

UNDERSTANDING DPRK'S NUCLEAR STRATEGIC CHOICE:
USING A CONSTRUCTIVIST LENS TO ILLUMINATE RATIONAL CHOICE INSIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Predictions of Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons acquisition under the dominant structural-realist model are predicated on an anarchic international system where states optimise their capabilities to survive. Opaque to structural-realists is what predicated North Korea's discounting of a Chinese or Soviet/Russian nuclear umbrella as a reliable balance to South Korea's US-provided nuclear umbrella. This project innovatively explored the North Korean leaders' ideational processes regarding self-realisation using Alastair Iain Johnston's alternative strategic-culture model, subjecting key regime texts and historical documents to symbolic analysis. The model recognises that non-cultural factors help shape internal cultural elements and that ideological variables have significant impact on states' reactions to structural changes. Understanding North Korea's nuclear choice requires assaying leaders' perceptions of three features inherent in its security environment; namely "the role of war in human affairs," "the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses" and "the efficacy of the use of force." These preoccupations limited nuclear choice to ideation-derived strategic choices where indigenous nuclear balancing was preferred across changing structural conditions. It is concluded that Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons programme was not only for survival, but also for internal social stability, economic prosperity, political ideological consistency and the regime's credibility in the international system.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea)
European Union (EU)
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO)
People's Republic of China (PRC or China)
Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea)
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or Soviet Union)
United States (US or America)
United Nations (UN)
World Trade Organisation (WTO)
World War II (WWII)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Predictions of Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons acquisition under the dominant structural-realist model are predicated on an anarchic international system where states optimise their capabilities to survive. Opaque to structural-realists is what predicated North Korea's discounting of a Chinese or Soviet/Russian nuclear umbrella as a reliable balance to South Korea's US-provided nuclear umbrella. This thesis seeks to fill the gap by investigating ideations behind DPRK leaders' (Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il) nuclear choice. It assumes a "social reality" exists in North Korea to which ruling elites incessantly contribute and on which they reflect. Assessment is required of the culture-structure dialectical process during key historical events. A strategic-culture model is used to interpret leaders' perceptions of the security environment and justifications for their strategic behaviour. It is argued that leaders preferred to pursue indigenous nuclear capabilities early on (1950s) and their nuclear ambitions steadily grew over different periods, relative capabilities and external threat levels. The central research question is: "Does a strategic-culture model's alternative explanation address gaps in the structural-realist model's explanation for the DPRK's nuclear choice?"

Today's overarching narrative portrays DPRK as a failed isolated rogue/outlaw state, but in its heyday (until late-1960s) it economically surpassed ROK.¹ The socialist camp supported it against the US-led UN army in the Korean War and in its war-torn economy's recovery (1960s). Becoming a non-aligned movement member, it allied with Third World

¹ Anderi Lankov, *The Real North Korea* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11; Victor D. Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (London: The Bodley Head, 2012), 19-62.

countries in the 1970s and engaged in grand bargaining with dominant UN powers.² Today DPRK retains exceptionally high ratios of military personnel to population, and military spending to overall expenditure.³ North Korea's historical belligerence towards neighbours and adversaries,⁴ its open defiance of international norms⁵ and "dysfunctional" autocrats, have made it the most-sanctioned and isolated nation. Regardless of predictions of its imminent collapse since 1990s,⁶ three decades later the regime has become seemingly collapse-proof and completed two leadership successions. It retained a utopian ideology and the most militarised authoritarian post-Cold War regime.

The DPRK's nuclear posture drew global attention from late-1980s. Pyongyang joined the IAEA signing Safeguards Agreement "INFCIRC/66" in 1977. It only signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985. In 1989, following DPRK's 70-day shutdown of the Yongbyon megawatt reactors, CIA concluded North Korea had sufficient plutonium and technology to produce a modicum of nuclear-weapons.⁷ The possibility that North Korea possessed or could possess nuclear-weapons heightened military tensions in the Korean peninsula. George W.H. Bush's Administration adopted a "limited engagement" approach conducting seven negotiations with Kim Il Sung. The US-DPRK joint declaration on denuclearisation of the peninsula led Pyongyang to ratify the Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement in 1992. However, the IAEA reported that the DPRK had reprocessed

² Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*, 19-62.

³ Etel Solingen, "North Korea," in *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia & Middle East* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 121; Jonathan Cheng, "How Seoul Would Defend Itself Against a North Korean Attack," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 11, 2017.

⁴ Pyongyang's military inflicting includes invasion of ROK (1950), over 435 violent incidents around the demilitarised zone (1966 to 2015), use of artillery to sink a ROK naval vessel (1967), seizure of the *USS Pueblo* (1968), shooting down an US navy EC-121 (1969), attempted assassination of ROK presidents (1968, 1982, 1983) and the bombing of ROK's international airport (1986) and South Korean Air flight 858 (1987). See Richard A. Mobley, "Historical Crisis in North Korea: Lessons from the Capture of the *USS Pueblo* and the Shootdown of a US Navy EC-121 - 1968 and 1969," *Studies in Intelligence* 59, no. 1 (2015): 1-10; available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol-59-no-1/pdfs/Revisiting-Pueblo-and-EC121.pdf>

⁵ Pyongyang was labelled as a "criminal state" that engages in "kidnapping, drug running, trafficking in endangered species and counterfeiting foreign currencies, pharmaceuticals and cigarettes" and defies human rights issues. See Mark Fitzpatrick, "North Korea: Is Regime Change the Answer?," *Survival* 55, no. 3 (2013): 7-20; available from <https://iiss.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00396338.2013.802848>

⁶ Aidan Foster-Carter, "Obama Comes Out as an NK Collapsist," *38 NORTH*, January 27, 2015; available from <https://www.38north.org/2015/01/afostercarter012715/>; US Department of Defence, *Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Q&A Following IISS Asia Security Conference*. News Transcript, May 31, 2003; available from <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2704>

⁷ Larry A. Niksch, *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program* (New York: Nova Science Publisher, 2001), 26.

more plutonium than disclosed, demanding access in 1993 to two nuclear waste storage sites.⁸ Consequently, Pyongyang threatened to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty.⁹

North Korea temporarily froze its nuclear programme after Kim Il Sung met former President Jimmy Carter in 1994. A US-North Korean Agreed Framework was concluded in Geneva on 21 October 1994. Under the Agreed Framework, North Korea would freeze operation and construction of nuclear reactors and eventually dismantle its nuclear-weapons programme in exchange for two Light Water Reactors by 2003 and annual shipments of 50,000 metric tons of heavy oil as “alternative energy”.¹⁰ KEDO was established in 1995 to finance the promised two Light Water Reactors.¹¹ Kim Il Sung’s death in 1994 left implementation to his son Kim Jong Il. The Clinton Administration lifted the economic embargo that was imposed after Pyongyang’s invasion of ROK in 1950. 109 multilateral (ROK-DPRK-US, PRC-DPRK-ROK-US) and bilateral talks (US-DPRK) occurred during the verification process from 1994 to 2000.¹²

In 2002, after US Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly’s official visit to Pyongyang, US alleged North Korean officials had admitted to their nuclear-weapons programme.¹³ Oil shipments to North Korea were suspended in November 2002. North Korea expelled IAEA inspectors and announced the re-commissioning of nuclear facilities to overcome its energy crisis. It withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty on 10 January 2003 and resumed its nuclear-weapons programme. Its development of nuclear warhead delivery capability significantly heightened military tensions on the peninsula, because of the likelihood of pre-emptive strikes by the US (the George W. Bush Administration). The regional security environment’s deterioration led to the first round of Six Party Talks¹⁴ in August 2003. The Six Party Talks made limited progress until the fourth round on 19 September 2005. A Joint Statement re-affirmed the DPRK’s commitment to abandoning its nuclear programme and returning to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and IAEA Safeguards. In

⁸ IAEA, “Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards,” International Atomic Energy Agency; available from <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/dprk/fact-sheet-on-dprk-nuclear-safeguards>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Arms Control Association, “The US-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance.” Arms Control Association website; available from <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/agreedframework>

¹¹ *Agreement on the Establishment of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization*, 1994; available from <http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/EstablishmentKEDO.pdf> KEDO members were Japan, South Korea, US and EU.

