations and improving its position in North East Asia.



# China-DPRK Relations

*Tingting Qian*

## **Background**

The China-North Korea relationship began in 1949, and was one of the first diplomatic exchanges following the establishment of the People's Republic of China. In 1950, China entered the Korean War and supported North Korea to protect Chinese territory. The war ended in 1957, and after the Chinese volunteer army retreated from North Korea in 1958, North Korea became an independent country without any occupying foreign military forces. During the Cold War, Soviet Union gave support to North Korea after South Korea started to aid the Vietnam War effort with the United States. North Korea relied on the Soviet Union to get military support such as the development of nuclear technology, because at that time, Chairman Mao of China rejected North Korea's plan to build nuclear weapons and refused to allow North Korea any access to nuclear technology. Ever since the Soviet Union decided to help North Korea develop nuclear technology, the Soviet Union started to export cheap oil and other nuclear resources to North Korea.<sup>134</sup> The Soviet Union was North Korea's largest contributor of resources and provided technological developments to aid their nuclear program. In 1991, Soviet Union collapsed, and North Korea lost the security of its greatest ally, as well as its economic and technical support.

The fall of Soviet Union forced North Korea to rely on China. From then on, China has been North Korea's most significant economic and trading partner, as well as the main supplier of its food and energy resources. According to reports, China has been supplying North Korea with about 90 percent of its oil imports and 45 percent of food.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, under the influence of the NPT, China has been opposed to North Korea's nuclear program. However, China has also opposed harsh international sanctions on North Korea in the interest of preserving the Kim regime. If the regime collapses, an unstable Korean peninsula would result in an unwanted influx

---

<sup>134</sup>Beal, Tim. "The Collapse of the Soviet Union and North Korea's 'Arduous March.'" *Crisis in Korea: America, China and the Risk of War*, Pluto Press, London, 2011, pp. 39–50. JSTOR.

<sup>135</sup>Zhang, Hui. "Ending North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions: The Need for Stronger Chinese Action." *Arms Control Today*, vol. 39, no. 6, 2009, pp. 21–27. JSTOR, JSTOR.

of refugees across the China-DPRK border.<sup>136</sup> The Chinese government has also stated that if the US started the nuclear war towards North Korea, then China would stand on the side of North Korea. However, Pyongyang's nuclear tests and launching of missiles have made its relationship with Beijing complicated. The Chinese government might not be able to stand on North Korea's side and against the UN sanctions.

To illustrate, China has continued to propose for the resumption of the Six-Party Talks, which aimed to negotiate a multilateral framework to denuclearize North Korea. Henry Kissinger agreed that the US should resume the talks but emphasized the flaws in the argument for Beijing to play a greater role.<sup>137</sup> While past US administrations have discussed the need for solving the problem by halting supplies to North Korea, China still refused to take actions that might lead to the collapse of North Korea. With the failure from the Six-Party Talks, the ultimate goal now becomes the dismantlement of Pyongyang's existing arsenal. From the Chinese point of view, it is not beneficial for a unified Korean Peninsula to become an ally of the United States. Once Korea is unified, and under the control of United States, China will feel its security is threatened by pressures from US forces in Korea, Japan and Taiwan.

## **China's Rise and Geopolitics in NE Asia**

China, being the world's largest economy, has played an important role in North East Asia. However, Chinese ideological incompatibility with western value and political system has been a serious point of concern for the US. China's rapid economic growth has lead the rest of the world to believe that it is just a matter of time before China becomes the leading-world superpower. China's current plan is to concentrate economic development and "build a well-off society in an all-round way" from now through the year 2020.<sup>138</sup> This plan requires a stable international environment and a peaceful relationship with its neighbor countries. However, a nuclearized North Korea would surely destroy stability and create the possibility for a nuclear arms race in North East Asia.

---

<sup>136</sup> Albert, Eleanor. "Understanding the China-North Korea Relationship." Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, 8 Feb. 2018.

<sup>137</sup> Jeon, Jeong-yun, and Yong-in Yi. "Henry Kissinger suggests a return to the Six Party Talks." Henry Kissinger suggests a return to the Six Party Talks : North Korea : News : The Hankyoreh, 28 Jan. 2018l.

<sup>138</sup> Zhang, Hui. "Ending North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions".

Moreover, from a Chinese perspective, North Korea's nuclear program and nuclear testing would create an excuse for Japan to speed the progress in a project to deploy a joint US-Japan missile defense shield. Once the shield is well-built, China's nuclear deterrent towards Japan and US will be mitigated.<sup>139</sup> It is also important to note that in 2017, a quarter of South Korean exports were to China. Among all the China's top trading partners, South Korea ranked fourth place. However, China has taken vindictive measures against South Korea to show its opposition towards the deployment of a the US missile defense system, THAAD, in South Korea's eastern province of North Gyeongsang.<sup>140</sup>

## **China's Priorities**

The Chinese prefer that North Korea does not have nuclear weapons, but indeed, China's priority is to prevent the collapse of the Kim Regime. The United States, South Korea, Japan, and China have together provided over 75 percent of food supplies since 1995, however, after the failure of the Six-Party Talk in 2009, all the donations have decreased significantly. It is important to note that China's provisions to the DPRK did not decrease, despite the collapse of the negotiations. In the past, many scholars assumed that Beijing's bottom line is to avoid war on the Korean peninsula and the collapse of the Kim Jong-il regime. However, at the moment, under Chairman Xi's reformed policy, China's new bottom line is to prepare to retaliate against any large-scale US military operation in the Korean peninsula.<sup>141</sup>

Due to China's increasing influence the region and growing confidence in its capabilities, Beijing is most concerned about power balance in NE Asia. If the Kim regime collapsed or was overthrown, it would likely lead to reunification under South Korea, who would then inherit the DPRK's nuclear program and use it to support the United States. The aforementioned concern of China might be able to explain why the Chinese government does not want to remove the Kim regime despite its belligerence.<sup>142</sup> As China is geopolitically surrounded on all of its borders, it is understandable that China wants to prop up the DPRK as a neutral buffer zone to protect itself

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Albert, Eleanor. "Understanding the China-North Korea Relationship."

<sup>141</sup> Mastro, Oriana Skylar. "Why China Won't Rescue North Korea." *Foreign Affairs*, 4 Jan. 2018.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

from foreign encroachment. Therefore, Beijing's goal is to keep the two Koreas separate and prevent the US from expanding its influence in NE Asia.

## **Recent Events**

With the Winter Olympics taking place in South Korea, the opportunity for establishing diplomatic relations with the DPRK were growing. The most notable interaction with the North Korean delegation is that of Kim Yo-jong, Kim Yong-nam, and President Moon Jae-in, in which the North invited President Moon to Pyongyang. China's response towards the meeting between North Korea and South Korea has been positive and supportive overall, with many hopeful statements coming from the Chinese media. Spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Lu Kang, was one in particular, when sending his greetings to both countries. He expressed hope that the two Koreas can continue to have meetings together more frequently and that such kind of interaction between South Korea and North Korea can influence interactions between North Korea and the United States.

## **Analysis**

Based on the above information, it is possible to conclude that China sees DPRK's nuclear crisis as a long-term problem. Chairman Xi has always sought a peaceful solution to the nuclear crisis. However, it will definitely take time and based on history, neither UN sanctions nor US threats will make any difference in prohibiting DPRK's nuclear development plan. DPRK continued to test new nuclear weapons technology for the sixth time despite sanctions. Therefore, China does not believe North Korea will give up its nuclear weapons anytime soon. However, China still believes that North Korea can be persuaded to slow down or even freeze its nuclear program through multilateral meetings between the US, China and South Korea. China has always hoped that North Korea and US would be able to talk to one other. Talks could happen at different levels of administration or a continuation of Six Party Talks would be another possible choice. More importantly, China does not want the US and South Korea to perform joint military exercises. China regards the Korean peninsula as a neutral buffer zone, so it views these exercises as a US led effort to threaten its security.

China believes that President Trump has been using his bellicose rhetoric to raise tensions among the China, US and North Korea. China and North Korea relationship has deteriorated since Beijing has participated in UN sanctions to punish North Korea due to its continued nuclear tests. It is true that China has making efforts to increase its security by installing more camera monitors, armed forces, and radiation detectors along its border with North Korea.<sup>143</sup> North Koreans who are found crossing the border are sent back. However, China will not completely cut off aid to North Korea, including oil supplies. China does not want to the DPRK to collapse because it would cause millions of refugees to come over the border. China was alarmed by the statements US during the past year that once the regime of Kim falls, US would send troops to secure the nuclear materials and weapons. This confirmed China's fears that the US or South Korea would absorb the nuclear program left behind by the North Koreans.

At the moment, tensions between US and East Asia remain high. As some experts have already proposed that increased political dialogue between China and the US would be a step in the right direction and might help to progress talks between US and North Korea.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> "On its border with North Korea, China prepares for a possible crisis." *The Japan Times*, 19 Jan. 2018.

<sup>144</sup> Wang, Jin. "Why China's Influence Over North Korea Is Limited." *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 2 Mar. 2017.



# Human Rights Violations

*Cheyenne Virivong*

## Introduction

Now three generations into the Kim family's dynastic rule, North Korea has remained one of the most repressed countries in the world, notorious for controlling its citizens through human rights abuses and intimidation. Kim Jong-un's ascent to power invoked hope for North Korean citizens and signaled a new generation.<sup>145</sup> Instead, what Kim Jong-un's rule had actually brought about was an accelerated nuclear weapons program far more evolved from the original nuclear ambitions of his grandfather, Kim Il-sung.

## Human Rights Violations: When and Why?

Ingrained in North Korea's institutional framework are systemic and widespread human rights violations that have been perpetuated through three generations of rule under the Kim dynasty.<sup>146</sup> The origins of these violations began with the establishment of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea (NKPP) under the leadership of Kim Il-sung in 1946, prior to founding DPRK. The NKPP's rule led to the formation of 17 forced labor camps to punish suspected Japanese collaborators, those with anti-Korean sentiments and those suspected of being disloyal to the Kim regime. The official founding of the DPRK by Kim Il-sung in 1948 expanded the scope of these purges, integrating the persecution of leaders with South Korean political backgrounds, pro-Soviet groups, and pro-Chinese groups.

The continuous purge of opposition groups to Kim Il-sung's regime led to the creation of the *chulsin-songbun* system (*songbun*) in 1957.<sup>147</sup> The *songbun* system is directed by the state and discriminates citizens into hereditary classes determined by their perceived level of loyalty to the regime. *Songbun* is assigned at birth based on family lineage. A citizen's ancestors' socioeconomic status at the time of North Korea's liberation and their actions and affiliations

---

<sup>145</sup> Fifield, Anna. "Life Under Kim Jong Un," The Washington Post, published November 17, 2017.

<sup>146</sup> Clemens, Walter C. *North Korea and the World: Human Rights, Arms Control, and Strategies for Negotiation* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2016), 4.

<sup>147</sup> HRNK, "Timeline," The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, last modified 2014.

during the Korean war, greatly impacted their *songbun*. Furthermore, having affiliations outside of North Korea, such as relatives in South Korea or China negatively impacted a person's *songbun*. The system is broken into three main classifications: hostile, wavering, and core. Broken down from the three classifications are 51 subgroups. A citizen's *songbun* determines the outcome of their life and the opportunities and freedoms they are granted including education, occupation, military service, party membership, treatment within the criminal justice system, geographic location and housing, medical services, marriageability, and food supply. Those who are labeled as hostile are considered threats to the regime and are moved geographically further from the capital and given less socioeconomic opportunities.<sup>148</sup> By the end of the 1960s, the *songbun* system helped North Korea execute approximately 6,000 people and incarcerate 70,000 others in prison camps.

Famine is a recurring theme in North Korea's history. Soon after its founding, the lack of rain, combined with implications of Kim Il-sung's industrial reform policy of building enterprise and taxing farmers exacerbated the effects of famine in the 1950s.<sup>149</sup> The efforts of aid from other communist countries allowed North Korea's economy to rebound by the 1970s,<sup>150</sup> but deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union and decades of mismanagement led to the collapse of the regime's economic and social systems and the Public Distribution System (PDS), from a severe famine that occurred in the 1990s. The North Korean PDS was part of a planned economic program that ensured that all goods were distributed by the state. The PDS was divided into three subtypes: 1) *paegup*- distributed grains; 2) *konggup*- covered food, clothing, and housing appliances; and 3) *punbae*- distributed seeds and sprouts to farmers. Kim Il-sung used the PDS extended his reach over North Korean citizens until the economic collapse.<sup>151</sup>

In 1994, after the death of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il inherited leadership over North Korea and its famine crisis. Kim Jong-il established *songun* within the regime, which prioritized resources to to members of the North Korean military. The regime's remaining resources were distributed

---

<sup>148</sup> Park, Sokeel J. "Songbun: Social Class in a Socialist Paradise," Liberty in North Korea, published June 25, 2012.

<sup>149</sup> Ward, Peter. "How Kim Il Sung tried to save North Korea's troubled planned economy," NK News, November 14, 2017.

<sup>150</sup> Clemens, Walter C. *North Korea and the World: Human Rights, Arms Control, and Strategies for Negotiation*, 85-6.

<sup>151</sup> Tertitskiy, Fyodor. "Let them eat rice: North Korea's public distribution system," NK News, October 29, 2015.

in accordance with the *songbun* system but inevitably led to approximately 600,000 deaths, and left the remaining 80% of the population suffering from malnutrition. Extreme poverty led to increased black-market activity where citizens bartered what they had to survive. During the mid-1990s, the Kim regime eased up on free-market activity due to the famine. However, from 1997 until 2001, Kim Jong-il led a campaign to find the parties responsible for the famine. The investigation resulted in the deaths and incarceration of approximately 30,000 officials and their families. By 2003, Kim Jong-il's regime felt that the markets promoted a capitalist ideology and began a currency reform to shut down private markets.<sup>152</sup>

Leading up to the Kim Jong-il's death, his youngest son, Kim Jong-un, was announced to be his successor. Kim Jong-il's eldest son and original heir had finally fallen out of favor after being caught trying to enter Japan to visit Disneyland using a falsified passport in 2001.<sup>153</sup> The second son, Kim Jong-chul, was overlooked for his lack of masculinity. Kim Jong-un's rise to power in 2011, invoked hopes among North Korean citizens that he would change the situation in North Korea. However, Kim Jong-il's favor toward Kim Jong-un was attributed to their likeness, and under Kim Jong-un's rule, North Korea immediately tightened its borders and put in place harsher restrictions—such as hunting fleeing North Korean refugees and punishment for contact with the outside world—to control the population.<sup>154</sup>

## **Agreements Signed**

The DPRK became recognized as a UN member state in 1991, becoming party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). While the UDHR is not a treaty, it appears in the UN Charter and thus constitutes a binding agreement for all UN member states. The UDHR has served as a foundation for numerous UN human rights covenants and treaties.<sup>155</sup>

First, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which grants civil and political freedoms.<sup>156</sup> Second, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural

---

<sup>152</sup> Clemens 116.

