

LIVING WITH GHOSTS:

AMERICAN NARRATIVES CONSTRUCTING NORTH KOREA

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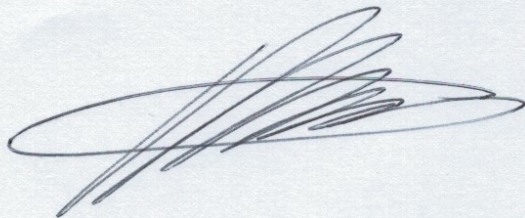
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ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DMZ	Demilitarised Zone
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
IAEA	International Atom Energy Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IR	International relations (the study of)
JSA	Joint Security Area
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
NAM	Non-aligned Movement
NPT	Non-proliferation Treaty
P5	Permanent Five (members of UNSC)
R2P	Responsibility to protect
SEZ	Special economic zone
UFG	Ulchi Freedom Guardian
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
Unicef	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, Richard Vogt, declare this thesis to be wholly my own work. It has not been presented for publication or appraisal within any other department or institution.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by several overlapping loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Signed Richard Vogt

Date 09 October 2015

ABSTRACT

While the Korean Peninsula looms as a regional security threat for most of North East Asia, North Korea is deliberately constructed as a global threat by the US. This thesis fills an important gap in the existing literature by exploring alternative questions raised by critical writers on what is often referred to as the “problem” of North Korea, especially in relation to memory. To organise these questions, Baudrillard’s order of simulacrum is employed to help explore the concept of memory curation and how it relates to a renewed aesthetic turn in international relations studies. Baudrillard’s simulacra is effective when also coupled with Derrida’s notion of post-Cold War hauntology. In current US foreign policy North Korea is marginalised, too often an afterthought of US international concern. Traditional security studies have failed to fully account for this marginalisation. Yet for Pyongyang the Korean War has never been forgotten, while Washington struggles to remember it. Acknowledging this, the core questions this thesis seeks to answer are: what have been the main narratives employed by the US, preventing North Korea’s normalisation in the international system? And, has this American behaviour helped in reinforcing regime stability in Pyongyang, allowing North Korea to fortify itself against American aggression?

Chapter One

Introduction: spectacle, simulation and spectre

In 2014, Sony Pictures announced completion of a film entitled *The Interview*, in which two incompetents are sent by the CIA to kill the leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Un.¹ It is the first film made in the United States of America (US) to feature the assassination of an existing head of state. In retaliation Sony Pictures allegedly suffered cyber crime by the North Korean government in order to protest against, and thwart, the movie's release. When the movie was preemptively withdrawn from screenings, US President Obama politely condemned Sony for failing to stand up for the ideal of American freedom. He declared that the US would respond 'proportionately' to the Pyongyang regime, preferring that Sony had negotiated with the government before its decision.² Neither the President nor the State Department chose at this time to release the (then unknown) information that at least two of its officials had viewed a pre-release copy of the movie and advised those involved regarding its potential use as anti-Pyongyang propaganda.³

Following the criminal allegations, North Korea was then under discussion to be reinstated to the list of state sponsors of terrorism from which it had been removed in October 2008.⁴ North Korea denied all allegations and announced it was willing to cooperate with any joint investigation recommended by the American administration. Meanwhile, beneath the radar of mainstream media –

¹ North Korea's official international title is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as South Korea's is the Republic of Korea (ROK). This thesis will proceed with usage of the vernacular titles, unless a direct reference is made in quotation to either.

² Rosenfeld, Everett. 2014, "Obama: I think Sony made a mistake by pulling *The Interview*". *NBR.com* (CNBC.com), 19 December 2014. Available <http://nbr.com/2014/12/19/obama-i-think-sony-made-a-mistake-by-pulling-the-interview/> accessed 21 August 2015.

³ Boot, William. 2014, "Exclusive: Sony emails say state Department blessed Kim Jong-Un assassination in *The Interview*". *The Daily Beast*, 17 Decemeber 2014. Available <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/12/17/exclusive-sony-emails-allege-u-s-govt-official-ok-d-controversial-ending-to-the-interview.html> accessed 22 March 2014.

⁴ As of August 2015, only Iran, Sudan and Syria remain on the list. US Department of State, "State Sponsors of Terrorism". Available <http://m.state.gov/mc14151.htm> accessed 25 August 2015.

and the spectacle of billboards and cartoonish dictator representations – an ex-Sony worker was unveiled as the culprit. In reprisal, despite this knowledge by at least some in the administration, the US shut down the North's internet; a largely symbolic act considering only the capital and outlying elites are likely to have regular access. Despite the vagaries of the 'hacking' claims it also increased sanctions on the North Korean government.⁵

As will become clear, this one trivial episode shows that spectacle, simulation and spectre determine the North Korean-US relationship. These concepts are a key concern of this thesis. What is it about North Korea that so rankles the current world power? It is a small country virtually shut off from the world, without expansive foreign policy ambitions. Its population is less than twenty-five million people unable to travel globally, let alone with freedom within their own country districts. As the Sony episode reveals, perhaps there is a different narrative to help explain North Korea's ongoing existence and arrogance in the face of the "end of history".⁶

*

Some accepted descriptors of the North Korean state include autarkic, sclerotic, schizophrenic, Orwellian, anachronistic, pariah, suicidal, hermitic and paranoid.⁷ It is regularly described as a rogue state, a garrison state defying international norms. Over a decade before the rise of Islamic State in Iraq and

⁵ US Department of the Treasury. 2015, "Treasury Imposes Sanctions Against The Democratic People's Republic of Korea", Press Centre, 2 January 2015. Available <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl9733.aspx> accessed 16 May 2015.

⁶ Bigelow, Jeff. 2014, "'The Interview' in historical perspective: endless war against North Korea". *Liberation*, 21 December 2014. Available <https://www.liberationnews.org/the-interview-in-historical-perspective-endless-war-against-north-korea/> accessed 18 August 2015.

⁷ French, Paul. 2014, *North Korea: State of Paranoia*. Zed Books: London, UK; New York, US.

Syria, North Korea was referred to as a death cult.⁸ A descriptor that is hardly ever applied, however, is that of a *normal* state. Like any other state in the international system, North Korea deals with issues of power, legitimacy and its place in a broader anarchical system of other states. It is – as Bruce Cumings once described – ‘another’ country.⁹ In this it is both the Other, yet also just another state. Furthermore, the normalisation of North Korea is explicit, ironically, in the fact that the great powers created it *tabula rasa*, and it is now an accepted member of the United Nations (UN).¹⁰ Its default representation is the current pre-eminent example of how “to learn to live with ghosts”, as Jacques Derrida described the post-Cold War angst of the West.¹¹ This concept organises the following chapters of this thesis, and goes to the fundamental reality of American constructions of North Korea.

1. *Hauntology: learning to live with ghosts*

The US is haunted by the past, as much as it fears the spectre of the Korean peninsula’s future if unable to contain Pyongyang’s ambition for self-reliance. In a world of equalised sovereignty among nations, it is not the North Korean state that is often objected to, or spoken of derisively, by its foes – it is the Pyongyang regime in particular. It is the self-reliant North Korean ideology of *juche* that is an affront to America, as much as it was to both Beijing and Moscow. Kim Il Sung explained that “*juche* means, in short, to live with your own sense and your own strength without following others blindly.”¹² The North Koreans now live

⁸ Becker, Jasper. 1998, *Hungry Ghosts: Mao’s Secret Famine*. Henry Holt & Company, LLC: New York, US: 313.

⁹ Cumings, Bruce. 2004a, *North Korea: Another Country*. Scribe Publications: Victoria, Australia; The New Press, US.

¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly. 1991, UNGA A/RES/46/1. Available <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r001.htm> accessed 8 September 2015.

¹¹ Derrida, Jacques. 1994, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Routledge: Oxon, UK; New York, US: xvii-xviii.

¹² Kim Il Sung. 1970, *Answers to the Questions Raised by Foreign Journalists*. Foreign Languages Publishing House: Pyongyang, Korea: 72-73.

with the *juche* calendar, year zero being the year Kim was born (1912) - it organises all aspects of their lives. The term first appeared in North Korean politics in 1955, at the time of the schism between China and the Soviet Union and the beginning of the non-aligned movement of states (NAM) wishing to be outside direct communist control. Whereas a majority of former Soviet client states were able to be absorbed into the new world order after 1991, North Korea refused to relent. It sought further insurance in both nuclear capabilities and closer ties with those other non-compliant governments (rogue states) unwilling to cede full sovereignty to what was perceived as a neo-imperial world system.

It is the *simulated* memories that North Korea evokes for the US - what this thesis also names as the ghosts evoked by Derrida - which are of most importance. There are three that have been constructed around North Korea and its regime. Past, present and future can be read chronologically as communist, rogue state and human rights abuser. In the eyes of Derrida ghosts are also spectres – they contain memories of past events so as to haunt future possibilities. While the Korean Peninsula looms as a regional security threat for North East Asia, it is considered global by the US. It is “a problem that threatens the security of the entire world”.¹³

Firstly, for Washington, North Korea primarily remains the last of the traditional Cold War communist states and its presence represents a history that continues to haunt the West. Secondly, it is presently and widely heralded to be a rogue state with a history of practicing state terrorism, abduction and assassination. Thirdly, Pyongyang is most recently, and will increasingly be framed in the future, a systematic human rights abuser and potentially the most egregious regime since World War Two. These are the three core American narratives

¹³ Bolton, John. US Department of State Archive. 2003, “A Dictatorship at the Crossroads”, Speech to East Asia Institute, 31 July 2003. Available <http://2001-2009.state.gov/t/us/rm/23028.htm> accessed 16 August 2015.

concerning North Korea and they exist as different lenses of a meta-narrative echoing the same sense of American superiority.

If one were to apply a framework to these narratives it could be referred to as a ‘*hauntology*’.¹⁴ The US is still haunted by the Korean War. At its most evangelical, American reportage represents North Korea as a time machine state intent on destroying its citizens by running a “gulag with nukes”.¹⁵ Cold War rhetoric played an enormous role in the country’s idea of emerging postwar geopolitics and its subsequent human rights framework. The threat of communism was used as a disciplinary device domestically and also an organising framework for its disparate foreign policies. While defending South Korea achieved ‘national interest’ goals, McCarthyism protected innocent civilians at home. The aim of this research is to investigate these three dominant narratives so as to gain more understanding of how American policy has both provoked *and* entrenched North Korean actions since the division of the Peninsula.

2. Ideology as a form of forgetting

Political ideology is a generator of the predominant memories in a society through recalling events, rewriting them for a different ideological perception or attempting to forget them. In the context of the Korean peninsula ideology has been central in two ways; *a)* North Korean propaganda dismissed by the US and South Korea, or *b)* in the eyes of the North, the wholesale South Korean swallowing of an imperial capitalist policy. There has been an increasing interest in a third way of approaching ideology, namely *c)* the acceptance that both may

¹⁴ Derrida, 1994: 10.

¹⁵ Becker, Jasper. 2005, “A gulag with nukes: inside North Korea”. *Open Democracy*, 19 July 2005. Available https://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/north_korea_2686.jsp accessed 19 January 2015.

have equal validity and consequence. The repeated insistence of both sides of the demilitarised zone (DMZ) to refer to the other as a ‘puppet regime’ of one of the great powers explains to us that the Korean War did not end in a victory for either side.¹⁶ If the war had resulted in defeat then the DMZ, that ‘last remaining Cold War tripwire’ dividing North from South at the 38th parallel, would not exist today. “In a sense” given this narrative, “the duty of the critical intellectual is exactly this *not forgetting*, this drawing to attention” of ideology that gains credence through the power to reproduce it.¹⁷

This thesis employs a reading of Jean Baudrillard that offers some suggestions on ideology worth examining, by way of his orders of simulacra. A simulacrum is an image (representation) of something that may appear as a substitute for the real. The simulacra is therefore the framework for these individual imitations. His understanding of social evolution led him to the following chain of representations:

- “-*Counterfeit* is the dominant scheme of the “classical” period, from the Renaissance to the industrial revolution;
- *Production* is the dominant scheme of the industrial era;
- *Simulation* is the reigning scheme of the current phase that is controlled by the code.”¹⁸

This logic follows linearly from the pre-industrial counterfeit to mass-production and then finally becomes subsumed beneath layers of technologic innovation. Simulation is present in both ideology *and* its discourse. In both the knowledge and the power to represent it. Militarily, this simulation is found most graphically on the Korean peninsula in the annual Washington-Seoul war

¹⁶ Feffer, John. 1999, “North Korea and the Politics of Engagement”. *Peace Review*, 11 (3): 415.

Martin, Bradley K. 2006, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty*. Thomas Dunne Books: New York, US: 62.

¹⁷ Edkins, Jenny. 1999, *Poststructuralism and International Relations: Bringing the Political Back In*. Lynne Rienner Publishers: Colorado, US; London, UK: 140.

¹⁸ Baudrillard, Jean. 1983a, *Simulations*. Semiotext(e), Inc: New York, US: 83.

simulation games. In the final simulacrum, Baudrillard refers to 'the code'. This is the idea of the individual victim being replaced by the preference for the numbers and letters of a particular missile, or more recently in the surveillance capabilities on an unmanned drone. Baudrillard never dismisses realism nor its aggressive claims to truth - he is more intent on attempting to uncover its propagandistic claims, coupled with its dubious moral compass.

While postmodern terms are increasingly employed in international relations (IR) theorising, there is a noticeable lack directed at studies relating to the Korean peninsula, as noted by David Shim.¹⁹ This is arguably due to the predominance of realist texts recognising North Korea's position as one of the only theatres of hot conflict during the Cold War. Its ongoing high level of threat perception, its nuclear capability and its alliances with states vexatious to the American Bloc are further problems for Washington. North Korea is one of the few states left that continues to reek of twentieth century history. It is also one of the last places in international relations that is deliberately presented and *re-presented* in this way – as a *memento mori* of a half-century of wars, both cold and hot. The aim of this thesis is therefore to describe, in a less conventional way, the means by which America has attempted to represent, simulate and then use spectral notions so as to stigmatise, yet – ironically – reinforce and stabilise successive North Korean regimes. While this is a chance to present “a form of dissent that celebrates difference”,²⁰ this thesis does not claim to offer the answer as meta-narratives often do.

¹⁹ Shim, David. 2014, *Visual Politics and North Korea: Seeing is Believing*. Routledge: Oxon, UK; New York, US: xi.

²⁰ Campbell, David. 1992, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. University of Minnesota Press: US: 4.

3. *The political aesthetics of simulation*

This thesis on American constructions of North Korea employs both the aesthetic and emotional turns in IR theory, especially as they relate to collective memory. Despite his insights, what appears to be lacking in Baudrillard's order of simulacra quoted above is the transition from simulation back to counterfeit (what is more commonly understood to be representation). Representation is the key to ideas of both memory and emotion in politics, especially through appearance as spectacle. This is what has been ignored in many 'poststructuralist approaches' of international politics.²¹ This helps securitise the spectre of future danger because images used politically not only "exalt the event, they also take it hostage".²² By holding on to the ghosts of the past – a war that was never won, one that was therefore studiously forgotten – the US has left a spectre that still needs to be resolved. That is, the spectre of an Armistice. When Derrida writes then of rogue states (*voyou*) he manages to highlight that all ideas come down to a turn and a return – of the *to come* involved in ideology.²³ The closure of a peace treaty for the peninsula is still, in Derridean terms, to come.

Through reference to spectacle, especially those tied up in memories of World War Two and the Cold War, the US has acted toward North Korea in an emotional and unpragmatic way. Whilst Kim Il Sung *did* profess an admiration for Hitler's aesthetics alongside an early admiration for Stalin's regime, this soon waned with both the Sino-Soviet split and Khrushchev's ideological unmasking of Stalin's brutality in 1956.²⁴ Largely relying on rethinking the standard field of

²¹ *ibid*: 18.

²² Baudrillard, Jean. 2002, *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Verso: London, UK; New York, US: 27.

²³ Derrida, Jacques. 2005, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*. Stanford University Press: California, US.

²⁴ Khrushchev, N.K. 1956, "On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences: Report delivered to the 20th Congress of the CPSU on 25 February 1956", in *The Stalin Dictatorship* (ed: Rigby, T.H). Sydney University Press: Sydney, Australia: 23-90.

political aesthetics, Crispin Sartwell approaches this through the phrase 'Leni Riefenstahl Meets Charlie Chaplin'.²⁵ The clownish dictator as earlier perfected by Chaplin is an ongoing ideological tactic in American political representation. 'Appearances' in both *Team America: World Police* and *The Interview* by Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un (to name but two of the most obvious examples) testify to the consistency of America's aesthetic trope. American constructions of North are reliant upon the "trace of the twentieth century cult of propaganda."²⁶ This aesthetic agenda employs Baudrillard's observation of the Korea disciplinary nature of the power relationship involved: "parody makes obedience and transgression equivalent".²⁷ Further, by linking the construction of knowledge with access to positions of power it can be seen how "simulacra are not only a game played with signs; they imply social rapports and social powers" through a "project of control and universal hegemony".²⁸ The attempted disciplining nature of such stereotypes hint at a deeper "terrified hostility that sometimes fends off terror with a burst of laughter", as recognised by Derrida.²⁹

If "Kim Jong Un is a caricature of a tyrant, a person too silly to be taken seriously" it is hard to imagine why the need for such exaggerated political rhetoric from the US.³⁰ Spectacle can thus be presented as an attempt at either securitisation or farce, whether through set security speeches or newspaper cartoons. It is a political tool that works best when it evokes memory and emotion (simulation) to create a sense of fear for one's national security in the future (spectre). If American citizens fail to understand the geopolitics of the Korean peninsula they can at least understand the incessant references to

²⁵ Sartwell, Crispin. 2010, *Political Aesthetics*. Cornell University Press: New York, US: 15-47.

²⁶ Sartwell, 2010: 38.

²⁷ Baudrillard, 1983a: 40.

²⁸ *ibid*: 88-89.

²⁹ Derrida, 1994: 58.

³⁰ Horsey, David. 2013, "Kim Jong Un is a pudgy punk with the power to create great misery". *LA Times*, 3 April 2013. Available <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/apr/03/nation/la-na-tt-pudgy-punk-20130402> accessed 26 May 2015.

previous dictatorial villains of the US. North Korea remains the *memento mori* of a communist world that Washington believes should have collapsed as symbolically as the Berlin Wall. Its fall, as a sign, “repeated over and over again, immediately attained the incontestability of all the other signs of democracy.”³¹

*

Such cross-disciplinary texts and ways of seeing are not academic elitism, as is often the criticism, nor are they “empty gestures which make up the politics of deconstruction”.³² They are fundamental to the way North Korea has been constructed by the US and its media. They may make for grand theoretical gestures,³³ but in this they avoid the obscurantist doublethink of institutional literature churned out by nuclear and security surveillance agencies. If “doublethink is a form of mental discipline whose goal (...) is to be able to believe two contradictory truths at the same time” American narratives seek to sever international relations from the memory of past deeds, now that history has allegedly ended.³⁴ The doublethink extends to US narratives of both North Korea’s dismal ability to feed its own citizens but also to its parallel global power via nuclear threat. These two arguments are hard to align when viewed rationally but “it seems a condition of political thought in a modern superstate to be permanently of at least two minds.”³⁵ This is the power of ideology, whether American or North Korean. The concepts are well rehearsed: Pyongyang’s unknowability, its nefarious foreign policy attitude that eschews modern open

³¹ Debord, Guy. 1992, “Preface to the third French Edition”, in 1994 (1967), *The Society of the Spectacle*. Zone Books: New York, US: 10.

³² Hussey, Andrew. 2001, “Spectacle, Simulation and Spectre: Debord, Baudrillard and the ghost of Marx”. *Parallax*, 7 (3): 68.

³³ Skinner, Quentin. 1985, *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (ed: Skinner, Q.). Cambridge University Press: UK: 19.

³⁴ Pynchon, Thomas. 2003, “Introduction”, in 1984 (Orwell, George). Penguin Modern Classics: x.

³⁵ *ibid*: xi.

diplomacy for barbaric retribution. It is furthermore “the worst place on Earth” because “we are not allowed to see the extent of it”.³⁶

Keeping in mind the order of simulacra, this thesis commences with the original (*counterfeit*) moment that created North Korea by the division of the peninsula. This is seen in the still-dominant communist narrative, employed by Washington and its allies, that Pyongyang is stuck in a Cold War ghetto. Discussions of collective memory are engaged with in order to situate the importance of state memory and, of equal importance, the place of ritual forgetting to both the US and North Korea. For the US, North Korea is one of the last communist ghosts, refusing to relinquish its pre-1991 history as most Eastern Bloc countries have done. The chapter focuses especially on both the DMZ and the annual Washington-Seoul war game simulations. These spectacles provoke Pyongyang’s elite into cyclical announcements of being ‘at war’, justified by the lack of a peace treaty after the Korean War. The discussion of North Korea’s transition to a rogue state – one independent of the superpower Cold War lens – is aided by a new focus on its historical links to middle eastern states not allied with the US.