¹² CSIS, “U.S. Negotiations and North Korean Provocations,” October 2, 2017, Centre for Strategic & International Studies; available from <https://beyondparallel.csis.org/dprk-provocations-and-us-negotiations/>

¹³ U.S. Department of State, “North Korean Nuclear Program,” Press Statement, October 16, 2002; available from <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/14432.htm> This visit took place during the George W. Bush Administration,

¹⁴ China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea and US.

return, the five parties (China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and US) offered a comprehensive aid programme including energy, economic and humanitarian assistance.¹⁵

Disagreements arose about verification soon after. Tensions further increased when the US Treasury Department designated North Korean accounts in Banco Delta Asia as a “money laundering concern” and sanctioned them.¹⁶ On 9 October 2006, Pyongyang conducted its first nuclear test. In response, the UN Security Council imposed weapons and economic sanctions. The Six Party Talk resumed in December 2006 and February 2007 and called for implementation of requirements in the September 2005 Joint Statement.¹⁷ The DPRK sealed its Yongbyon nuclear reactor in July 2007 as the process required. The 2007 Agreement’s phase two further required “disablement” of North Korean nuclear facilities in exchange for international aid and continuing diplomatic normalisation with US and Japan.¹⁸ Completing substantial positive steps, DPRK committed in 2007 not to transfer nuclear materials, technology and knowhow. The US agreed to remove DPRK from the state sponsors of terrorism list in June 2008.

However, the process halted again when disputes occurred among parties over the second implementation phase in late-2008. In August, the US proposed a revised verification proposal that required “full access to any site, facility or location” while DPRK blocked collection of samples at Yongbyon.¹⁹ Following Pyongyang’s satellite launch in April 5, 2009, the UN Security Council issued a presidential statement condemning DPRK’s violation of Resolution 1718.²⁰ North Korea walked away from Six Party Talk in April 2009 and conducted its second nuclear test on May 25. The Obama Administration refused to reward Pyongyang’s “bad behaviour” (launching missiles and insulting neighbours) under its “strategic patience” policy. The US reinforced its alliance with South Korea and Japan and further isolated North Korea to urge it to return to negotiations.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Six-Party Talks, Beijing, China,” September 19, 2005; available from <https://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Designates Banco Delta Asia as Primary Money Laundering Concern under USA PATRIOT Act,” Press Centre, September 15, 2005; available from <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js2720.aspx>

¹⁷ Arms Control Association, “The Six-Party Talks at a Glance,” Arms Control Association; available from <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6partytalks>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ UN Security Council, “Statement by the President of the Security Council,” United Nations Security Council, 13 April 2009; available from http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/2009/7

Up to late-2017 DPRK had conducted 55 missile-launches and six nuclear tests.²¹ On 10 February 2015 North Korea proclaimed itself a nuclear-weapon state.²² Despite a series of UN Security Council Resolutions, external pressure and incentives, North Korea retained its nuclear capabilities.²³ Missile tests conducted from 1993 to 2017 revealed that South Korea was completely and Japan was partially within range of *Nodong*-family missiles; *Taepodong*-family missiles could reach Japan, South Korea and US Western Pacific territories and possibly Alaska and Hawaii.²⁴ Pyongyang's command and control systems, accuracy and operational capabilities, and surprise attack capabilities remain matters of grave global concern. Despite shuttle diplomacy between DPRK, ROK, PRC and US leaders in 2018, pessimists view Pyongyang continues to be a threat to regional peace with its advancement of bomb-making and intercontinental ballistic missiles technologies.

Research Purpose

Structural-realists' explanations were dominant in making predictions of the DPRK's nuclear choice. They viewed North Korea's nuclear possession and belligerence to be part of its rational calculus in an anarchic international system where material capabilities are distributed variously to actors and opposing groups of allies seeking power balancing.²⁵ The US projected power on the Korean peninsula through the US-ROK alliance since 1953. The declining of its allies' support since late-1980s led the DPRK to develop indigenous nuclear-weapons.²⁶ The structural realist model explains most of North Korea's behaviour around its nuclear choice. What is opaque to structural realists' explanations is the ideation leading to North Korea not seeking a nuclear umbrella from its "allies". Structural realists do not identify why North Korea continued to nuclearise while other socialist countries embraced international norms and practices in the Cold War's wake. It either changed its nuclear

²¹ 1st nuclear test (October 9, 2006), 2nd nuclear test (May 25, 2009), 3rd nuclear test (February 12, 2013), 4th nuclear test (January 6, 2016), 5th nuclear test (September 9, 2013) and 6th nuclear test (September 3, 2017).

²² Arms Control Association, "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance."

²³ UNSCR 1718, UNSCR 1874, UNSCR 2087, UNSCR 2094, UNSCR 2270, UNSCR 2321, UNSCR 2356, UNSCR 2371, UNSCR 2375, and UNSCR 2397.

²⁴ Japan Ministry of Defence. "Security Environment Surrounding Japan," *Defence of Japan 2017*, 67; available from http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2017.html

²⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1979); Robert O. Keohane, *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

²⁶ Nicholas D. Anderson, "Explaining North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions," *Australia Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 6 (2017): 621-41; available from <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2017.1317328>

decision when the US reduced military assets remarkably and withdrew all nuclear-weapons from South Korea between 1991 and 1992.

Every known nuclear-weapons programme has been based on decades-long commitment and large-scale investment on technology, science and experts.²⁷ It is recorded that Pyongyang's earliest nuclear interests were for peaceful purposes.²⁸ The question is when and why did Kim Il Sung or Kim Jong Il decide to pursue a weapons-grade nuclear programme in addition to civilian use of nuclear power?²⁹ Or, why and when did North Korean leaders begin to see alliances as unreliable, the international system as anarchic, conflicts with other international actors as zero-sum, and self-reliance (by developing its own nuclear weapons) as the *sine qua non* for survival.

Since DPRK's inception its leaders' realpolitik ideations have gradually transformed a well-endowed country (advanced industrial facilities, plentiful natural resources, large population and labour force) into a true "garrison state". Leaders' subsequent strategic choice of nuclear-weapons acquisition may go far beyond neorealist "rationality"; in fact, it was defined as Pyongyang's core national interest with significant links to its national security, social stability, economic prosperity, legitimacy of domestic political authority and the regime's credibility in the international system.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation has six chapters beginning with this Introduction.

Chapter II first offers a structural realist explanation of DPRK's realpolitik behaviour in acquiring nuclear-weapons and being belligerent. Outlining deficits, it explains the necessity for cultural variables in understanding North Korea's strategic behavior and explicates Alastair Iain Johnston's strategic-culture model and method.

Chapter III through "process tracing" the period between 1930s-1980s examines how Kim Il Sung and his guerrilla faction *Kaspan* interpreted and reacted to key historical events; how North Korean ruling elites' realpolitik ideations were constituted through social

²⁷ Richard K. Betts, "Universal Deterrence or Conceptual Collapse? Liberal Pessimism and Utopian Realism," in *The Coming Crisis: Nuclear Proliferation, US Interests, and World Order*, ed. Victor A. Utgoff (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), 57.