<sup>153</sup> HRNK, "Timeline."

<sup>154</sup> HRW, "World Report 2017: Rights Trends in North Korea," Human Rights Watch, published January 2017.

<sup>155</sup> UNHR, "Ratification Status for Democratic People's Republic of Korea," United Nations Human Rights - Office of the High Commissioner, December 2016.

<sup>156</sup> UNHR, "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," United Nations Human Rights - Office of the High Commissioner, 2018.

Rights (ICESC), which grants economic and social freedoms.<sup>157</sup> Third, The International Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which serves as an international bill of rights for women.<sup>158</sup> Fourth, the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), which ensures rights that are fundamental to the growth and well-being of children.<sup>159</sup> Finally, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which seeks to change attitudes toward persons with disabilities from “objects” to autonomous human-beings.<sup>160</sup>

While treaties and covenants are legally binding, they are not easily enforced. North Korea’s ratification of treaties obligates them to submit a report on its compliance to the treaties. However, the reports submitted by the regime provide little information on its human rights conditions.<sup>161</sup> It is not entirely clear why North Korea signs and ratifies these major agreements seeing as they do not adhere to the policies they entail. The UN Security Council upholds resolution 1674— “Responsibility to Protect”—which holds that states have a duty to protect their people from “genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes,” prompting the recommendation for the UNSC to punish the DPRK for the human rights violations and crimes against humanity it has entrenched in its institutions by the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>162</sup>

## **Role of Sustained Human Rights Violations**

The fact that human rights abuses are highly ingrained into North Korean institutions is a large part of how they have remained in place over three generations of the Kim dynasty. Most rights are *de jure*, or legally guaranteed, by North Korea’s constitution and ratified treaties. However, due to the nature of the regime, few freedoms are exercised *de facto*, or in reality. The regime

---

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> UNHR, "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women," United Nations Human Rights - Office of the High Commissioner, 2018.

<sup>159</sup> UNHR, "Convention on the Rights of the Child," United Nations Human Rights - Office of the High Commissioner, 2018.

<sup>160</sup> UNHR, "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)," United Nations Human Rights - Office of the High Commissioner, 2018.

<sup>161</sup> Cohen, Roberta. “The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and North Korea,” Brookings, February 18, 2014.

<sup>162</sup> Clemens, Walter C. *North Korea and the World: Human Rights, Arms Control, and Strategies for Negotiation*, 4-5.

suppresses all forms of expression that are considered unfavorable toward the regime or portray any political or ideological opposition.<sup>163</sup>

Human rights violations have played a major role in maintaining the Kim regime's control over North Korea. Its totalitarian stance and *songbun* system has eliminated many political obstacles and threats to the Kim regime. It has also enabled the regime to take advantage of the desperation and starvation of its citizens by using its monopoly on food accessibility to coax citizens into dependency and forced loyalty.<sup>164</sup> The perpetuated use of arbitrary arrest, torture, detention, forced labor, and execution by Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un has conditioned North Korean citizens and strengthened the regime's influence.

### **Connection to the Nuclear Crisis**

Through human rights abuses, North Korea has been able to prioritize the production of nuclear weapons by allocating their resources toward its nuclear program similar to the *songun* policy's prioritization of the military. The regime utilizes an unpaid labor force of citizens, students, workers, soldiers, prisoners, and *dolgyeokdae*—a forced labor brigade—to work on behalf of the government's demands. \$500 million to \$1 billion in funding for North Korea's nuclear program is produced by forced labor of approximately 50,000 to 100,000 North Korean citizens overseas per year.<sup>165</sup> The people sent abroad are forced to work in jobs such mining, logging, textiles, and construction and for “as much as 20 hours at a time” in over 16 countries around the world. In few cases, workers are compensated \$150 per month for their work while the rest of their wages are forfeited. Most workers are not paid directly, and their wages are sent straight to the North Korean government.<sup>166</sup> Resistance or failure to bribe officials are met with being labeled as an enemy leading to beatings, torture, and loss of agency and economic freedoms, among other

---

<sup>163</sup> HRW, "World Report 2016: Rights Trends in North Korea," Human Rights Watch, 2016.

<sup>164</sup> Clemens, Walter C. 124.

<sup>165</sup> Huang, Kristin. "How can North Korea afford to pay for its nuclear programme?" *Diplomacy & Defence*, October 12, 2017.

<sup>166</sup> Olivia Enos and Brett Schaeferm "State Department Reform Should Retain Emphasis on North Korean Human Rights," *The Heritage Foundation*, September 14, 2017.

things.<sup>167</sup> Within North Korean schools, students are taught that the sacrifices made by citizens in their daily lives assist in building nuclear weapons that are necessary to protect the country.<sup>168</sup>

The nuclear weapons program is contributing to further human rights violations in addition to catastrophic consequences for the region. The nuclear program embodies human rights violations such as crimes against peace which include preparation of war and crimes against humanity such as murder, extermination, or inhumane acts committed against the its civilian population on discriminatory grounds. A nuclear strike led by North Korea is against the interests of the international community, particularly the US and Northeast Asia. North Korea's nuclear ambitions have promulgated sanctions by the UNSC to deter and dismantle its nuclear program due to the threat of war it poses to international security and its own citizens.<sup>169</sup>

## **Analysis**

North Korea has lead by totalitarian rule through condoning the manipulations of fear and desperation. Human rights violations have been thoroughly integrated into its institutional framework since before its founding and perpetuated through three generations of the Kim regime. The regime does not condone political resistance and any opposition is quickly subdued or incapacitated by its *songbun* system, which rewards those who display loyalty to the regime and punishes those who reject it. Despite ratifying several international treaties, North Korea has done little to adhere to international human rights standards and obligations. Its purpose in signing these treaties is not entirely clear but could have a connection with North Korea' desire to be recognized by the international community and avoid further getting sanctions. The inherent repressive tactics employed by the regime oppress its citizens into forcibly obeying its ideology and helping to further its nuclear program by forcing its citizens to perform unpaid hard labor to compensate for a lack of resources.

---

<sup>167</sup> Phil Robertson, "Power at All Costs: Where Missiles and Human Rights Overlap in North Korea," Human Rights Watch, November 29, 2017.

<sup>168</sup> Fifield, "Life Under Kim Jong Un."

<sup>169</sup> Kelly Askin, "North Korea: A nuclear threat and human rights catastrophe unchecked," International Bar Association, published November 8, 2016.

## **Conclusion**

North Korea's development and proliferation of nuclear weapons poses a security threat to the NE Asian region and beyond. The regime's self-reliant ideology known as *juche* has isolated the country from the rest of the world. The North Korean regime has managed to sustain itself by limiting and violating the rights of their people and profiting off of their abuses. The UNSC and the US have targeted North Korea with economic sanctions, in hopes of coercing North Korea to abandon its nuclear program.



## Kim Jong-un's Goals, Strategies, and Success

*Dennis Yeum*

Immediately after his father Kim Jong-il's death in December of 2011, Kim Jong-un succeeded to the throne as the supreme leader of North Korea. The state media declared him as the "Great Successor." Compared to his father, who shunned publicity, Kim Jong-un made frequent public appearances, not hesitating to show himself as a ruthless ruler who purged anyone who threatened his political authority and power. His uncle Jang Song-thaek and his half-brother Kim Jong-nam<sup>170</sup> were no exceptions to such brutality. Under Kim Jong-un's regime, North Korea's nuclear weapon and missile programs have been developed at a much faster pace compared to his predecessors' regime, despite the ongoing threat of international sanctions. As a result, the tension between the US and North Korea has reached its peak.

While Kim Jong-un's official birthday is known as January 8, 1983, much of his early life is unknown to the world. Kim Jong-un was born as the youngest son of Kim Jong-il and his third wife, Ko Yong-hui, a famous opera singer. He attended an international school in Switzerland from 1998 to 2000 as the son of an employee of the North Korean embassy<sup>171</sup>. Upon his return to North Korea, Kim Jong-un and his older brother Kim Jong-chul, attended Kim Il-sung Military University, the officer-training school, in Pyongyang from 2002 to 2007. The Kim brothers began attending Kim Jong-il's field inspections and other domestic visits starting from early 2008.

The succession process to Kim Jong-un quickened when his father suffered a stroke in August 2008. According to Fujimoto Kenji, Kim Jong-il's cook in Pyongyang between 1982 and 2001, he chose his third son as the successor because Kim Jong-un showed prominent ambition and masculinity over his older brothers. Kim Jong-nam, the eldest son, lost his father's trust when he was deported from Japan for illegal entry with a forged visa<sup>172</sup>. The fact that Kim Jong-un received education from Kim Il Sung Military University further established him as an ideal

---

<sup>170</sup> Chanlett-Avery, Emma. "NORTH KOREA: US RELATIONS, NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY, AND INTERNAL SITUATION \*." *Current Politics and Economics of Northern and Western Asia* 21, no. 2 (2012): 151-79.

<sup>171</sup> Craw, Victoria. "Kim Jong Un's hidden Swiss past offers a diplomatic lifeline." NewsComAu. September 04, 2017.

<sup>172</sup> Jae-Cheon Lim. "North Korea's Hereditary Succession. Comparing Two Key Transitions in the DPRK." *Asian Survey* 52, no. 3 (2012): 550-70.

military leader who was expected to carry on Kim Jong-il's military-first policy. Additionally, Kim Jong-un's physical resemblance to his grandfather played a key role in his natural transition to the throne. As the state holds great affection for its founder, it was easy to develop Kim's charismatic image by emphasizing his similarities to Kim Il-sung.

Kim Jong-un's succession differed greatly from his father's succession in 1994 in many aspects. At the time of Kim Il-sung's death, Kim Jong-il was 53 years old and had already received intensive leadership training for more than 20 years in preparation for ruling the country. In contrast, Kim Jong-un rose to power almost instantly without much political or military experience behind him. However, he was able to consolidate powerful authority at a faster rate than most expected.

Kim Jong-un has been ruling North Korea differently from his father and grandfather, while fulfilling the same long-term task: to ensure the survival of the regime under his control and pass it on to his successor. His *Byongjin* policy has focused on pursuing economic and nuclear development. Under his leadership, North Korea has achieved modest economic growth, despite limited market-oriented reforms, and has also progressed its nuclear weapons program considerably. These nuclear advances have helped Kim Jong-un to gain recognition and favor from his people, to a point where the continuation of the Kim regime is now widely accepted<sup>173</sup>. North Korea's nuclear efforts have expanded most rapidly under Kim Jong-un's reign; the country has conducted three of its five nuclear bomb tests and 80 missile tests, more than twice as many as his father and grandfather achieved together. As a result, Kim Jong-un has already become the most powerful leader in North Korea to date.

As the founder of the DPRK in 1948, after the liberation of Korea from the Japanese, Kim Il-sung established a unique political system known as the monolithic system. This structure has played a crucial role in maintaining a monopoly over power and facilitating the hereditary succession of the Kim dynasty. Under the monolithic system, North Korean society mobilized and militarized with the aim of replicating the power of a *Suryeong*, defined as the Supreme Leader of North Korea. The authority of the *Suryeong* does not come from the duties he carries out, but rather from the status itself. As the first *Suryeong*, Kim Il-sung outlined the three

---

<sup>173</sup> Chung, Young-chul, Yong-hyun Kim, and Kyungyon Moon. "State Strategy in the Kim Jong-un Era: The "Byongjin" Policy of Pursuing Economic and Nuclear Development \*." *Korea Observer* 47, no. 1 (2016): 1-33.

fundamental principles of *Juche* ideology - independence in politics (*jaju*), self-sufficiency in the economy (*jarip*), and self-reliance in national defense (*jawi*)<sup>174</sup>. The term “*jawi*” is directly related to the military-first policy of Kim Jong-il as part of his strategic move to consolidate his own power and to overcome many crises such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, and natural disasters exacerbated by economic hardships and famine. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kim Jong-il accelerated the pace of the nuclear weapons program for a political purpose; he was looking to prevent his regime from collapsing in the new unipolar political system.<sup>175</sup>

North Korea’s nuclear weapons program is rapidly approaching completion. When Kim Jong-un officially declared North Korea a responsible nuclear weapons state, it became clear that he would never give up the newly possessed threat. What does Kim Jong-un want to achieve by developing nuclear weapons? While there are many arguments and speculations about Kim Jong-un’s goals, these five are most heavily associated with the *Juche* ideology of his grandfather and the military-first policy of his father: regime survival, offensive and defensive military strategy, nuclear negotiation, reunification, and international reputation of *Kansung daeguk* (strong and prosperous nation).

## **Regime Survival**

The principal purpose of the North Korea’s nuclear weapons program is to ensure a favorable environment for the survival of the Kim regime. Such survival is intimately linked to the nuclear weapons development program because nuclear arms help to legitimize Kim Jong-un’s hereditary rule. The validation of legitimacy is crucial to any leader in maintaining his claim to power. Frank Rüdiger, the Head of the Department of East Asian Studies in Vienna, argues that legitimacy in North Korea originates from performance, which includes a certain compliance with rules and formalities<sup>176</sup>. Kim Il-sung’s legitimacy was based off his reputation fighting the Japanese for liberation of Korea and his victory in the war against US invasion to establish the DPRK as a communist state. Lacking the credibility of his father, Kim Jong-il struggled to

---

<sup>174</sup> Park, Yong Soo. "Policies and Ideologies of the Kim Jong-un Regime in North Korea: Theoretical Implications." *Asian Studies Review*, 2014, 1-14.

<sup>175</sup> Miyeong, Jeon. "The Kim Jong-il Regime’s “Military-first Politics”: Structure and Strategy of Discourse." *THE REVIEW OF KOREAN STUDIES* 12, no. 4 (2009): 181-204.

<sup>176</sup> Frank, Rüdiger. "North Korea after Kim Jong Il: The Kim Jong Un Era and Its Challenges." *Korea: Politics, Economy and Society* 6 (2012): 109-29.

establish his legitimate claim to rule. His strategy was to focus more attention to making artistic tributes to his father and to further develop the Juche ideology as the country's guiding principle. Kim Jong-un however, hope acquire his power by successfully following in his father's footsteps to create a nuclear program and the consolidating of political power by means of ballistic tests. Therefore, the development of nuclear weapons is a tool for Kim Jong-un to prove his competency as a leader, paving the road to fulfill the Juche revolution, and ensuring his regime's survival. Additionally, Kim Jong-un sees the nuclear program as a means of sustaining his regime against US military power. Kim Jong-un is well aware of what happened to Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi's after they agreed to give up their nuclear weapons programs. The possibility of regime change through US intervention is the primary reason why Kim Jong-un will not give up the nuclear weapons program.