The thesis then moves to discussion of the rogue state concept itself. This is a period in which America has been attempting to securitise North Korea’s isolation in the new world order following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. Pyongyang is therefore seen as an outlaw that is no longer contained by its security guarantors. This highlights its status as that of a state intent on employing terrorist activities. Most central to this period in US-North Korean relations has been the issue of nuclear weapons development. The constant frustrations in these negotiations with North Korea have been exacerbated by the engagement/isolation dynamic used by both sides – arguably due to domestic political agendas.

³⁶ Cha, Victor. 2012, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*. Ecco/HarperCollins: New York, US: 166.

That the rogue narrative has failed to fully capture the imagination of its citizens and the broader community of states, America has been moving toward the third ghost in the hauntology. This isolates North Korea as the archetypal human rights abuser as much as it self-designates the US as potential victor and saviour. The memories of past spectacular human rights abuses (in particular, concentration camps, gulags and show trials) are actively being applied as to warn of the spectres of future horrors. This chapter deals with the issue of human rights as a political tool, the use of sanctions and – as with the nuclear weapons agenda – the place that control of surveillance has within the US narratives. To enhance the understanding of these narrative shifts one needs to comprehend the history and the socialising impact of American bellicosity toward Cold War foes. This is where the increase in anti-American aggression since 9/11 complicates and completes the narrative of American ghosts in this thesis.³⁷ That does not imply *the end* of ghosts (any more than we should believe in the end of history), but perhaps a new turn of the wheel: a potential return to the original ghost. This is what Robert Gilpin expresses as “cycle(s) of growth, expansion and eventual decline”.³⁸ With these three narratives North Korea has been constructed, and continues to be constructed, by the US.

³⁷ Lankov, Andrei. 2014, “Why Kim Jong Un’s special envoy just met Vladimir Putin”. *NKnews.org*, 20 November 2014. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2014/11/why-kim-jong-uns-special-envoy-just-met-vladimir-putin/> accessed 9 May 2015.

³⁸ Gilpin, Robert. 1981, *War and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge University Press: New York, US: 177.

Chapter Two

Narrative: communist ghosts

1. *On Memory and Forgetting*

Of late there has been an increase in academic literature concerned with memory in the field of IR theory. This has evolved alongside work done as part of what has been termed an emotive turn in IR theory.³⁹ This scholarly work on memory shares a common narrative that seeks to distinguish between individual and/or collective memory. This thesis is concerned only with the macro-level theorising of official state memory – its formation as myth, its continuation through active appeals to nationalism, and its future in evoking spectres of past ghosts so as to legitimise the state’s monopoly on force.⁴⁰ The analysis of this occurring both in the past and future, the active component of hauntology, entails the “movement towards the analysis of memory as an organising principle of scholarly or artistic work.”⁴¹

It has been claimed by Ross Poole that states write collective memory in the first person, like individuals, through the investment citizens make in nationalist myths.⁴² Most importantly, “collective memory is ahistorical in so far as it

³⁹ Hutchison, Emma & Bleiker, Roland. 2014, “Theorising Emotions in World Politics”. *International Theory*, 6 (3): 491-514.

⁴⁰ “World politics can be fully understood in terms of a continuous struggle for the establishment of state identity.” Duncombe, Constance. 2011, “Foreign policy and the politics of representation: the West and its Others”. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 23 (1): 32-33.

⁴¹ Winter, Jay. 2010 [2006], “Notes on the Memory Boom: War, Remembrance and the Uses of the Past”. *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present* (ed: Bell, Duncan). Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, UK; New York, US: 54.

⁴² Poole, Ross. 2010, “Misremembering the Holocaust: Universal Symbol, Nationalist Icon or Moral Kitsch?”, in *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society* (eds: Gutman, Yifat; Brown, Adam D. & Sodaro, Amy). Palgrave Macmillan: UK; US: 31-49.

simplifies and is impatient with any kind of ambiguity”.⁴³ For North Korea this has been made explicitly true as the eight-volumes of Kim Il Sung’s autobiography testifies. His is a personal recounting of the formation of North Korea from the ashes of Japanese imperialism, in which the Soviet role is deliberately belittled. “When the Soviet force landed at the city, it had already been liberated... in this way the liberation of Korea was won through the struggle of the KPRA”.⁴⁴ Whereas for Kim Il Sung it was fascism and imperialism, America’s North Korean narrative relies on ghosts of communism and the Cold War - even more than it does the spectacle of the Korean War. This is one of the most perplexing angles at which to come at American narratives constructing North Korea: the war is barely visible at all. Yet for North Koreans the war in which they “inflicted an ignominious defeat” on the US has never ended.⁴⁵

When writers discuss the return of the Cold War,⁴⁶ it would be equally advisable to question whether it ever existed, whether it ended, or whether it was a popularised linguistic term for the standard balancing of global power. The Cold War certainly differed from previous models inasmuch as nuclear capability forestalled the ease with which larger powers were likely to engage in traditional conflict. Ultimately, however, it is the perception of the way conflict and engagement is framed and perceived. In the same way that North Korea declared in 1971 that President Nixon’s visit to Beijing was a defeat forced upon the US, it

⁴³ Fierke, K.M. 2010 [2006], “Bewitched by the Past: Social Memory, Trauma and International Relations”. *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present* (ed: Bell, Duncan). Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, UK; New York, US: 116.

⁴⁴ Kim Il Sung. 1992, *With the Century*. Available <http://www.korea-dpr.com/lib/202.pdf> accessed July 2015: 2020-2023.

⁴⁵ Kim Jong Un. 2015, “Kim Jong Un Makes Congratulatory Speech at 4th National Conference of War Veterans”. *KCNA Watch*, 26 July 2015. Available <http://kcnawatch.nknews.org/article/fbco> accessed 5 August 2015.

⁴⁶ Edwards, Lukas. 2014, *The New Cold War: Putin’s Russia and the Threat to the West* (2 ed.). Palgrave Macmillan/St Martins Press LLC: New York, US.

Legvold, Robert. 2014, “Managing the New Cold War: What Moscow and Washington Can Learn From the Last One.” *Foreign Affairs*, 93 (4). Available <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2014-06-16/managing-new-cold-war> accessed 24 June 2015.

still declares the Armistice a victory against imperialist forces.⁴⁷ Yet conversely the North has since been at a state of 'ready-at-war', which becomes more telling with the onset of military manoeuvres between the US and South Korea in the mid-1970s. The Cold War in this sense never ended in the Korean peninsula, though the US would have declared it over with the capitulation of the Soviet Union. The inability to forget the deconstruction of their homeland by wartime allies - followed by the aerial bombardment from the US-led UN forces - has meant that "the war is everywhere in today's Korea".⁴⁸ The trauma fixes the memory in the national conscious as much as Pearl Harbour and 9/11 has for the US.⁴⁹ Pyongyang translates as 'flat land', a reminder of the fact that 75% of its geography was flattened by superior US aerial power during the Korean War. Nearly 650 thousand tons of bombs (twenty percent of which were napalm) were dropped on North Korea as part of a "scorched-earth policy",⁵⁰ a quarter more than all used during World War Two's Pacific campaign.⁵¹ If forgetting is an equally crucial component of what is remembered, Pyongyang does not have the ability yet to do so. For America, the North has become a spectre (under the Armistice), and it has been waiting for the state and regime to collapse ever since 1989.

Memory has come to be used as a key concept in understanding current state behaviour. Initially this is through the creation of the state, whether by a war of independence, secession from a host state, or in the case of both Koreas,

⁴⁷ Reference taken from diplomatic cable at Document 1 (Appendix): GDR Embassy to DPRK, 13 March 1972.

Schaefer, Bernd. 2010, "Overconfidence Shattered: North Korean Unification Policy, 1971-1975." North Korean International Documentation Project, Working Paper 2. Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars: 31. Available <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/nkidp> accessed November 2014.

⁴⁸ Kim, Suki. 2014, *Without You, There is no Us: My secret life teaching the sons of North Korea's elite*. Rider/Ebury Publishing: London, UK: 11.

⁴⁹ Crockatt, Richard. 2003, *America Embattled: September 11, Anti-Americanism and The Global Order*. Routledge: London, UK: 9.

⁵⁰ Cumings, 2004a: 20. Martin, 2006: 85.

⁵¹ Armstrong, Charles K. 2010, "The Destruction and Reconstruction of North Korea, 1950-1960." *Asia Pacific Journal* Vol.8, 51 (2). Available http://www.japanfocus.org/site/make_pdf/3460 accessed 18 July 2015.

artificial and legislated intrusion. This is “the memory of that which carries the future”, the yet-to-come of memory.⁵² Not only does the past drive the present in North Korea, as recognised by Roland Bleiker, but it also haunts the future.⁵³ It was for this reason that Kim Il Sung decided upon familial succession. Only after seeing the way in which Stalin’s crimes were denounced by his successor did he decide that the idea of ‘generational turnover’⁵⁴ was to be avoided in North Korea;⁵⁵ yet another thorn in the side of an America wishing to get to an imagined future quicker. Bleiker reinforces this by noting that such questions concerning the control over memory are vital for the future more than they are in the present; “it thus becomes as much a political as a historical issue.”⁵⁶

There is also another memory to consider, the one repressed or deliberately forgotten. Not only does victor’s justice cement the loyalty of one’s own citizens, it expands the pliant audience through which to disseminate power. Victor’s justice decrees that control of history is one of the ideological trophies of a war won, of treaties agreed with opponents. This makes the Korean War doubly ironic. Because it was never won, ending as it did in an Armistice, it remains to this day with separate names in both South and North Korea. The North call it the Fatherland Liberation War, the South know it as the Korean War, arguably through American discourse.⁵⁷ These labels help order the ghosts of the war in line with the aims of both sides – liberation and self-defense, respectively. It was

⁵² Derrida, 2005: 86.

⁵³ Bleiker, Roland. 2009, *Aesthetics and World Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, UK; New York, US: 166.

⁵⁴ Wolfram, Mark A. 2011, *Getting History Right: East and West German Collective Memories of the Holocaust and War*. Bucknell University Press: Maryland, US: 21.

⁵⁵ The ‘Resolution of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’ (25 February 1956) urged “the complete overcoming of the cult of personality, which is foreign to Marxism-Leninism” - Khrushchev, 1956: 91.

⁵⁶ Bleiker, Roland & Hoang, Young-Ju. 2010 [2006], “Remembering and Forgetting the Korean War: From Trauma to Reconciliation”. *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present* (ed: Bell, Duncan). Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, UK; New York, US: 196.

⁵⁷ Kim Il Sung. 1981, *History of the Just Fatherland Liberation War of the Korean People*. Foreign Languages Publishing House: Pyongyang, Korea. Available http://archive.org/stream/HistoryOfTheJustFatherlandLiberationWarOfHteKoreanPeople/KoreanWar_djvu.txt accessed 19 July 2015.

the first war that America did not win. It was a stalemate war (though the North did gain Kaesong) in which an estimated four million people died, more than half being civilians, whilst entire Northern cities were razed. Korea became the first spectacular exchange of the Cold War era, recognition of the fact that the world had now entered the era of permanent war.

2. The forgotten war, the afterthought peninsula

The Korean peninsula was divided at midnight the day following the American atomic bombing of Nagasaki on 9 August 1945. Whilst Bruce Cumings rightly notes this division was presented to the victorious allies as a *fait accompli*, he fails to mention that this was not the first time that an “imaginary line” was used to divide north from south.⁵⁸ In 1902, Japan proposed that it divide the peninsula with Russia at the same line, in order to minimise conflict and to create two spheres of separate influence.⁵⁹ Before the eventual 1945 division the Cairo Conference was held between the United Kingdom (UK), the US and China in 1943: a meeting to discuss the ongoing war against Japan in Asia and the Pacific. President Roosevelt wished to position China as one of the ‘four policeman’ of Asia, this becoming crucial to its status as a P5 state upon the creation of the UN.⁶⁰ The dual purpose of this was to mould a postwar environment conducive to American national interests, whilst marginalising the ambitions of both Russia and the UK (ironically, Japan’s intent in 1902). To understand this helps explain why the US demanded that the UN legitimise the use of American and allied troops to aid South Korea in 1950. It was the American order that was being destabilised as much as it was the threat of

⁵⁸ Cumings, 2004a: ix-x.

The “imaginary line” is a quote from the US ambassador to the UN during the Korean conflict: Cumings, 2004a: 1.

⁵⁹ Oberdorfer, Don & Carlin, Robert. 2014, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (3ed.). Basic Books: New York, US: 4.

⁶⁰ US Department of State Archive. (2009), “The Cairo Conference, 1943”. Available <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwii/107184.htm> accessed 12 June 2015.

communism seeking new territories. The Cairo Declaration also determined that “in due course Korea shall become free and independent”.⁶¹ As with the suggestion of a Sino-Soviet-US trusteeship at the Yalta Conference in 1945, these were formative betrayals on the part of America that led to some of the lingering ghosts’ recalled by future North Korean leaders.⁶² The triumph of Mao’s communist party against the Kai-shek nationalists (attendant at Cairo) likewise further destabilised what America thought it had been assured in 1943, resulting in an American foreign policy that was often decided ad hoc by successive administrations.⁶³

Most of what is known about the beginning of the Korean War through the US narrative is this: on June 25 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel with the intent of (re)claiming the southern half of the peninsula. Thousands of US troops had been stationed in South Korea since the division, when the Defense Support Agreement had been signed January 1950, five months before Kim Il Sung’s decision to attack.⁶⁴ The mainstream Western narrative actively forgets the actions from 1943-1950, in particular the vagueness of the transition years between 1945 and the official declaration of both new Korean states in August 1948. In June 1948 the spectre of an inevitable civil war was raised, in light of two-thirds of South Korean citizens preferring reunification to division.⁶⁵ In this memory and forgetting it bears repeating what Jenny Edkins has noted: “as soon as the new state is established, it begins the process of producing a

⁶¹ Oberdorfer, Carlin: 4. Original transcript available <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1341677-cairo-declaration-1943.html> accessed 28 June 2015.

⁶² French, Paul. 2015, “Lingering Ghosts: World War II and the shaping of Modern Asia”. *The Diplomat*, 31 July 2015. Available <http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/lingering-ghosts-world-war-ii-and-the-shaping-of-modern-asia/> accessed 18 August 2015.

⁶³ Yahuda, Michael. 2011, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific (3ed.)*. Routledge: Oxon, UK; New York, US: 22.

⁶⁴ The full title of the agreement being “The Agreement between the United States and Korea to establish a Military Advisory Group”, 26 January 1950. Additionally, nearly 29,000 America troops are still positioned in South Korea, 2015.

⁶⁵ Strong, Anna Louise. 1949, *In North Korea: First Eye-Witness Report*. Available <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/strong-anna-louise/1949/in-north-korea/ch02.htm> accessed 4 May 2015.

single point of origin, through a legitimating narrative that takes the form of a heroic memory of struggle.”⁶⁶ Politics is about power and legitimacy, the ability for a state and its leaders to “retroactively constitute[s] the basis for its own authority”.⁶⁷ Often this takes the form of forgetting. For Kim Il Sung’s legitimacy, reminding North Koreans of the division of the peninsula by greater powers would have been hardly as credible for himself as the myth of a revered guerrilla leader resisting Japanese imperialism.

Ever since, the two sides have been discussing two separate war experiences. For North Korea it was the attempt to reunite a divided country, a civil war against an outside enemy. For America it was “a testing ground” in the containment of communism so as to halt the ideology north of the 38th parallel.⁶⁸ For both, it was about the need for ideological domination of their citizens. The Korean War was also America’s first foray into ‘creeping sovereignty’. Though the US-led mission was undertaken to defend the 38th parallel, once successful it pushed up into North Korea in an attempt to reclaim land for the South.

The division of Korea was originally intended as temporary. With the Armistice signed, the DMZ was built and the division became physical. This physicality became, in effect, the Kim dynasty’s greatest asset in being able to cordon off the outside world both physically and symbolically.⁶⁹ During the Cold War era, the semiotics of ‘three worlds’ was widely accepted, though without any fixed reality:

⁶⁶ Edkins, Jenny. 2010 [2006], “Remembering Relationality: Trauma Time and Politics”. *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present* (ed: Bell, Duncan). Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, UK; New York, US: 105.

⁶⁷ Edkins, 1999: 5.

⁶⁸ Anderson, Clinton & Biffle, Leslie. 1950, “The Truth About Korea”. Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. Available http://trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-18-14.pdf#zoom=100 accessed 18 February 2015: 3.

⁶⁹ “Local despotisms have always thrived on their ability to maintain closed frontiers”. Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2003, *The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World*. The New Press: New York, US: 131.

the divisions were simulated by ideological preference.⁷⁰ In discussions of American simulation however, it is often more logical to speak of dissimulation (or perhaps, misinformation): for the US this predominantly involves its inability to confess to coercive and ideological control over client states throughout the Asian and Middle Eastern region. Most fundamentally, the situation was one of security for the US. For North Korea it was far more elementary: it was one of survival.

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This brings us to a key factor in national memory: commemoration, and the political art of spectacle. Commemoration is a complex action that involves the simulated yearning of a nation's citizenry, mostly uninvolved with the original event. Aesthetic representations such as memorials and museums are employed by the state as part of what Bickford and Sodaro term "future-oriented commemorative sites".⁷¹ This involves all orders of Baudrillard's original simulacra. The counterfeit (the original site), the mass production (souvenirs, citizen photos and replicas) and simulation (memory, both past and future) – all are condensed into one spectacle. The Korean War Memorial in Seoul features an 'Interactive Combat Simulator' not dissimilar to computer games like *Doom*, which seeks to actively create collective memory sympathetic to South Korea's memory of the war.⁷² In the US, the Korean War Memorial has a ghostly aspect, symbolic soldiers' reflections cast upon a wall. It lacks the vertical pride of other monuments in the vicinity. Even the graves of returned victims from the war simply state 'Korea', as if no one knows precisely what else to say about the

⁷⁰ Bonura, Carlo J. 1998, "The occulted geopolitics of nation and culture: situating political culture within the construction of geopolitical ontologies". *Rethinking Geopolitics* (eds: Ó Tuathail, G. & Dalby S.). Routledge: London, UK; New York, US: 101.

⁷¹ Bickford, Louis & Sodaro, Amy. 2010, "Remember Yesterday to Protect Tomorrow: The Internationalisation of a New Commemorative Paradigm". *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society* (eds: Gutman, Yifat; Brown, Adam D. & Sodaro, Amy). Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, UK; New York, US: 67.

⁷² Bruce, Scott Thomas. 2010, "Memorializing Contested Space". *Peace Review*, 22: 233.

conflict.⁷³ The aesthetics of the memorial, and the silence of the graves, speak to the history of the war.

“By calling the Korean conflict a ‘forgotten war’, we both name it, and we remember it – a paradox,” reflects Bruce Cumings.⁷⁴ In this instance America commemorates what it wishes to remember, which is very little. This aligns with what David Campbell refers to as ‘ritual forgetting’ by politicians and scholars. It is the “silences, omissions and limitations of the traditional approaches” to political science that critical theory seeks to open up to a wider conversation.⁷⁵ It took as long as four decades for a memorial to be placed in the National Mall in Washington, well over a decade after the Vietnam memorial was unveiled, arguably a far more controversial part of American history. Its forgotten nature may in part be due to the fact that the Korean War lacked the spectacle of the later Vietnam campaign. It predated the nightly news phenomenon, the footage, the peace marches, and the slew of movies trying to reclaim the pride of American soldiers from the moral ambiguity that became the seventies. Korea became a quiet footnote, or coda, to World War Two. The “glow of rightness” that accompanied the defeat of Germany on the continent and Japan in the Pacific soon faded with the commencement of limited wars that lacked the human rights justification (then) recently ascendant in international law.⁷⁶ North Korea became an afterthought in “the ‘bandwidth’ of attention” (that) could accommodate only so many issues”,⁷⁷ as it has been since the end of the Cold War era other than during both nuclear crises (the apex of which were 1994 and 2002).⁷⁸

⁷³ Edwards, Paul M. 2000, *To Acknowledge a War: The Korean War in American Memory*. Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut, US: 31.

⁷⁴ Cumings, 2004a: 4.

⁷⁵ Campbell, 1992: 248.

⁷⁶ Zinn, Howard. 1990, “Just and Unjust War”, in (1997), *The Zinn Reader*. Seven Stories Press: New York, US: 265.

⁷⁷ Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 434.

⁷⁸ Even during Obama’s infamous Pacific Pivot, a White House veteran claimed that about 80% of the National Security Council meetings were still focused solely on the

3. *Ideology as simulation and spectacle*

Guy Debord makes a number of claims about ideology at the end of *The Society of the Spectacle*. In his desire to tackle the subject of 'ideology in material form' - that is, the spectacle - he offers the following assessments:

"The spectacle is the acme of ideology (...) it exposes and manifests the essence of all ideological systems: the impoverishment, enslavement and negation of real life."

"...ideology, which is the *abstract* will to universality and the illusion thereof, finds itself legitimated in modern society by universal abstraction and by the effective dictatorship of illusion."