²⁸ Jonathan D. Pollack, *No Exit: North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and International Security* (Oxford, England: Routledge, 2011), 47.

²⁹ Although some South Korean resources claim that Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons program began in 1950, as Jonathan Pollack noted, there is no sufficient evidence that could support these assertions. *Ibid.*

interactions. The analysis focuses on Johnston's three basic assumptions about the central paradigm of strategic-culture - the perceptions of "the role of war in human affairs," "the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses" and "the efficacy of the use of force." The empirical inquiry also reveals how these perceptual preoccupations established a "social reality" that restrained Kim Il Sung's strategic-choice and consistently impacted on leaders' decision-makings. Finally, it articulates how these ideations could help us understand the DPRK's nuclear choice in the period up to 1980s.

Chapter IV covers 1990s to 2011. It examines whether existing shared ideations continued under Kim Jong Il and how new ideational elements were constituted regarding Johnston's three basic assumptions. It reveals how North Korea's strategic choices and preferences were impacted by the evolved "social reality" and where nuclear-weapons fit into it.

Chapter V systematically examines the DPRK's strategic-culture and how it impacts on DPRK's nuclear path consistently. It first summarises the central paradigm of North Korean strategic-culture, which consists of the perceptions of Johnston's three basic assumptions. It then presents a set of ideation-driven strategic preferences associated with nuclear choice that were empirically observed in Chapter III and IV. It concludes that nuclear-weapons possession was not only for external balancing for survival, but also for the DPRK's internal social stability, economic prosperity, political ideological consistency and its regime's credibility in the international system.

Chapter VI provides a conclusion and suggests potential future studies.

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURAL-REALIST MODEL & STRATEGIC-CULTURE MODEL

Introduction

In explaining the derivation of North Korea's realpolitik behaviour (its nuclear possession and belligerent nuclear activities) neorealists attribute its strategic preferences to rational calculations in an anarchic international system where great powers (having superior material capabilities) seek balancing of power through alliances.³⁰ The splitting of Korea and the DPRK's strategic behaviour are both seen as consequences of great power balancing. Declining support for DPRK from its allies - USSR and China – in the face of a strengthening US-ROK caused an unresolved imbalance.³¹ While its explanatory simplicity is the dominant structural realpolitik model's strength, it does not capture ideations that shape the DPRK's nuclear self-reliance motivation. Waltzian structural realists, unlike neoclassical realists, do not factor state agents' ideation as intermediate variables when predicting states' realpolitik strategic behaviour.

Mainstream constructivists attribute states' strategic preferences, whether idealpolitik or realpolitik, to ideational variables.³² The culture-structure relationship is dialectical.³³ The changes of structural conditions may facilitate internal cultural evolutions; however, the internalised cultural forces have strong impacts on states' responsiveness to structural

³⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Robert Jervis, "Realism, Game Theory, and Cooperation," *World Politics* 40, no. 3 (1988): 317-49; available from

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2010216.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A3f21c9962913e6fe9c41fdd898e7bc8a>

³¹ Anderson, 621-41.

³² Alastair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 266.

³³ *Ibid.*, 265-6.

change.³⁴ Following constructivist scholars, Alastair Iain Johnston's strategic-culture model aims to reveal states' perceptions of their security environments by focusing on three "basic assumptions about the orderliness of the strategic environment": "the role of war in human affairs," "the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses" and "the efficacy of the use of force."³⁵ A "realpolitik" strategic-culture explanation argues North Korea has always responded to internal crises and external threats within its own political framework on which meanings of its nuclear choice evolved. The DPRK's realpolitik ideations, constructed by core leaders, are consistently reinforced through interactions with other actors. The cultural forces behind its nuclear policy are empirically observable. Leaders' nuclear acquisition preferences were remarkably consistent across time, levels of technology and external threats.

This Chapter begins by summarising structural-realist explanations of North Korea's nuclear choice and strategic behaviour. It then outlines how assaying strategic-culture may offer insights structural-realist explanations may not. It discusses Johnston's strategic-culture analytical framework clarifying the definition of "strategic-culture" and method and objects of analysis of North Korea's "strategic-culture" in association with its nuclear behaviour.³⁶

Structural Realpolitik Model

Mainstream realist theorists assume world politics to be anarchic and state-centric; and state-actors to optimise utilities and capabilities for survival using balance-of-power strategies.³⁷ State-actors' self-help realpolitik behaviour is unavoidable under anarchy.³⁸ Strategic choices, driven by international anarchy and specifically by relative material capabilities, vary from mere survival to power maximisation.³⁹ Waltzian structural-realism describes states as "like-units" because "socialisation reduces variety"; unit-level variables became irrelevant when explaining "some big, important, and enduring patterns" of states' behaviour.⁴⁰ Great Powers' status-quo oriented balance-of-power behaviour shapes the

³⁴ Thomas U. Berger, "Norms, Identity, and National Security in Germany and Japan," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 319.

³⁵ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 223.

³⁶ Johnston. *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995.

³⁷ Jervis, "Realism, Game Theory, and Cooperation," 319.

³⁸ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

³⁹ Ibid., 289; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2001).

⁴⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 70 & 76.

international system. States are rational and decide whether to choose internal balancing (strengthening military and economic capabilities or developing ingenious strategies) or external balancing (making/strengthening their alliances).⁴¹ Secondary and tertiary powers are likely to align with more powerful states or to bandwagon.⁴²

The main post-Korean war structure-generated changes for North Korea are discussed below - Establishment of the ROK-US alliance (1953); End of the Cold War (late-1980s); the Bush Administration's pre-emptive doctrine (2002).

Post-1953 US-ROK alliance

When the US militarily intervened in the Korean War President Truman warned nuclear-weapons may be used on North Korea.⁴³ After the armistice the US signed the Mutual Defence Treaty with South Korea in October 1953 and deployed a strong defence network with different types of tactical nuclear-weapons in South Korea from January 1958.⁴⁴ American nuclear-weapons in ROK peaked to approximately 950 nuclear warheads in the mid-1960s.⁴⁵ In contrast, North Korea faced the US/UN economic sanctions pursuant to invading South Korea in 1950. Its infrastructure was mostly destroyed by US/UN bombing.

Structural-realists would anticipate the Soviets and Chinese counterbalancing the US alliance. As this failed to satisfy North Korea, they would expect it to strengthen internally balancing with conventional weapons. However, this was insufficient to ward off the US nuclear threat. Consequently, it signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the USSR in 1959 to gain training and technology. The promised nuclear research centre was constructed in Yongbyon by 1961. To balance externally, North Korea was able to sign, in 1961, the Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid and Cooperation Friendship Treaty and the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the USSR – fitting the model.

⁴¹ Ibid., 118.

⁴² Stephen M. Walt, "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition," in *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, 192-230 (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002).

⁴³ Andrew Glass, Truman Leaves Nuclear Option on the Table in Korean War, *Politico*, Nov. 30, 1950; available from <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/11/30/truman-leaves-nuclear-option-on-the-table-in-korean-conflict-nov-30-1950-264580>

⁴⁴ Despite 1953 Armistice Treaty prohibiting introduction of qualitatively new weaponry, Washington deployed nuclear-tipped bombers (280mm nuclear cannons), submarines (Matador cruise missiles) and aircraft carriers (US F-4 fighter plans) into South Korean territory from 1958-59. See Bruce Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York: New Press, 2004), 53.

⁴⁵ Cited in *ibid.*, 53-4.