### **Defensive and offensive strategy**

The North Korean government has been emphasizing the critical role of nuclear weapons in national security to prevent war against the persistent US nuclear threats. In 2018 New Year's Day address, Kim Jong-un responded to hostile US remarks to his regime by actively emphasizing use of the nuclear program as a deterrent rather than an offensive strategy. North Korea has requested the elimination of hostile US policy as a precondition for dialogue on denuclearization. However, Kim recently shifted this stance on denuclearization by hinting that it is impossible for Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear program unless a peace treaty is negotiated with the US. Furthermore, North Korean foreign ministry officials told Alexander Vorontsov during his visit to Pyongyang on November 2017 that Kim is seeking a "nuclear parity" with the US<sup>177</sup>. If a "nuclear parity" with the US is what Kim really wants, the purpose of nuclear weapons becomes more defensive than offensive. As Kim faces more pressure from the US, he is emphasizing the importance of a "tit-for-tat" response, a typical nuclear deterrence theory that seeks to create peaceful external environments that can respond to any type of threats. Lee, deputy assistant director of the CIA's Korea Mission Center, argues that Kim Jong-un is rational enough to not use nuclear weapons preemptively against the US because his primary goal is to

---

<sup>177</sup> Vorontsov, Alexander. "Is the US Preparing for Preventive War? Views from North Korea | 38 North: Informed Analysis of North Korea." 38 North. January 10, 2018.

ensure his survival<sup>178</sup>.

However, many experts, including US National security adviser H.R. McMaster, focus more on the offensive use of nuclear weapons. North Korea responded to the latest UN sanctions by threatening act of wars. Violating peace and stability in the Korean peninsula narrows options down to a war-fighting strategy for North Korea. The offensive potential of nuclear weapons became more obvious as North Korea successfully launched the satellite, Kwangmyongsong-4, in spite of international concerns of an EMP attack. The rogue state also conducted the latest ICBM test, the Hwasong-15, on November 2017 which proved it was capable of reaching the US mainland topped with a nuclear warhead. However, these actions do not explain why Kim would employ an offensive strategy if we think that Kim understands his regime could never survive if he strikes first. The offensive posturing of nuclear weapons is therefore aimed at creating a wedge between the US South Korea in order to achieve the Kim family's long-term goal of the reunification of Korea.

## **Reunification**

As the only long-term solution to the regime's chronic security problems, reunification is Kim's ultimate goal as a nuclear state. Historically, North Korea's foremost goal has been the reunification of the Korean Peninsula through the socialist revolution. The constitution of North Korea describes reunification as "the supreme national task" and it has been a consistent theme of North Korean media. When the Kim regime speaks of completing a "socialist revolution in our country," they mean unification of the entire Korean peninsula solely on North Korean terms. North Korea considers the entire peninsula as its sovereign territory as they do not recognize South Korea as a separate nation, nor the South's government as legitimate. North Korea also views its southern neighbor as a puppet state of US imperialism. Therefore, when North Korea refers to "our country," they are referring to the entire Korean peninsula. For these reasons, North Korea can never be truly secure as long as the freer and more prosperous South remains independent, undermining the North's existence as a separate state. This crisis of legitimacy poses a danger as threatening as American military power. South Korea is a serious

---

<sup>178</sup> Smith, Nicola. "Kim Jong-un is not crazy but a 'rational actor', CIA officials state." The Telegraph. October 06, 2017.

threat to the Kim regime. The Kim's are very afraid that their own people will recognize South Korea's success and reject the legitimacy the Northern system. This is why Kim Jong Un has executed over 300 people since coming to power and why Kim wants to reunify the entire Korean peninsula on terms favorable to him. Kim Jong-un envisions nuclear weapons to play an important role in the power of reunified Korea. In the WPK CC Plenary Meeting in 2013, Kim Jong-un said that "nuclear weapons are the sword that advances the cause of Korean reunification and a treasure of a reunified country which can never be traded."<sup>179</sup> Instead of invading South Korea outright, North Korea seeks to slowly build ties with South Korea. Kim seeks to use the nuclear weapons program to compel the South to accept reunification on the terms favorable to Pyongyang and to resist against the US troops residing in the Korean peninsula.

## **Nuclear Negotiation**

Nuclear negotiation is the most reasonable explanation that is directly related to North Korea's interest as a short-term strategy of nuclear weapons. Starting with the North-South Basic Agreement in 1991 to the US-DPRK Leap Day Agreement in 2012, North Korea has already made a total of seven nuclear negotiations in exchange for political and economic concessions from the US, taking advantage of international assistance. However, after 2012, North Korea began to take advantage in different ways as the state officially proclaimed itself as nuclear-armed through a revised constitution. Bell, an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, argues that nuclear possession can allow the state to act more independently of allies, expand their position and influence, strengthen alliances or stand more firmly in defense of the status quo<sup>180</sup>. Before North Korea began to emphasize its nuclear power, the state tried to gain economic advantages from denuclearization agreements. Now, the true value of nuclear weapons comes from expanding their position and influence against the US and building a strong relationship with countries who need North Korea's military and nuclear technology. Since the 1980s, North Korea has been a reliable weapons supplier to Iran and the two states have shared ballistic missile technology. According to a 2018 UN report, North Korea

---

<sup>179</sup> Mansbach, Richard W., and Kirsten L. Taylor. *Introduction to global politics*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018.

<sup>180</sup> Bell, Mark S. "Beyond Emboldenment: How Acquiring Nuclear Weapons Can Change Foreign Policy." *International Security*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2015, pp. 87–119.

has also been assisting the Syrian government in developing nuclear weapons program and has provided Myanmar's army with ballistic missiles<sup>181</sup>. As a notorious proliferator, North Korea has a long history of selling its knowledge, technology, and capacities around the world. Kim Jong-un wants to establish a nuclear state so his country can be recognized as a legitimate member of the international community and he will be able to negotiate with the US on more favorable terms. If he succeeds, Kim Jong-un will be an example to the world that nuclear weapons can guarantee security and prestige, making nukes even more appealing to nations and groups who already want them.

## **International Reputation**

Since 2004, North Korea has invited Sig Hecker, an American nuclear scientist, seven times to prove North Korea's advanced nuclear technology by showing off facilities in the Yongbyon area. Kim Jong-un has stressed the significance of science in the regime's propaganda and shows his fondness for scientists and engineers on prominent displays across North Korea<sup>182</sup>. This view of a "modern" North Korea is what Kim seems to be actively promoting to the rest of the world as a young and ambitious leader of the country. While most countries in the world perceive North Korea as an impoverished and underdeveloped nation, Kim has great pride in his nuclear weapons program. After years of persistent efforts, DPRK nuclear progress has been a game-changer for Kim as well as a proper defensive method against US provocations. By emphasizing North Korea's nuclear status, Kim hopes to enter the first rank of world military powers, and be recognized as *Kansung daeguk* by the international community.

## **Analysis**

The year of 2018 seems to be the turning point for Kim. As soon as he declared the completion of North Korea's nuclear program, Kim has proposed an "open dialogue" with South Korea and has invited South Korean President Moon to Pyongyang for a summit. While Kim's invitation for a summit may seem like welcome news and a bright opportunity to communicate peace on the Korean peninsula on the surface, Kim's sudden change in attitude for the summit allude to a darker reality. By firmly refusing denuclearization, his true intentions seem to point towards

---

<sup>181</sup> Nichols, Michelle. "North Korea earned \$200 million from banned exports." Reuters. February 04, 2018.

<sup>182</sup> Pak, Jung H. "The education of Kim Jong-un." Brookings. February 07, 2018.

leveraging his weapons to settle negotiations on terms favorable to the DPRK rather than conforming to international sanctions.

President Moon made it clear that the alleviation of inter-Korean relations cannot be separated from North Korea's nuclear program.<sup>183</sup> The issue of denuclearization must be dealt with before inter-Korean dialogue can take place. However, Kim's intention to promote inter-Korean dialogue while ignoring the issue of denuclearization makes it obvious that he wants to use South Korea as a protective barrier to relieve some of the pressure of the current sanctions.

Furthermore, the "Peace Olympics" that President Moon has emphasized for the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics is a great opportunity for North Korea to appeal to the world the unity and hope between the divided nations and to use a "charm offensive" as a way to drive a wedge in US-South Korea alliances.

As a short-term goal, Kim will try to open dialogues with South Korea in order to create a favorable environment to negotiate with the US and alleviate the sanctions. In the long-run, Kim will use the nuclear weapons as a tool to create conditions conducive of unification in favor of his regime. Kim Jong-un is earning his title as a conniving dictator competent enough to follow in the footsteps of his forefathers. Young and ambitious, Kim has already consolidated powerful authority at rates faster than his father and grandfather before him. As North Korea's nuclear weapons program is rapidly approaching completion, Kim is proving to be the most powerful leader in the history of North Korea. While his actual masterplan upon the completion of the nuclear program is hidden behind the veils, Kim is most likely to pursue the five goals based on the Juche ideology of his grandfather and the military-first policy of his father: regime survival, offensive and defensive military strategy, nuclear negotiation, reunification, and international reputation of *Kansung daeguk*.

---

<sup>183</sup> Kim, Christine. "S. Korea's Moon says better inter-Korean relations linked..." Reuters. January 01, 2018.

# DPRK Nuclear Weapons Capability

*Jay Rapp*

North Korea's earliest attempt to obtain nuclear weapons can be traced back to Kim Il-sung's request to the USSR and China for technological aid in the 1970s. Despite both nations' refusals, the DPRK has never abandoned its goal to become a nuclear state. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kim Jong-il began developing a secret nuclear weapons program because they felt that non-nuclear nations were vulnerable to invasion from the US. This nuclear technology would be the best, and probably only, way to prevent such attack. In 2006, North Korea divested itself of all nuclear ambiguity by staging its first nuclear weapons test.<sup>184</sup> After two more tests, the DPRK finally declared itself a nuclear state in 2012. As we have seen dozens more tests since 2012, including a particularly large detonation in September of 2017<sup>185</sup>, it is necessary to ask: how far have the North Koreans actually gone with their nuclear program?

## Current Nuclear Weapons Capability

Experts differ somewhat in their estimates of how many nuclear weapons Pyongyang may have. David Albright, founder of the Institute for Science and International Security, estimates that there are between 13 and 30, with an annual production rate of 3 to 5.<sup>186</sup> Siegfried Hecker, nuclear scientist, estimates that there are between 25 and 30 weapons, with an annual production rate of 6 to 7.<sup>187</sup> Kristensen and Norris, researchers, estimate that there are currently between 10 and 20 weapons, with enough fissile material for 30 to 60 weapons.<sup>188</sup> US Intelligence agencies estimate that there are between 30 and 60 weapons.<sup>189</sup>

---

<sup>184</sup> Smith, Hazel. *North Korea: Markets and Military Rule*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

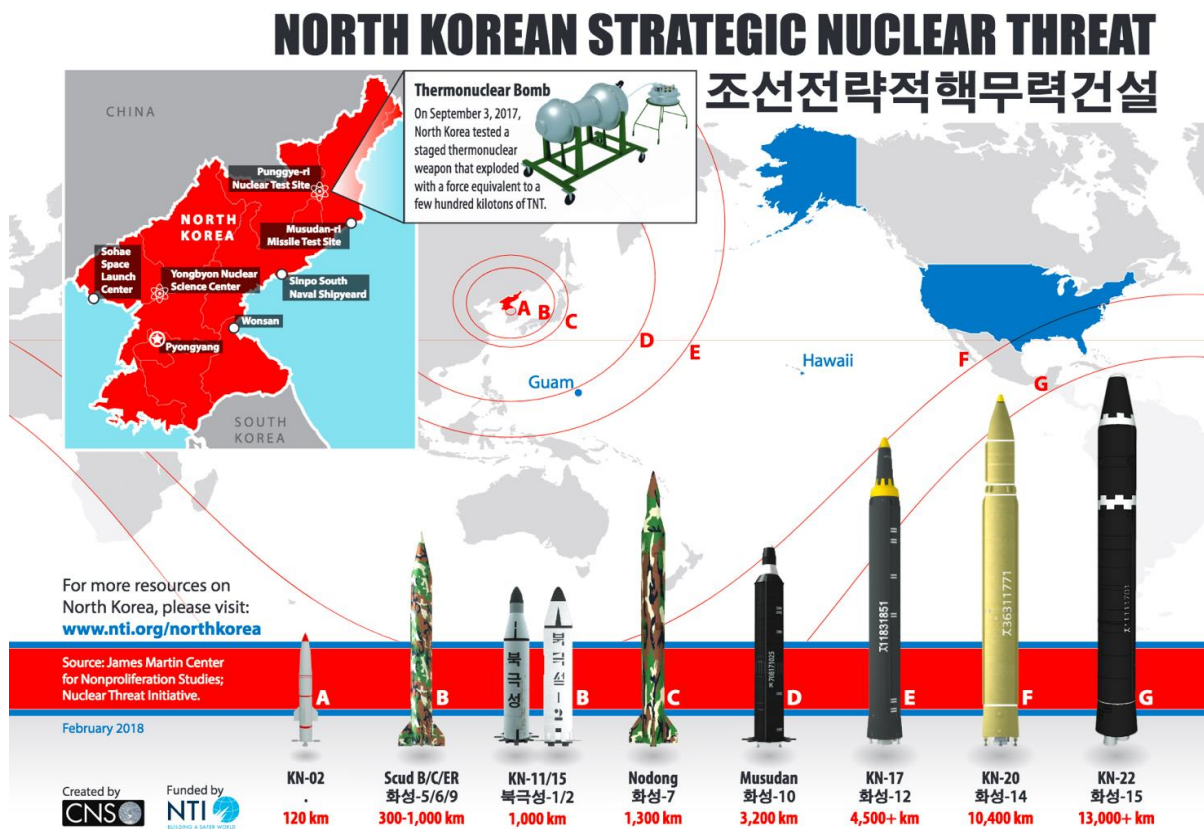
<sup>185</sup> Davenoport, Kelsey. "Chronology of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis." *North Korean Review* 1, no. 1 (2005): 113-18. doi:10.3172/nkr.1.1.113.

<sup>186</sup> Albright, David. "North Korea's Nuclear Capabilities: A Fresh Look"

<sup>187</sup> Fyffe, Steve. "Hecker Assesses North Korean Hydrogen Bomb Claims."

<sup>188</sup> Kristensen, Hans & Norris, Robert. "North Korean nuclear capabilities."