"'total ideology' - a totalitarian worldview.. ideology - the *last unreason*".⁷⁹

These insights return us to the fundamental truth rarely discussed when American narratives of North Korea arise. That is, *both* parties have a totalitarian or essentialist need to fit the other into a self-serving 'enslaving' lens. The ideological nature of the politics of both justifies their ability to be party in their "role of the knowledge/ignorance, consciousness/unconsciousness" creator of narrative.⁸⁰ North Korea is easily caricatured for this through the continuation of a comical form of Cold War spectacle that is seen mostly now in Western movies and media.⁸¹ The comedy is usually tinged with a triumphal aggression that is want to declare the North Korean leader's international isolation, his "absurdly comical figure" that "provide us all with nothing but laughs" if he were

Middle East. *The Economist*. 2015, "A Dangerous Modesty". *The Economist*: Briefing, 6 June 2015: 14.

⁷⁹ Debord, 1994 (1967): 150-151.

⁸⁰ Edkins, 1999: 83.

⁸¹ Keneally, Meghan. 2015, "How Kim Jong Un, North Korea's Threats Evoke Cartoon Villains". *ABC News*, 4 February 2015. Available <http://abcnews.go.com/International/kim-jong-un-north-koreas-threats-evoke-cartoon-villains/story?id=28725001> accessed 28 June 2015.

not so evil and villainous as to be running “an Orwellian alternative reality”.⁸² Through such insights aesthetic approaches to international politics are able to “recognise that the difference between represented and representation is the very location of politics.”⁸³ The US however, and their driving ideology of the triumphant liberal market prefers the ‘diffuse’ spectacle; one that it is able to drip-feed such hyperbolic attacks to non-state media sources.⁸⁴ This is a more nuanced form of control, one that is able to *dissimulate* ideology. It continues to dismiss the disappointment that “the success of totalitarian movements among the masses meant the end of illusions” throughout Western European nations.⁸⁵

In such representations, to conflate communism as being a single political movement (which tends to be the default US essentialist setting) ignores much of its history since the end of World War Two. It also dismisses the provocations and justification for North Korea’s *juche* ideology; an ideology that has seen it at times act against what the US would perceive to be Pyongyang’s national interest. It is this *juche* ideology that has been ingrained in society to foster regime legitimacy. After the exposure of Stalin as a brutal dictator antithetical to the worker, successive Soviet governments despised both Mao and Kim for their personality cults.⁸⁶ 1956 was pivotal not just for the Hungarian Uprising against the Soviets but also a renewed attempt to legislate Il Sung’s ideology at part meetings.⁸⁷ Following the adoption of some market reform in the late 1970s, China began to isolate itself – as much as North Korea reciprocated – from North

⁸² Horsey, 2013.

⁸³ Bleiker, Roland. 2001, “The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory”. *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, 30 (3): 512.

⁸⁴ The diffuse spectacle is “the Americanisation of the world”. Debord, Guy. 1998, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*. Verso: London, UK: 5.

⁸⁵ Arendt, Hannah. 1976 [1967], *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Harvest Books, Harcourt Inc: San Diego, New York, US; London, UK: 312.

⁸⁶ Lankov, Andrei. 2015, “How Comrade Mao was perceived in the Soviet Union.”

Russia Beyond the Headlines, 1 September 2015. Available http://m.asia.rbth.com/blogs/2015/09/023/how_comrade_mao_was_perceived_in_the_soviet_union_48893.html accessed 1 September 2015.

Harden, Blaine. 2015, *The Great Leader and the Fighter Pilot*. Mantle: Oxford, UK: 223.

⁸⁷ DPRK. (no date), “Foundations of Socialism: Construction of the Foundation of Socialism”, Official Webpage of the DPR of Korea. Available http://www.korea-dpr.com/foundation_socialism.html accessed 15 August 2015.

Korea's resistance to change. The US never tried to engage at any point, but kept isolating all sides of the triangle. History may have been written far differently now if Washington had taken the chance to engage, even if initially rebuffed.

As Gorbachev stated in 1987 when announcing *novoe myshlenie* (new thinking): “diversity of our movement is not synonymous with uniformity”.⁸⁸ This rhetoric is contrary to the reception given to it in Pyongyang. Troubled by the pace of ideological reform sought by one of its major sponsors, Kim Il Sung once again swung allegiance back toward the safety of China, which it had tilted away from following Mao's death and Deng Xiaoping's 'Beijing Spring' initiatives of the late seventies.⁸⁹ These initiatives mimicked the USSR in 1956, a way for the state to facilitate discussion of the truth repressed about the Mao regime. North Korea was fast running out of reliably communist allies. The US continued to see a monolithic communism in the second world rather than several, competing communisms.⁹⁰

In this North Asian example of orientalism, communism “can be made to serve as an illustration of a particular form of eccentricity”.⁹¹ Such a neat logic begins to break down, however, if there is something of strategic value for the US. In 1972 President Nixon met with Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou Enlai; a rapprochement based in the main on gaining leverage after Sino-Soviet tensions, though official records also credit the US with wishing to improve relations with communist governments in the region.⁹² Within this event there remain

⁸⁸ Byun, Dae-ho. 1991, *North Korea's Foreign Policy: The Juche Ideology and the Challenge of Gorbachev's New Thinking*. Research Centre for Peace and Unification of Korea: Seoul, South Korea: 190.

⁸⁹ Pyongyang made a similar switch of allegiance following the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, deeming Moscow to be acquiescent to Washington's force. Martin, 2006: 125.

⁹⁰ Westoby, Adam & Hill, Roland J. 1992, “Communism and Political Evolution”. *Journal of Communist Studies*, 8 (1): 160-161.

⁹¹ Said, Edward. 2003 [1978], *Orientalism*. Penguin Modern Classics: 102.

⁹² US Department of State. (no date), “Milestones: 1969-1976: Rapprochement with China, 1972”. US Department of State Office of the Historian. Available

competing opinions. While some aver that the Sino-American détente was a constraint on North Korea's self-reliance in the future, other analysts conclude that the North was happy to have questions of Korean unification being presented by Beijing for serious consideration.⁹³ Five years later with the end of Mao's government, North Korea again tilted toward the USSR illustrative there never was a single monolithic communism. There were only competing spheres of power and their attempts to be liberated from the events of both 1956 and 1968.⁹⁴ By its very nature foreign policy is focused on the Other, the foreign. This reiterates the tendency toward US essentialism and its use of simulacrum ideology in foreign policy; its ability to "colonise the present, reduce the other to the same, even confuse the map for the 'real thing'."⁹⁵

What America has never acknowledged about North Korea is this obvious need to seek haven with either Beijing or Moscow in order to survive. It sought not just a security guarantee but also an ideological tripartite contest. The US misunderstood this behaviour through the lens of war and Otherness. The construction of North Korea as a *prima facie* Other – regardless of the label of the time (communist, rogue, human rights abuser) – amounts to the same narrative. It is how America is able to define itself as a paragon of freedom and liberty in contrast. If communism was not such a perceived threat it is arguably true that the US would have persisted with an alternate grand narrative to justify overseas intervention and domestic discipline.

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<http://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/rapprochement-china> accessed 18 August 2015.

⁹³ "The Nixon visit created panic in Pyongyang because Kim feared he might not even be consulted when the two giants decided Korea's fate": Becker, 2005: 119.

⁹⁴ Ely, Geoff & Nield, Keith. 1995, "Starting over: the present, the post-modern and the moment of social history". *Social History*, 20 (3): 357.

⁹⁵ Der Derain, James. 1998, " 'All but war is simulation' ". *Rethinking Geopolitics* (eds: Ó Tuathail, G. & Dalby S.). Routledge: London, UK; New York, US: 262.

The war did not end this, as much as the war did not end. Ghosts of Korea made their way through to the Vietnam War – the second theatre of hot conflict during the Cold War. The complicated relationship America had with the un-won war would soon be replayed in the jungles of Vietnam. The representation of ‘jungle’ warfare was undoubtedly a xenophobic and racist ‘dog-whistle’ to Americans following the events. Racism has been strewn throughout the coverage of both smaller hot wars in Asia, so much so that “Americans lose any sense of embarrassment or self-consciousness about the intricate and knotty problems of racial difference and Otherness when it comes to North Korea and its leaders.”⁹⁶ It began with the war reportage – if not in the decision of the superpowers to divide the peninsula without recourse to the ‘silenced’ voices of the Koreans – and has been endemic in media portrayal ever since. This has allowed the American memory to auto-dictate and in doing so to trample alternate voices.

Memory is, however, never finished; there is constant rewriting in an attempt to get history right.⁹⁷ This thesis understands this process of rewriting as “a returning or haunting”, and it can be seen even in the border skirmishes on display at the DMZ during August 2015.⁹⁸ These reached prominence only upon the media spectacle of missiles,⁹⁹ though previously both North and South Korea had been directing propaganda at the other side in a form of “psychological warfare” through walls of loudspeakers.¹⁰⁰ Here, indeed, was a *spectacular* display of ideology.¹⁰¹ The limited skirmishes that were to follow were based

⁹⁶ Cumings, 2004a: 49.

⁹⁷ Wolfgram, 2011.

⁹⁸ Derrida, 2005: 8.

⁹⁹ Derrida notes the ability of the media to ‘spectralise’ its implicit messages, 1994: 63.

¹⁰⁰ Park Juhwa. 2015, “Psychological Impact of Loudspeaker Broadcasting against North Korea”. Korea Institute for National Unification: Online Series: CO15-24. Available http://www.kinu.or.kr/eng/pub/pub_05_01.jsp?bid=EINGINSIGN&page=1&num=195&mode=view&category= accessed 28 August 2015.

Soon Yeon. 2015, “NK vows to retaliate against S. Korea, U.S. over upcoming military drill”. *Yonhap News Agency*, 13 August 2015. Available <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2015/08/13/0200000000AEN20150813001751315.html> accessed 18 August 2015.

¹⁰¹ Domestic use of loudspeakers proclaiming state ideology in factories (etc) has long been a tool of North Korean politics. Martin, 2006: 666.

almost entirely on the old Cold War antagonisms of ideology and pride; the debate over which side had the best solution for the Korean people of the future. It was bellicose ideology more than a real threat to the security of the region. It was also an echo of events from October 2014 that saw the North shooting at South Korea after it sent balloons to the North, filled with political pamphlets.¹⁰² Despite the North's talk of "burning our hearts with the strong will to wipe out the war provocateurs and achieve the country's reunification without fail", life went on as normal in the Pyongyang capital.¹⁰³

Under-reported to this day, in an attempt to stigmatise the North as war-mongering and irrational, was that North Korean was responding to the annual US-South Korean war games on the peninsula. The Ulchi Freedom Guardian war games (UFG previously known as Team Spirit) have had a history of heightened tension between the two Koreas.¹⁰⁴ On 4 August 2015, two South Korean soldiers suffered near-fatal injuries from a landmine near the DMZ, in an event eerily similar to one that occurred in 1976. From the media complicity over blame and the logics of state behaviour presented in such events, it would appear that the South has at this stage won the current history war. This, despite President Park's declaration of total retaliation should the North strike further. With reportage of eight fighter jets that "swept through the sky (...) simulating bombings of enemy targets", on a deliberately provocative course, it would not be hard for Kim Jong Un to translate such actions as a heightened

¹⁰² Ibrahim, Fauziah. 2014, "The two Koreas: From words to war?" *Al Jazeera*, 11 October 2014. Available <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2014/10/two-koreasfrom-words-war-2014101114295137438.html> accessed 5 July 2015.

¹⁰³ Macdonald, Hamish. 2015a, "As N.Korea inches 'close to war', life in Pyongyang reportedly 'completely normal'". *NKnews.org*, 21 August 2015. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2015/08/as-n-korea-inches-close-to-war-life-in-pyongyang-reported-as-completely-normal/> accessed 24 August 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Macdonald, Hamish. 2015b, "U.S., South Korea resume military drills following brief suspension: Pentagon". *NKnews.org*, 21 August 2015. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2015/08/u-s-south-korea-resume-military-drills-following-brief-suspension-pentagon/> accessed 23 August 2015.

security situation for North Korean citizens.¹⁰⁵ The final truce, after a marathon four day negotiating session, involved South Korea withdrawing the loudspeakers and North Korea admitting 'regret' over its use of landmines. Critics have immediately pointed to the vague linguistics of Pyongyang's recant. The same critics also – when discussing Japanese war crimes – realise China and South Korea's need for an apology, without mentioning the North.¹⁰⁶ The stalemate war returns to haunt us, sixty years on.

4. Smells like Team Spirit

One particular event is representative of the nature of most US-North Korea interactions during the Cold War era. At the west end of the DMZ exists the Joint Security Area (JSA), a small trepanned zone where the highly militarised fence did not extend to the ocean. In essence, this event is about the pruning of an overly large poplar tree.¹⁰⁷ Realism has been dominant throughout the past century in IR paradigms due to its view of agency, in particular the value of power. Liberalism has tended to prefer the idea of structure as the defining force. What both meta-theories often miss is what Baudrillard captures in his concept of simulation: the notion that neither could adequately account for such a bizarre and meaningless event as this exchange, resulting in the death of two American military personnel. This is the event so echoed in the 2015 DMZ events mentioned above, a replay of Cold War history.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ The Korea Herald. "S. Korea, U.S. fly 8 combat jets in show of force against N. Korea". *The Korea Herald*, 22 August 2015. Available <http://m.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150822000066> accessed 26 August 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Lee Sung-Yoon & Przystup, Zach. 2015, "Japan's prime minister needs to actually apologise for his country's crimes". *Foreign Policy*, 1 May 2015. Available <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/japan-shinzo-abe-sorry-apologies/> accessed 28 August 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 59-66.

¹⁰⁸ Associated Press. 2015, "Cold War allies: Beijing may moan in event of North Korea nuke test, but is Kim Jong-un listening?" *South China Morning Post*, 19 September 2015. Available <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/1859652/china-respons-firmly-any-north-korea-nuke-test-how-much> accessed 19 September 2015.

At the JSA, there was capability for both Koreas to maintain visual contact with the other by way of guard towers. The growth of this lone tree was causing obstruction. Ultimately, there was confrontation between a joint US-South Korean team and their North Korean foes resulting in an American serviceman being bludgeoned to death. A fellow serviceman also died. “Within days the killings would result in the gravest threat of all-out war from the 1953 Armistice to the nuclear crisis of the 1990s.”¹⁰⁹ Was this really a crisis over the trimming of a tree? Or was the tree a cipher, an image of something more?¹¹⁰ Baudrillard would offer that “behind the baroque of images hides the grey eminence of politics” and that therefore “at stake has always been the murderous capacity of images.”¹¹¹ This incident is symbolic of the vexed and antithetical relationship America maintains with non-compliant states with which they do not hold secure diplomatic relationships. This was especially true during the heightened suspicion of the Cold War era. The level of threat perception north of the DMZ due to both ongoing *juche* scaremongering and American collusion with Seoul inevitably created the type of paranoid peninsula so often spoken of, one still present in 2015.¹¹² Surrounded by untrustworthy allies (ever since the Sino-Soviet split), and fringed by both Japan and South Korea – compliant servants of Washington’s North East Asia strategy – North Korea had spent over two decades percolating a hatred of the Other that found its reflected face in McCarthyism in America.

To put the above event within a fuller context: two months earlier American and South Korean forces completed their first war game manouevres amid much

¹⁰⁹ Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 60.

¹¹⁰ Cumings, Bruce. 1997, “Time to End the Korean War”. *The Atlantic*, February 1997. Available <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1997/02/time-to-end-the-korean-war/376775/> accessed 6 July 2015.

¹¹¹ Baudrillard, 1983a: 10.

¹¹² Rodong Sinmun. 2015, “U.S. Cannot Evade Its Blame For Escalating Tensions on Korean Peninsula”. *Rodong Sinmun*, 17 September 2015. Available http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-09-17-0007 accessed 19 September 2015.

pomp and ceremony. Named initially as Team Spirit, the event has run nearly annually ever since. Through these simulations, the US has enabled the ongoing crisis on the peninsula by both encouraging and reinforcing North Korean animosity. There are two main reasons. Firstly, North Korea has been since the Armistice nothing but consistent in one proviso: American troops must withdraw itself and the 'nuclear umbrella' from the peninsula.¹¹³ In response to this, the US gradually transferred more troops and nuclear weapons to South Korea by referencing Pyongyang's recalcitrant and counter-productive behaviour. Secondly, America has never fully focused on the peninsula's insecurity dilemma. This is a product of both the democratic electoral cycle at home as much as it is its focus on the Middle East as the ongoing core foreign policy adventure. Below are provided more examples that highlight how engagement with the North ebbs and flows, and how this impacts on Pyongyang's behaviour during the annual war simulations in the South.

In both 1984 and 1985, Red Cross talks were cancelled by North Korea in protest over the Team Spirit exercises; the talks were subsequently resumed after the war simulations were completed.¹¹⁴ The following year the cancellation recurred with the same reason given. This time however, the talks were never resumed. In the 1989 exercises there were 19 marine deaths, proving that simulation is a dangerous game even if within one's control.¹¹⁵ "Americans tended to scoff at Pyongyang's fears that the annual field exercise was a threat to its national security", but the US likewise considers a cyber-attack not by North Korea to be sufficient warrant to ramp up sanctions.¹¹⁶ The paranoia evidently runs both ways.

¹¹³ Martin, 2006: 113.

¹¹⁴ Buzo, Adrian. 1999, *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea*. Allen & Unwin: St Leonards, Australia: 151.

¹¹⁵ Rivera, Carla. 1989, "19 Californian Marines Die in S. Korea". *LA Times*, 20 March 1989. Available http://articles.latimes.com/1989-03-20/news/mn-243_1_south-korea accessed 16 July 2015.

¹¹⁶ Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 213.

Team Spirit ran annually from 1976-1993.¹¹⁷ After that final year's events which North Korea used as justification for withdrawing from the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT), the US and South Korea suspended manoeuvres indefinitely.¹¹⁹ Having agreed to suspend for the following two years, American relations with North Korea improved. In 1994 Pyongyang signed the Agreed Framework with the US, limiting its nuclear ambitions so it could be supplied by alternative sources through the KEDO arrangement. However, even in times of peace, Hitler is never far from the more hawkish of the US Republicans who decipher engagement to equate a Chamberlainesque appeasement reminiscent of the late 1930s.¹²⁰ The original intent of these drills was to simulate self-defense measures against potentially negative North Korean scenarios such as invasion, collapse and a mass refugee exodus. Of late these drills have begun to employ forward self-defense as shown by the 2012 Key Resolve and Foal Eagle Operations, which simulated 100 thousand South Korean troops crossing the DMZ in the likelihood (according to US analysts) of regime collapse following a flawed succession.¹²¹

With the reinstatement of the annual war-gaming in 1997, Pyongyang declared "if the puppet regime provokes a war in collusion with outsiders, it will meet a thousandfold retaliation".¹²² South Korea is typically perceived as the junior, pliant partner by the North in official state editorials regarding the country's puppet-like 'flunkeyism' (*sadaejuui*: reliance and subservience to a master),¹²³

¹¹⁷ Global Security. Available <http://globalsecurity.org/military/ops/teamspirit.htm> accessed 17 July 2015.

¹¹⁹ Martin, 2006: 488-489.

¹²⁰ DiMuccio, Ralph & Kang Kym-Gu. 1998, "The Irony of U.S. policy towards North Korea". *Peace Review*, 10 (2): 279.

¹²¹ Hong, Christine. 2013a, "The Mirror of North Korean Human Rights: Technologies of Liberation, Technologies of War". *Critical Asian Studies*, 45 (4): 578.

¹²² KCNA Watch. 1997, "Rodong Sinmun berates Kim Young Sam regime for anti north exercises". *KCNA Watch*, 23 August 1997. Available <http://kcnawatch.nknews.org/article/cc54> accessed 18 July 2015.

¹²³ Cotton, James. 1987, "Ideology and the legitimization crisis in North Korea". *Journal of Communist Studies*, 3 (4): 92.

especially as it was never a signatory to the Armistice.¹²⁴ This both reinforces that aggressive signalling does not solve the problem on the peninsula but perhaps, even more so, that the US needs this level of aggression from North Korea to further justify its military arsenal and troops remaining there. After numerous name changes since Team Spirit, the UFG exercises are now the largest of its kind in the world; war simulation *in extremis*. Recently acquiring a hyper real component, the 2012 drill involved 600 users in what can only be described as a virtual Olympic Games.¹²⁵ From military-industrial, to simulation-realism, computer games like *Doom* have long been used by Marine Corps and are now part of the ‘military-entertainment complex’.¹²⁶ This has also been visible in Google’s acquisition of American military-industrial suppliers.¹²⁷ Additionally, these annual war exercises were doubled in 2012 to two months as an aggressive signal following Kim Jong Un’s accession to power. Recently there was an attempt at softening the American intent of the exercises when in 2014 US officials visited Pyongyang (the first visit in two years) before the UFG exercises. No incidents occurred.¹²⁸ The following year, isolation predictably followed engagement: for a week newspapers ran doomsday stories on the likelihood of war on the peninsula.¹²⁹ This was nothing new, though for media with short-term memory it was a sensational shift in the region’s politics.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Suh Bo-hyuk. 2014, “The Militarization of Korean Human Rights”. *Critical Asian Studies*, 46 (1): 6.