Throughout 1970s, the US-ROK alliance strengthened whilst the DPRK-USSR-China alliance weakened. South Korea was discovered to be developing nuclear-weapons in 1987.⁴⁶ To induce Seoul to desist, Washington reaffirmed its security commitment to it, confirming (in the mid-1970s) its willingness to launch nuclear-weapons and conduct ground strikes on DPRK territory.⁴⁷ The US-ROK Combined Forces Command was formed in 1978, for South Korea's defence, under a US general.⁴⁸ As the US had command of nuclear-weapons and conventional forces, in addition to the absence of a peace treaty, North Korea intensified its nuclear power demands. But the USSR declined its request for a nuclear plant in the 1970s.⁴⁹

The Sino-Soviet split (1960s) and the US-ROK-Japan alliance's strengthening (1970s) advantaged the US. A structural-realpolitik model would predict seeking by the DPRK of separate security assurances from the USSR and China and internal balancing with conventional forces. The DPRK exploited Sino-Soviet disputes to extract economic and military assistance from both, insisting on acquiring nuclear weapons even when the 1961 Sino-North Korean and Soviet-DPRK agreements offered external balancing. Pyongyang's several requests (1960-1970s) of the USSR and China for nuclear technology transfer to support indigenous nuclear development were to no avail.⁵⁰

The end of the Cold War

In 1991, in persuading Pyongyang to comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations, Washington planned "for the actual return of all land-based Naval air delivered and sea-based tactical nuclear-weapons to US territory, the withdrawal of all nuclear-weapons from Korea" noting that "the withdrawal of weapons from Korea had highest

⁴⁶ Throughout 1970s, ROK continued to seek fissile material and nuclear technology from Canada, mainland China, Taiwan, and India, as well as from American firms.

⁴⁷ The published Pentagon's "AirLand Battle" war-fighting strategy targeted the DPRK's extensive underground troop depots and munitions factories. See Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country*, 54-5.

⁴⁸ *Combined Forces Command*. United States Forces Korea (website); available from <http://www.usfk.mil/About/Combined-Forces-Command/>

⁴⁹ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry*, April 15, 1976; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111473>; *Telegram, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry*, June 25, 1976; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111475>; *Telegram, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry*, January 20, 1977; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110126>

⁵⁰ *Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and the German Ambassador*, August 26, 1963; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110608>; *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry*, January 11, 1964; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110616>; *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry*, March 13, 1967; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110621>; Solingen, 118.

priority.”⁵¹ After ROK President Roh Tae Woo announced that “there do not exist any nuclear weapons whatsoever anywhere in the Republic of Korea,”⁵² the 1992 ROK-US joint “Team Spirit” military exercise was halted. Victor Cha, former national foreign policy advisor under Bush Administration (2001-2009), recalls that Washington and Seoul had made security assurances, particularly between 1989 and 2011.⁵³ Structural realists would anticipate North Korea’s rational choice at this point would be to bandwagon with the US as the sole superpower. But unlike some post-Soviet countries’ bandwagoning, the DPRK chose indigenous internal balancing instead.

The USSR’s dissolution in 1991 killed a funding source for DPRK. Russia did not renew the Soviet-DPRK mutual defence treaty signed in 1961 that expired in 1996.⁵⁴ China had supplied more than 70 percent of food and oil to North Korea since the late-1990s.⁵⁵ Domestic economic difficulties coupled with natural disasters caused the great famine (1994-1998) in North Korea when 3-5 percent of the population was reported to have died of starvation and millions fled to neighbouring countries.⁵⁶ Since the late-1980s, other socialist regimes chose radical reforms or gradual economic liberalisation. The DPRK persisted with its self-reliant system channelling domestic resources to the military sector under its *Songun* (“Military First”) doctrine in 1998.

Post-nuclear crisis from 1993

From a structural-realist viewpoint, Pyongyang’s nuclear programme was for coercion. First, The US pre-emption doctrine of 2002 first practised in the Iraq War (2003) had a direct impact on the DPRK’s nuclear decision-making.⁵⁷ Nuclear-weapons could help

⁵¹ US Pacific Command. “Command History 1991.” Camp Smith, Hawaii, Volume 1 (1992): 91. Partially declassified and obtained under FOIA by Peter Hayes; available from http://www.nukestrat.com/korea/CINCPAC9_1p90-93.pdf

⁵² Bulman, R. “No A-Arms in S. Korea, Roh Says.” *Washington Post*, December 19, 1991.

⁵³ Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*, 307-14.

⁵⁴ Jongseok Woo, “Structural Impediments, Domestic Politics, and Nuclear Diplomacy in Post-Kim Il-sung North Korea,” *Pacific Focus* XXX, no. 1 (2015): 66.

⁵⁵ David Shambaugh, “China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the Long Term,” *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2003): 43-56.

⁵⁶ Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang. *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies* (Columbia university Press, 2005).

⁵⁷ Kristen Eichensehr, “Broken Promises: North Korea’s Waiting Game,” *Harvard International Review* 23, no. 3 (2001): 11-2; Jon B. Wolfsthal, “Asia’s Nuclear Dominos?,” in *Deadly Arsenals: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction*, ed. Joseph Cirincione, Jon B. Wolfsthal and Miriam Rajkumar (Washington D. C.: Carnegie Endowment, 2002); Rajaram Panda, “North Korea’s Nuclear Policy: Domestic Determinants, Strategy and Future,” *The Journal of Comparative Asian Development* 10, no. 2 (2011): 229; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15339114.2011.616705>

Pyongyang build a strong deterrence capability to deter Washington.⁵⁸ Weaker states use Mutual-Assured-Destruction to stand firm against stronger states. Pyongyang responded the possible US attack by increasing its nuclear retaliatory capacity. The US and allies reckon that Pyongyang's nuclear retaliation would offset potential gains from military invasion. In an asymmetric conflict an indigenous nuclear arsenal was the only efficient strategic "equaliser"⁵⁹. Knowing first use of nuclear-weapons would mean obliteration by the US, Kim Jong Un announced a No-First-Use policy at the Workers' Party of Korea's 7th Congress in 2016.⁶⁰ Pyongyang believed that mutual-deterrence would fashion peaceful coexistence with Washington.⁶¹

Second, after the initial nuclear crisis of 1993, the DPRK learnt that by promising to end its nuclear-weapons programme, while keeping it under covers, it could extort material support (energy and food) from great powers.⁶² KEDO and Six Party Talk have provided development and humanitarian aid to Pyongyang. Also, DPRK's continued isolation led to increased divergence with former communist bloc bureaucrats; its trade and political partnership with China weakened.⁶³ DPRK's coercion targets China. Since a DPRK regime collapse, either through a US-engineered regime change or South Korean seduction, would deliver a geopolitical disadvantage to China. Given the regime's survival largely depends on Beijing's material support, the DPRK's nuclear-weapons could ensure Chinese support.

⁵⁸ "Deterrence in a Bipolar World", *Adelphi Papers* 21, no. 171 (1981): 4; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/05679328108457395>

⁵⁹ Trachtenberg M. *Proliferation revisited*. Unpublished paper, 24 June, (Los Angeles: Political Science Department, University of California, 2000), 11-2. Cited in William T. Tow, "The Nuclear Waltz: Rational Actor, Deterrence and Nuclear Non-proliferation," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (2014): 541-6; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10361146.2014.937371>

⁶⁰ Kim Jong Un stated that "North Korea will not use nuclear weapons first unless aggressive hostile forces use nuclear weapons to invade on our sovereignty." See Dana Ford, "North Korea Threatens Nuclear Strike over US-South Korean Exercises," *CNN*, March 7, 2016.

⁶¹ Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2002).