<sup>189</sup> Eleanor, Albert. "What's the Status of North Korea's Nuclear Program?"

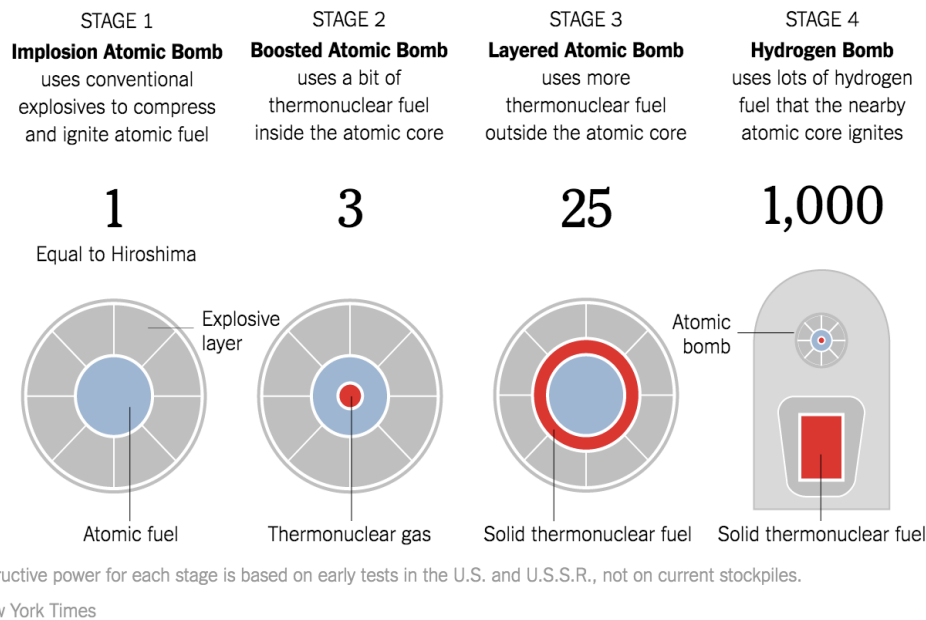


**Figure 2:** DPRK capabilities as of February 2018 (Source: <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/north-korea/>)

Former Los Alamos National Laboratory director Siegfried Hecker is one of the leading experts on North Korean nuclear technology and development. In one of his articles, Hecker estimates that Yongbyon’s 5-megawatt reactors are capable of having produced 20 - 40 kilograms of plutonium, which is enough for four to eight bombs. In addition, he believes that North Korea is capable of enriching 250 - 500 kilograms of weapon-grade uranium through centrifuges, which is equivalent to 12 to 24 bombs. Under his estimation, the DPRK can produce 25 to 30 bombs, with an additional annual production of between six and seven bombs. In a recent paper for *Foreign Affairs*, Hecker stated that the most recent DPRK test had a probable yield in the range of 200 to 250 kilotons (kt) worth of TNT. He summarized his assessment saying the record “conclusively demonstrates that North Korea can build nuclear device with the power of the fission bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and is working to achieve the destructive power of modern hydrogen bombs”.<sup>190</sup> It should be noted that Hecker does not conclusively say that North Korea can build a thermonuclear device, let alone a weapon. Both fission and boosted fission tests

<sup>190</sup> What We Really Know About North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons

performed by the US and Britain, code named Ivy King and Orange Herald, had yields of 500 kt and 750 kt, respectively. Such explosive power is considered within the range of hydrogen weapons but can be produced by larger amounts of weapons-grade uranium or plutonium than commonly used. Hecker concludes that the DPRK will need an additional two years to fully utilize the miniaturized nuclear warhead with the ICBM technologies. “We are going to have to learn to live with North Korea’s ability to target the United States with nuclear weapons”, said Jeffrey Lewis of the Middlebury Institute of Strategic Studies.<sup>191</sup>



**Figure 3:** Stages of Nuclear Weapons Technologies (Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/03/science/north-korea-bomb-test.html>)

## Current ICBM Capability

In order to fully utilize its weapons, the DPRK needs sufficient intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) capable of sustaining the nuclear warhead to successfully deter its overseas adversaries, such as Japan and the US. Missile tests have become the most visible portion of North Korea’s weapon program. In July 2017, North Korea passed an important milestone with the test of two Hwasong-14 missiles – ICBMs that have a range greater than 3,400 miles. Six months

<sup>191</sup> Albert

afterwards, the regime tested an even more powerful missile, a Hwasong-15, with an estimated range of 8,000 miles, capable of reaching anywhere on the US mainland. Dr. Hecker expresses that these tests have been accompanied by the diversification of North Korea's missiles, allowing it progress toward its stated goal of launching at any time and from any place, including submarines.<sup>192</sup> For instance, North Korea has successfully tested a submarine-launched ballistic missile, the Pukguksong-1. "Having the ability to fire a missile from a submarine could help North Korea evade a new anti-missile system planned for South Korea and pose a threat even if nuclear armed North Korea's land-based arsenal was destroyed", experts said.<sup>193</sup> However, there are debates about whether or not the North Koreans are capable of utilizing their newest nuclear technologies. In response to such concern, Hecker claims that "the greatest concern is not so much that they really tested a hydrogen bomb, but rather that they tested at all... This is their fourth test - with each test they can learn a lot".<sup>194</sup> Furthermore, at Yongbyon, the North Koreans told us that they will eventually build larger power reactors, and although they anticipate difficulties because the technologies for the reactor and fuel are unfamiliar to them, they are confident it will succeed. Hecker made it clear that, in their minds, they had no choice; US actions had pushed them in this direction.<sup>195</sup> Given the above information, the international community can assume that DPRK is seeking a diverse range of military technologies to achieve its strategic goals of proposing maximum deterrence towards its adversaries.

## **Analysis**

At this point, North Korea must now be considered to have nuclear weapons. It is a nuclear weapon state *de facto*, but not *de jure*. No foreign nation has designated the DPRK officially a "nuclear weapon state." The full extent of these weapons, in number, kind, yield potential, and launch capability, cannot yet be known with certainty. An average of estimates provided by experts would be in the range of between 15 and 30 weapons, probably in missile form. Yields are likely to be in the 5-50 kt range or so, with a small possibility that some could reach 100+ kt. Such large-yield weapons will most certainly be produced within a few years or less. Launch

---

<sup>192</sup> Siegfried, Hecker. What We Really Know About North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: And What We Don't Yet Know for Sure.

<sup>193</sup> Park, Ju-min. "North Korea fires submarine-launched ballistic missile towards Japan." Reuters. August 24, 2016.

<sup>194</sup> Fyffe, Steve.

<sup>195</sup> Siegfried, Hecker. What I found in North Korea.

capabilities are, at present, confined to short-range and intermediate missiles. It is doubtful that North Korea has the capability to strike the continental US today, but it will within a year or two, if its missile program is allowed continue.

As mentioned before, the DPRK is also pursuing sea-based launch capabilities using submarines. Successful tests of such missile launches in the past year suggests the country will achieve a nuclear diad (land- and sea-based nuclear weapon launch capability) within several years. It does not seem at this time that the regime is pursuing the third leg of the nuclear triad, i.e. delivery by bomber aircraft.

Because of the success in all these areas and the view of nuclear weapons as both a security necessity and a mark of prestige, it does not seem likely that the Kim regime will be satisfied with a small arsenal, as it now possesses. It would not accept status as a “small nuclear nation.” Thus, the US and other nations should assume that the DPRK will seek to build a larger stockpile of weapons, including strategic types, and numbering perhaps between 80 and 100 or more. Such numbers and diversity in weapon types must be considered a source of tremendous concern for the region and the world. They greatly increase the possibility of accidental or miscalculated use. Moreover, they pose the possibility that the regime will gain cash for its program, will consider selling weapons, weapon designs, technology, and fissile material. Finally, a growing arsenal will make denuclearization increasingly difficult over time, not easier.



# DPRK Conventional, Chemical, and Biological Arms Capability

*Arne Landboe*

## Introduction

North Korea has one of the world's largest conventional military forces. Though much of its matériel is thought to date from the 1980s, it has been proven functional and therefore capable of serious offensive and defensive action. The DPRK Military employs tactical use of ground, air, sea and conventional missile forces. Its strength is concentrated in two areas: 1) its ground forces, which, under conditions of full mobilization, could include 1.8 million soldiers; and 2) its missiles, which include an estimated 850 mostly ground-launched weapons of varied ranges.

In addition to conventional arms, the DPRK is believed to have significant stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. Combined with the close proximity of large South Korean population centers (notably Seoul) to the border, these capabilities create the likelihood of mass civilian and military casualties if open war was to occur. While the number of potential casualties is a topic of debate amongst military strategists, the inevitability of mass casualties, should war break out, is a relevant deterrent to armed action against the DPRK.

## Conventional Forces

### *Ground Forces*

The DPRK military depends on its large, and well-equipped Army as its largest and most heavily equipped military branch. Though this previously provided a significant advantage over the South, the modernization and expansion of ROK military capabilities has altered the balance since the Korean war. The North keeps approximately 1.2 million soldiers on active duty, and an additional 600,000 reservists who are capable of being mobilized. Additionally, the North maintains a militia force, known as the Workers and Peasants Red Guard, which numbers around 6 million.<sup>196</sup> As a result of the mountainous terrain that characterizes the Korean peninsula, the DPRK's ground forces are organized with a focus placed on light infantry and small unit tactics.

---

<sup>196</sup> Kalman, Brian. "North Korea vs. South Korea-Comparison of Military Capabilities. What Would A New War in Korea Look Like?". *South Front*. December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Web.

These tactics would theoretically allow for more flexible and successful military action in comparison to larger offensives which could be hampered by the terrain. The DPRK has access to a large number of armored vehicles, with approximately 4,200 tanks, and an additional 2,200 armored vehicles.<sup>197</sup> These are of Chinese and Soviet design, consisting of large numbers of small and medium tanks, but few heavier varieties. The most modern DPRK tanks are T-72s bought from the Soviet Union during the 1970's, with most of its armored forces dating back to the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>198</sup>



**Figure 4:** Likely Locations of DPRK Artillery Sites (Source: <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-special-reports/mind-the-gap-between-rhetoric-and-reality/>)

One of the North's greatest conventional strengths is its arsenal of artillery, consisting of self-propelled and towed cannon plus rocket launchers (MLRS), the majority of which are stationed in hardened sites along the DMZ. Estimates place the number of North Korean artillery pieces at over 8,600, with an additional 4,800 MLRS.<sup>2</sup> Much of the North Korean arsenal is composed of weapons purchased from both China and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, meaning that

<sup>197</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Military and Security Developments Involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Annual Report to Congress". 2013, pp. 1-18.

<sup>198</sup> Mizokami, Kyle. "North Korea Has Lots of Tanks (But Can They Fight?). *The National Interest*. April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

they are weapons of significant age, however the North's armament industry has been capable of both maintaining and improving upon these older weapons, thus making their military capabilities fairly time resistant.

Another key strength which the North employs is its Special Operations Forces (SOF), which number approximately 200,000 personnel, making it the world's largest SOF.<sup>199</sup> SOF soldiers are trained for a variety of missions, including covert infiltration into South Korea, destroying key infrastructure or possibly transporting deadly weapons into the South.

The DPRK's available pool of 1.8 million soldiers outnumbers ROK forces which number 600,000, and US forces in South Korea which number 28,500. This numerical advantage stands as a threat to the ROK and US in the short term, however a longer conflict would be difficult for North Korea, as they have a far smaller population than South Korea and thus a smaller pool of potential soldiers to call upon, while US troop presence would continually rise.<sup>200</sup> While winning a conventional war is unlikely for North Korea due to their comparative inadequacy in military technology, economic power, and available manpower, the damage that their artillery and SOF forces could inflict on South Korean population centers would be devastating.<sup>201</sup>

### *Air Forces*

The DPRK's air forces are the North's second largest military branch, consisting of 110,000 active personnel, and are responsible for the defense of DPRK airspace.<sup>202</sup> While the North's air forces consist of approximately 545 combat ready aircraft, they are significantly outdated in comparison to the ROK's air forces, with the most modern aircraft being the MiG-29 which was introduced in 1982. While the North has over 280 helicopters, only 80 are designed for ground attack, while the rest act as reconnaissance and troop transport.<sup>6</sup> In addition to air forces, the North Korean Air Force is in command of the DPRK's anti-aircraft missile defenses, comprised of roughly 350 Surface to Air Missile (SAMs) installations and a collection of over 11,000 Man-portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) which are operated by individual soldiers. Similar

---

<sup>199</sup> Congressional Research Service. "The North Korean Nuclear Challenge: Military Options and Issues for Congress". November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, pp. 16.

<sup>200</sup> Cordesman, Anthony H. "The Military Balance in the Koreas and Northeast Asia". *Center For Strategic & International Studies*. January 2017, pp. 88.

<sup>201</sup> Congressional Research Service. pp. 18-20.

<sup>202</sup> Cordesman, Anthony H. pp. 118.

to their air forces, these anti-aircraft missile defense systems are old, and of Chinese or Soviet origin. Despite the North's antiquated air defense capabilities, their small geographic area combined with the quantity of hardware, creates a virtually impenetrable air space.

The status of North Korea's aircraft and anti-air systems is still far inferior to the combined resources of the ROK and the United States. Both the US and the ROK hold a numerical and qualitative advantage over the north, as well as stealth capabilities that could likely breach North Korean air defenses.<sup>203</sup> The density of the DPRK's defenses make for an obstacle, but this would likely not be enough to stop ROK and US air forces from inflicting catastrophic damage on the North.

### *Naval Forces*

The North Korean Navy consists of 60,000 active sailors and emphasizes coastal defense and submarine warfare. As a result, the North Korean Navy maintains a large collection of coastal patrol craft and minelayers, as well as 73 submarines. Most of their submersibles are intended for troop transport, likely to insert SOF units into South Korea, not for combatting US or ROK surface ships. In addition, only 16 of the DPRK's 383 coastal craft carry anti-ship missiles,<sup>204</sup> and the North's navy maintains no air forces.

The naval power of the DPRK is heavily outmatched by the numerical and qualitative superiority of the ROK and US navies. In the event of a conflict, North Korean naval mines would be an obstacle for US and ROK forces, however there is little that could be done to significantly damage US and ROK naval capabilities, which possess vastly superior surface vessel and submarine assets, as well as naval aviation arms.