¹²⁵ Olympic Games being also the codeword for the US cyber attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, smuggled in with thumb drives. Sanger, David E. 2012, “Obama Ordered Sped Up Wave Of Cyberattacks Against Iran”. *The New York Times*, 1 June 2012. Available http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/01/world/middleeast/obama-ordered-wave-of-cyberattacks-against-iran.html?_r=0 accessed 18 July 2015.

¹²⁶ The US has been keeping a “PC-based Wargames Catalog”: Lenoir, Tim & Lowood, Henry. 2002, “Theaters of War: the Military-Entertainment Complex”. Stanford University. Available [http://web.stanford.edu/class/sts145/Library/Lenoir-Lowood TheatersOfWar.pdf](http://web.stanford.edu/class/sts145/Library/Lenoir-Lowood%20TheatersOfWar.pdf) accessed 8 August 2015.

¹²⁷ Lynn III, William J. 2014, “The End of the Military-Industrial Complex: How the Pentagon is Adapting to Globalization.” *Foreign Affairs*, 93 (6): 104-110.

¹²⁸ Kyodo News International. 2014, “U.S. officials visited N. Korea before joint exercises: report”. *The Global Post*, 29 August 2014. Available <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/140828/us-officials-visited-n-korea-joint-exercise-report> accessed 1 September 2014.

¹²⁹ Kwon, K.J. & Mullen, Jethro. 2015, “North Korea orders front-line troops into ‘wartime state’ after exchange of fire”. *CNN*, 21 August 2015. Available

5. *Pre-emptive rogue state*

There is a fundamental link between the American fear of communism and its later wariness of rogue states. In essence both are guerrilla states with little regard for the 'community' of modern democratic states. They are hermitic and prone to unlawful activity in order to survive in the current US-led international system - making limited foreign sorties of aggression to punctuate points of difference in ideology. This American narrative appeals both to standard ideas of a good/bad dualism and furthermore to the Enlightenment view of technology and monetarism as the inevitable final stage of democratic liberalism. North Korea meets these basic criteria with little doubt, based upon its behaviour during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s.

As an 'outpost of tyranny', North Korea has a list of objectionable forays into what can arguably be described as terrorist activities. There was many attempted assassinations of South Korean President Park, one in 1974 resulting in the death of his wife.¹³¹ In 1983, the Rangoon bombing attempted to assassinate President Chun but instead caused the death of 21 others. In 1987 flight KAL858 flew from Baghdad to Seoul, during which a bomb was detonated and all 115 passengers were killed.¹³² These actions were undertaken so as to reunite the peninsula by force. This is eerily commemorated in a South Korean

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/20/asias/koreas-tensions/> accessed 20 August 2015.

Agence France-Presse. 2015a, "North Korea prepared to risk 'all-out war' as Kim Jong-un puts troops on alert". *The Guardian*, 22 August 2015. Available <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/22/north-korea-prepared-to-risk-all-out-war-as-kim-jong-un-puts-troops-on-alert> accessed 20 August 2015.

¹³⁰ In 1992, the nation was ordered to be at 'a state of readiness for war': Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 217.

¹³¹ Martin, 2006: 127.

¹³² Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 144.

cemetery that houses most of those who died after the Korean War.¹³³ The cemetery also houses the remains of some of those indicted for the above crimes, with their tomb markers facing back North in a spectre of the war that never ended. It should also be noted that there has likewise been a history of assassination attempts on Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il;¹³⁴ escalating their reticence to travel outside North Korea.¹³⁵ This began when “the Japanese put a bounty on Kim Il Sung’s head” due to his role as a prominent guerrilla leader.¹³⁶

North Korea has also trafficked arms, especially to Middle Eastern and African countries that are neither US aligned nor sanctioning states.¹³⁷ With the collapse of the Soviet Union, North Korea has been able to step in and supply arms to countries that had formerly been minor client states, at a much cheaper market rate than other exporters.¹³⁸ North Korea’s perceived inability to change with the times shackles it with “a post-Cold War taboo” and becomes, in this framework, its major crime.¹³⁹ Though those with vested interests write most reports of such behaviour they cannot always be dismissed as partisan propaganda. North Korea *has* had a long relationship with NAM states since the early 1970s. The post-Cold War narrative has evolved since 9/11 to become one of explicit connections with rogue states or organisations, especially Iran, Syria

¹³³ Herskovitz, Jon. 2008, “South Korean cemetery keeps Cold War alive”. *Reuters*, 10 September 2008. Available <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSSEO73920080911> accessed 18 August 2015.

¹³⁴ Cathcart, Adam. 2014, “For North Korea there is nothing comic about killing off Kim”. *Financial Times*, 18 December 2014. Available <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/50599bfe-86d1-11e4-8a51-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3nYaXSCAj> accessed 29 March 2015.

¹³⁵ Beal, Tim. 2005, *North Korea: the Struggle Against American Power*. Pluto Press: London, UK; Michigan, US: 176.

¹³⁶ Harden, 2015: 24. See also f/n: 252.

¹³⁷ Kim Jina. 2014, “UN Sanctions as an Instrument of Coercive Diplomacy against North Korea”. *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 26 (3): 316.

¹³⁸ Oliemans, Joost & Mitzer, Stijn. 2014, “North Korea and Ethiopia, brothers in arms”. *NKnews.org*, 4 September 2014. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2014/09/north-korean-military-support-for-ethiopia/> accessed 26 September 2014.

¹³⁹ Berger, Andrea. 2014, “North Korea, Hamas, and Hezbollah: Arm in Arm?” *38 North*, 5 August 2014. Available <http://38north.org/2014/08/aberger080514/> accessed 17 January 2015.

and Lebanon.¹⁴⁰ Based on limited seizures of North Korean cargo destined for Iran and Syria during the 2009 calendar year the UN alleged that Hamas or Hezbollah were the intended recipients.¹⁴¹

As a way to amplify the link between communism and North Korea as a rogue state there has been an increasing determination to align Pyongyang with states in the Middle East perceived to be anti-American. In one recent instance a member of President Bush's security staff authored an account of North Korean links to Hamas.¹⁴² The article details Pyongyang's association with the Palestinian organisation, and points to further involvement with Hezbollah among others; discussing in particular the training of Hamas in the art of underground tunneling. The Hamas links are used as a dog whistle, in concert with its Iranian relations, in an attempt to prove that North Korea has emerged as part of an anti-Israel alliance in the Middle East. This is complicated though by reports of Israeli intentions to "compensate North Korea for not selling missiles to Iran".¹⁴³ Syria and Iran have also come under increasing scrutiny (as has the Russian support for anti-American regimes).¹⁴⁴ The shared nuclear knowledge between the Kim and Assad dynasties, chemical weapons and missiles: these all have some foundation in fact. The Cold War era obviously created a more cloistered atmosphere for such dealings. Bringing them out in to the open, thanks to Google Earth and the IAEA's links with American

¹⁴⁰ Macdonald, Hamish. 2014, "North Korea and Syria: A revamp in relations". *NKnews.org*, 2 September 2012. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2014/09/north-korea-and-syria-a-revamp-in-relations/> accessed 26 November 2014.

¹⁴¹ United Nations Security Council. 2013, "Report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1874 (2009)": S/2013/337, 11 June 2013. Available http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2013/337 accessed 17 July 2015.

¹⁴² Cha, Victor D. & Scheinmann, Gabriel. 2014, "North Korea's Hamas Connection: 'Below' the Surface?". *The National Interest*, 4 September 2015. Available <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/north-koreas-hamas-connection-below-the-surface-11195> accessed 11 February 2015.

¹⁴³ O'Hanlon, Michael & Mochizuki, Mike. 2003, "Toward a Grand Bargain with North Korea". *The Washington Quarterly*, 26 (4): 8-9.

¹⁴⁴ Szalontai, Balazs. 2015, "The spectre of terrorism in North Korean, Iranian propaganda". *NKnews.org*, 25 August 2015. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2015/08/the-specter-of-terrorism-in-north-korean-iranian-propaganda/> accessed 27 August 2015.

surveillance, does not alter them – it merely makes them more usefully employed as a media spectacle.¹⁴⁵

The accelerating fusion of communist, rogue and Islamic states as defined by the US is hard to deny even within the limited examples offered here. Following 1991, the collapse of the communist order created concepts such as ‘renegade’ states like North Korea: an explosion of non-partisan smaller states created out of the big bang that was the end of the Soviet Bloc.¹⁴⁶ The US has since moved to this new narrative that attempts to frame North Korea as a tyrannical outpost. The nuclear weapons capabilities of states antithetical to US policy in Asia and the Middle East have been used as a securitising attempt to bind them as a bloc intent on retribution against American foreign policy adventures in the region. That states would not fall in to line with the supposed victory of Americanism was an affront, and enough to allow Washington to begin moulding the narrative of rogue states.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Spyer, Jonathan. 2013, “Assad’s North Korean Connection”. *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 November 2013. Available <http://www.meforum.org/3658/assad-north-korea> accessed 19 January 2015.

¹⁴⁶ Gelb, Leslie. 1991, “The Next Renegade state”. *New York Times*, 10 April 1991. Available <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/04/10/opinion/foreign-affairsd-the-next-renegade-state.html> accessed 22 June 2015.

¹⁴⁷ The same was true during the bombing of Kosovo in the late 1990s, with Milosevic’s defiance of NATO – Michael Ignatieff, as quoted in: Chomsky, Noam. 2004, *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance*. Allen & Unwin: New Zealand; Australia: 57.

Chapter Three

Narrative: rogue state

1. From rouge to rogue

In 1994 at the time of the first North Korean nuclear crisis an article appeared in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. It was titled “Controlling Backlash States” and was written by Anthony Lake, then President Clinton’s security advisor.¹⁴⁸ Lake attempted to coalesce “a group of outlaws” that over the following decade were to become a high priority for successive Washington administrations. The language concerning outlaws is not inconsequential. David Campbell had earlier identified a fundamental aspect of the American sense of national security in ‘frontier logic’ – dating back to the myths of the Wild West, domestically.¹⁴⁹ Outlaws and renegades need to be tamed and civilised, a part of the American myth inherited over centuries. The five states named in the article by Lake were Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya (in that order). What is most striking when re-reading the article two decades later is just how successful the US has been in their mission to remove such states via the American belief in its “special responsibility to nurture and promote” democracy and economic liberalism.¹⁵⁰ Iraq and Libya have been all but ruined – arguably they are now failed states thanks largely to American (and in the latter case, UN) intervention. Cuba has since been placated. Interestingly, the first foreign delegation to visit North Korea was from Cuba, after normalisation with the US – a sign of either Havana’s need to remain in the anti-capitalist camp, or its attempt to reach out and attract Pyongyang back in from ‘the cold’.¹⁵¹ It is only Iran and North Korea -

¹⁴⁸ Lake, Anthony. 1994, “Confronting Backlash States”. *Foreign Affairs*, 73 (2). Available <http://foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/1994-03-01/confronting-backlash-states> accessed 8 July 2015.

¹⁴⁹ Campbell, 1992: 165.

¹⁵⁰ Lake, 1994.

¹⁵¹ Grisafi, John G. 2015, “Kim Jong Un has first meeting with official foreign delegation”. *NKnews.org*, 8 September 2015. Available

both of whom have understood that nuclear capability is the most effective way to avoid a forced regime change - that may maintain the same level of ongoing regional or global perceived threat as two decades ago. They are also two of three countries in the world with which America does not maintain “diplomatic relationships” suggestive of the fact that diplomacy does go some way toward minimising Otherness.¹⁵² Ironically, this nuclear threat was the outcome President Bush declared would not eventuate due to America’s aggressive hegemonic intent to fight for ‘a just peace’, “making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless”.¹⁵³

Five years after Lake’s essay, *Foreign Affairs* published “The Lonely Superpower”, authored by noted academic Samuel Huntington.¹⁵⁴ Dismissing the fact that both writers have been in some way part of the political establishment, the discord in their ideological approach toward the rogue state concept could not have been more dramatic for such a conservative publication. Whilst Lake, from within the beltway, argued an early liberal draft of what has come to be known as the Bush Doctrine, Huntington erred outside the (then) accepted logic by virtue of his cynical realism. Describing the US as *the* rogue superpower - what French foreign minister Hubert Védrine termed the hyperpower¹⁵⁵ - Huntington

<http://www.nknews.org/2015/09/kim-jong-un-has-first-meeting-with-official-foreign-delegation/> accessed 8 September 2015.

¹⁵² The other state being Bhutan. US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. (as of 2015), “Countries with Limited or No U.S. Visa Services”. Available <http://travel.state.gov/content/visa/english/general/countries-with-limited-or-no-u-s--visa-services.html> accessed 22 July 2015.

¹⁵³ Bush, George W. 2002b, “President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point”. United States Military Academy, 1 June 2002. Available <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html> accessed 28 July 2015.

¹⁵⁴ Huntington, Samuel P. 1999, “The Lonely Superpower”, *Foreign Affairs*, 78 (2). Available <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/54797/samuel-p-huntington/the-lonely-superpower> accessed 13 March 2015.

¹⁵⁵ Kagan, Robert. 2008, “The September 12 Paradigm: America, the World, and George W. Bush”. *Foreign Affairs*, 87 (5). Available <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2008-09-01/september-12-paradigm> accessed 18 February 2015: 25.

distilled many of the concerns over expansive US foreign policy adventures.¹⁵⁶ Written in 1999, two years before 9/11 and the commencement of the new American crusades against the Other, Huntington was able to critique the government from within conservative hallways, a task now unthinkable as both major political parties fight to gain control of which is more devoted to national security at the deficit of domestic liberty. That is, the ironic defense of freedom via curtailing the freedom of one's own citizens. His article concludes with a cataloguing of American foreign policy, its potentially duplicitous nature, and the reason why rogue (read: backlash) states stand to benefit from such ideology.

“American officials seem peculiarly blind to the fact that often the more the United States attack a foreign leader, the more his popularity soars among his countrymen who applaud him for standing tall against the greatest power on earth”.¹⁵⁷

This chapter turns the wheel from *rouge* (red) to rogue: from the framing of North Korea as a communist threat to that of an outlaw state intent on undermining the new world order America has been attempting to forge since the end of the Second World War.

2. *The new world order?*

Is the idea of the rogue state a break with previous concepts in IR? Or are these countries merely a rebranded Other, the purpose being the American need for an enemy so as to be able to define itself? As Bertrand Russell claims, the “psychological obstacle” to a true world government would be the lack of an

¹⁵⁶ Jervis, Robert. 2001, “Weapons Without Purpose? Nuclear Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era.” *Foreign Affairs*, 80 (4). Available <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2001-07-01/weapons-without-purpose-nuclear-strategy-post-cold-war-era> accessed 22 August 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Huntington, 1999.

external enemy.¹⁵⁸ North Korea's existence is useful in this sense so that American "identity has meaning through its relationship with difference"?¹⁵⁹ Paul Hoyt argues that this lens is not "a new class of state but instead represents a new perceptual construct".¹⁶⁰ He highlights the variance between Cold War foe and rogue states at two levels. Primarily, the lack of superpower supervision means that these states are not as predictable as they may have been. The true crime is perhaps their lack of transparency and failure to be disciplined – or, their inability to not be "clever enough to know which lines [to] not cross".¹⁶¹ Secondly, by inference, this involves a lot more effort on behalf of American policy makers – the old simple game theory formulas no longer apply. Even whilst the Soviet Union was the Evil Empire, it could be counted on to play by the rules that both superpowers had negotiated after the war. There may have been flashpoints along the way, but by and large there was a gentleman's agreement among the competing Blocs. Since then, states such as North Korea have been needing far more surveillance so as to be kept in line with perceptions of the new world order.¹⁶²

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It has been said that for "50 years [North Korea] has been the poster child for rogue states."¹⁶³ North Korea was not afraid to play into the hands of such framing, though, with Kim Jong Il stating "the most serious lesson of the collapse of socialism in several countries is that the corruption of socialism begins with

¹⁵⁸ Russell, Bertrand. 1961, *Has Man A Future?* Penguin Books: UK, US, Australia: 82.

¹⁵⁹ Campbell, David. 1993, *Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and The Narratives of The Gulf War*. Lynne Rienner Publishers: Colorado, US; London, UK: 24.

¹⁶⁰ Hoyt, Paul D. 2000, "The "Rogue State" Image in American Foreign Policy". *Global Society*, 14 (2): 297-310.

¹⁶¹ Horsey, 2013.

¹⁶² Cumings, 1997.

¹⁶³ Wit, Joel S. 2001. "North Korea: Leader of the Pack". *Washington Quarterly*, 24 (1): 77.

ideological corruption.”¹⁶⁴ Jong Il was unwilling to let go of the past in an uncertain future, as much as the US needed its version of the past to prosecute an argument against unreconstructed regimes. The updated idea of a ‘terrorist state’ spoke to a lot more than the previously accepted terms of terrorism. The most obvious point to make is that states are seen to have a monopoly on the use of legislated violence, which would appear fundamentally at odds with terrorist activity. Failed states arguably digress from this Weberian logic, but these states remain a minority in the global system. Terrorism – more important in discussions of the rogue state – is an amorphous term, perhaps even more unfixable than that of the rogue. It also speaks to the system that enables the US to ignore their designation as a convicted state sponsor of terrorism (Nicaragua, 1986).¹⁶⁵

The most recent implicit understanding of a terrorist state is one that allows for any combination of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, an unchecked rise of Islamic extremism and also a nexus for global drug trafficking, a particularly resonant point at the end of the Cold War era.¹⁶⁶ When the US describes North Korea as a mafia-like state intent on trafficking drugs worldwide for regime support, they similarly do not remind domestic voters (for rogue states are a vote-winner for either party, not primarily a foreign policy tool) that Pyongyang may be responsible for as little as 0.00005% of seized heroin globally.¹⁶⁷ Without being overly simplistic, this logic returns again to simple Foucauldian theories of power and knowledge. If the US has the power to designate, it shall be.

¹⁶⁴ Kim Jong Il. 1995, “Giving Priority to Ideological Work is Essential for Accomplishing Socialism”. Available <http://www.korea-drp.info/lib/101.pdf> accessed June 2015.

¹⁶⁵ ICJ. 1986, “Nicaragua v. United States of America – Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua – Judgment of 27 June 1986 – Merits – Judgment [1986] ICJ 1”. Available <http://www.worldlii.org/int/cases/ICJ/1986/1.html> accessed 6 September 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Sovacool, Benjamin K. 2005, “Constructing a Rogue State: American Post-Cold War Security Discourse and North Korean Drug Trafficking”. *New Political Science*, 27 (4): 500.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*: 513.

Following the breakup of the Soviet order, bipolar certainty and self-assurance could no longer guarantee the status quo leading to a new era of hyper-aggression in US military politics. Successive governments in Washington still actively forgot the stalemates and failures of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Trepidation and confusion over the new international order were to be triumphed over by what John Mearsheimer termed 'Wilsonianism with teeth'; policies of intervention that were often justified and excused on the grounds of democracy promotion.¹⁶⁸ Lake hinted at this also, in declaring backlash states as those determined to "remain outside the family" of democratic states.¹⁶⁹ Regarding the new American order, President Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright more colourfully concluded that rogues are those states "outside of it and throwing, literally, hand grenades inside in order to destroy it".¹⁷⁰ In her order of state simulacrum, they are the third level states. If you analyse her calculations there remained the first and the second world as the US was still not willing to part with the Cold War logic altogether. It is also worth mentioning that following these, she declared, exists a fourth category: the 'basket cases'. These we know by the more common term of failed states. In 2000 the Clinton administration declared it would no longer be using the term rogue states, replacing it instead with states of concern. This was an attempt to create more nuance, enabling the US to pick and choose which states would fulfill its criteria.

Though the list of states may have altered slightly over time, there can be no doubting that North Korea has remained high on every modern list. Regardless of the writer there has emerged a general consensus that to be classified as a rogue state you must have some common features. A rogue state is one that

¹⁶⁸ Schmidt, Brian C. & Williams, Michael C. 2008, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists". *Security Studies*, 17 (2): 191-220.

¹⁶⁹ Lake, 1994.

¹⁷⁰ Albright, Madeleine K. 1998, "Remarks at University of South Carolina", 19 February 1998. Available <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1998/980219c.html> accessed 3 August 2015.

rejects the norms of the international community of states (as determined by the US). It is one that is actively pursuing weapons both chemical or biological, and also WMDs or nuclear weapons. Additionally, it sees no fault in supplying such weapons to terrorists or non-state groups wishing to upset the global balance. Finally, it is a state with a damnable human rights record toward its own citizens. Despite the variable definitions to be found over the past two decades, these still remain the core ingredients. At the outset there may have been less emphasis placed on human rights; but as the doves continue to gain ascendancy in Washington, this liberal framing gains increased priority. As critics have highlighted, the accuser can also be considered guilty as charged;¹⁷¹ not just for its own behaviour but for the deliberately ‘narrow construction’ of the label.¹⁷² This brings us to “the ‘question of the United states’, the question of what Derrida describes as their ‘right of the strongest’”.¹⁷³

In 1995, a US Strategic Command document showed the true self-awareness of those in the American political elite. “Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence”, later accessed under freedom of information, recommended that the US employ the same ‘madman’ irrational logic it accuses rogue state dictators of. “The fact that some elements may appear to be potentially ‘out of control’ can be beneficial to creating and reinforcing doubts in the minds of an adversary’s decision makers,” it argues. “The essential sense of fear is the working force of deterrence”; that is, the continuation of the traditional Cold War containment strategy by another name. “That the US may become irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked should be part of the national persona we project to all adversaries.”¹⁷⁴ The recommendations of the document point to successes

¹⁷¹ Blum, William. 2014 (2001), *Rogue State: A Guide to the World’s Only Superpower*. Zed Books: London, UK.