⁶² Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig. "North Korea's Nuclear Politics." *Current History* 103 (2004): 273-79; Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the maintenance of the *Songun* System," *The Pacific Review* 24, no. 1 (2011): 43-64; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09512748.2011.554992>

⁶³ The highest-ranking DPRK defector, the former Secretary of International Affairs of the Korean Workers' Party Hwang Jang-yop in a 2006 interview, told a journalist that from 1980s onwards, Deng Xiao Ping (the Chinese paramount leader in economic reform) encouraged the DPRK's leaders to follow the Chinese path on economic and social reforms and promised to provide unconditional assistance, but was refused by the DPRK's leader. See Interview. (October 2006). shindonga.donga.com; available from <http://shindonga.donga.com/3/all/13/105786/4>. Also, according to former President of the ROK Lee Myung-bak's memoirs "The Uncharted Path", Chinese diplomat Dai Bing Guo during a mission to Pyongyang in 2010 reinterpreted the treaty for Kim Jong-il thus: "If North Korea would first attack South Korea and, as a result, there were full-scale armed clashes, China wouldn't aid North Korea".

Third, Pyongyang's nuclear option allows "denuclearisation negotiations" to be a resource for exploiting US-ROK policy divergence.⁶⁴ US and ROK have tactical differences in dealing with a nuclearising DPRK, especially when "Sunshine" governments occupy the Blue House.⁶⁵ Pyongyang drives wedges between Washington and Seoul, weakening its enemies. Hence, Pyongyang's nuclear choice also depends on expected actions of others.

However, an ideational model would have alternative views on non-cultural explanations: First, North Korea joined a powerful socialist alliance for external balancing in 1961 but its internal balancing exceeded conventional force development. It acquired nuclear technology from the USSR in the mid-1950s to develop a self-reliant security guarantee.

Second, unlike post-communist countries North Korea chose not to bandwagon in the post-Cold War unipolar moment. The US and Seoul had engaged in withdrawal of military assets from the Peninsula and offered security assurances from 1989 to 2011.⁶⁶ Pyongyang's seemingly reckless nuclear strategy and provocative missile tests remained relatively constant in response to changes in international structure and relative material/capability dynamics.

Third, instead of espousing economic reforms like other socialist countries since the late-1980s, the DPRK continued its nuclear development. Its allies befriending of the US increased North Korea's insecurity. Did the regime choose not to reform, or had it no choice but to stick to its "self-reliance" system that was tied to its credibility and its survival? So, what did reform mean to Pyongyang? Similarly, was *Songun* (Military-first) an outcome of ideational forces and the existing political framework?

This North Korea's strategic behaviour requires investigation of its domestic ideological components.

The Significance of Strategic-Culture Explanations

The DPRK's nuclear acquisition is better assayed critically through a strategic-culture approach than a structural-realist one as key preferences (indigenous internal balancing) are rooted in realpolitik strategic-culture. The DPRK's domestic ideological components have

⁶⁴ Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behaviour* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999); Vipin Narang, "Nuclear Strategies of Emerging Nuclear Powers: North Korea and Iran," *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2015): 84; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0163660X.2015.1038175>

⁶⁵ Jong-Han Yoon, "The Effect of US Foreign Policy on the Relationship Between South and North Korea: Time Series Analysis of the Post-Cold War Era," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (May-August 2011): 255-87; available from <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1598240800007189>

⁶⁶ Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*, 307-14.

been the main cause for its proliferation and failure to pursue political-economic engagement with the US in exchange for security assurances and economic benefits.

In addition, structural-realists expect that as a state-actor becomes militarily stronger or its external threats decline, it becomes less coercive. However, in the empirical examination (in Chapter III and IV) of the DPRK's political-military interaction with other key actors, its strategic choices revealed that the more military advantage the DPRK had the more aggressive was its behaviour towards the ROK. Furthermore, North Korea's strategic options toward the US were less explicable to structural-realists. As Cha pointed out, the DPRK's defensive/offensive purpose of belligerent strategic behaviour is unclear because of "logical inconsistencies" between Pyongyang's defensive deterrence argument and its war-fighting strategy towards the US.⁶⁷ DPRK had been offensive regardless of the US's military superiority while demanding a peace treaty, security guarantee and normalisation of relations in bilateral talks with the US. Under the George W. Bush Administration, if Pyongyang's nuclear programme was for defensive purposes, its development of nuclear-weapons did not make the regime secure given the likelihood of a pre-emptive US attack.⁶⁸ Meanwhile the desire to improve the US-DPRK relationship (fearing the US threat) through denuclearisation talks were evident. This seemingly paradoxical behaviour could be better captured through studying leaders' ideation.

Strategic-Culture Model

A strategic-culture model posits that DPRK's interests of nuclear acquisition and realpolitik preferences are socially constructed. It aims to investigate the DPRK leaders' realpolitik ideations and their strategic preferences. Rather than rejecting importance of structural conditions, this project views the DPRK's realpolitik ideations to be constituted by cultural and non-cultural resources. The internalised realpolitik perceptions of the security environment became a North Korean "social reality"⁶⁹ and were consistently applied to interpret changes in non-cultural elements. The realpolitik strategic-culture could be

⁶⁷ Victor D. Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction: Badges, Shields, or Swords?," *Political Science Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (2002): 223-6; available from <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1598240800007189>

⁶⁸ Cha, "North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction: Badges, Shields, or Swords?," 223.

⁶⁹ Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (January 1998): 324; available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25054040.pdf?refregid=excelsior%3Aabc93ea26fa6bb69a04ae8a40c65df9ab>

reinforced if content and meaning were given by realpolitik ideational precursors and therefore impacted on the DPRK's strategic response.⁷⁰

"Structures do not exist until they have been defined".⁷¹ The strategic-culture model affords a more complex ontological interpretation of the DPRK's realpolitik strategic-culture that incorporates the traditional structural-realpolitik explanation. Cultural factors could provide the meaning of possessing nuclear capabilities in the DPRK's perceptions; and its culture-oriented behavioural patterns in empirical studies could even provide predictions of states' future strategic behaviour. Beyond its nuclear acquisition, strategic-culture explanations could also offer understandings of DPRK's seemingly "conflictual" or "inconsistent" strategic behaviour towards US and ROK. As Johnston and other constructivists have posited, a state's strategic behaviour, whether idealpolitik or realpolitik, is strongly impacted by ideas.⁷²

Johnston defines strategic-culture "as an integrated system of symbols (i.e. causal axioms, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs"⁷³ and through the prism of these conceptions, decision-makers believe that certain strategic choices are "uniquely realistic and efficacious."⁷⁴ Within this "social reality", encultured decision-makers "are sensitive to structural or exogenous conditions (i.e. relative capabilities) in a culturally unique way."⁷⁵ Hence, the "system of symbols" has impacts on state behaviour.⁷⁶

Strategic-culture is a two-tiered "system of symbols", namely "central paradigm" and "strategic preference."⁷⁷ The central paradigm is comprised of a set of assumptions of how encultured agents perceive the nature of security environments. Three interrelated components are used in Johnston's symbolic analysis (Figure 1). These are "[1] the role of war in human affairs (whether it is aberrant or inevitable); [2] the nature of the adversary and

⁷⁰ Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," 256.

⁷¹ Sebastian Green, "Understanding Corporate Culture and Its Relation to Strategy," *International Studies of Management & Organization* 18, no. 2 (1988): 9; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00208825.1988.11656478>

⁷² Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, 9-27.

⁷³ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 53.

⁷⁶ J. Elkins David and Richard E. B. Simeon, "A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain," *Comparative Politics* 11, no. 2 (1979): 127-45; available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/421752.pdf>

⁷⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 46-7; available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2539119.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aec68a6ca31a4e2bfae8e16edfc460589>

the threat it poses (zero-sum or variable sum), and [3] the efficacy of the use of force (the ability to control outcomes and eliminate threats and the conditions under which it is useful to employ force).”⁷⁸ The three components form the central paradigm that ranges from an extremely “hard” realpolitik approach (A) to an extremely “soft” idealpolitik approach (B) (Figure 1).