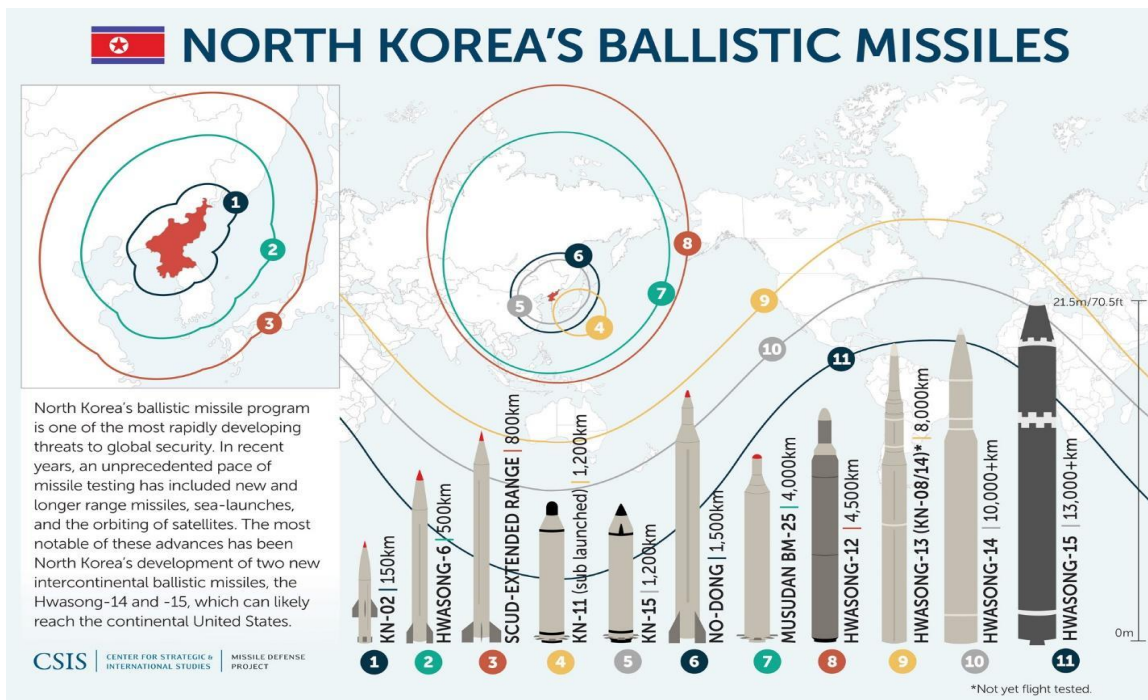
---

<sup>203</sup> Cordesman, Anthony H. "Keeping the North Korean Threat in Proportion". *Center For Strategic & International Studies*. August 9, 2017.

<sup>204</sup> Cordesman, Anthony H. pp. 104.

## Missile Forces

The North Korean missile forces are a primary focus of the North Korean leadership, and stand, along with their ground forces, as the most potent force in the DPRK's conventional military. The official size of this force is unknown, but they are believed to operate over 330 medium to short range missiles, as well as an expanding ICBM program. The North's missile capabilities, namely the FROG and SCUD varieties range between 270 and 900 kilometers, placing South Korea, Japan, Guam and parts of Alaska within range.<sup>205</sup> These missiles can carry conventional and chemical munitions and pose a major threat to civilian and military centers in South Korea.



**Figure 5:** DPRK's Missile Arsenal (Source: <https://southfront.org/north-korea-vs-south-korea-comparison-of-military-capabilities-what-would-new-war-in-korea-look-like/>)

The DPRK's ICBM capabilities include Hwasong missiles which have potential ranges between 8,000 and 13,000 kilometers. These missiles are intended to deliver nuclear warheads but could also deliver conventional or chemical munitions and could potentially reach any target in North America. While these capabilities are unconfirmed, continued testing and development of the North's ICBM force can be expected.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 128.

A key strength of the DPRK's missile forces is that they are highly mobile, with a multitude of mobile launch sites that can fire from any position within North Korea. These launch platforms are difficult to monitor and locate, and thus would be difficult to destroy in the event of a conflict. The North Korean military has also been successful at developing rudimentary launch platforms from vehicles such as tractors,<sup>206</sup> a practice which would further complicate the task of eliminating North Korean missile capabilities.

### *ROK Missile Defense*

The ROK has access to three main forms of Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD). First is the sea-based Aegis System which is present on three ROK navy destroyers, as well as US navy destroyers. Second is the American THAAD BMD system in South Korea which defends against short and medium range ballistic missiles. Lastly are the Patriot Missile Systems which can destroy medium range ballistic missiles, such as the SCUD.<sup>207</sup>

While these overlapping systems make the interception of North Korean ballistic missiles possible, it is not enough to rule out the possibility of a successful North Korean missile strike. The Patriot and Aegis Systems have not seen extensive combat usage since the Persian Gulf War of 1991, and the THAAD system has yet to be used in a combat situation. Additionally in the case of THAAD, the limited range of the system, and its deployment in the southern half of the peninsula means that THAAD fails to cover Seoul and other population centers in the northern portion of the ROK. While the ROK is pursuing an expansion of its Aegis and Patriot capabilities, they are not yet operational, and therefore would not be able to guarantee protection from North Korean missile capabilities.

## **North Korea's Chemical Weapons**

North Korea remains one of six nations which have not signed onto the Chemical Weapons Convention and is believed to maintain a large and lethal stockpile of chemical weapons. Estimates of this stockpile are between 2,500 and 5,000 metric tons of chemical weapons, and it is likely being expanded. This stockpile would make the DPRK the nation with the third largest

---

<sup>206</sup> Bermudez, Joseph S. "'Key Vulnerability' in North Korea's ICBM Force? What We can and Can't Learn from a North Korean Military Parade". *38 North*. February 9, 2018.

<sup>207</sup> Cordesman, Anthony H. pp. 222-224.

stockpile of chemical munitions, after the US and Russia who are trying to destroy their chemical arsenals.<sup>208</sup> These munitions can be deployed via artillery, missiles or SOF, many of which are trained in operating within a chemically saturated environment.<sup>12</sup> These chemical munitions are believed to be stored in hardened sites near the DMZ, making rapid deployment into South Korea a possibility. This possibility of chemical weapons use raises further concerns for the safety of South Korean civilians in the event of a conflict.

In comparison, the ROK and US chemical weapons capabilities in South Korea range from minimal to none. South Korea has distributed gas masks to civilians and civil defense forces,<sup>209</sup> however these measures would only protect wearers from choking agents, not blister, blood or nerve gases which the DPRK could also deploy.

### **North Korea's Biological Weapons**

North Korea has been a signatory of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention since 1987. Despite this, they are suspected of having the ability to create and weaponize biological agents. While biological weapons are likely at the North's disposal, they would be difficult to successfully deploy via artillery or missiles, as biological agents are susceptible to being destroyed on impact. The difficulty of successful deployment makes the North's biological weapons less of a concern than their chemical arsenal, however the existence of a biological weapons program in the DPRK is still a cause for concern. Biological agents could be dispersed amongst South Korean populations by North Korean SOF or by aircraft, causing mass casualties and the crowding of hospitals within the ROK.

### **Analysis**

#### *Conventional Forces in a Potential Conflict*

The North Korean military is designed for a predominantly defensive operation on its own territory, while maintaining artillery, missile and SOF capabilities designed to inflict mass military and civilian casualties on the ROK. This organization is intended to create deterrence against the ROK and its allies, as any military action would likely result in mass casualties in

---

<sup>208</sup> Ibid. 230.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. 233.

South Korea. This is the DPRK's only viable military option, as their inferiority to the US and ROK in manpower, military technology, and resources, makes the possibility of a North Korean victory in a conventional war near-impossible. While the DPRK maintains a numerical advantage in its ground forces, the numerical and technological superiority of ROK and US air and sea forces would make large scale North Korean ground operations highly costly for the DPRK. ROK and US ground forces also can be expected to be more combat proficient, as ROK forces participated in operation Desert Storm, and US forces have been battle hardened by long engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. In comparison, the North Korean military has not fought since the Korean War, a fact which raises doubts over whether North Korean strategy has been effectively adapted to modern battlefields.

The scarcity of North Korean resources, namely oil, is another factor that would make the possibility of a North Korean victory near-impossible. International sanctions have cut imports of refined petroleum into the DPRK to 500,000 barrels per year,<sup>210</sup> a massive decrease from the North's pre-sanction annual imports of nearly 2.8 million barrels per year.<sup>211</sup> The most modern estimates place North Korean production of refined petroleum at roughly 4.1 million barrels a year, an amount which would place North Korea globally at 158<sup>th</sup> in supplies of refined petroleum, and would prevent them from being able to operate their air, sea and land forces in a prolonged conflict.

The inevitability of a North Korean defeat only adds to the argument that conflict on the Korean peninsula would guarantee a mass casualty scenario, as a militarily inferior North Korea with little hope of winning a conventional conflict would seek to inflict as much damage as possible. The most conservative estimates of such a scenario point to 30,000 civilian casualties in the area around Seoul within the first days of fighting,<sup>212</sup> and potential for over one million civilian deaths in the South Korean capital during a prolonged conflict.<sup>213</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> United Nations. "Security Council Tightens Sanctions on Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2397 (2017)". December 22, 2017. Web

<sup>211</sup> Central Intelligence Agency. "East & Southeast Asia: Korea, North." *World Factbook*. Web.

<sup>212</sup> Congressional Research Service. pp. 19.

<sup>213</sup> Cordesman. 170.

*Chemical and Biological Weapons in a Potential Conflict*

North Korea's access to chemical and biological weapons adds to their strategy of deterrence by threatening civilian lives. The diversity of the DPRK's chemical and biological weapons, as well as the speed with which they can be deployed, would make it difficult for US-ROK forces to defend against a chemical or biological weapons strike.



# Cyber Capabilities

*Kevin Lam*

## Background

Besides North Korea's recent development of nuclear weapons, the DPRK has advanced its ability to launch cyberattacks on institutions and facilities in other countries. North Korea has been developing its cyber-attack program for more than a decade. With potential assistance from Chinese and Russian hackers, they could rapidly catch up to the same level as China and Russia in the next five to ten years, posing a significant threat to the United States, South Korea, and Japan. Before 2013, most of North Korea's cyber attacks included disruption, web-defacement, and distributed denial of service (DDoS), typical of less advanced cyber operations.<sup>214</sup> In a DDoS attack, an attacker will use your computer to attack another computer.<sup>215</sup> Since 2013, however, the attacks have evolved to leak private emails and leave hacked workstations with permanent damages, as seen in the Sony Pictures incident of 2014.<sup>216</sup> As of now, the potential threat that North Korean hackers present is not fully known. In order to make an informed estimate of this threat, a review of recent attacks and their probable motives are necessary.

## Actors Responsible for the Cyber-Assaults

The Reconnaissance General Bureau (RGB) serves as the main actor under the DPRK's cyber operations while the General Staffed Department (GSD) of the Korean People's Army serve as their cyber operations planning. The RGB developed from the conglomeration of several different government parts from the "special operations and intelligence units" to form a "centralized intelligence disruption organization."<sup>217</sup> They are mainly under Bureau 21, the DPRK's complex cyber attack cell, and are primarily responsible for cyber-attacks and sabotage

---

<sup>214</sup> Albert, Eleanor. "What's the Status of North Korea's Nuclear Program?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 3 Jan. 2018,

<sup>215</sup> McDowell, Mindi. "Security Tip (ST04-015)." *Understanding Denial-of-Service Attacks* /, United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team, 4 Nov. 2009

<sup>216</sup> United States, Congress, Rosen, Liana W., et al. "North Korean Cyber Capabilities: in Brief." *North Korean Cyber Capabilities: in Brief*.

<sup>217</sup> Jun, Jenny, et al. *North Korea's Cyber Operations Strategy and Responses*. CSIS, 2015, *North Korea's Cyber Operations Strategy and Responses*.

operations during peacetime.<sup>218</sup> While the GSD is primarily responsible for military operations should war break out on the Korean peninsula, the RGB deals with asymmetric and cyber provocations.<sup>219</sup> However, the RGB and GSD work together. There are speculations that these two parts of the government work in close alliance with Kim Jong Un and his senior officials. This means that cyber operations are not only significant to the DPRK, but that they are overseen in a top-down, centralized fashion. Furthermore, the DPRK has elevated cyber capabilities to the forefront of their military strategy.<sup>220</sup> For example, according to reports from 2012 to 2014, there was a two-fold increase in the number of personnel working under the RGB's "cyber offensive technologies division."<sup>221</sup> Considering that many governments see the benefits of using cyber-attacks to damage the adversary's critical infrastructure as a favorable alternative to engaging in a conventional war because the latter puts lives at risk, this is not surprising.

## **Motives for Developing Cyberattack Capabilities**

First, the release of "The Interview", a film that contained a plot to kill the supreme leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-un, prompted state-sponsored hackers associated with North Korea to release sensitive information on the people involved in the film and then drove them to implement a malware that erased Sony Pictures' computer infrastructure.<sup>222</sup> The 2014 Sony Pictures attack was in line with a string of North Korean provocations, and was not just a response to the ridicule of Kim Jong-Un in "The Interview."

The DPRK developed its cyber-attack capabilities to avoid facing the full consequences of economic sanctions imposed by the UN, which financially crippled them. They initially used cyber-operations to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars from international banks. In February of 2016, a succession of cyberattacks targeted banks in Bangladesh and Southeast Asia, resulting in the theft of \$81 million dollars.<sup>223</sup> The DPRK considers cyberattacks relatively low risk

---

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>221</sup> Bermudez, Joseph S. Jr, et al. "North Korea's Cyber Capabilities: Deterrence and Stability in a Changing Strategic Environment." *38 North*, 23 Feb. 2017.

<sup>222</sup> Feeny, Noland. "Sony Hack: Lawyers Asking Media Outlets to Stop Covering Leaked Emails." *Time*, Time, 15 Dec. 2014.

<sup>223</sup> United States, Congress, Rosen, Liana W., et al. "North Korean Cyber Capabilities".

because they are easy to deny and international organizations i.e., the UN, struggle to respond to cyber-attacks due to the lack of precedent cases.

Overall, it is in North Korea's strategic interest to advance their cyber-attack capabilities during peacetime to counterbalance their weak conventional military. Not only is it cost-effective, but there are relatively few consequences. The DPRK can also use their asymmetric military capabilities (cyber and nuclear technology) to level the playing field against South Korea and the United States during wartime. However, unlike North Korea's nuclear proliferation, it is unlikely that cyber attacks could provoke all-out war.

Ultimately, the DPRK is using cyber warfare as part of their offensive strategy. In the case of war, advanced cyber technology, i.e. through techniques used in Operation Orchard, can aid North Korea in maximizing damage to the ROK's critical infrastructure before their allies have enough time to adequately respond. These asymmetrical attacks would be coordinated alongside conventional attacks. But, it can also be argued that they are using cyber warfare as part of a defensive strategy similar to the DPRK's justification for the development of nuclear weapons in the interest of their regime's survival. Cybersecurity research specialist, Jessica L. Beyer, goes so far as to argue that North Korea's nuclear development could be a way for the DPRK to divert attention away from their cyber attacks.