¹⁷² Chomsky, Noam. 1999, “Rogue states”. *Acts of Aggression: Policing “Rogue” States* (eds: Chomsky, N; Clark, R; & Said, E.). Seven Stories Press: New York, US: 15-57.

¹⁷³ Derrida, 2005: xiii.

¹⁷⁴ Strategic Command (STRATCOM). 1995, “Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence”. Available

against both Hitler's Germany and Saddam's Iraq, as if ideological fervour were the reason for triumph, and not naked military might and willingness to kill as many soldiers and civilians needed to complete the mission.

3. *Terrorism as Ground Zero*

One of America's key criteria used to assess rogue states is through the framework of terrorism. The most recent War on Terror was highlighted in an early stage of the evolution of the rogue concept.¹⁷⁵ States that are willing to invest in WMD - let alone those developing nuclear technology outside the NPT framework - have long been considered key targets in US foreign policy. The ideal rogue state must be "vulnerable and defenseless (...) a perfect punching bag when needed".¹⁷⁶ The apotheosis of this lens came in President Bush's speech that declared the Axis of Evil: Iran, Iraq and North Korea.¹⁷⁷ Using the ghosts of both the Axis Powers and the Evil Empire - a marriage of the ghosts of World War Two and the Cold War - the administration chose to take a more moralistic and military tone toward those recalcitrant states that were actively rejecting the American world order. The designation and its rhetoric were truly a "phantasmic projection",¹⁷⁸ even if revised from the original 'axis of hatred'¹⁷⁹ wherein Iran and North Korea were added in order to obscure the war planning already occurring

<http://oldsite.nautilus.org/archives/nukestrat/USA/Advisory/essential95.html>
accessed 18 July 2015.

¹⁷⁵ Reagan's war on terror began in 1981, as a response to the Iran hostage crisis of 1979. Arquilla, John. 2012, "Three Wars on Terror". *Foreign Policy*, 10 September 2012. Available <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/10/three-wars-on-terror/> accessed 1 August 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Chomsky, 1999: 30.

¹⁷⁷ Bush, George W. 2002a, "The President's State of the Union address", 29 January 2002. Available <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20020129-11.html> accessed 4 May 2015.

¹⁷⁸ Baudrillard, 2005, *The Intelligence of Evil, or the Lucidity Pact*. Berg: London, UK; New York, US: 124.

¹⁷⁹ Schlesinger, Robert. 2008, *White House Ghosts: Presidents and their Speechwriters*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks: New York, US: 478.

against Iraq.¹⁸⁰ However, to be taken off the US state sponsor of terrorism list seems surprisingly easy in this light. For North Korea to be removed from the list involved merely “certification that the Government of North Korea had not provided any support for international terrorism during the preceding six-month period”.¹⁸¹ The US has a history of using the concept of terrorism as a political weapon. In 1987 it was the only country (aside from Israel) that voted against UN Resolution 42/159 that sought to define terrorism so as to differentiate it from national liberation movements.¹⁸² When coupled with the emerging international norm of preemptive strike – which the US argued was legally acceptable under Article 51 of the UN Charter (self-defense against imminent strike) – Pyongyang could understandably be both nervous and confused following the American invasion in Iraq that was premised on regime change.

This behaviour hints at the identity crisis within American politics as it struggles for a way to best securitise the post-Cold War era. This transitional narrative relies on the neoconservative simulation of both democracy and liberal state building following the invasion of another state (Afghanistan, Iraq).¹⁸³ In this, the rogue state narrative is one that is almost entirely representative of the third order in Baudrillard’s simulacra. From the bipolar simplicity of stage two, the mass production of client states under one of the two superpowers, America has now found itself lost in myriad contradictory and overlapping narratives to explain its place in the international order. Arguably this can then account for the return back to human rights. The relative safety for American

¹⁸⁰ However, Pyongyang’s fears of American aggression were not purely paranoia: “In July 2003, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld ordered his commanders to devise a war plan for a possible campaign against the DPRK.” Lynn, Valerie. 2006, “North Korea: U.S. Foreign Policy Options”, in *Perspectives on U.S. Policy Toward North Korea* (ed: Richardson, Sharon). Lexington Books: Oxford, UK: 42.

¹⁸¹ US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. 2008, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2008.” 30 April 2009. Available <http://m.state.gov/md122413.htm> accessed 3 June 2015.

¹⁸² Blum, 2014 [2001]: 263.

¹⁸³ Hehir, Aidan. 2011, “Hyper-reality and Statebuilding: Baudrillard and the unwillingness of international administrations to cede control”, in *Third World Quarterly*, 32 (6): 1073-1087.

administrations in condemning states like North Korea with the ghosts of concentration camps, the spectacles of overly-militarised parades and Napoleonic statues of the Dear Leader cannot be doubted. It helps simplify what was never properly dealt with by the Armistice of 1953.¹⁸⁴ It maintains the conflict as “a permanent opium war” so as to minimise the confusion that followed the sudden end to superpower bipolarity.¹⁸⁵

This muddled logic changed with the collapse of the World Trade Centre on 9/11. The terrorists were hoping for an echo of the February 1993 attack on tower one.¹⁸⁶ Instead, the disaster was the worst outcome that both America and Al Qaeda could have had – with an increased US crusade in the Middle East, and thousands of deaths and trillions of dollars spent in America. Spectacle had returned, replacing the “stagnation of the 1990s” in which “events were on strike”.¹⁸⁷ Describing the previous decade as non-eventful is somewhat disingenuous, however. “The non-event is not when nothing happens”, merely the lack of *spectacle*.¹⁸⁸ There would no longer be a hint or pretense of simulating a balance of global power following 9/11, as had been the briefly accepted global norm. This was Ground Zero. This was the chance to start again the narrative and focus on the effects of terror though importantly not the *causes*. This was in direct contrast to the German approach of Hour Zero (*Stunde Null*) at the end of World War Two, where “all connections to the evil past

¹⁸⁴ It has been noted that “no longer is Russia interested in putting forward the simulacrum of a democratic state that aspires to equal membership in the Western-led order”. Yaffa, Joshua. 2015, “Putin’s Hard Turn: Ruling Russia in Leaner Times”. *Foreign Affairs*, 94 (3): 131.

¹⁸⁵ Debord, 1994 [1967]: 30.

¹⁸⁶ Stewart, Scott. 2015, “A Look Back at the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing”. *STRATFOR Global Intelligence*, 26 February 2015. Available <https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/look-back-1993-world-trade-center-bombing> accessed 26 April 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Baudrillard, 2002: 3.

¹⁸⁸ Baudrillard, 2006, “Virtuality and Events: The Hell of Power”. *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, 3 (2). Available http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol3_2/jb_virt.htm accessed 4 June 2015.

were to be, and remain, severed”.¹⁸⁹ In the context of this thesis’ belief in a cycle of simulacrum, a political *tabula rasa* is never possible. Instead, international politics necessitates the ‘indefinite cycle’ in which the representing agent defines the original act through deliberate attempts to forget the turns of the cycle previous. For instance, the crime of North Korean incursion below the DMZ in 1950 fits America’s narrative best if the years previous are forgotten.

For the US its Ground Zero politics of 2001 were to be a renewed focus on smaller, weaker states that had yet to fall ‘into line’ with American expectations, rather than a retreat from war and violence (as under Hour Zero). It was not going to be a policy of engagement, but of neo-imperial coercion. In post-Melian logic it was the smaller states that created the bigger problem. The US government officially declared weak and failing states to be the new priority, demanding the ‘strengthening’ of their capabilities (through invasion if need be) a new policy directive.¹⁹⁰ To soften the real agenda, simulated notions of democracy were now to be employed (not unlike the responsibility to protect (R2P) policies advocated half-heartedly by the UN) so as to justify diplomatic aggression toward states such as North Korea. The very unfixable quality of R2P as peacekeeping under the guise of sovereign incursion where it most suited UN ideology can be seen in the statements made a decade after its formal inception, with the UN calling it at its base a “political commitment”.¹⁹¹ That is, to be used politically. This is also the same logic that led the US Secretary of State to declare in 2008 that one of the North Korean nuclear crisis’ main concerns for the administration was the fear of “isolation of the United States” from the

¹⁸⁹ Gossmann, Martin. 2014, “Memento Auschwitz: Growing up in Post-War Germany”. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry: A Topical Journal for Mental Health Professionals*, 34 (7): 665.

¹⁹⁰ Wyler, Liana Sun. 2008 (updated), “Weak and Failing states: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy”. Congressional Research Service. Available <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crw/row/RL34253.pdf> accessed 22 May 2015.

¹⁹¹ UN News Centre. 2015, “Ten years on, ‘responsibility to protect’ must be more than words – UN officials”, UN News Centre, 8 September 2015. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51822#.Ve-rBobXec0> accessed 9 September 2015.

region.¹⁹² The need for a pliable enemy expresses itself in a desire to control its movements, which a rogue state threatens through its alleged incalculability.

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In the case of state building and R2P the notion of a perfectible Western democracy is often upheld to be the cornerstone of missions such as Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁹³ At the very core of this is the question of what exactly democracy means, and by whose standards. Democracy is always that which is to come.¹⁹⁴ There can be no time at which one could place an institutional parenthesis so as to declare, for instance, American troops have now created a democratic Iraq. It is merely a simulation of what America believes democracy ought to approximate in Baghdad. There may also be a deliberate distortion in saying one thing to mean another, a charge that has been levelled critically at successive Washington administrations.

Despite the fact that states have fixed addresses and as such are hardly to be compared with terrorist cells working within (and across) national boundaries, the initial justification for a majority of US foreign policy was to be that of terror. It was to be enacted by the 'angry Leviathan' channelling "the panic and rage" it suffered at actually becoming a victim.¹⁹⁵ The endgame remains that "punishment is conceived in apocalyptic terms", at one with the biblical tenor of most Presidents' foreign policy addresses toward Asia and the Middle East.¹⁹⁶ That is, as President Bush explained, "many have discovered again that [...]"

¹⁹² Rice, Condoleezza. 2008, "Rethinking the national interest: American realism for a new world". *Foreign Affairs*, 87 (4). Available <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2008-06-01/rethinking-national-interest> accessed August 2014.

¹⁹³ Hehir, 2011.

¹⁹⁴ Derrida, 2005: 29.

¹⁹⁵ Kagan, 2008: 30.

¹⁹⁶ Said, Edward W. 1999, "Apocalypse Now". *Acts of Aggression: Policing "Rogue" States* (eds: Chomsky, N; Clark, R; & Said, E.). Seven Stories Press: New York, US: 10.

especially in tragedy – God is near.”¹⁹⁷ Not only is America haunted by its frontier mentality it is continually looking toward religious notions to give it guidance regarding the Other.¹⁹⁸ American rhetoric had forgotten since the end of the Cold War that it was not always triumphant, not always the state to maintain and secure global peace and prosperity. Of course, as highlighted by others, emotions have been central to the core philosophies of political science – fear and anger for realists, trust for liberals – though often minimised so as to preference the dominant rational actor model.¹⁹⁹ Yet, this field of emotive research has become more explicit since the events of 9/11 and America’s incessant monologue with itself; the need for revenge and to punish the Other. “Where once emotions were neglected or actively demonized they have now become one of the most exciting theoretical and empirical research areas in international relations”.²⁰⁰

4. Sunshine and Moonshine

Most of what has been reviewed above obviously concerns the US, not North Korea, as the designation of a rogue state (or regime) tells us more about the accuser than the accused. It gives us clues about how the US wishes the ‘evil Other’ to be named: the “negation of all Western values”.²⁰¹ In true Western Christian fashion, the US is keen to believe in evil but is far more reticent to acknowledge the existence of ghosts. This analysis of Pyongyang as an “exemplary case” of rogue regime type is endemic to both the media and mainstream American politicians.²⁰² Rather than a rogue, it might be more

¹⁹⁷ Bush, 2002a.

¹⁹⁸ Said, 2003 [1978]: 290.

¹⁹⁹ Hutchison, Bleiker, 2014: 494.

²⁰⁰ *ibid*: 495.

²⁰¹ Baudrillard, 1993: 83.

²⁰² Izumikawa, Yashuhiro. 2007, “Security Dependence and Asymmetric Aggressive Bargaining: North Korea’s Policy toward the Two Superpowers”. *Asian Security*, 3 (1): 45-71.

helpful to look at North Korea as a struggling client state as evidenced in the previous chapter. Deciding on a militant *juche* ideology with which to marshal the population, the Pyongyang elite has been determined to maintain the ethos of the NAM that began in Bandung in the same year as *juche*'s declaration, 1955. The ten point declaration which emerged from the conference employed a large amount of the UN Charter principles, becoming a trigger for future NAM alliances. In order to help evangelise their cause, Pyonygang even paid for full-page advertisements in major American newspapers (this also would have helped the regime gain extra legitimacy with wavering citizens).²⁰³ It is the quintessential rogue regime in the eyes of most American commentators, and that is why US policy remains more personal.²⁰⁴ It allows the US to represent the regime through "the personality quirks" of its leaders, so often deliberately misrepresented as irrational rather than politically calculating.²⁰⁵ It fulfills a half-century of animosity and animus over the failures to disciple Mao or Stalin, and the lingering guilt over having attempted to appease Hitler, let alone Mussolini, even as late as the outbreak of war.²⁰⁶

It has been nearly 25 years since the New York Times announced North Korea as "perhaps the most dangerous country in the world (...) run by a vicious dictator", yet the rhetoric has advanced very little beyond this.²⁰⁷ Despite two debilitating famines, often applied in narratives that predict the end of the state, at least two near-lethal currency revaluations and two (perhaps three, depending on your definition) Gulf wars, North Korea persists in aggrieving American foreign policy elites. Both hawks and doves can agree to this one fact: Pyongyang, and the Kim dynasty, remains a global threat. Despite South Korea's

²⁰³ Young, Benjamin R. 2013, "How North Korean ads in Western newspapers backfired". *Academia*, 27 September 2013. Available http://www.academia.edu/4664960/How_North_Korean_ads_in_Western_Newspapers_Backfired_Published_on_NKnews.org accessed 18 July 2015.

²⁰⁴ Becker, Jasper. 2005, *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea*. Oxford University Press: New York, US: ix.

²⁰⁵ Izumikawa, 2007: 45.

²⁰⁶ Chomsky, 2004: 67. Campbell, 1993: 21.

²⁰⁷ Gelb, 1991.

best efforts to engage and placate the North, the US remains determined to get revenge for the first of their military humiliations of the twentieth century. Herein lies the base difference between the Sunshine and Moonshine policies, between engagement and isolation.

In 1984, North Korea signalled a willingness to hold bilateral talks with the US. President Reagan did not respond to this, despite his advocacy for such a move earlier in the year at the UN.²⁰⁸ He was preparing for an election and considered the domestic audience less receptive to engagement with Pyongyang than was that of the UN. As much as the US trumpets its displeasure at North Korean prevarication over formal negotiations, the US is equally complicit. It sets up an encouraging level of contact only to withdraw either through a change of administration (the Carter to Reagan and Clinton to Bush transitions being the most chaotic) or preparation to talk tough during an electoral cycle. The same logic flows to South Korean elections since 1988, after it began the process of adhering to Western democratic norms. Of the three states involved, North Korea appears to be the most consistent with its reasoning and demands.

When left alone, the two Koreas are most productive. This is demonstrated in the 1972 Joint Communiqué, agreed to by both states in July whilst the US was focused on the Vietnam War.²⁰⁹ Likewise, during the Sunshine era, President Clinton failed to make the most of the October 2000 Joint Communiqué as his administration was focused more on tensions between Israel and Palestine.²¹⁰ At the end of his tenure, Clinton labeled this inadvertent sleight his greatest foreign

²⁰⁸ Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 184-185.

²⁰⁹ Shin, Jong-dae. 2012, "DPRK Perspectives on Korean Reunification after the July 4th Joint Communiqué". North Korea International Document Project: Wilson Center, 30 June 2012. Available <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/dprk-perspectives-korean-reunification-after-the-july-4th-joint-communique> accessed 18 August 2015. Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 204.

²¹⁰ US Department of State: Archive. 2000, "U.S.-D.P.R.K. Joint Communiqué". Office of the Spokesman, US Department of State, 12 October 2000. Available http://1997-2001.state.gov/www/regions/eap/001012_usdprk_jointcom.html accessed 18 June 2015.

policy blunder,²¹¹ repeating previous US behaviour that acknowledged the Korean peninsula as either an afterthought, or only able to be engaged with when a crisis arises.²¹² In the era of permanent war, however, there is no option other than permanent crisis management:²¹³ equally, there is no such thing as temporary strategic retreat. For North Korea, a country that had never forgotten the war, the repeated engagement and isolation exercises continues. When in 1988 Gorbachev began to articulate Russia's reform policies, North Korea tilted back to China.²¹⁴ America's reticence to engage at this point continues to haunt the region's politics, as Beijing became a reliable ally and enabler of the Kim regimes. This is proof on a grand scale that whilst 'hawkish engagement' is nothing but an attempt to coerce the Other to accept one's own pre-existing rules, its habit of "blindly employing historical analogies without critically assessing their real applicability" leads to nothing but further isolation for both players.²¹⁵ North Korea is not 1930s Germany; such stunted logic is both unhelpful and counterproductive. In fact it only gives the Pyongyang elites more ideological legitimacy over its citizens when refusing to bargain with Washington.

Conversely, practical engagement is also seen as relinquishing American power on the international stage, whilst echoing the politics of inter-war appeasement. The giving of aid is criticised as propping up a regime that would otherwise have collapsed. Alternatively – and this is where aid and sanctions begin to become wedded – there are those who see "the deliberate withholding of aid in order to apply political pressure" as "morally offensive".²¹⁶ The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) report on North Korea opts for both views. Aid is being

²¹¹ Becker, 2005: 250-251.

²¹² A table compiled by Coletta helps illustrate the similarity between Washington and Pyongyang regarding sporadic engagement. Coletta, Damon. 2006, "North Korea and Crisis Dynamics", in *Perspectives on U.S. Policy Toward North Korea* (ed: Richardson, Sharon). Lexington Books: Oxford, UK: 80.

²¹³ "The discourse of crisis" being a key weapon for the powerful. Baudrillard, 1983a: 42.

²¹⁴ Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 155.

²¹⁵ DiMuccio, Kang, 1998: 279.

²¹⁶ Beal, 2005: 157.

misused by elites as much as the Commission “does not support sanctions imposed by the Security Council or introduced bilaterally that are targeted against the population or the economy as a whole.”²¹⁷ Between these positions lies the hypocritical lack of moral indignation the US expresses regarding allies with both covert nuclear weapon development and equally questionable human rights records as North Korea.

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Most central to this deliberate intent at engaging North Korea has been the South’s Sunshine Policy.²¹⁸ Its essential tenants are those most associated with liberalism and capitalism – investment, trade and cross-border capital. Controversial from the start, it began in 1998 with Kim Dae-jung’s election as South Korean President. However, most of the gains were going North, with the South potentially only gaining cheap labour at the Kaesong special economic zone (SEZ) and the international kudos of bringing the two halves of the country closer together than since division in 1945. Significantly, the US was not an outspoken supporter of the Sunshine Policy as it isolated Washington from negotiations in the region. This has sometimes been credited as a key feature of North Korean diplomacy with the South, the attempt to “exploit fissures between Washington and Seoul”.²¹⁹ When later discovered that the famous “cathartic” embrace between Kim Dae-jung and Kim Il Sung was (in effect) paid for,²²⁰ the awarding of the Nobel Prize to the South Korean President seemed especially

²¹⁷ United Nations Human Rights Council: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHRC). 2014, Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. UNHR, A/HR/25/63. Available <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/ReportoftheCommissionofInquiryDPRK.aspx> accessed 16 March 2015: 11, 20.

²¹⁸ Kim Dae-jung. 2000, “Address by President Kim Dae-jung of the Republic of Korea, Lessons of German Reunification and the Korean Peninsula.” Free University of Berlin, 9 March 2000. Available <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/dossiers/coree/A/1904> accessed 24 July 2015.

²¹⁹ Roy, Denny. 2010, “Parsing Pyongyang’s Strategy”, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 52 (1): 114.

²²⁰ Cha, 2012: 393.

unpalatable to most critics of engagement policies.²²¹ Whatever the criticism, democratic electoral politics put an end to it with the election of President Lee in 2007. Since then, the US-South Korean alliance has managed to blossom once more under a quietly resurgent militarism aimed at awaiting North Korea's 'inevitable' collapse. Though the US would arguably be quite content to maintain the Pyongyang regime as a ghost that can remind its allies of previous struggles.