Strategic preference is a set of ranked strategic choices that exists within the central paradigm. It reflects, at an operational level, how the “system of symbols” suggests to decision-makers the most efficacious *modus operandi* for dealing with threats or security problems. While strategic options may overlap across different societies (from a structural-realist perspective), weighting of each strategic choice is distinct in each society.⁷⁹ This project looks for where nuclear choice fits into North Korean leaders’ strategic preferences and why it was preferred.

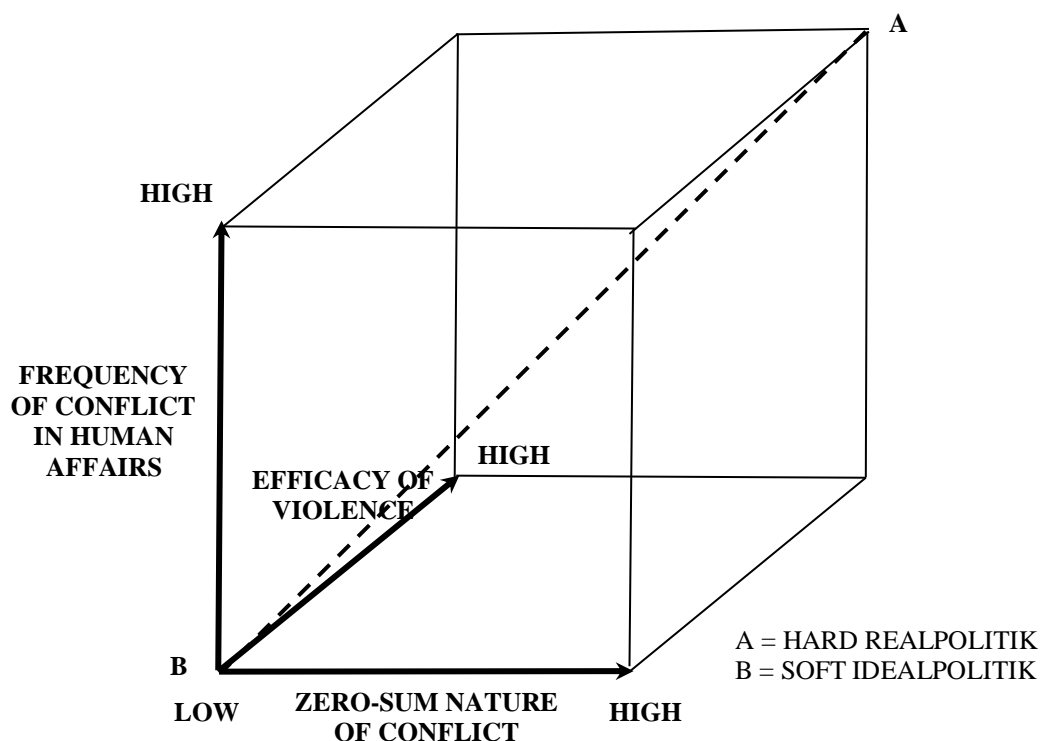


Figure 1 The central paradigm of a strategic-culture (Johnston, 1995)

⁷⁸ Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," 222.

⁷⁹ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," 48.

To reveal DPRK's realpolitik ideations and ideation-oriented interest in nuclear-weapons acquisition, this project will closely interpret North Korean leaders' interactions and reactions to changes in structural or exogenous conditions through a process-tracing method. The selected historical period covers the period from when Kim Il Sung as a guerrilla fighter (1931-1945) and the period of rule of Kim Il Sung (1945-1994) and Kim Jong Il (1994-2011). It first investigated salient historical events during Kim Il Sung's term of office that contributed to the constitution of DPRK's original realpolitik ideations in terms of "the role of war in human affairs," "the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses (zero-sum or variable sum), and "the efficacy of the use of force." Empirical studies revealed a strategic paradigm that embodies a key decision-shaping axiom since 1950s – the notion of *Juche* (self-reliance) – which stresses on national sovereignty and a self-sustained economy and military. These perceptions were reinforced during subsequent interactions with other international actors and gave the meanings of leaders' nuclear motivations and nuclear posture during the two regimes. With new structural conditions emerging, Kim Jong Il added new congruent ideational elements into the existing *Juche* framework since 1990s – the notion of *Songun* (military-first) – which stresses that military is the solution. The regime's existing identity was shaped into a *Juche-Songun* political entity with strong emphasis on self-reliance and military role in all social sectors.

During the empirical study, the leaders' strategic preferences will be observed as a pattern of behaviour in dealing with different categories of adversaries, allies and competitors during internal and external crisis/threats. Strategic preferences are ideationally motivated, which explains DPRK's leaders' nuclear choice rather than alternatives such as free-riding under Chinese or Soviet nuclear umbrellas or relying on international institutions as neoliberals would suggest.

Symbolic analysis in Johnston's model will be used for strategic-culture analysis. A symbol is "any object used by human beings to index meanings that are not inherent in, nor discernible from, the object itself. Literally anything can be a symbol: A word or a phrase, a gesture or an event, a person, a place, or a thing. An object becomes a symbol when people endow it with meaning, value or significance."⁸⁰ In this project, the objects of symbolic analysis in this study consist of Wilson Centre's archival materials and existing literature on DPRK's strategic decisions; and leaders' speeches and writings. The aims are to find out meanings of these symbols that disclose the leaders' perceptions of inherent features in North

⁸⁰ Charles Elder and Roger Cobb, *The Political Uses of Symbols* (New York: Longman, 1983), 28.

Korea's strategic environment and the justifications of why certain strategic choices were preferred over others. The analysis looks for recurring themes, phrases and evaluative statements used by the DPRK leaders to justify their strategic behaviour, which is across different times and levels of external threat and not necessarily responsive to changes in non-cultural elements.⁸¹

These ideational preoccupations reflect the leaders' belief system in relation to "the role of war in human affairs," "the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses" and "the efficacy of the use of force."⁸² The ideational forces had consistently impacted on North Korean leaders' interpretation of new events and offer guidance/justification on their strategic decisions of economic and military development, perceptions of adversaries and allies, and on the circumstances under which violence is required to deal with these threats. The unique meanings and utility attached to the DPRK's possession of nuclear-weapons can be revealed through this exploration.

⁸¹ In Johnston's original model, he uses the method of coding to find out "cause and effect" statements in texts and work out a cognitive map. However, in this project, as the word limitation of the Master of Research project, I have chosen to search out key justifications of policy and behaviour, recurring themes, phrases, and evaluative statements that attached meanings in the selected texts and available resources.

⁸² Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," 223.

CHAPTER III

THE CONSTITUTION OF REALPOLITIK IDEATIONS

Introduction

This chapter's "process tracing" method shows historically how North Korean ruling elites developed and adapted interpretive frames to understand and respond to the changes in their external environment, which constituted a particular North Korean identity. The period covered is from 1931, when records show KIS was an anti-guerrilla fighter as this experience influenced his later strategic thinking as national leader, and his rule of the country from 1945-1994. Four normative frames were evident in North Korean leaders' understanding of their security environment and justification of their operational responses: First, the international system was unjust; allies were unreliable and ultimately self-regarding. Hence, *Juche* (self-reliance) was necessary. Second, Korean reunification must be under the *Juche* system that was superior to the US-reliant South Korean system. Third, unjust interference from oppressors like imperialists and colonialists consistently hindered the reunification. Violence, whether large-scale warfare or small-scale guerrilla tactics, was righteous for reunification. Fourth, only Kim Il Sung could ensure the *Juche* spirit, unify Korea and free the Korean people from imperialist oppression.