### **Duration of Kim's Cyber Operations**

Cyberwarfare is a long-term area of focus for the Kim regime. Since the 1980s, North Korea has been developing their nuclear arsenal and investing in cyber specialists who are trained in "both espionage and disruptive/destructive technologies."<sup>224</sup> Since the DPRK began their pursuit for cyber technology, their goal has evolved from gaining prestige for acquiring cyber technology to manipulating data collection and system penetration for the sake of stealing information to surveying the adversaries' defenses and the capability of their responses.<sup>225</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup>Bermudez, Joseph S. Jr, et al. "North Korea's Cyber Capabilities".

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

## Scope of Cyber Operations

We expect the heavily sanctioned North Korea to use cyber operations to raise funds, gather intelligence, and launch attacks on South Korea and the United States. Pyongyang probably has a number of techniques and tools it can use to achieve a range of offensive effects with little to no warning, including distributed denial of service attacks, data deletion, and deployment of ransomware.<sup>226</sup>

Though North Korea's cyber operations have the potential to pose a serious threat to the US, they have already shown their capacity to inflict serious damage on South Korea, most notably with the 2013 cyber attack on ROK banks and broadcasting agencies.<sup>227</sup> Russia's cyber-attacks on Georgia during the Russo-Georgian war and Operation Orchard serve as contemporary paradigms for the DPRK to follow in the event of a conflict. In the Russo-Georgian war, Russia launched "coordinated barrages of millions of requests – DDoS attacks – that overloaded and effectively shut down Georgian servers".<sup>228</sup> This was the first time that the DPRK witnessed an actor use cyber-warfare in conjunction with conventional warfare, a strategy that the DPRK could feasibly employ during a conflict on the Korean peninsula.<sup>229</sup> Similarly, Israel used cyber warfare to successfully execute Operation Orchard, an airstrike mission that destroyed Syrian nuclear facilities with the help of hackers undermining Syrian air defense networks before the attack, allowing Israeli fighter jets to travel undetected through Syrian airspace.<sup>230</sup> Furthermore, It is important to recognize that the nature of the two attacks were different: the former was an indirect attack while the latter was direct. Although North Korea is likely to use cyber warfare alongside conventional warfare to maximize their overall likelihood of defeating the ROK in the event of war,<sup>231</sup> the DPRK does not yet possess the capability to seriously damage critical US civil infrastructure. The US electrical grid is not as easily penetrable because many of the technologies that operate these infrastructures have not been updated in decades. Beyer argued that it is therefore unnecessary for North Korea to use their nuclear arsenal to destroy critical

---

<sup>226</sup> Dilanian, Ken. "Watch out. North Korea keeps getting better at hacking." NBCNews.com. February 20, 2018.

<sup>227</sup> Jun, Jenny, et al. *North Korea's Cyber Operations Strategy and Responses*.

<sup>228</sup> Markoff, John. "Before the Gunfire, Cyberattacks." *New York Times*, August 12, 2008.

<sup>229</sup> Jun, Jenny.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

state infrastructure because they can already achieve this by using cyber-attacks.<sup>232</sup> Yet the DPRK continues to invest millions of dollars on nuclear program because they believe it will serve as a deterrence for invasion.

## Getting Help

North Korea has worked with China, Russia, and Iran in improving their cyber warfare capabilities by sending their best students to these countries for training in universities and engineering companies.<sup>233</sup> Russia has sent a few professors to train North Korean professional hackers.<sup>234</sup> Meanwhile, China has stationed half of ‘Office 91’, the headquarters of the RGB’s hacking operations, subordinate units in China with several hundred agents operating in these cells.<sup>235</sup> Overall, China and Russia have provided North Korea with education on how to advance the scale of their cyber-attacks and resources to access the internet.<sup>236</sup>

## Case Study

In the 2011 South Korean Banks attack, there was a DoS attack that shut down South Korea’s National Agricultural Cooperative Federation bank for three days, preventing some customers from entering their accounts while deleting other customers’ credit card records.<sup>237</sup> In a DDoS attack, “an attacker attempts to prevent legitimate users from accessing information or services”.<sup>238</sup> The IP addresses were traced to computers from the DPRK.<sup>239</sup> It is safe to assume that the hackers worked for the government because only government workers have access to the internet.<sup>240</sup> These attacks have been financially costly. For example, North Korea’s cyber-attacks

---

<sup>232</sup> Beyer, Jessica L., and Donghui Park. “Commentary: Making Sense of North Korea's Hacking Strategy.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 22 Dec. 2017.

<sup>233</sup> Yoon, Sangwon. "North Korea Recruits Hackers at School." *Poverty & Development | Al Jazeera*. June 20, 2011.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> Park, Donghui. “Consequences, Motives, and Responses of North Korea's Cyber Attacks .” 20 Feb. 2018.

<sup>237</sup> United States.

<sup>238</sup> McDowell, Mindi. “Security Tip (ST04-015).” *Understanding Denial-of-Service Attacks* /, United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team, 4 Nov. 2009

<sup>239</sup> United States.

<sup>240</sup> Park, Donghui. “North Korea Cyber Attacks: A New Asymmetrical Military Strategy.” *The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies*, 22 Jan. 2018,

since 2010 have accumulated to “\$650 billion in repairs and economic losses”.<sup>241</sup> By 2016, the DPRK’s cyber capabilities have shown dramatic improvement in their cyber-attack capabilities with the SWIFT banking hacks, which operated under ‘Lazarus’, a group tied to the 2014 Sony hack.<sup>242</sup> Although they likely receive help from Russia and China, this was the first time North Korean hackers stole funds using cyber attacks.<sup>243</sup>

The possibility of Chinese and Russian hackers aiding North Korea is likely, considering the level of attacks, and spying by government-recruited hackers. China and Russia have already lent hackers to the DPRK and the DPRK could recruit non-governmental freelance hackers to teach North Koreans how to perform advanced cyber attacks.<sup>244</sup> These hackers committed the series of cyber-assaults through the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), an international messaging service used by banks to facilitate money transfers between countries.<sup>245</sup> This development not only signifies the vulnerability of banks but also an increase in the DPRK’s cyberattack capabilities. The DPRK may be incentivized to use cyber operations to steal money because the backlash is limited considering the absence of “norms against cyber-attacks” making it a challenge for the US and their allies to retaliate in these instances.<sup>246</sup> However, the UN is taking steps to create a framework of consequences against actors that conduct mass cyber attacks that undermine international institutions. The 2017 WannaCry attacks showed that the DPRK was willing to test their boundaries to see how far they could go before they reach conventional warfare.

In the WannaCry attacks of 2017, at least 300,000 computer systems in 150 countries were affected by ransomware infections.<sup>247</sup> The WannaCry worm was much more harmful than had been anticipated. Initially it was assumed to be a normal ransomware delivered through phishing attacks, but it was later recognized as much more lethal, “exploiting security vulnerabilities” within unpatched computers.<sup>248</sup> The NSA traced the IP addresses back to the RGB, suggesting

---

<sup>241</sup> United States.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Jun.

<sup>247</sup> United.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

that the DPRK was involved with these operations.<sup>249</sup> However, the DPRK never claimed responsibility for these attacks were performed in peacetime.<sup>250</sup> In addition, these IP addresses were linked to IP addresses found in China used by RGB programmers.<sup>251</sup> This either means that the Communist Party of China (CCP) turned a blind eye to these hackers, or abetted them in their operations. Nevertheless, the WannaCry attack was slightly different from former cyber-attacks in the aggressor's style of attack, demonstrating intentions that deviated from past attacks. The shortcomings in the WannaCry code show that these cyber attacks were performed in effort to increase the regime's revenue, which is typical, but it also revealed attempts to raise personal wealth, an unprecedented act.<sup>252</sup> In each of these three cases, the DPRK risks escalating tensions with the US and the ROK so they are taking calculated risks.

---

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Park, Donghui.

<sup>251</sup> United.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.



# US Diplomatic Response

*William Stewart-Wood*

Relations between the US and the DPRK began during the Korean War in the 1950s. However, following the war, there was almost no direct diplomatic contact for several decades. In 1991, the US-DPRK relationship became more hostile as a result of North Korean statements and actions regarding their intent to pursue a nuclear weapons program. Since 1991, this issue has remained at the center of negotiations between the US and the DPRK and to date, the two countries have not established official diplomatic relations.

## **George H.W Bush Administration: 1991-1993**

In December of 1985 the DPRK joined the NPT, however did not reach an agreement with the IAEA for safeguards inspections<sup>253</sup>. On September 27, 1991, President Bush announced the withdrawal of all land and naval-based nuclear weapons deployed abroad, and subsequently withdrew all nuclear weapons based in the ROK. This led to the DPRK to ratify an agreement with the IAEA to allow for safeguard inspections in April of 1992, when the IAEA inspectors discovered discrepancies in the DPRK's initial report and made these known to the global community.<sup>254</sup> This led to the first nuclear crisis, that was dealt with under the incoming Clinton Administration.

## **Clinton Administration: 1993-2001**

Only two months after President Clinton's inauguration, his administration was confronted by the first nuclear crisis. Following a request by the IAEA to conduct special investigations into the DPRK's nuclear program, the DPRK announced it would withdraw from the NPT on March 12, 1993. In May, the DPRK intensified the situation by conducting a successful missile test, launching four Nodong-1 missiles into the Sea of Japan. In order to defuse the crisis, the US and DPRK entered the first of three rounds of bilateral negotiations in June of 1993. Following the first round of talks, the DPRK suspended its decision to pull out of the NPT and agreed to IAEA

---

<sup>253</sup> "Chronology of US-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy." Arms Control Association.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

inspections on June 11, 1993. After the second round of talks in July, the DPRK announced in a joint statement with the US it was ready to negotiate inspection.<sup>255</sup>

On May 19, 1994, IAEA inspectors reported that the DPRK violated terms of the agreement by removing spent fuel from its 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor. A month later the DPRK announced its withdrawal from the IAEA, returning to a crisis situation. To the objection of President Clinton, former President Carter travelled to the DPRK to meet with North Korean officials and seek a solution. President Carter reached an agreement with the DPRK in which Pyongyang agreed to freeze its nuclear program and re-enter negotiations. The US and DPRK then entered a third round of negotiations which resulted in the Agreed Framework, signed on October 21, 1994. The Agreed Framework's ultimate goal was to halt the North Korean nuclear program in exchange for two light water nuclear power plants. The United States would also supply oil to North Korea and provide \$4 billion toward building the light-water reactors.<sup>256</sup>

On March 15, 1995, the US, ROK, and Japan created the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to implement the Agreed Framework. The main task of KEDO was to finance construction of two light water reactor nuclear power plants within the DPRK to replace their Magnox type reactors and import fuel<sup>257</sup>. The two reactors would serve as compensation for North Korea in exchange for freezing its nuclear program. However, the Agreed Framework and KEDO began to fail shortly after inception due to poor funding from a disapproving Republican Congress. By 1998 KEDO was \$47 million in debt and was behind on its fuel delivery schedule<sup>258</sup>. The DPRK subsequently accused the US of failing to meet its agreements, and members of Congress accused President Clinton of underestimating the cost of the program as well as the amount donated by other countries<sup>259</sup>.

---

<sup>255</sup> Pacheco Pardo, Ramon. *North Korea-US Relations under Kim Jong Il: The Quest for Normalization?* Oxfordshire, England; New York, Routledge 2014.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>257</sup> "Chronology of US-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

<sup>258</sup> *KEDO and the Korean agreed nuclear framework: problems and prospects: hearing before the subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Fifth Congress, second session, July 14, 1998.*

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

In 1999 US Secretary of Defense William Perry revealed the US was on the brink of war with the DPRK in 1994. Prior to the Agreed Framework, the Pentagon had plans to send cruise missiles and fighter jets to strike a nuclear reactor in the DPRK. Secretary Perry remarked “We [US] planned for war at that time. Of course, with the combined forces of the ROK and US, we can undoubtedly win the war”.<sup>260</sup> Secretary Perry understood the costs of a potential war on the Korean peninsula and instead recommended negotiations and UN sanctions. Throughout the remaining years of the Clinton administration the DPRK and US met for numerous rounds of bilateral talks, none of which were successful in coming to an agreement. The US also enforced sanctions on the DPRK due to missile proliferation, although they were largely symbolic. By December of 2000 relations with the DPRK were no better than they had been before the Agreed Framework, and President Clinton announced he would not visit the DPRK by the end of his term.

### **George W. Bush Administration: 2001-2009**

The George W. Bush administration inherited the increasingly hostile relationship with the DPRK, and President Bush himself was a harsh critic of the DPRK and Kim regime. In his 2002 State of the Union address he named the DPRK in the “axis of evil” and expressed how he “loathed” Kim Jong-Il. Bush’s administration attempted to seek more binding guarantees from the DPRK. Throughout his Presidency his cabinet was divided on how to approach the issue. So-called “hawks” like Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld argued for a tougher approach, while “doves” such as Secretary of State Colin Powell wanted to maintain the policies of the Clinton administration.<sup>261</sup>

The Agreed Framework quickly fell apart during the first years of President Bush’s administration. Most Republicans in Congress opposed it, and KEDO fell behind on oil shipments and reactor construction. In October of 2002 the DPRK admitted to Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, James Kelly, that the DPRK was in possession of a highly enriched uranium program.<sup>262</sup> KEDO subsequently suspended fuel

---

<sup>260</sup> UNCLASSIFIED US Department of State, Case No. F-2014-12370, Doc No. C06009250, pg. 6. The National Security Archive.

<sup>261</sup> Pacheco, North Korea. 42.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. 47.

shipments to the DPRK effectively ending the Agreed Framework. In February 2003, the DPRK restarted reactors that were shut down in the agreement, and KEDO suspended construction of the light water reactors. By 2006 the project was terminated entirely.<sup>263</sup>

In January 2003, the DPRK announced their withdrawal from the NPT, which became effective in April, and entered into trilateral talks with the US and China. The DPRK delegation revealed to the US it possessed nuclear weapons during these talks, but no deals were agreed upon. These talks preceded the Six-Party talks- a series of multilateral talks hosted in Beijing between the US, the DPRK, China, Japan, the ROK, and Russia, which consisted of six meetings between 2003 and 2007. The DPRK objective in these talks was to improve relations with the US, however, the other five countries sought to negotiate the CVID of the DPRK's nuclear program. At times the talks lacked consensus; while the aim of all countries was a nuclear weapons free Korean peninsula, there was no complete consensus on how to reach that. China and Russia supported an agreement in which the DPRK eliminated its nuclear weapons program, but not its peaceful nuclear activities, while the US, Japan and ROK would only support elimination of all nuclear activities.<sup>264</sup>

After five rounds of unsuccessful talks due to aggressive brinkmanship tactics from the DPRK, the participating countries attempted a sixth round. Despite the plans that were made to send aid in exchange for shutting down its nuclear program, the DPRK was found to be continuously developing their program. The DPRK boycotted further talks after the US sanctioned DPRK entities involved in proliferation of nuclear technology and froze DPRK assets in Banco Delta Asia.<sup>265</sup> Ultimately, the talks failed in reaching any sort of lasting agreement. On April 14, 2009, the DPRK declared they would no longer participate in the Six-Party talks or be held to any previous agreements reached in the talks.