By remaining its security guarantor the US had previously used the South as an excuse not to engage properly with Pyongyang. Kim Dae-jung's initiative created a barb in the US-South alliance by opening up new conversation that Washington was not driving, nor privy to.²²² It was an instance of the US being dealt the same cards as those handed to the South and North during Sino-US rapprochement in the early seventies. This American conservative compulsion of trying to deal itself out of negotiations through isolating foes repeated itself almost verbatim in the nuclear issue; likewise the Iran nuclear deal signed finally in 2015.²²³ It can most obviously be seen in both sanctions and the phrasing of UN resolutions that are used as political weapons to further isolate Pyongyang.²²⁴ Proof of this is found in the January 2015 sanctions levied on North Korea targeting ten specific individuals. Reading through the announcement it is striking to note that the majority of these persons are officials operating within countries such as Russia, Syria, Iran and Sudan.²²⁵

A belief in diminishing US power among its citizens, based on media portrayals of world events (nearly always sensational and lacking in context) has led

²²¹ Chang, Gordon G. 2009, "Kim Dae-jung's Disappointing Legacy". *Forbes Magazine*, 21 August 2009. Available <http://www.forbes.com/2009/08/20/kim-dae-jung-south-korea-kim-jong-il-opinion-columnists-gordon-chang.html> accessed 16 July 2015.

²²² Feffer, 1999: 418.

²²³ "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action", Vienna 14 July 2015 (accessed from document cloud). Available <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2165388-iran-deal-text.html> accessed 12 September 2015.

²²⁴ Carlo, Giuseppina Scotto. 2014, "Analysis of UN resolutions relating to North Korea: A Comparison with Resolutions Relating to the Second Gulf War". *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*, 27 (4): 665-685.

²²⁵ US Department of the Treasury, 2015.

Presidents, both incumbent and potential, to positions that may not have been considered without the ability of the ‘masses’ to “accept everything and redirect everything *en bloc* into the spectacular”.²²⁶ As early as 1969, Kim Il Sung was briefing sympathetic foreign reporters on the perception that despite posturing with nuclear weapons “US imperialism above all, is already on the decline”.²²⁷ The US electoral cycle – as much as that of South Korea since the ‘turn to democracy in the late 1980s – interferes with a consistent policy platform.²²⁸ The code of the electoral process trumps long-term decisions, and ‘the silent majority’, the masses, stand in the way of the broader national concern.²²⁹ This has been shown to be especially crucial in some American election years where Pyongyang has responded to a shift in Washington’s internal dynamic by provocative behaviour (1980, 1988, 1996). This is a major blind spot within the American beltway – the inability to countenance that pandering to domestic voters with simplistic foreign policy slogans infects the signals received by the Pyongyang elite.

Eventually, the failure of the Sunshine Policy has led to what Victor Cha labels as “neojuche revivalism”.²³⁰ The North has now turned toward Cold War military romanticism, believing it is able to recapture the golden days when its economy was greater than Seoul’s. Furthermore it blames current economy volatility on letting the ‘sun shine’ in from the South, referred to as the need for “a mosquito net to keep out the toxins of capitalism.”²³¹ The use of *songun* (military first) politics is a crucial factor. Cha overlooks the fact that *songun* was also predicated on the need for Kim Jong Il to claim further legitimacy by ingratiating

²²⁶ Baudrillard, Jean. 1983b, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities, or, The End of the Social*. Semiotext(e): New York, US: 43.

²²⁷ Kim Il Sung, 1970: 84.

²²⁸ Oberdorfer, Carlin, 2014: 439.

²²⁹ Baudrillard, 1983b: 2.

²³⁰ Cha, 2012: 58-63.

²³¹ Shim, Elizabeth. 2015, “North Korea denounces U.S., Japan, South Korea for ‘cultural decadence’”. *UPI*, 24 July 2015. Available http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2015/07/24/North-Korea-denounces-US-Japan-South-Korea-for-cultural-decadence/8211437752312/ accessed 27 July 2015.

himself within the military elites. As he had not served as a “front generation” fighter during the struggle for independence of the state,²³² this was considered the best way to gain support after his official accession in 1997. Both arguments can be held to be equally as true, and both may not have been necessary had the US been more actively engaged in South Korea’s attempts to provide a “soft landing” for North Korea following 1991.²³³

5. *Nuclear as apotheosis of simulation*

The majority of recent literature - especially papers championed in conservative American think tanks - focuses largely on the nuclear question rather than nuances of North Korean domestic politics. Whilst there were ongoing arguments over realism and liberalism during the first century of IR theory, smaller states were finessing how to triumph over what was unquestioningly accepted as the formula of the strong over the weak. Hence the ideological agnostics now tilting toward non-traditional theories in an attempt to explain the survival of states like North Korea. Ultimately, the legacy effects of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the ongoing threats to America’s foes have trained Pyongyang to realise that nuclear weapons enable a country to bargain from a position of strength.²³⁴ This may be unfortunate, but that is the system that the US has created, and in a sense trained, since 1945. The US had plans prepared to bomb North Korea within weeks of the commencement of the Korean War,²³⁵ let alone

²³² Arendt, 1976 [1967]: 327.

²³³ Choo, Jaewoo. 2013, “North Korea’s Soft Landing”. *The International Relations and Security Network (ISN)*, 12 September 2013. Available <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?id=168960> accessed 12 June 2015.

²³⁴ Bandow, Doug. 2015, “Thanks to Libya, North Korea Might Never Negotiate on Nuclear Weapons”. *The National Interest*, 2 September 2015. Available <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/thanks-libya-north-korea-might-never-negotiate-nuclear-13756> accessed 15 September 2015.

²³⁵ Cumings, Bruce. 2004b, “Korea: forgotten nuclear threats”. *Le Monde diplomatique*, December 2004. Available <http://mondediplo.com/2004/12/08korea> accessed 17 June 2015.

Washington's continual threats toward China over the Taiwan Strait crises. It is this hegemonic and self-serving system that divided the Peninsula at the 38th parallel. It is a system that has now broken out of the NPT straitjacket - not only with Israel and Iran facing off against each other, but with rumblings of a new arms race in North East Asia.²³⁶

"The nuclear is the apotheosis of simulation", Baudrillard declared.²³⁷ The idea of a zero-sum equation with nuclear weapons is too simplistic, as the arms race of the Cold War would attest through the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Though in hindsight it is easy to dismiss the genuine fears of previous decades, MAD amplified the spectre of conflict into a previously unknown form of permanent war simulation, "a *worldwide state of undeclared war*".²³⁸ This resulted in such security studies as game theory. It was removed from the battlefield and practised in computer laboratories. In a sense, MAD deterrence logic "leukemises" those involves as it excludes its reality by virtue of its very unreality.²³⁹ Roland Bleiker highlights that when discussing North Korea, Washington ought to remind itself of the "over half a century of clear and repeated American nuclear threats" issued.²⁴⁰ "No nation in the world has been exposed to the nuclear threat so directly and for so long time as the Korean nation," North Korea's own report on the US's human rights record reminds us.²⁴¹ This results in a two-way threat perception that only fuels an insecurity

Ebbinghausen, Rodion. 2013, "The new arms race in Asia". *DK Akademie: Deutsche Welle*, 18 March 2013. Available <http://www.dw.com/en/the-new-arms-race-in-asia/a-16681158> accessed 18 July 2015.

²³⁶ Feffer, John. 2009, "An Arms Race in Northeast Asia?" *Asian Perspective*, 33 (4): 5-15.

²³⁷ Baudrillard, 1983a: 58.

²³⁸ Virilio, Paul. 2002, *Ground Zero*. Verso: New York, US: 52.

²³⁹ *ibid*: 59.

²⁴⁰ Bleiker, Roland. 2003, "A rogue is a rogue is a rogue: US foreign policy and the Korean nuclear crisis". *International Affairs*, 79 (4): 736.

²⁴¹ Report of the DPRK Association for Human Rights Studies" (DPRKHR) (transl: Adam Cathcart). 2015, Available <https://adamcathcart.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/report-of-the-dprk-association-for-human-rights-studies.pdf> accessed 17 February 2015: 147. Seo Ji-eun. 2014, "Leon Panetta reveals nuke plan for South Korea". *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 9 October 2014. Available

dilemma between the two states,²⁴² based on perception and not action. This threat is part of the theatre of megaphone diplomacy and becomes increasingly hard to control without regular consular engagement.

As for the much vaunted North Korean nuclear threat. To place it in perspective, some counts of total nuclear warheads estimate the US (2014) to have 4764. In contrast North Korea possibly has 10, though this figure is not totally verifiable.²⁴³ It is true that the last known test of a nuclear device by the US was in the early 1990s, yet the US continues to increase its exports of arms by 23%, based on the differentiation of the five year period ending 2014.²⁴⁴ This would seem counter-intuitive to its major ethical concern that North Korean arms are being exported (an estimated \$11 million in 2013).²⁴⁵ Perhaps it is best to reframe this as American opposition to those exporting states antithetical to the new American world order, complicit with its attempted rogue state narrative. This is superpower paranoia over “small or medium nations that have achieved some success in thwarting American policy.”²⁴⁶ Although the “atomic arsenal itself (is) a hyperreal form, a simulacrum which dominates us all and reduces all ‘ground-level’ events to mere ephemeral scenarios”, the relative numbers are instructive.²⁴⁷ The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute provides a database of arms transfers that researchers are able to compile to fit their need.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2995845> accessed 14 June 2015.

²⁴² Especially so given the conclusion of a US-South Korea Nuclear agreement submitted to Congress 16 June 2015. Squassoni, Sharon. “Unique Nuclear Allies: The New U.S.-South Korea Nuclear Cooperation Agreement”. *Centre for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)*, 1 October 2015. Available https://csis.org/files/publication/151001_Sharon_Squassoni_Unique_Nuclear_allies.pdf accessed 4 October 2015.

²⁴³ The Economist. 2015, “The Unkicked Addiction”. *The Economist*, 7 March 2015. Available <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21645840-despite-optimistic-attempts-rich-world-nuclear-weapons-threat-they-pose-peace> accessed 8 August 2015.

²⁴⁴ Deutsche Welle. 2015, “Global arms exports on rise: SIPRI”. *Deutsche Welle*, 16 March 2015. Available <http://www.dw.com/en/global-arms-exports-on-rise-sipri/a-18317473> accessed 28 June 2015.

²⁴⁵ Kim Jina, 2014: 316.

²⁴⁶ Dujarric, Robert. 2001, “North Korea: risks and rewards of engagement”. *Journal of International Affairs*, 54 (2): 467.

²⁴⁷ Baudrillard, 1983a: 59.

Using the start of the last nuclear crisis between the US and North Korea as a benchmark year (2002), the information tabulated suggests the following export numbers. US exports totalled 96951 units (within a worldwide figure of 320756 recorded) in comparison to North Korean exports totalling 443 units (of course, transparency with both figures cannot be guaranteed).²⁴⁸ Considering the scale of this discrepancy it is hard not to see why the US has repeatedly been the sole dissenting UN member, voting against resolutions such as 38/182 (1983) and 39/62 (1984) that sought to ‘prohibit the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction’.²⁴⁹

6. Surveillance of rogue state and human rights

Surveillance has always been a part of international politics. WikiLeaks is able to attest to the many nefarious ways in which it has been used at the ground level in the past. Never before however have we had such a super-panoptic global system which is creating both humanitarian benefits but unique ethical challenges.²⁵⁰ For with surveillance comes both power and the control of knowledge. Images in this respect are far superior to policy documents, to presidential speeches and to investigative journalism. With the increase in access to technology from the start of the 1990s, North Korea has been open to scrutiny like never before.²⁵¹ Similarly the catastrophe of the floods and drought during the Arduous March exposed the country to on-ground monitoring by aid organisations. This illustrates the two methods of ‘seeing’ North Korea for American administrations (and their reportage to pliant agencies like the UN):

²⁴⁸ SIPRI. 2015, “TIV of arms exports from all, 2002-2014”, data compiled by author. Available http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export_values.php accessed 17 August 2015.

²⁴⁹ Blum, 2014 [2001]: 257, 259.

²⁵⁰ Debrix, François. 1999, *Re-Envisioning Peacekeeping: The United Nations and the Mobilization of Ideology*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, US: 85-89.

²⁵¹ Shim, 2014: 39.

horizontally and vertically. The defector testimony discussed earlier enables a more personal form of bearing witness.

If simulation “is radically opposed to representation” then what to make of surveillance techniques that claim to speak of reality?²⁵² Are both mutually exclusive of the other? No, because simulation contains an “ideological blanket” that is “a false representation of reality (ideology)”.²⁵³ For this is the trick of satellite images: they need to be decoded. Satellite surveillance is presented as an incontrovertible truth despite the fact that such images need deciphering by experts. They do not speak for themselves. They simulate the truth. The US is able to present whichever images it so wishes. “Contesting hegemonic visuality” becomes almost impossible for a state like North Korea that has been successfully tarnished as irrational, crazy and laughable.²⁵⁴ This is not to say that all images are false. Yet very few images are challenged in the same way as when North Korea releases footage or images; the default reception is one of doubt and scepticism.

Furthermore, there is the issue of sub-visibility when discussing North Korea and nuclear capabilities. American complicity in the creation of these networks trace back to the aerial domination of the Korean War, and are merely reinforced by its control of the new aerial domination of simulation.²⁵⁵ Whilst complaining that North Korea’s underground facilities prove its malign behaviour, the US government remains intent on removing or blurring its own important security sites from Google Maps.²⁵⁶ Listed as ‘prohibited’ sites, the internet cartography tool remains compliant to the power of the government, despite being a private

²⁵² Debrix, 1999: 12.

²⁵³ Baudrillard, 1983a: 25.

²⁵⁴ Shim, 2014: 78.

²⁵⁵ Cumings, 2004a: 2.

²⁵⁶ There are estimated to be more than 10,000 underground facilities in North Korea. Grisafi, John & Byrne, Leo. 2015, “Pointing the world’s largest bomb at North Korea”. *NKnews.org*, 27 September 2015. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2015/09/pointing-the-worlds-largest-bomb-at-north-korea/> accessed 28 September 2015.

company.²⁵⁷ As North Korea has continually goaded Washington through its perceived unknowability, the relative unveiling of the country through Google Earth should allow the US to relax somewhat its heightened paranoia over Pyongyang's advanced nuclear and missile programs. Additionally, volunteer citizens are using the satellite images to further explore and chart North Korea's regions.²⁵⁸ Foremost they are concerned with potential military and missile launch sites. Secondly, they are increasingly identifying potential prison camp sites with the help of defector testimony. This shows the direct link between the nuclear question and the turn toward the human rights issue. This is the same movement made in 2003 to justify the Iraq invasion: allegations concerning WMDs, followed by the salvation of citizens from human rights abuses. Ultimately both lenses attested to the same desired effect; regime change.

Surveillance capabilities and ideology have created the nexus between nuclear weapons and human rights. The US has managed to construct North Korea as a flagrant trespasser of both the NPT and UN human rights through use of surveillance footage. This ability to control the super-panopticon of satellite imaging and UN resolutions has been vital in further ostracising – rather than engaging with – Pyongyang. It is necessary for its position as the ultimate enemy “because no other society in the increasingly homogenised world of the twenty-first century seems so distinctly and defiantly ‘other’.”²⁵⁹ When the US speaks of Pyongyang's unknowability, pointing to a near-dark satellite image, it is evoking the true power of the panopticon. The panopticon as explained by Foucault reverses previous disciplinary regimes such as the dungeon by relying upon both

²⁵⁷ IT Security. (no date), “Blurred Out: 51 Things You Aren’t Allowed to See on Google Maps”, *IT Security*. Available <http://www.itsecurity.com/features/51-things-not-on-google-maps-071508/> accessed 17 July 2015.

²⁵⁸ Osnos, Evan. 2013b, “Beyond the Google Map of North Korea”. *The New Yorker*, 29 January 2013. Available <http://www.newyorker.com/news/evan-osnos/beyond-the-google-map-of-north-korea> accessed 25 February 2015.

²⁵⁹ Armstrong, Charles K. 2011, “Trends in the Study of North Korea”. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 70 (2): 367-8.

light and visibility.²⁶⁰ Therefore, by this rationale, the US is unable to fully control North Korea in the way it has other small states. Control of modern technologies enables the US to frame North Korea as the signified object, one that can be written upon. Having reluctantly acknowledged the success of North Korea in gaining nuclear capability, the US is now turning to the spectre of human rights and the ghosts of World War Two as a way to further isolate the regime in the global environment.

²⁶⁰ Foucault, Michel. 1977, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Penguin Group: London, UK: 200.

Chapter Four

Narrative: human rights

1. The 'Never Again'

Following the failure to securitise North Korean nuclear capabilities the US has returned to World War Two and the ghosts of the Holocaust. This event is stamped upon world politics and history as one that should *never again* be repeated. This is the 'memento Auschwitz' so relied upon by those wishing for the collapse of the Pyongyang regime, with use of constant references to the country's political camps, the *kwanliso* ('management' or 'correctional' facility).²⁶¹ The word itself becomes a spectacle: Auschwitz. The US has been on a permanent search since 1945 in its pursuit of the next holocaust so as to discipline the ghosts in its past, leading to what has been labeled the "Holocaust industry".²⁶² Though it has seen many genocidal instances since World War Two and has been complicit in some, the ones that matter most will be the ones that serve best its own national interests.²⁶³ This can be neatly summarised in a journal article dealing with the North Korean famine of the 1990s. Not only is the country represented as "dangerous communists" but also "inscrutable Orientals" and "starving masses".²⁶⁴ Stripped thus of any sense of self-identity, the country can be treated as a cipher that explains the need for ongoing

²⁶¹ Gossmann, 2014: 663-670.

²⁶² Finkelstein, Norman. 2000, *The Holocaust industry: Reflection on the exploitation of Jewish suffering*. Verso: London, UK.

²⁶³ As Presidential candidate George W. Bush highlighted "the United States should not send troops to stop ethnic cleansing and genocide in nations outside [US] strategic interest". Kagan, 2008: 28.

Pilger, John. 1998, "Friends of Pol Pot". *The Nation*, (republished in) *Global Policy Forum*. 1 May 1998. Available <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/190/39190.html> accessed 18 June 2015.

²⁶⁴ Yuh Ji-Yeon. 1999, "Dangerous Communists, Inscrutable Orientals, Starving Masses". *Peace Review*, 11 (3): 317-324.

belligerent American foreign policy. Baudrillard describes this element of cipher thus: “there is no possible distinction, at the level of images and information, between the spectacular and the symbolic.”²⁶⁵ With visual representations of militarism and starving children North Korea is both dangerous and hopeless at the same time, the standard conclusion made in failed state literature. This shows the inherent dichotomy of the US using human rights as a political tool. What should be considered an emancipatory discourse becomes a hegemonic disciplinary lens.

2. *The spectacle becomes the spectre*

The spectacle is what has re-invigorated American desire to maintain hegemony since 2001. “This situation was certainly not created, and was not even really revealed by that supposedly “major event” dated “September 11, 2001,”²⁶⁶ as much as it was “constituted by this media-theatricalisation” in order to elicit *emotional* outrage.²⁶⁷ In a new era of revenge, and the inability to properly securitise North Korea as a rogue state through its nuclear potential, American politicians have attempted to frame it as emblematic of the worst human rights abuses of the current era. The US media has largely undertaken this work through “a regime of visual authority”.²⁶⁸ Even though human rights is equally hard to pin down as that of the rogue state narrative – should rights be universal or relative to the society and its beliefs? – as a discourse it enables the powerful to dictate through both spectacle and its relationship with global mass media.²⁶⁹ The importance of images and the memories they evoke is a key component of North Korea as a *momento mori* of previous wars and arguably the US media is

²⁶⁵ Baudrillard, 2002: 31.

²⁶⁶ Derrida, 1998: xiii.

²⁶⁷ “The world did not suddenly become extraordinarily dangerous on 9-11, requiring ‘new paradigm’”; Chomsky, 2004: 91.

²⁶⁸ Ignatieff, Michael. 1998, *The Warrior’s Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*. Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt & Company: New York, USA: 26.

²⁶⁹ Suh, 2014: 5.

“part of the terror”.²⁷⁰ Images do not ‘self-select’, they are presented with a political intention.²⁷¹ Debord predicted that by “means of the spectacle the ruling order discourses endlessly upon itself”.²⁷² Images are central to the hauntology of North Korea as they are able to be presented as proof, and then re-presented through collective memory. These images become the “self-portrait of power” in representing international relations.²⁷³

This constitutes “the regime of memory” curated by a deliberate American narrative that sees the US as good and North Korea as bad.²⁷⁴ Simply by allusion to Stalin or Hitler, to gulags and concentration camps, there is little room left for the casual observer to attempt a more nuanced reading.²⁷⁵ The spectacular image bears witness.²⁷⁶ New ghosts are transformed into spectres of future evil, all without a chronology as “history cannot now be separated from its model, its simulation” through mass mediation.²⁷⁷ Of course, Pyongyang often knowingly provokes American rhetoric through its aggressive behaviour. War was Kim Il Sung’s legitimacy through his reputation as a guerrilla fighter against imperialism. This legacy has extended to both the son and the grandson.