A strategic-culture model sees dialectical processes between non-cultural and cultural factors constituting realpolitik ideations. Ideational precursors invest content and meaning to structures, generating realpolitik structures as "social reality" that consistently impact on state's behaviour.⁸³ This feedback process consequently reinforces realpolitik ideations. To address the DPRK's realpolitik behaviour and strategic preferences in its nuclear choice,

⁸³ Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," 256.

several questions are asked: (1) From where do the leaders' realpolitik ideational bases come? (2) How do the leaders' realpolitik ideations help to interpret and justify their responses to external and internal crises? (3) How were realpolitik ideations reinforced during social interactions? (4) How did realpolitik ideations consistently shape North Korean leaders' views of "the role of war in human affairs," "the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses" and "the efficacy of the use of force."⁸⁴ (5) How might these ontological perceptions help us understand the DPRK's nuclear choice and strategic preferences during the period 1940s-1980s?

1931-1950

Kim Il Sung and his *Kapsan*⁸⁵ faction gathered leadership charisma during the anti-Japanese guerrilla war in Manchuria. Being under Soviet and Chinese command during August Storm and the Chinese Civil War respectively shaped Kim Il Sung's belief in a hybrid military strategy. Becoming the DPRK's leader, Kim Il Sung assembled a strong modern Soviet-style army for purposes of nation building and espoused Mao-style mass-line revolution.⁸⁶ During the Soviet occupation, Kim Il Sung respected and emulated Stalinist economic and political systems, adding nationalist character to domestic development plans. Pyongyang's political culture incorporated anti-Japanese colonialism, nationalism, communism and Chinese and Soviet influence.

The rise of Kim Il Sung and *Kapsan*

After the Japanese annexed Korea in 1910, the earliest Korean communist and nationalist groups emerged in eastern Siberia and Manchuria, influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution. Expanding into the peninsula (late-1920s) the Korean communist movement underwent a leadership struggle. Korean peasants and workers were mobilised by anti-Japanese independence movements (1930s). Kim Il Sung joined the Chinese Communist Party (early-1930s), commenced anti-Japanese guerrilla operations in eastern Manchuria (1931-1941) and fought in the Chinese civil war (1945-1949).⁸⁷ He led the *Kapsan* faction, a

⁸⁴ Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," 223.

⁸⁵ *Kapsan* is a "Spartan" warrior group the nationalist-communist members of which outwitted other groups with their strong arms.

⁸⁶ A manpower-based warfighting strategy. Mobilising mass population to join revolutionary forces.

⁸⁷ Kim Il Sung joined the Soviet Red Army (late-1940s) and fought Japanese forces in USSR (1941-1945). See Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2006).

Korean-ethnic nationalist-communist group that served and competed with other groups.⁸⁸ *Kapsan* victories in several famous battles⁸⁹ gained charisma for Kim Il Sung.⁹⁰ Kim Il Sung learnt military force was necessary to resist oppressors and overshadow rivals.

Kim Il Sung acquired strong military experience through anti-Japanese guerrilla operations under anti-colonial and nationalist banners. By early-1940s, he enjoyed great prestige among North Koreans and became a Soviet captain and battalion commander.⁹¹ Kim Il Sung's allegiance to Soviet occupiers (1945-1948) propelled him to the helm.⁹² Believing in the superiority of a socialist system, returning from USSR, Kim Il Sung cooperated with Soviet occupiers in establishing a government (1948), Korean People's Army⁹³ (1948) and WKP (1949).⁹⁴ *Kapsan*'s ruling elite prioritised building a modern Korean army with Soviet assistance⁹⁵

South-North Competition

Soon after liberation, Koreans were divided by the 38th parallel, the North under Soviet and the South under US occupation. Assisted by these occupiers and politically triumphant in North and South Korea respectively, Kim Il Sung and Rhee Syngman established their governments independently (1948).⁹⁶ Both sides were nationalistic and desired Korean reunification and national independence. Each claimed sole authority over

⁸⁸ It did so under the Chinese-organised North-East Anti-Japanese United Army and Soviet-created 88th Special Brigade. See Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 205.

⁸⁹ Such as 'Pochonbo' battle. See Kim Young-jun, *Origins of the North Korean Garrison State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 44.

⁹⁰ Only *Kapsan* retained arms on entering Korea (1930s); other factions consisting of communist intellectuals or were disarmed by Soviets. See Suh Dae-sook, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University, 1988), 151-2; Kang Choi and Park Joon-sung, "South Korea: Fears of Abandonment and Entrapment," in *The Long Shadow - Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21st Century Asia*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 375-8.

⁹¹ *Biographies of Soviet Korean Leaders*. The Library of Congress [online]; available from <http://www.loc.gov/rr/asian/SovietKorean/78.pdf>

⁹² Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 1-48.

⁹³ KPA was established in 1945 as a Soviet-trained army and became the official DPRK People's Army in 1948.

⁹⁴ *Soviet Report on Communists in Korea, 1945*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114890>; Kim Il Sung, *For the Establishment of a United Party of the Working Masses: Report to the Inaugural Congress of the Workers' Party of North Korea, August 29, 1946*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123864>; *The Korean People's Army, November 20, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116521>

⁹⁵ Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1999).

⁹⁶ *The Problem of the Independence of Korea, December 12, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117706>

pan-Korea.⁹⁷ The leaders saw their contesting socio-economic systems in zero-sum terms.⁹⁸ Both militaries were beefed-up rapidly after the US and USSR troops withdrew in 1949 and 1948 respectively, but ROK lagged behind DPRK in military equipment and personnel.⁹⁹

Prior military campaigns shaped Kim Il Sung's strategic vision. Kim Il Sung had participated as Soviet mechanised forces destroyed Japanese forces in the month-long operation August Storm (1945). Korean People's Army followed Soviet-style modernisation in tactical exercises, command and control systems and combat training.¹⁰⁰ Also Chinese Communist Party's victory over the well-equipped Chinese Nationalist Army in the Chinese Civil War impressed on Kim Il Sung the value of manpower.¹⁰¹ A hybrid Soviet-Chinese war strategy was adopted in Pyongyang's preparation for unifying Korea.

Committed to communism, Kim Il Sung replicated Joseph's Stalin's political, military and economic systems in the DPRK.¹⁰² Anticipating conventional war with the ROK, the DPRK focused on military building.¹⁰³ Aiming for a forced Korean reunification, Kim Il Sung and *Kapsan* comrades skewed their development strategy towards rapid heavy industrialisation to support militarisation and war preparations.¹⁰⁴ All industries were geared

⁹⁷ *Record of Conversation Between Kim Gu and Liu Yuwan, July 11, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119630>; *The Problem of the Independence of Korea, December 12, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117706>; *Report of the DPRK Ministry of Internal Affairs, June 25, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114909>

⁹⁸ Bruce Cumming, *The Origins of the Korean War. Vol. II: The Roaring of the Cataract 1947-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 374; Balázs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 43-5.

⁹⁹ *Telegram from Shtykov on Preparations for an Attack on North Korea, May 2, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118662>; *Telegram from Shtykov to Vyshinsky, September 3, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112129>; *Telegram from Gromyko to Tunkin at the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, September 11, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112130>; Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*, 26-7.

¹⁰⁰ Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Strengthen Tactical Training: Speech Delivered to the Officers Who Took Part in a Tactical Exercise of the Infantry Battalion Held at the First Central Military Academy, July 20, 1949," in *Kim Il Sung Selected Works Vol. 5* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 158-9; *Untitled Memorandum on the Political and Morale Situation of Soviet Troops in North Korea and the Economic Situation in Korea, January 11, 1946*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114893>

¹⁰¹ Thereupon KIM IL SUNG's battle strategy featured Soviet military modernisation and Mao's mass-line strategy – mobilising human resources and increasing mass participation in revolutions. See *The Korean People's Army, November 20, 1948*; Young-jun, 72-3.