### **Obama Administration: 2009-2017**

The DPRK policies used during the Obama administration were not successful, and little ground was gained in the attempt at freezing the DPRK's nuclear program. The Obama administration

---

<sup>263</sup> "Chronology of US-North Korea Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy"

<sup>264</sup> "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance." Arms Control Association.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

employed a policy of “strategic patience” that implemented sanctions until the DPRK felt the need to enter negotiations. During the Clinton and Bush administrations provocations by the DPRK were met with an attempt to enter negotiations or reach some sort of agreement. The DPRK would enter agreements and receive millions of dollars’ worth of aid, only to violate the agreement and then again use their nuclear program as a bargaining tool for further negotiations. Under the policy of strategic patience, DPRK provocations were met with heavier economic and trade sanctions from the US and UN. Although the strategic patience strategy stopped positively reinforcing acts of brinkmanship from the DPRK, it is widely regarded a massive failure in stopping nuclear development.

When Kim Jong-il died in December, 2011, and his son Kim Jong-un assumed power, the Obama administration had new hope for progress and better relations with the DPRK. In an attempt to restart negotiations, the US and DPRK announced the Leap Day agreement in February 2012. Under the agreement the DPRK would suspend operations at its Yongbyon nuclear plant and allow IAEA inspectors into the country in exchange for food aid from the US.<sup>266</sup> Just two weeks later the deal was suspended after the DPRK attempted to launch a satellite into space in honor of Kim Il-sung’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, deepening the US’ reluctance towards negotiations.

### **Trump Administration: 2017-Present**

Under President Trump US policy on North Korea has become drastically more aggressive, and in response tensions in relations have increased substantially. During President Trump’s administration North Korea has displayed accelerated development of their nuclear program and succeeded in test launching ICBMs. To combat the nuclear crisis the Trump administration is implementing a policy of “maximum pressure”- increasing economic pressure on Pyongyang through sanctions until the Kim regime is fully denuclearized. Under this policy President Trump has called for greater sanctions, often attempting to persuade China into joining sanctions and discontinuing trade with North Korea. During the summer of 2017, an American college student, Otto Warmbier, was detained in North Korea and sentenced to hard labor. When he finally

---

<sup>266</sup> Clemens, Walter C. *North Korea and the World : Human Rights, Arms Control, and Strategies for Negotiation.* Asia in the New Millennium. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2016. 247.

returned home, he was in a comatose state and died within a few days. Subsequently the State Department banned Americans from travelling to North Korea. President Trump has frequently taken it upon himself to call out Kim Jong-Un and his regime, primarily through twitter. Referring to Kim as “rocket man” President Trump has time and again threatened North Korea with United States military intervention. During his speech at the UN in September of 2017, President Trump stated “If [the US] is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.”<sup>267</sup> During his visit to the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, Vice President Mike Pence reiterated the administration’s maximum pressure policy stance and warned of further sanctions. Pence stated that the US will not talk to the DPRK unless it showed it was taking meaningful steps towards denuclearization.

## **Analysis**

Over the past three decades policies pursued by the US regarding the DPRK’s nuclear program have yielded varied results. Now in 2018 tensions have increased to a high level and there continues to be no diplomatic communication between the two countries. Based on previous approaches, the Trump administration would be more successful if they engaged the DPRK instead of the maximum pressure policy. President Obama’s policy of strategic patience failed in denuclearizing the DPRK, as did President Bush’s sanctions and aggressive rhetoric. While President Clinton’s policies ultimately failed, in part due to policy changes during the Bush administration, the Agreed Framework was the closest the US and DPRK have come to a successful agreement on denuclearization. In this deal, the US made major concessions in aid but was successful in bringing the DPRK to the negotiating table and implementing the first steps of the agreement. The Trump administration has reiterated they will not hold talks with the DPRK until they fully denuclearize, which is unlikely. Therefore, the Trump administration should consider their precondition on talks with the DPRK.

In 2018, the DPRK and US are very different countries than they were when they entered in the Agreed Framework. Today the DPRK possesses a nuclear and missile program far more advanced than that of the mid 90s, although US intel has been inconclusive in determining the precise extent of DPRK capabilities. After one year in office, the Trump administration has not

---

<sup>267</sup> Baker, Peter, and Rick Gladstone. "With Combative Style and Epithets, Trump Takes America First to the U.N." The New York Times. September 19, 2017.

made any diplomatic communication with the DPRK. President Trump has only exacerbated tensions by making aggressive comments about Kim Jong-un via his personal twitter. The level of trust between the two nations is low, and conflict at an all-time high. Whichever diplomatic approach the Trump administration takes towards the DPRK, the effects will be felt for years.



## **Record of Sanctions**

*Chris Kim*

Since the withdrawal of North Korea from the NPT in 2003, the UN Security Council has passed nine unanimous sanctions against the regime, primarily focused on trade. In addition, the EU has implemented supplemental sanctions on goods and personnel entering its countries, while the US implements its own financial sanctions against individual groups who facilitate trade with North Korea. The goods that are restricted from entering North Korea include a variety of commodities like fuel and coal, dual-use technologies, luxury items, and materials like textiles, vehicles, and certain foods. Also banned are North Korea's exports, including labor and textiles, which are major sources of income for the regime. Most of the sanctions have been made in response to nuclear tests, while some have been in response to satellite launches and ballistic missile tests. The US claims they will not lift these sanctions until North Korea follows through with denuclearization.

### **President Bush's UN Resolutions**

UN Resolution 1718 was passed on October 14, 2006, in response to North Korea's first nuclear test. The sanctions included restrictions on the supply of heavy weaponry, missile technology and material, and select luxury goods.<sup>268</sup> Nonetheless, North Korea has been able to procure materials through its vast external network, which will be covered later.

### **President Obama's UN Resolutions**

Bush's first and only sanction against North Korea was not enough to deter North Korea from continuing their nuclear program, since less than 3 years later, Pyongyang carried out its second nuclear test. The UNSC consequently strengthened its existing sanctions on June 12, 2009 through Resolution 1874, calling on states to inspect and destroy all banned cargo to and from the country if reasonable grounds of justification are present.<sup>269</sup>

---

<sup>268</sup> "What to Know About the Sanctions on North Korea | Council on Foreign Relations." Accessed January 17, 2018.

<sup>269</sup> "Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1718 (2006) | United Nations Security Council Subsidiary Organs." Accessed January 17, 2018.

UN resolution 2087 was announced on January 22, 2013, which condemned satellite and long-range rocket launches in 2012. According to the UN, the DPRK had evaded the previous sanctions by using bulk cash. While no new material economic sanctions were imposed, the UN reiterated some of the key points of the previous two sanctions and called for greater international cooperation between member states in inspecting, removing/destroying, and reporting of trade activities that have been banned. It was clear, however, that some states would not act under the premises of international cooperation. China allowed North Korean banks and firms to access international financial markets through a vast network of Chinese-based front companies during this period.

Regardless, UN Resolution 2087 was perceived to be weak in its rhetoric and did not hinder North Korea from continuing its nuclear program. In fact, it seemed to have aggravated the North Koreans, who responded vehemently against the sanctions and ramped up their nuclear program. Only 3 weeks later, the DPRK conducted its third nuclear test. In response, the UN passed resolution 2094 on March 7, 2013, this time explicitly targeting the illicit activities of diplomatic personnel, transfers of bulk cash, and the country's banking relationships.<sup>270</sup> With the new resolution, 193 member states are now required to "freeze or block" any financial transactions or monetary transfers if such activities are deemed to help North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. In addition, no new branches or offices of DPRK banks or joint ventures be opened or operationalized in the states' territories.

On January 6, 2016, the DPRK conducted its fourth nuclear test, which registered as a 5.1 magnitude-earthquake that the DPRK claimed was a successful hydrogen bomb. Once again, a resolution was passed in response calling states to inspect cargo, this time broadening the scope to "within or transiting through their territory- including airports, seaports and free trade zones."<sup>271</sup> In addition, the resolution specified that states should "prohibit that country's nationals and those in their own territories from leasing or chartering their flagged vessels and aircraft to it, or providing it with crew services."<sup>272</sup> Two other economic sanctions that were not present in previous resolutions were included: the prohibition of states to acquire or purchase

---

<sup>270</sup> "UN Security Council Passes New Resolution 2094 on North Korea." Accessed January 28, 2018.

<sup>271</sup> "Security Council Imposes Fresh Sanctions on Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2270 (2016)" Accessed January 17, 2018.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

coal, iron, iron ore, gold, titanium ore, vanadium ore, and rare earth minerals, and the prohibition of states to sell or transfer gasoline and other types of jet/aviation fuels to the DPRK. Finally, the resolution urged member states to expel Pyongyang’s diplomats, governmental representative or nationals acting in a governmental capacity who assisted in the evasion of sanctions or the violation of related resolutions.

Eight months later, Pyongyang successfully executed a fifth nuclear test, and on November 30, 2016, the UN passed Resolution 2321 on North Korea, banning mineral exports such as copper and nickel and the selling of statues and helicopters.<sup>273</sup>

### **President Trump’s UN Resolutions**

For 10 years, the list of sanctions continued to grow, but Pyongyang continued to develop its missile program. This pattern did not falter under the Trump administration. Although the DPRK remained relatively quiet for a little over a year after its most recent sanction, in July of 2017 it conducted two intercontinental ballistic tests. In response, the UN Security Council passed another resolution on August 5, 2017 reiterating the prohibition of coal and iron sales and including the new bans on seafood, lead and lead ore.<sup>274</sup>

After North Korea’s 6th and largest test, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2357 on September 11, 2017, adding additional sanctions on natural gas liquids to the DPRK and banning exports of textiles such as fabrics and apparel products. These products make up North Korea’s second-largest industry and could potentially cost the Kim regime \$80M annually.<sup>275</sup> In addition, the resolution reduced about 30% of oil provided to North Korea. Yet only two months later, on December 22, 2017, new sanctions were passed in the wake of an intercontinental ballistic missile specifying restriction amounts on the sanctioned materials. North Korea’s imports of refined petroleum would be limited to 500,000 barrels for 12 months starting on January 1, 2018.<sup>276</sup> In addition, all nationals earning income abroad, with some humanitarian exceptions,

---

<sup>273</sup> “Security Council Strengthens Sanctions on Democratic Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2321 (2016)” Accessed January 17, 2018.

<sup>274</sup> “Security Council Toughens Sanctions against Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2371 (2017) | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” Accessed January 17, 2018.

<sup>275</sup> Sanchez

<sup>276</sup> “Security Council Tightens Sanctions on Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2397 (2017) | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” Accessed January 17, 2018.

were to be repatriated within 24 months. Finally, exports of food products, machinery, electrical equipment, earth and stones, wood and vessels would be banned from the DPRK, and exports of industrial equipment, machinery, transportation vehicles and industrial metals were banned to the DPRK. All in all, over 90% of North Korea's publicly reported 2016 exports are now banned.<sup>277</sup>

## **Violations**

Despite the seven different sanctions, the DPRK continues to develop their nuclear weapons program, conducting 26 ballistic missile tests in 2016.<sup>278</sup> Even after the most recent round of the harshest sanctions to date, North Korea has signaled no interest in giving up its nuclear program. They are able to continue its program by deriving materials from their vast overseas network. Some debris from these ballistic tests were found to be from Chinese companies, while others were found to be manufactured in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. This shows that North Korea indeed has a large intermediary network that it can leverage to procure the necessary materials they need to continue launching ballistic missiles.

In August of 2016, Egypt intercepted a vessel known as Jie Shun, which was revealed to be carrying 30,000 rocket-propelled grenades concealed under 2,300 tons of iron ore, a banned export, unless exempted under Resolution 2270. North Korea used third-country nationals to operate part of its illicit network to transfer these prohibited goods, demonstrating that North Korea can get the hard currency needed to buy the different parts for its nuclear program.

However, illicit trading networks is not the only way North Korea in obtaining its needed materials. Since the passing of resolution 2093 in 2013, and expanded financial sanctions in 2016, all of which specifically targeted banking and financial activities, there is evidence that continued illicit financial activities are taking place. They have been using bulk cash and gold to bypass financial systems and avoid detection, as well as allowing foreign nations to establish banks on its soil and entering into joint venture deals abroad.<sup>279</sup>

---

<sup>277</sup> "FACT SHEET: Resolution 2375 (2017) Strengthening Sanctions on North Korea | Usun.State.Gov." Accessed January 17, 2018.

<sup>278</sup> C4ADS and The Asian Institute for Policy Studies. "In China's Shadow: Exposing North Korean Overseas Networks," August 2016.

<sup>279</sup> UN Security Council. "S/2017/150 Panel of Exports Report," February 27, 2017.

## **Verdict: The Future of Sanctions**

It is not likely that sanctions themselves will make North Korea drop its nuclear program. The North Koreans are using discrete measures to ensure that its materials are procured, regardless of the sanctions imposed against them. While the most recent round of sanctions on oil and other fuel sources has the potential to greatly reduce the North's conventional military capability, it is unlikely that North Korea will reduce the current pace of their nuclear program, something that has been both astonishing and alarming to scientists studying North Korea's capabilities.<sup>280</sup>

Clark Sorensen, a leading anthropological scholar at the University of Washington, has mentioned that it is unclear whether the sanctions will only continue to affect the people at hand without any real policy changes. The failure of sanctions thus far show that a better understanding of why North Korea desires to keep its nuclear program going is required, before sanctions can be used as an effective strategy to force the North Koreans to the negotiating table. Without such an understanding, cracking down on North Korea's illicit trading networks and preventing them from obtaining hard currency will only cause the North Koreans to use even more extreme measures to get what they want.<sup>281</sup> For example, the North Koreans have shown they are capable of using cyberattacks to steal cryptocurrency from South Korean exchanges.<sup>282</sup>

## **China's Role**

While there is clearly a strong Chinese interest to maintain regime stability, China is also concerned over North Korea's nuclear program, and increasing US territorial encroachment and influence. Leveraging China's concern in order to help the denuclearization process may be important. It is also important to note that there are glimpses of domestic discontent and antagonism in North Korea. In fact, the Korea Workers Party was recently reported to be stoking anti-Chinese sentiments for its support in the most recent sanctions.<sup>283</sup> Some would argue that it is far from clear whether China is really helping the international effort to clamp down on the

---

<sup>280</sup> "Sig Hecker on the North Korean Nuclear Program." n.d.