Images of goosestepping soldiers, leaders in military uniforms, rumours of concentration camps, glorifying statues and mass rallies in honour of the leader: all this has been seen before. Spectres and ghosts of Stalin, Mao and Hitler - we

²⁷⁰ Baudrillard, 2002: 31.

²⁷¹ Shim, 2014: 3.

²⁷² Debord, 1994 [1967]: 19.

²⁷³ *ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Godfrey, Richard & Lilley, Simon. 2009, “Visual consumption, collective memory and the representation of war”. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 12 (4): 276-277.

²⁷⁵ For instance, “the gulag is the cornerstone of totalitarianism”. The same article references a pope who declared “totalitarianism is the attempt to make absolute what is relative.” Mawdsley, James. 2006, “The Walled Country: Truth and Lies in North Korea.” *Crisis Magazine*, 1 February 2006. Available <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2006/the-walled-country-truth-and-lies-in-north-korea> accessed 22 July 2015.

²⁷⁶ Wiesel, Elie. 1993, “Elie Wiesel’s Remarks at the Dedication Ceremonies for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, April 22, 1993”. Available <http://www.ushmm.org/research/ask-a-research-question/frequently-asked-questions/wiesel> accessed 28 August 2015.

²⁷⁷ Baudrillard (1994) as quoted in Godfrey, Lilley, 2009: 280.

have seen this formula when removing Gaddafi, Hussein and various Latin American leaders that form part of a “rogue’s gallery”.²⁷⁸ There was a belief that the victory of democratic capitalism had removed all this from history. The US has through actions both past and ongoing constructed the Kim dynasty in such a way, refusing serious engagement so as to keep North Korea isolated. This policy has extended the regime beyond what could arguably be its true lifespan, by legitimising its need for domestic repression and excessive military projection.

3. International law as third-order simulacrum

International law has historically been employed by the US to justify wars, and has also been neglected as redundant when not supportive of US ambitions. Baudrillard has argued “law is a second order-simulacrum whereas simulation is third-order, beyond true and false, beyond equivalences”.²⁷⁹ Even supporters of the UN system could not disagree that it has been used for cynical and ideological purposes in the past, allowing for states to act outside international law or norms. In 1979 the US was the only state member to vote against resolution 34/46 calling on recognising “alternate approaches within the UN system for improving the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”²⁸⁰ A year earlier it was also one of two dissenting voice (along with Israel) when ruling on taking “all necessary measures for insuring UN decisions on the maintenance of international peace and security” (33/75).²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Fifield, Anna. 2014, “North Korea tries to lure tourists to earn foreign currency, but two now on trial”. *The Washington Post*, 10 September 2014. Available https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/north-korea-tries-to-lure-tourists-to-earn-foreign-currency-but-two-now-on-trial/2014/09/10/7c4340aa-b799-4539-87a8-92fe88af90c8_story.html accessed 19 March 2015.

Sottile, J.P. 2013, “When in Doubt Say “Hitler””. *Counterpunch*, 5 September 2013. Available <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/09/05/when-in-doubt-say-hitler/> accessed 17 August 2015.

²⁷⁹ Baudrillard, 1983a: 40.

²⁸⁰ Blum, 2014 [2001]: 246.

²⁸¹ *ibid*: 245.

The use of human rights agendas “have in fact functioned as a hegemonic interpretive lens and discursive framework of power” in the post-Cold War era, where the US has the cultural and institutional leverage to dictate which issues gain the most traction.²⁸² If Baudrillard considers law as of the second-order, when discussing North Korea and the US we need to consider the *international* aspect of law as simulation. The privilege of the US is that “power to enforce international law against great states is impossible” due to both the armaments and the spectre of their future pre-emptive use.²⁸³ The U.N. relationship within the American beltway was never *lex scripta* but always ideological, which we have seen to be simulation. When Colin Powell was arguing the case for invading Iraq in 2003, against UN Security Council approval, he made a speech in the foyer of the New York UN office. Roland Bleiker notes that a large blue sheet was draped behind him, conveniently placed on the wall so as to cover the UN’s signature artwork, Picasso’s anti-war masterpiece “Guernica”.²⁸⁴ As Francois Debrix states of the supra-national UN, it is “a structure without depth” that paradoxically, “the more it intervenes, the more it shows its formal emptiness” – possibly the most succinct definition of simulation.²⁸⁵ In the same way that Derrida asserts that “there are, to be sure, claims or allegations of democracy, everywhere ‘we’ are”, international law works in a similar fashion.²⁸⁶ The ‘we’ is central to the designation of the Other. In this respect, the use of the UN is used within an argument only inasmuch as there is ability to control the outcome of its rulings. This returns us to the increasingly unsolvable problem of the human rights agenda and its political use by the US in attempting to recast global politics.

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²⁸² Hong, Christine. 2013b, “Reframing North Korean Human Rights”. *Critical Asian Studies*, 45 (4): 517.

²⁸³ Russell, 1961: 79.

²⁸⁴ Bleiker, 2009: 181.

²⁸⁵ Debrix, 1999: 6.

²⁸⁶ Derrida, 2005: 9.

Of course, recent adventures into the field of R2P by the US and the UN have been less than satisfactory in outcome. In 2011 during the so-called Arab Spring, the no-fly zone and increased arms embargo against Libya brought about the eventual collapse of the Gaddafi regime.²⁹⁰ Libya has since seen a parade of temporary leaders competing over and pushing Libya to the verge of being a ‘failed’ state that perpetrates potential crimes against humanity.²⁹¹ These crimes are of little concern to the US, currently focused on the Syrian regime and Islamic State. As far as the Western media is concerned, Libya’s dictator was removed and democracy reinstalled in North Africa. Arguably, Libya was invaded because it had relinquished its nuclear arsenal previously to the US²⁹² Syria was not, perhaps due to the nature of its links with North Korean weapons and nuclear manufacturing. Further evidence for the Kim regime – if evidence was still needed – that a small state needs the very deterrence capabilities that the US is so keen to remove via ‘stealth multilateralism’.²⁹³ When given a potential chance to broker the Assad regime’s removal from power in concert with Russia in 2012 the US preferred ‘strategic patience’, proving its frustrating ability to more often than not pick the wrong winner in foreign interventions.²⁹⁴ This patience is perceived in the North as a policy of deliberately delaying so as to

²⁹⁰ United Nations Security Council. 2011, “Resolution 1973”: S/RES/1973 (2011). Available <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement> accessed 18 August 2015.

²⁹¹ Kuperman, Alan J. 2015, “Obama’s Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure”. *Foreign Affairs*, 94 (2): 67-68.

²⁹² Jervis, Robert. 2013, “Getting to Yes With Iran: The Challenges of Coercive Diplomacy.” *Foreign Affairs*, 92 (1): 113.

²⁹³ Kaye, David. 2013, “Stealth Multilateralism: U.S. Foreign Policy Without Treaties – or the Senate”. *Foreign Affairs*, 92 (5): 113-124.

²⁹⁴ Tharoor, Ishaan & Smirnova, Julie. 2015, “The West dismissed Russian offer to help remove Assad in 2012, says top diplomat”. *The Washington Post*, 15 September 2015. Available <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/09/15/the-west-dismissed-russian-offer-to-help-remove-assad-in-2012-says-top-diplomat/> accessed 15 September 2015.

US troops have been employed as a quiet deterrence due to a lack of “great urgency”, despite media reports at times of crisis. Martin, 2006: 369.

focus on the Middle East and to avoid discussing the nuances with allies and Congress.²⁹⁵

This pattern reflects those ‘forgotten’ interventions by the US in the 1970s. Most infamous was the bombing of suspected Vietcong forces in Cambodia that led in turn to the creation and ‘embrace of”the Khmer Rouge (a response echoed in the 1990s by the inadvertent creation of Al Qaeda).²⁹⁶ Likewise, in what was one of the few successful secessions of the twentieth century, the US supplied arms and information to Pakistan in its fight to stop East Pakistan creating the new state of Bangladesh. India became the third party enabler against American stabilisation, and the UN principle of self-determination eventually triumphed. For the US it was of no small significance that Pakistan would be useful in helping negotiate the Sino-US rapprochement in the coming years.²⁹⁷ Taking these limited examples into account – whilst mentioning Iran (1953), Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), Iraq (2003) as more obvious examples – it is hard to not see a pattern of sovereign intervention to maintain control of world politics. Most cases centre on access to national resources and are a direct response to a nationalist uprising wishing to regain control of its own sovereignty. In North Korea there are very few resources to exploit, so it is only the ideology that continues to provoke the US. Reflecting upon the death of Kim Il Sung and the transition to dynastic succession, Victor Cha notes that this occasion “did not provide [the US] opportunities to overthrow the system at a vulnerable moment,

²⁹⁵ Roehrig, Terence. 2003, “One Rogue State Crisis at a Time! The United States and North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program”. *World Affairs*, 165 (4): 158.

York, Rob. 2014, “U.S. policy not ‘strategic patience’: ambassador”. *NKnews.org*, 12 December 2014. Available <http://www.nknews.org/2014/12/u-s-policy-not-strategic-patience-ambassador> accessed 8 February 2015.

²⁹⁶ Robertson QC, Geoffrey. 2012 [1999], *Crimes Against Humanity (4 ed.)*. Penguin Books: London, UK: 737.

Judt, Tony. 2008, “The Illusionist: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy”, in *Reappraisals: Reflections of the Forgotten Twentieth Century*. Penguin Press, New York, US: 350.

²⁹⁷ National Security Archive. 2002, “The Tilt: The U.S. and the South Asian Crisis of 1971”. National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 79 (ed: Gandhi, Sajit). Available <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/> accessed 5 September 2015.

because the norms of sovereignty just don't allow outsiders to do this."²⁹⁸ Aside from the random examples listed above as counter-witness to this,²⁹⁹ Cha does list Iraq as an exception. However, in his argument the exception proves that the norm is valid - it is so rarely broken as to be noticeable.

This "slippage in the notion of sovereignty" is both a designation that minimises the legal rights of the Other, but is also used a way to sell the concept of infringement.³⁰⁰ The morality of intervention has become increasingly muddled since the full international awareness of the Holocaust. R2P is now a form of accepted and (mostly) legitimised post-Westphalian intervention; it is, in effect, creeping sovereignty by the strongest.³⁰¹ It is employed on an ad hoc and trials-by-number basis with each conflict as it escalates in the media cycle, as witnessed in the Libyan case referenced above.³⁰² R2P has been used historically so that "states were selectively castigated for their violation of human rights" as per the "Euro-North American cultural bias" predominant in the UN.³⁰³ If Iraq is listed as the exception to sovereign non-intervention the proof must therefore be incontrovertible that the rest of international law is slavishly followed by the US, and therefore North Korea must be the rogue. In response (as regime change is not permissible under international law) the US employs other means, awaiting the slow and inevitable collapse of the Pyongyang elite. Withdrawing aid, further

²⁹⁸ Cha, 2012: 429.

²⁹⁹ See also US State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki; "as a matter of longstanding policy, the U.S. does not support political transitions by non-constitutional means." Icke, David. 2015, "State Dept. Spokesperson Jen Psaki: US does not back Coups, Journalists laugh." *The Project Avalon Forum*, 13 March 2015. Available <http://projectavalon.net/forum4/showthread.php?80684-State-Dept.-spokesperson-Jen-Psaki-US-does-not-back-Coups-Journalists-laugh-independent-journalists-to-be---enemies-of-the-state> accessed 25 March 2015.

³⁰⁰ Weber, Cynthia. 1995, *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State and Symbolic Exchange*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK; New York, US; Melbourne, Australia: 16.

³⁰¹ Regarding the Libyan example above, 5 of the 15 members of the UNSC abstained from a vote rather than vote against: Brazil, China, India, Germany, Russia.

³⁰² Robertson QC, 2012 [1999]: 732.

³⁰³ Palat, Ravi Arvind. 2005, "On New Rules For Destroying Old Countries". *Critical Asian Studies*, 37 (1): 82.

destabilising the peninsula with weapons and military drills and ultimately the use of sanctions.³⁰⁴

4. *Sanctions as potential WMDs*

The reverse side of aid is of course sanctions. The relationship is often referred to as carrot and stick diplomacy (or, hawkish engagement) and has been a tool increasingly employed by the US (in concert with the UN) since the end of the Cold War. This form of 'coercive diplomacy' is not new to North Korea, having been employed within weeks of the Korean War.³⁰⁶ President Truman employed the Export Control Act (1949) in June 1950, in effect a total ban on all export trade with North Korea.³⁰⁷ In December that same year, the policy was tightened so as to include any or all 'hostile' states (according to the US designation).

The more conservative members of US Congress applaud the use of sanctions, whilst being sceptical on the validity of aid in bringing a state 'into line' with what the donor wishes to see as more acceptable behaviour.³⁰⁸ Recently the discussion has centered around trying to force Pyongyang back into negotiations via the Six Party Talks that were centered on the North Korean nuclear program. Yong Suk Lee has researched this presumption within the specific North Korean case and concluded "sanctions have had no impact on changing the regime's pursuit for nuclear weapons".³⁰⁹ Similarly, after South Korea's May 24 Measures (2010), Seoul has all but abandoned aid relief to the North which has fallen from

³⁰⁴ In the three years following the 'Axis of evil' designation, aid to North Korea declined by 80%. Beal, 2005: 151.

³⁰⁶ Kim Jina, 2014: 317-318.

³⁰⁷ Kim Haeyoung. 2014, "Stifled Growth and Added Suffering". *Critical Asian Studies*, 46 (1): 96.

³⁰⁸ Aid was viewed during the Arduous March famine as propping up a regime that deserved to collapse. Roehrig, 2003: 166.

³⁰⁹ Lee Yong Suk. 2014, "Countering Sanctions; The Unequal Geographic Impact of Economic Sanctions in North Korea", Stanford University FSI Working Paper, August 2014: 1-38. Available <http://web.stanford.edu/~yongslee/NKSanctions.pdf> accessed 25 January 2015.

\$366m in 2007 to about \$15m in the last calendar year.³¹⁰ Despite this, North Korea's economic growth has been on an upward trajectory, with positive figures since 2011. If neither aid nor sanctions seem to work, do they facilitate anything other than political posturing that serves the domestic interests of politicians in Seoul and Washington?

As with other attempts at coercion through simulated threat (Team Spirit, the 'Axis of Evil' statement of 2002), aggressive intent toward an enemy tends only to entrench perceived bad behaviour. It intensifies the state's own defensive rhetoric which then is adopted by the citizenry. Repeatedly North Korea has announced through state media that sanctions amount to an act of war by the Americans.³¹¹ The same argument was also repeated in its Human Rights report into the US, published in 2014:

"US-sponsored economic sanctions and blockades against DPRK are intended to economically stifle the DPRK and destabilize the country to topple the government... by stirring up its followers, obstruct the right of development of sovereign state and impose negative influence to enjoyment of human rights. They are anti-human rights and anti-popular in character and a crime of genocide far surpassing the war-time mass slaughter."³¹²

Though typically prosaic in delivery, these conclusions marry neatly with other critics of the sanctions regime due to its 'blunt instrument' nature: its inability to discern between elites and citizens.³¹³ Cuba equally acknowledged that the

³¹⁰ Hwang Jae-ok. 2015, "The effectiveness of sanctions on North Korea – true and false". *The Hankyoreh*, 31 August 2015. Available <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/opinion/column/706714.html> accessed 10 September 2015.

³¹¹ Buzo, Adrian. 1997, "The Twenty-One Year Freeze: Australia's Relations with the Democratic Republic of Korea". *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 51 (1): 33.

³¹² DPRKHR, 2015: 144-145.

³¹³ Boutros-Ghali, A/50/60-S/1995, in Paul, Jane A. & Akhtar, Senwan. 1998, "Sanctions: An Analysis". *Global Policy Forum*. Available

ongoing sanctions stiffened the resolve of its government and rallied citizens' support for its anti-American stance. The same logic is becoming increasingly evident within Russia, aided by Putin's anti-imperialist rhetoric.³¹⁴

Historically the US has employed sanctions in order to encourage unresponsive states like Cuba to open their borders to the global market economy. In the case of North Korea sanctions are intended to discipline and likewise coerce Pyongyang to not only relinquish its nuclear program but also to engage more economically within the North East Asian region. The rhetoric of this secondary aim is only likely to end in a "sanctions cul-de-sac",³¹⁵ as closing their economy to increased two way trade through rigging the market seems counterproductive. The same aggressively economic rationale is employed also in Iran. The state likewise rejects the American world order and as a consequence its leaders believe that economic sanctions are being used "to bring the revolution down".³¹⁶ Where sanctions also aid a regime is through hiding the true failures of the sanctioned state's economic policies. North Korea, like Cuba and Russia, is able to lay blame at the US for any policy missteps. This further heightens the legitimacy of the Kim regimes as it has a ready-made scapegoat that is a priori known to be an enemy of the state.

Accounting for the above, there is a real suspicion that the US is using sanctions as a way to attempt to isolate North Korea from its regional community of states.

<https://www.globalpolicy.org/global-taxes/41612-sanctions-an-analysis.html> accessed 14 August 2015.

³¹⁴ Bershidsky, Leonid. 2014, "Sanctions: Tragedy in Cuba, Farce in Russia". *Bloomberg View*, 18 December 2014. Available <http://www.bloombergvew.com/articles/2014-12-18/sanctions-tragedy-in-cuba-farce-in-russia> accessed 16 March 2015.

Krastev, Ivan & Leonard, Mark. 2015, "Europe's Shattered Dream of Order: How Putin is Disrupting the Atlantic Alliance". *Foreign Affairs*, 94 (3): 53.

³¹⁵ Comment by John Delury, Yonsei University (Seoul). Osnos, Evan. 2013a, "Google's Eric Schmidt, North Korea, and Sanctions". *The New York Times*, 11 January 2013. Available <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/world/asia/eric-schmidt-bill-richardson-north-korea.html?hpw&r=0> accessed 18 November 2014.

³¹⁶ Ayatollah Khamenei, quoted in Ganji, Akbar. 2013, "Who is Ali Khamenei? The Worldview of Iran's Supreme Leader". *Foreign Affairs*, 92 (5): 35.

Through the use of its own, and UN-sponsored sanctions, the administration is able to condemn Pyongyang for not being serious about economic reform in the same way China, Russia or Vietnam has been. Meanwhile these very same diplomatic tools negate the ability of North Korea to seriously undertake reform it claims to desire, especially since Kim Jong Un's accession to power. In order to gain hard currency to meet these ends, North Korea seeks funds wherever it can. This has come in the main through Middle Eastern countries similarly sanctioned. In the past year there has likewise been a resurgence of Russian rejection of the American sanctions regime, and a committed tilt toward Asia in order to accommodate and groom anti-US allies.³¹⁷ America has, in effect, created an alliance of enmity within the North East Asian region. With the North Korean jackpot of Russia cancelling \$10 billion of debt, regime stability is likely to only increase twofold: the resupply of available funds, and the added animosity toward the US in attempting to thwart its future viability as a state.³¹⁸

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Sanctions also have a damaging human rights element, as Lee displays through economic and power luminosity data.³¹⁹ Though specifically targeted at the regime and privileged elites, the most noticeable demise in economic activity actually occurs outside the capital areas. In other words, it is the far north eastern and rural provinces most affected. This would lead credence to the argument of those critical of the regime's potential use of aid as a way to buy favour with the military and bureaucratic elites. Conversely, sanctions have

³¹⁷ Ryall, Julian. 2015, "Russia and North Korea declare 2015 a 'year of friendship'". *The Telegraph*, 11 March 2015. Available <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/11463265/Russia-and-North-Korea-declare-2015-a-year-of-friendship.html> accessed 15 March 2015.

³¹⁸ Soldatkin, Vladimir. 2014, "Russia writes off 90 percent of North Korean debt, eyes gas pipeline". *Reuters*, 19 April 2014. Available <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/04/19/russia-northkorea-debt-idUKL6N0NB04L20140419> accessed 18 July 2015.

³¹⁹ By using the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program's data on light activity as a guide for economic activity – Lee, 2014: 2.

increasingly been viewed as a weapon of mass destruction – not so much foreign policy as “state-sanctioned mass murder”.³²⁰ This thesis targets, proceeding from this, the political use of sanctions against North Korea as potentially the most vexatious use of such claims to moral superiority. The incursion and containment of a state’s UN-mandated right to non-intervention and sovereignty is one that even conservative figures see as conflicting the self-same doctrines of universal human rights. Its further repercussions that end in knowing, and unnecessary deaths would appear to be beyond defense.

Considering this, Iraq offers a helpful cross-cultural case study on the impact of sanctions. Firstly, the statistics are considered more reliable due to ongoing international agencies having access to the data. Secondly, as a joint designee of the axis of evil, Iraq has been privy to a lot of the same rhetoric from Washington. Unicef reported that even before President Bush’s 2003 invasion, 5000 children under the age of five died on average per month due to UNSC sanctions.³²¹ This proves once again that the ability of the US to coerce the system for reasons of revenge and plunder prioritises Western ideals of sovereignty over the broader concerns of human rights.³²² It is the “ideological fiction” implicit in American attempts at ‘Othering’ states deemed inferior to itself.³²³ Economic sanctions have been used as a form of post-Cold War containment, and in the case of Iraq alone have led to the death of close to one million infants.³²⁴ This in contrast to 1990 when Iraq “had one of the healthiest and best-educated populations in the

³²⁰ Chomsky, Noam; Herman, Edward S; Said, Edward W; Zinn, Howard et al. 1999, “Sanctions Are Weapons of Mass Destruction”, open letter to *The New York Times*, 28 March 1999, in *Iraq Under Siege: the Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War* (ed: Arnove, Anthony). Pluto Press: London, UK: 181-184.

³²¹ Unicef. 1999, “Results of the 1999 Iraq Child and Maternal Mortality Surveys”. Available <http://fas.org/news/iraq/1999/08/990812-unicef.htm> accessed 18 August 2015.

³²² Kim Jong Il, 1998: “we cannot think of human rights without considering the sovereignty of a nation”; quoted in Suh, 2014: 7.

³²³ Said, Edward. 1995, “Afterword” in Said, 2003 [1978]: 349.

³²⁴ Herring, Eric. 2002, “Between Iraq and a hard place: a critique of the British government’s narrative on UN economic sanctions”. *Review of International Studies*, 28: 39-56.

world”.³²⁵ In 1996 the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright confronted this situation in a televised interview. When asked whether (at that point) half a million dead children “was a price worth paying” to oust the Iraqi regime she replied that the administration “think the price is worth it”.³²⁶ This became a rare departure from the simulation of state building and peacekeeping, even whilst the US moved toward human rights as a justification for its coercive diplomacy in non-compliant countries. The US attempted to counter this with selective data blaming the Iraqi regime, not sanctions, as the reason aid was not reaching the people most at need (the same argument employed regarding North Korea). This is repudiated by a further Unicef report chronicling the debilitating aspect sanctions had on the country, despite the best protestations of the US government.³²⁷ The data since 2003 makes for even grimmer reading, calculating that 100 infants are dying daily due to a combination of malnutrition, killings both direct and indirect (air strikes), and toxicity latent in the environment.³²⁸

The statistics above would not seem entirely relevant to North Korea unless consideration is given to the near-universal impact of sanctions when coupled with the withdrawal of aid (enforced by South Korea’s likewise withdrawal). The need for Pyongyang to rely on other avenues of funding has enabled Russia to reassert its influence on the peninsula, surely a development not conducive to American plans for a peaceful regional transition in the future. The US has managed to further alienate North Korean citizens whilst encouraging Moscow to amplify its diplomatic clout within North East Asia. Sanctions have also become a convenient excuse for maintaining a nuclear weapons program, to instill a

³²⁵ Pilger, John. 2000, “Collateral Damage”, in *Iraq Under Siege: the Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War* (ed: Arno, Anthony). Pluto Press: London, UK: 61.

³²⁶ Pilger, 2000: 60.

³²⁷ Sacks, Bert. 1999, “Iraq: Unicef’s Report and the US State Department’s Report”, 28 September 1999. Available <http://www.scn.org/ccpi/UNandUSreports.html> accessed 18 August 2015.

³²⁸ Kentane, Bie. 2012, “The Children of Iraq: “Was the Price Worth It?” Brussels Tribunal and Global Research, 7 May 2012. Available <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-children-of-iraq-was-the-price-worth-it/30760> accessed 20 August 2015.

further pride in *juche* politics.³²⁹ The politicisation of human rights has been the most recent attempt at redrawing the Cold War boundaries that both Russia and the US increasingly appeal to, in an almost Pavlovian fondness for the ghosts of the past.

5. Human rights as a political tool

The US State Department releases reports each year on the human rights situation in other countries. Naturally a similar report is not issued on itself, and it is careful in what it chooses to say regarding client states.³³⁰ Interventions such as those referred to above only helped to “undermine(d) the moral authority of the United States to comment on human rights abuses in other parts of the world.”³³¹ In contrast to the damnation of North Korea, the annual report on Saudi Arabia seems almost unemotional in its cataloguing of similar human rights abuses to those of Pyongyang.³³² This despite the imminent beheading and crucifixion of a minor charged for ‘anti-government activities’.³³³ The North Korean report does provide a caveat acknowledging the non-existence of diplomatic relations posing a challenge to correct information.³³⁴ Of course, it is not a new phenomenon that “misinformation is a crucial part of war and politics”

³²⁹ Parenti, Michael. 2009, “North Korea: “Sanity” at the Brink”. *Monthly Review*, 25 June 2009. Available <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/parenti250609.html> accessed 19 April 2015.

³³⁰ Beal, 2005: 130.

³³¹ Kessler, Glenn. 2005, “State Dept. study cites torture of prisoners”. *Washington Post*, 1 March 2005. Available <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A60540-2005Feb28.html> accessed 28 July 2015.

³³² US Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human rights and Labor. 2014, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014: Saudi Arabia”. Available <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236832.pdf> accessed 8 September 2015.

³³³ Russian Times. 2015, “Op Nimr: Anonymous targets Saudi websites as teen awaits crucifixion for ‘anti-govt activities’”. *RT.com*, 27 September 2015. Available <https://www.rt.com/news/316621-anonymous-targets-saudi-websites-nimr/> accessed 27 September 2015.

³³⁴ US Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human rights and Labor. 2014, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014: Korea, Democratic People’s Republic of”. Available <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236660.pdf> accessed 8 September 2015.

– therefore the reliance upon ideology through which to secure domestic support.³³⁵

It came as little surprise that both China and North Korea launched counter human rights reports on the US. China first began the practice in 1998, and has been persistent and predictable in its conclusions.³³⁶ In essence these reports continue the type of intellectual horror tourism that has become human rights discourse since World War Two. The claims from all sides are remarkably similar, and all have justifiable evidence with which to assert them.³³⁷ The most recent North Korean report targets essentially the same ‘crimes against humanity’ as that of the US, claims of political prison camps being the one notable difference.³³⁸ Naturally, such reports upon the US do not appear easily to researchers, as the algorithms of (predominantly American) search engines tend to tabulate them toward the end of lists. This is not a factor peculiar to new technological phenomena as it was recognised in what Antonio Gramsci referred to as the control of cultural hegemony.³³⁹

The US, through obfuscation, hegemonic ability to silence dissent, and UN complicity, is able to deny its own atrocities whilst damning North Korea with the same evidence. The US releases annual human rights reports highlighting countries that are under its own sanctions so as to further justify both the sanctions and US moral superiority.³⁴⁰ This has escalated somewhat since 2003,

³³⁵ Beal, 2005: 133.

³³⁶ For instance, see: Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States of America. “Human Rights Record in the United States”, Press release, 23 October 2003. Available <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zgrq/t36633.html> accessed 3 July 2015.

³³⁷ Taylor, Adam. 2014, “North Korea: Ferguson was a ‘disgrace’ and the United States are now ‘laughingstock of the world’”. *The Washington Post*, 27 August 2014. Available <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/08/27/north-korea-ferguson-was-a-disgrace-and-the-united-states-are-now-laughing-stock-of-the-world/> accessed 19 March 2015.

³³⁸ DPRKHR, 2015.

³³⁹ Gramsci, Antonio. 2012 (1971), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. International Publishers: New York, US: 416.

³⁴⁰ Beal 2005: fn 23, 286.

when Republican Senator Brownback introduced the North Korean Freedom Act.³⁴¹ The North Korean Human Rights Act of the following year was passed by President Bush, reading as an equal condemnation of China in its policy of refoulement (in particular, s.304).³⁴² The Act authorised the President to be allocated \$2 million for each of the forward fiscal years so as to conduct espionage activities within North Korea in order to gain access to increased information (at s.104b.) An explosion of human rights groups specific to and supportive of both acts has evolved since. However, the spectacle of hard security (missiles, nuclear weapons) still prevails. Between 2009-2012, there were 16 bills and resolutions in the US Parliament raised on these grounds; but only eight on the issue of human rights and refugees.³⁴³ This thesis would understand sanctions to be also a human rights issue, confusing the data just provided. This is the tediousness of political bureaucracy and policy that tends to not engage citizen support. For *that* you need personal witness.

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While recent scholarship speaks to the knowability of Pyongyang's elite, thanks to a ever-globalising world managing to infiltrate the country, the autopilot button on most commentators still presses Iron Curtain politics. To amplify legitimacy, most commentators and scholars opt to highlight their personal proximity to Pyongyang in a way unseen in most other area studies. Some of the most recognised texts regarding the Pyongyang regime sit uncomfortably close to

³⁴¹ In order that the US is witness to 'Holocaust Now'. Hong, 2013a: 574; 2013b: 518.

³⁴² North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004. 2004, The Library of Congress. (sponsor: Leach, James). Available <http://www.gpo.gov.fdsys/pkg/PLAW-108publ333.html/PLAW-108publ333.html> accessed 4 August 2015.

³⁴³ Seo Jungkun. 2013, "Who Takes North Korea Seriously? U.S. Congress and Policy toward Pyongyang, 2009-2012." *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 25 (2): 195. Available http://politics.khu.ac.kr/homepage/khpolitics/www/img/prof/Who_Takes_North_Korea_Seriously.pdf accessed 28 August 2015.

the genre of defector testimony.³⁴⁴ Defector accounts come as ideologically pre-packaged texts and their adjective-laden lens is fixed from the first sentence due to the awareness of an 'escape' from the Other. The narrative arc is one of a modern pilgrim's progress, where repression and misinformation are supplanted by economic freedom and democratic salvation in the American-backed South. The rhetoric is not dissimilar to that of the Cold War era that saw Christian missionaries proselytise on the evils of communist China, its repression of free thought and assembly. Though aligned with Maoist and Stalinist repression, neither of those historical regimes had contemporary evidence presented in the same way as the Kim regimes have. There have been many important additions to the field of defector testimony, however most infamous of all has been *Escape From Camp 14*, due to revelations that the account was in parts fabricated.³⁴⁵

It is unquestionable that such works have enormous value in colouring North Korean studies. They are, however, rooted in domestic and regime politics, and say very little (if at all) about its international relations. Defector testimony has been widely championed ever since the Brownback Act of 2004 and is a chance to use the voices of those suffering human rights abuses so as to legitimise the US narrative.³⁴⁶ This is both a growing area of North Korean study but a somewhat difficult field both ideologically and politically. The reader is seeing from one side of the DMZ and not accounting for all narratives. It is the repetitive pilgrims progress from communism to capitalism and 'freedom'. This has been the same Enlightenment narrative that justified colonisation and spoke about the white man's burden of liberating unenlightened societies, even if the

³⁴⁴ "Defector" is sometimes considered a controversial term; as most who escape the country do so out of desperation to survive rather than for political purposes.

³⁴⁵ The three most recognised works being - Kang Chol-hwan. 2005, *The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag*. Basic Books: New York, US. Harden, Blaine. 2012, *Escape from Camp 14*. Pan Books: London, UK. Demick, Barbara. 2010, *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. Spiegel & Grau: New York, US. Testifying to the 'horror' spectacle of such narratives, two of these are being turned into American movies.

³⁴⁶ North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004.

UN Human Rights report suggests instead the definition of “refugees *sur place*”.³⁴⁷

It is in such works that the act of *ghosting* most obviously appears. While more impartial research acknowledges the idea of narratives haunted by the past – of the Second World War and the hidden transcripts of the Soviet Gulags – it also includes interdisciplinary work to fully flesh out multiple angles. Very rarely does this occur in discussions of human rights, the area which will become the most active in the coming years when discussing North Korea. “Countless events of the past, such as the Holocaust, cannot and should not be simply chased out of our collective memory”, Bleiker counsels.³⁴⁸ Having said that, the ‘*tabula rasa* of the consciousness’ (as he terms it) is necessary if we are to shrug off the mantras of traditional international relations theories so as to engage more honestly with the way geopolitics is evolving. The ghosts need to be dealt with, both those of the “unresolved legacy of the Korean War” and those of the perceived threat of communism that is resurgent in the current era.³⁴⁹ The use of defector testimony tells us a lot about some of what occurs within North Korea. Its use as a political weapon through parallels with the Holocaust suggest that the US has not been able to come to terms with what it so confidently described as the new world order.³⁵⁰ Rather, a lack of a clear narrative on North Korea reflects American concerns about global balances of power. Talk of the Washington Consensus being trumped by a Beijing Consensus were short lived and perhaps the world is heading “toward a global dissensus”.³⁵¹ The jostling for power that the Cold War enabled had a brief intermission during the era of rogue states.

³⁴⁷ UNHRC, 2014: 10.

³⁴⁸ Bleiker, Roland. 1997, “Forget IR Theory”. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 22, (1): 58.

³⁴⁹ UNHRC, 2014: 16.

³⁵⁰ Lee, Hee Young & Gerber, Jurg. 2009, “We Just Do What We Think Is Right. We Just Do What We Are Told’: Perceptions of Crime and Justice of North Korean Defectors”. *Asia Pacific Journal of Police and Criminal Justice*, 7 (1): 35.

³⁵¹ Kupchan, Charles A. 2012, *No One’s World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn*. Oxford University Press: New York, US: 145.

The world may now have returned to 1945 politics. As far as North Korea is concerned, the US is leading a push to recognise the spectre of concentration camps and nuclear capabilities inimical to Western controls. Putin's putsch is helping to escalate the legitimacy of this crisis in Washington. The US was able to forget the Korean peninsula before, though North Korea never did. The ghosts have come back to haunt the relationship and continued isolation of Pyongyang appears to be likely, though hardly helpful considering the ability of the US to enable regime longevity through its foreign policy choices.

Chapter Five

The return: spectacle, simulation and spectre

North Korea remains the American *memento mori*, an affront even over sixty years after the Armistice of 1953. The three narratives discussed in this thesis are chronological as much as they can be individually dissected from a meta-narrative of Otherness. We now live in a September 12 paradigm in which America witnessed the repercussions of its frontier wars returning home.³⁵² This was the apocryphal instance for the US in which “a spectacular reflection” upon its own security “sends the simulacrum away.”³⁵³ The repercussions personified by the Homeland Security measures were in memoriam of the fact that America has consistently silenced dissent at home as much as abroad. Yet for all the self-absorbed analysis in Washington, the true test of America’s ability to engage with states like North Korea has been evident in its distinct lack of competing and questioning voices.³⁵⁴

The US remains unwilling to properly engage with North Korea due to its security guarantee with South Korea, as much as through Pyongyang’s recalcitrance and its *juche* ideology. It remains personally offended that so small a state with a ‘tinpot dictator’ dare resist its might and the occasional foreign policy overtures made to it.³⁵⁵ Hence the use of sanctions, the reliance upon UN resolutions, the posturing simulations of the annual war games with the South. The media unthinkingly presents, through its simplistic representations, the caricatures that are analysed as the three ghosts in this thesis: communist, rogue, human rights abuser. It does not pause to consider the basis of these claims or how the complicity of US policy reinforces Pyongyang’s regime. However America is not

³⁵² The US being “viewed after September 11 as a self-absorbed, bullying hegemon”: Kagan, 2008.

³⁵³ Derrida, 1994: 147.

³⁵⁴ Cumings, 2004a: iix.

³⁵⁵ Chomsky, 2004: 21.

alone in this mistake – over the decades both Beijing and Moscow have faced the same dismissive attitude from various Kim regimes. Yet anger, revenge or humiliation has never proven to be a good basis for foreign policy decisions.

Whilst the first ghost identified in this thesis, communism, is now degraded as an anachronism in most US media, it is still employed popularly and colloquially as part of a “terrified laugh”.³⁵⁶ Additionally, the nuclear weapons trope so essential to securitizing the rogue state designation seems to have been begrudgingly accepted; future discussions will largely be in dividing the hawks from the doves in US political analysis. Through all this, the international system is still haunted by the Holocaust, by the images of the camps and the suffering. While North Korea was a victim of World War Two, it is now again on the frontline of an aggressive American agenda of human rights campaigning aimed at restoring the supremacy believed to have been lost after an all-too-short unipolar moment.

This reaction to its hauntology has resulted in an aggressively ideological return of the US wheel of political intrusion into the Korean peninsula due to institutional “ritual forgetting”.³⁵⁷ The rogue lens was never effectively securitised by the US despite the fact that representation has colonised modern thought through agents such as the mass media.³⁵⁸ It was (in hindsight) a vague designation that attempted to create a necessary sense of fear in the international interregnum between the end of the Cold War and the events of 9/11. North Korea remained a problem the US was unable to solve. It remained for the theatrical spectacle of 9/11 to justify a shift in pre-emptive US foreign policy that the simulation of ideology could not. This needed the collation of ‘evidence’ through images however, and in this regard satellite surveillance has since been crucial in creating a nexus between nuclear capability and human

³⁵⁶ Derrida, 1994: 58.

³⁵⁷ Campbell, 1992: 248.

³⁵⁸ Debrix, 1999: 11.

rights abuses. The recourse to bearing witness – both above and on the ground – has reinjected visual testimony of moral superiority for the US. This was the morality that had been diminished following the unilateral invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The American spectre of human rights abuses and rewrites history to legitimise past US intervention on the peninsula and future foreign policy regarding North Korea. Evidence such as that presented by the Kirby Report of the UNHRC validates the third lens of this thesis as does the surveillance of both nuclear facilities and the *kwanliso*. This reinforces American global control of knowledge,³⁵⁹ and knowledge as power which “neutralis[es] the truth in favour of the simulacrum”.³⁶⁰ In the face of simulation and spectre, the only weapon against this inundation of hyper-reality may be to “reinject realness and referentiality everywhere” and “for that purpose [the US] prefers the discourse of crisis.”³⁶¹ That is: to reinject the human rights spectacle so weighed down with references to the twentieth century.³⁶² To rely on the politic aesthetics that “favors the icons of suffering over the tomes of analysis.”³⁶³ This will continue and will remain in marked contrast to the monthly negotiations and diplomacy as seen regarding other states in North East Asia.

This attempt at recapturing global sympathy after 9/11 has not been met with universal approval. Forgetting the spectacles of counter-movements such as Al Qaeda, Boko Haram and Islamic State, there have been two occasions in 2015 in which North Korean leaders have been awarded accolades for their resistance in the face of belligerent American hegemony. First, in an award presented by the

³⁵⁹ Most infamously, Hawk, David. 2003, *North Korea's Hidden Gulag: Interpreting Reports of Changes in the Prison Camps*. US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. Available <http://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/The Hidden Gulag.pdf> accessed 18 October 2014.

³⁶⁰ Baudrillard, 1983b: 36.

³⁶¹ Baudrillard, 1983a: 42.

³⁶² The UNHRC report describes the *kwansilo* as “resembl(ing) the horrors of camps that totalitarian states established during the twentieth century”. UNHRC, 2014: 11.

³⁶³ Ignatieff, 1998: 16.

daughter of previous Indonesian President Sukarno (overthrown with the aid of the US due to his nationalist ambitions), Kim Jong Un was honoured for Global Statesmanship by the same agency that posthumously awarded Kim Il Sung the same accolade in 2001.³⁶⁴ Kim was celebrated for his “fight against neo-colonialist imperialism”,³⁶⁵ in the spirit of the non-aligned movement that has fallen from popular recognition since the end of the Cold War. Second, in August 2015, to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Workers Party of (North) Korea, Syria named a park in Damascus after Kim Il Sung.³⁶⁶

These two above awards do not amount individually to much global infamy but can be seen as part of a wider trend that seeks to reassert anti-US sentiment in states that have suffered under the hegemony of both the US and its consistent control of the UN and other global institutions. There has been a surge in such counter-Nobel recognition among non-US aligned states of late, such as the Confucius Peace Prize to Fidel Castro in 2014 or the Al-Gaddafi International Prize for Human Rights to Hugo Chavez in 2004.³⁶⁷ These markers are evidence that America cannot escape its ghosts, as much as it seeks to rely on them for coercive and disciplinary measures. Forever US public enemy number two, North Korea will continue to be engaged with through the aesthetics and culture of crisis – whether spectacle, simulation or spectre. Whilst under the aegis of an Armistice, the ‘problem’ of North Korea and the ghosts it represents for the US

³⁶⁴ Blum, 2014 [2001]: 170.

³⁶⁵ Agence France-Presse. 2015b, “Indonesian foundation defends awarding Kim Jong-Un peace prize.” *The Jakarta Post*, 3 August 2015. Available <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/08/03/indonesian-foundation-defends-awarding-kim-jong-un-peace-prize.html> accessed 8 September 2015.

³⁶⁶ Al Jazeera. 2015, “Syria names park in capital after N. Korea founder”. *Al Jazeera*, 31 August 2015. Available <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/08/syria-names-park-capital-korea-founder-150831194857490.html> accessed 6 September 2015.

³⁶⁷ Taylor, Adam. 2015, “Yes, Kim Jong Un is receiving an international peace prize”. *The Washington Post*, 3 August 2015. Available <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/08/03/yes-kim-jong-un-is-receiving-an-international-peace-prize/> accessed 14 August 2015.

will continue to be securitised as long as “efforts to render political aesthetics culminate in one thing: war.”³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Benjamin, Walter. 2007 [1968], *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Schocken Books: New York, US: 241.

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