<sup>281</sup> Park, H. Jung. "Regime Insecurity or Regime Resilience? North Korea's Grand Strategy in the Context of Nuclear and Missile Development," n.d.

<sup>282</sup> Kharpal, Arjun. "North Korea Hackers Linked to Cryptocurrency Cyberattack on South Korea," January 18, 2018.

<sup>283</sup> Park, H. Jung. "Regime Insecurity or Regime Resilience? North Korea's Grand Strategy in the Context of Nuclear and Missile Development," n.d.

DPRK, especially on the cooperation that exists between North Korean and Chinese private firms and banks. Others argue that China's conflicting interests concerning the DPRK can be leveraged towards a favorable US policy.

# The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Model for North Korea?

*Nicole Rankin*

Like North Korea, Iran has had a relationship long marked by conflict with the US and pursued a nuclear weapons program that threatens international peace, making it a major foreign policy concern in Washington.<sup>284</sup> Following the Iranian revolution in 1978 and the attack on the US embassy in Tehran, the US imposed heavy sanctions and declared the country a state sponsor of terrorism. This abruptly halted US partnership with Iran in the project to build up to 23 civilian nuclear power facilities.

Following the war with Iraq in the 1980s, Iran began weaponizing its nuclear program in response to the Iraqi hostilities with the help of Pakistani nuclear physicist Abdul Qadeer Khan. This involved kickstarting Iran's development in fuel fabrication, weapons-related research, and, in the 1990s, missile delivery systems.<sup>285</sup> As a signatory of the NPT, these actions directly violated the treaty and resulted in two decades of sanctions and resolutions from the IAEA and major world powers, as well as the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015 to freeze nuclear weapons activity in Iran. Similar actions have been taken against North Korea since their first nuclear test in 2006. Therefore, the agreement reached by Iran, the IAEA and the P5+1 countries can serve as a guide to a near-term agreement with the DPRK.

## The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

*2002-2013*

In 2002, an announcement by Iranian dissident group, the National Council of Resistance on Iran, revealed the existence of undeclared nuclear reactors.<sup>286</sup> These undeclared facilities violated the terms of the 1974 safeguard agreements with the IAEA- a condition under the NPT that requires signatories to declare nuclear facilities to verify they are not being used for weapons

---

<sup>284</sup> The timeframe from Iran signing the NPT and starting to weaponize its nuclear programs takes place over 17 years: 1970-1987. For a more detailed timeline and breakdown of events for the Iranian Nuclear Deal, see Davenport, Kelsey. "Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy With Iran." *Arms Control Association*, Jan. 2018.

<sup>285</sup> Sebenius, James K., and Michael K. Singh. "Is a Nuclear Deal with Iran Possible? An Analytical Framework for the Iran Nuclear Negotiations." *International Security*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2013, pp. 52–91., doi:10.1162/isec\_a\_00108. 60.

<sup>286</sup> Davenport, Kelsey. "Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy With Iran."

related activities. This sparked the implementation of a myriad of sanctions and resolutions by the IAEA and the UN Security Council's P5+1 countries (China, France, Germany, Russia, UK and US) requiring Iran to suspend enrichment and reprocessing operations. Iran was instructed to comply with the decision that the IAEA be granted access to all facilities to ensure protocols were being followed and the requirements of the resolutions were being met while more negotiations took place. Throughout the negotiations between Iran, the IAEA, and the P5+1 countries, one of the major conditions towards getting sanctions lifted in Iran was the assurance that their nuclear program would be used solely for energy and otherwise peaceful means, however, Iran was found in non-compliance countless times. These heavy sanctions, which included the freezing of foreign assets and trade bans, continued for the next decade while major powers continued to apply pressure towards reaching an agreement with the hostile nation.

### *2013-Today*

Following the election of Iranian president Hassan Rouhani in 2013, negotiations on reaching an agreement over Iran's nuclear program took a positive turn. The Joint Plan of Action (JPA) was signed in November 2013 by Iran and the P5+1 countries as an interim deal in the first steps towards reaching an agreement. The JPA included a first-phase plan that laid out actions to be taken by the participating parties over the next six-plus months while negotiations would continue. Some important achievements of the JPA included Iran gaining the right to enriched uranium and the lifting of sanctions that were devastating the economy. However, these conditions were under the stipulation that Iran halts any further progress in their nuclear program and the IAEA be granted additional access to their facilities for increased inspections<sup>287</sup>. This first phase served as a major milestone in the denuclearization of the country, and would reveal whether Iran was serious about reaching a final agreement.

In July 2015, the comprehensive nuclear agreement between Iran, the P5+1 countries, and the EU was completed. The deal prevents Iran from producing fissile material that can be turned into nuclear weapons, while allowing US and allied intelligence agencies to monitor the declared nuclear facilities. While these restrictions on the production of fissile materials are set to expire

---

<sup>287</sup> Davenport, Kelsey. "Iran, P5 1 Sign Nuclear Agreement." *Arms Control Today*, vol. 43, no. 10, 2013, pp. 20–23. JSTOR, JSTOR.

after 15 years, the parties have the authority to extend the restrictions if needed.<sup>288</sup> As a counterbalance to the limitations, the most economically damaging sanctions by the US and the EU would be lifted, upon the condition that Iran complies with uranium and plutonium production limitations and abides by the IAEA inspections.<sup>289</sup>

### *Limitations*

As with most deals and agreements, there are limitations to the JCPOA. The most prominent and concerning limitation is that the deal does not eliminate the nuclear program. With the lifted sanctions, Iran's economy has been able to recover almost to what it was before the decade of heavy sanctions. Once the agreement expires, Iran will have the economic strength to restart their nuclear program. Iran has also stated how easy it would be to revert to the previous program if the P5+1 countries do not hold up their end of the deal. This threat is a growing issue, as the Trump administration has recently "decertified" the agreement, alluding that the US no longer has an obligation to the agreed sanctions relief and could reinstate damaging sanctions.<sup>290</sup> As self-reliance is an important driver of Iranian policies, Iran does not want to rely on external supplies for critical components or material.<sup>291</sup> Adding more sanctions would only justify their fear that these could be taken away from them suddenly, leaving the Iranian administration in an unwanted position. The most likely outcome of this situation is Iran backing out of the deal all together, becoming a proliferation threat in a hostile region.

Another significant limitation revolves around Iran's intentions with the deal, and whether they intend on following through on their obligations. Iran has the longstanding goal of becoming the region's foremost political power and asserts its influence through the support of the Hezbollah and Hamas terrorist groups. This poses a significant threat to western nations who are political allies of Iran's regional opponent, Israel.<sup>292</sup> Backed by hostile forces, a failure of the West to

---

<sup>288</sup> Samore, Gary et al. 2015. *The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Definitive Guide*. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School.

<sup>289</sup> Samore, Gary et al. 2015. *The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Definitive Guide*.

<sup>290</sup> Laub, Zachary. "The Impact of the Iran Nuclear Agreement." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 13 Oct. 2017.

<sup>291</sup> Vishwanathan, Arun. "Iranian Nuclear Agreement: Understanding the Nonproliferation Paradigm." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2016, pp. 3–22., doi:10.1177/2347798916632321.

<sup>292</sup> DePetris, Daniel R. "The Limitations of the Iran Deal." *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 12 Apr. 2015.

meet their obligations of the deal would drive a deadly wedge between relations with Iran. The threat of nuclear weapons in an unstable region was a successful bargaining chip for Iran to strike a deal that would help to strengthen their regional influence. Despite reports that Iran has been complying with their obligations of the deal, that threat remains.

## **Similarities and Differences to North Korea**

### *Similarities*

The nuclear crises of Iran and North Korea share similarities in their intentions, hostility, and violations of the NPT.<sup>293</sup> Both nations were originally signatories of the NPT- Iran in 1970 and North Korea in 1985- but have since either violated its terms or withdrawn from the agreement. North Korea withdrew completely from the treaty in 2003 and Iran has violated its terms with repeated attempts at developing nuclear weapons since the 1980s. This disregard for nonproliferation poses a threat to the international community, as both have had the goal of becoming strong regional powers through the possession of nuclear weapons. The possession of this technology would allow for deterrence against their common enemies of the US and other western powers- a concern that has led to the crises we are in today. Both nations have also shown increasingly aggressive and offensive strategic uses of this technology by threatening use on regional allies or the US.

### *Differences*

Despite some shared qualities, the differences between the two nations and their respective crises far outweigh the similarities. Unlike North Korea, Iran has never reached the weapons-grade threshold in their nuclear development.<sup>294</sup> Because of this, it is easier to prevent the further development of nuclear weapons in Iran than it is in North Korea, as the DPRK has already been successful in developing nuclear warheads. Convincing the DPRK to give up their preexisting nuclear arsenal will be a significantly more difficult feat than prevention of such weapons in Iran. Aside from their developmental differences, Iran and the DPRK are on different political levels. Iran is an important regional actor that has a great influence over the Middle East and

---

<sup>293</sup> Landau, Emily. "Comparing the Nuclear Challenges Posed By North Korea and Iran." *The Jerusalem Post*, 25 Jan. 2018.

<sup>294</sup> Lecaj, Mentor. "North Korea's and Iranian Nuclear Program- Comparative approach." *AAB College*, 2016.

several terrorist organizations, while the DPRK is an isolationist nation. Comparatively, the influence that Iran has on its neighbors carries a heavier weight, but North Korea has a far more aggressive stance, which raises great concern. Finally, Iran was open to negotiations and signed a deal with the P5+1 countries because their economy was devastated by the imposed sanction. North Korea has had heavy sanctions imposed on them as well, but has used illicit means of acquiring the resources needed for their development, making the likelihood of signing a deal for sanctions relief less likely.

### **Can Iran be a Guide to North Korea?**

The Iranian case should not be used as a complete model for the situation in North Korea, but could serve as a stepping stone for establishing negotiations with the DPRK. The US strategy of sanctioning Iran until their economy was essentially devastated, was rather successful because of Iran's reliance on imports and exports. As North Korea relies on imported materials for technology and other essential goods to sustain life, a similar approach may be successful. However, the effort must not come from just the US. The US would need to convince China and Russia, North Korea's largest trading partners, to get on board with the sanctions towards the DPRK to see a possibility of negotiation. By sucking the DPRK's economy dry of resources like in Iran, further production of nuclear weapons and technology would come to a halt. However, North Korea is already a nuclear state and the US and its allies need to tread lightly.

An important aspect of the Iran deal that could be carried over to the crisis with North Korea is the use of scientists in these negotiations. Physicists Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and Ernest Moniz, former US Secretary of Energy, joined the negotiations for the JCPOA, and were integral players in brokering the deal.<sup>295</sup> Their expertise in nuclear energy and engineering assisted in building trust among the parties, and averting a miscalculation in capabilities. Being that the engineers and scientists behind North Korea's nuclear weapons program are treated with great prestige by the Kim regime, bringing the top scientific leaders of the DPRK and the US to the negotiation table could help to kickstart a potential deal.

---

<sup>295</sup> Colglazier, E. William. "War and peace in the nuclear age". *Science & Diplomacy*, vol. 6, no. 4 (December 2017).



# Policy Recommendations

*Rachel Paik*

## **A New Policy Framework for the Trump Administration**

This framework aims to redirect the policies of the current US Administration to avoid war by de-escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and providing a foundation for new peace talks that can ensure progress toward the denuclearization of the North Korean program. Our short-term goals focus on relieving tensions, increasing opportunities for dialogue and communicating peaceful intent to the DPRK. Our long term goals focus on multilateral negotiations to negotiate a peace treaty to end the Korean War, restore diplomatic relations, and provide economic reintegration for the DPRK in exchange for an incremental but verifiable denuclearization of their program.

### **Short Term Goals**

#### *Geopolitical Relations*

The US should lead intra-regional dialogue to: (1) restore lines of communication between DPRK and ROK military command to avoid the possibility of misfire. South Korea has previously suggested a front-line military hotline to reduce military threat levels. (2) Renew confidence in alliances with the ROK and Japan. To achieve this, the US should elect a White House special envoy to North Korea and an ambassador to South Korea and take the lead in communications between the ROK and Japan to prepare a strategy for defense. (3) Discuss its plans of action with regional neighbors, especially China, to form a unified stance by which to confront North Korea that also addresses the security concerns that threaten each nation.

#### *Executive Action*

The Trump administration should take measures to de-escalate tensions by (1) refraining from making threats to the regime, (2) agree not to inflict further punitive sanctions on the DPRK, and (3) agree no nuclear first use.

### *Trust-building*

Reciprocal action is necessary to start building trust between the US and the DPRK. To achieve this, the US can suspend bomber flights and submarine visits in exchange for a moratorium on missiles and weapons testing, and begin track II diplomatic talks, by hosting unofficial meetings and exchanging non-political figures like scientists, to help alleviate tensions. Taking these steps would demonstrate a genuine intentions to the DPRK and set the stage for restarting multilateral negotiations with a new focus on a building a peace regime. Although we would continue to call for CVID during negotiations, the US should not require CVID as a precursor to begin talks.

### **Long Term Goals of Multilateral Negotiations**

Multilateral negotiations should focus on ratifying a peace treaty to officially end the Korean War, restoring diplomatic relations, and providing economic reintegration for the DPRK in exchange for an incremental, but verifiable, denuclearization of their program.

This can be achieved by: (1) agreeing to a non-nuclear deployment pledge for Korean Peninsula. (2) negotiating a timeline for denuclearization. (3) enacting progressive sanctions relief & humanitarian aid to reward timely progress in denuclearization efforts. Humanitarian aid and economic aid could include food aid, medical supplies and medicine, and infrastructural development projects. (4) Offer suspension of US-ROK joint military drills, and a timeline for reduction of US troops on Korean Peninsula in conjunction with denuclearization efforts. The final goal will be denuclearizing the Korean peninsula by negotiating a peace treaty and normalizing diplomatic relations with the DPRK.

Officially ending the Korean War is a important step towards improving relations with the DPRK because it addresses the key concern Kim Jong Un has about his regimes' security. In conjunction, US normalization with the DPRK will open up communication and likely lead to the ROK and Japan normalizing relations in response. Once diplomatic relations have been established, the DPRK can develop deeper trade relations in NE Asia that would discourage them from engaging in future conflicts.

**THE HENRY M. JACKSON  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**  

---

**UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON**