¹⁰² Buzo.

¹⁰³ Pollack, *No Exit: North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and International Security*, 48.

¹⁰⁴ *Soviet Political, Economic, and Cultural Aid to the DPRK People for the DPRK's Democratic Construction, October 10, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116522>; *Telegram from Stalin to Kim Il Sung, October 12, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119377>; *The Operation of the People's Economy and the System of Planning, December 25, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116519>; *Meeting between Stalin and Kim Il Sung, March 5, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112127>; Phillip H. Park, *Self-Reliance or Self-Destruction* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 14.

towards production for war. Benefiting from Japanese industrial infrastructure legacies and supported by Soviets (late-1940s), Pyongyang built a vast military-industrial-complex.¹⁰⁵

North Korea's nuclear development was rudimentary in late-1940s. First generation DPRK's nuclear scientists received training in Japan (1930s).¹⁰⁶ Following their return to Pyongyang (1945), Kim Il Sung initiated an indigenous civilian atomic weapons programme.¹⁰⁷

1950-1955

The Korean War re-shaped Kim Il Sung's views on DPRK's security environment. The US with its weapons of mass destruction emerged as the principal adversary. With reunification thwarted by US intervention, Kim Il Sung realised that while the US protected South Korea, forced reunification was impossible. The Soviet reneging on promised air-cover provision during the war demonstrated to Kim Il Sung that Moscow was an unreliable ally. In contrast, China's wholesale military support sealed the DPRK-PRC "blood alliance". Even so, the self-regarding USSR possessed nuclear knowhow so the DPRK pragmatically sought nuclear cooperation with it. Disappointed by the South Korean population's failure to rise up against the South Korean regime, Kim Il Sung realised the importance of engineering a mass revolution in South Korea to achieve reunification. The war made Kim Il Sung undisputed leader in the DPRK; his anti-imperialist and anti-foreigners' ideations were incorporated into North Korea's national identity.

The Korean War

Kim Il Sung had sought Moscow's permission to "liberate" South Korea "through military means" (1949).¹⁰⁸ The Soviets thought they needed time to match US military

¹⁰⁵ Solingen, 126; The regime nationalised more than 90 percent of industry by 1946 to support military development. Consequently, most Japanese operators at almost all industrial production facilities withdrew from Pyongyang by mid-1950s. Pyongyang thereafter relied on its own labour forces and Soviet technical support. See Joseph Sang-hoon Chung, *The North Korean Economy* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974); *Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, May 12, 1947*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119373>.

¹⁰⁶ Pollack, *No Exit: North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and International Security*, 47.

¹⁰⁷ The two bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima vanquishing 'evil' Japan would have impressed KIM IL SUNG because of his strong patriotism and anti-Japanese sentiment.

¹⁰⁸ Kathryn Weathersby, "Should We Fear This?": *Stalin and the Danger of War with America*. Working Paper No. 39. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2004), 4.

power.¹⁰⁹ To avoid confronting the US prematurely, Stalin advised Kim Il Sung to wait for Seoul to display aggression,¹¹⁰ frustrating Kim Il Sung.¹¹¹ Mao too thought the timing was inopportune for military intervention by Pyongyang.¹¹² Moscow relented after the US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, gave a public address (January 12, 1950) where he excluded the Korean peninsula from US Pacific defensive perimeter.¹¹³ The Korean War's outbreak (June 1950) was the most critical episode in intra-Korean competition. With the help of modern Soviet weapons and the Korean Volunteer Army from China, North Korean forces seized 95 percent of the peninsula by August 1950.¹¹⁴

President Truman reversed his strategy and US/UN forces led by the General Douglas MacArthur landing in Incheon (September 1950) turned the tide of war.¹¹⁵ The Chinese were alarmed when US forces approached the Chinese border in October. After Moscow rejected

¹⁰⁹ "Protocol of the meeting of the Special Committee, October 22, 1949," in *Atomnyi Proekt SSSR Vol. 1*, ed. L. D. Riabev (Nauka-Fizmatlit, 1998), 392.

¹¹⁰ *Politburo Decision to Confirm the Following Directive to the Soviet Ambassador in Korea, September 24, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112133>; Weathersby, 4; Warren I. Cohen, "The Korean War and its Consequences," in *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations (vol. V): America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 65.

¹¹¹ Shen Zhihua, "Sino-Soviet Relations and the Origins of the Korean War: Stalin's Strategic Goals in the Far East," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 2 (2000): 44-68; available from <https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/10.1162/15203970051032309>; Anatoly V. Torkunov, *The Mysterious War: The Korean Conflict 1950-1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000), 55.

¹¹² *Draft Reply from Stalin to a Telegram from Mao Zedong on the Issue of Korea, October 26, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114899>

¹¹³ *Telegram from the USSR Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Stalin, January 31, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112036>; *Telegram, from Vyshinsky to Shtykov, February 9, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119388>; *Message, Stalin to Kim Il Sung (Via Shtykov), March 18, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110683>; *Speech on the Far East, January 12, 1950*; available from <http://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1950-01-12.pdf>

¹¹⁴ *Letter to Stalin from Molotov on Granting North Korea Credit to Purchase Soviet Equipment, March 11, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112944>; *Agreement between Soviet Union and North Korea, March 17, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119379>; *Telegram to Mao Zedong from Nie Rongzhen Concerning the Repatriation of Ethnic Korean Soldiers to North Korea, December 29, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114256>; *The Military Commission Agrees to Allow the 4th Field Army's Ethnic Korean Officers and Soldiers Repatriate to Korea, January 11, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116735>; *The Military Commission Agrees to Allow the 4th Field Army's Ethnic Korean Officers and Soldiers Repatriate to Korea, January 28, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116736>; *Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, January 30, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112136>; *Telegram from Shtykov to Vyshinsky, March 9, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112040>; *The Political Situation in Korea During the Period of Military Operations, August 11, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114916>; Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, 11.

¹¹⁵ *Statement by the President, Truman on Korea, June 27, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116192>; *National Security Council Report, NSC81/1, "United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea", September 9, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116194>; Cohen, 66-7; Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution, and Current Politics of the North Korean Nuclear Program," *Nonproliferation Review* 2, no. 3 (Spring-Summer 1995): 28; available from <https://www.nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/npr/mansou23.pdf>

Kim Il Sung's request for urgent military intervention he turned to China.¹¹⁶ Believing the US would invade China after unifying Korea, Mao sent the Chinese Volunteer Forces, *sans* Soviet air-cover (October 19), to help North Koreans.¹¹⁷ Kim Il Sung attributed Stalin's reneging on air-cover provision to self-interest in avoiding direct confrontation with the US.¹¹⁸ Unlike China, the USSR, unwilling to expend blood and treasure, was not seen as a steadfast ally.

US threats to use nuclear-weapons during the Korean War strongly influenced Kim Il Sung's decision to acquire nuclear-weapons. President Truman publicly said (November 30, 1950) that the US will take "whatever steps were necessary... that includes every weapon that we have" in the Korean peninsula.¹¹⁹ Kim Il Sung drew attention to US willingness to use nuclear-weapons as an existential threat to unify Korea.¹²⁰ President Eisenhower also expressed publicly "we should use the bomb in Korea if the aggression renewed."¹²¹ That US may use nuclear-weapons against Pyongyang, interfering in Korean reunification, was an enduring security concern for Kim Il Sung.¹²² After the armistice Kim Il Sung sought Soviet nuclear-weapons to counter US nuclear threats in the mid-1950s without success.¹²³ DPRK scientists also attended the 1955 nuclear energy conference in Moscow and signed the joint agreement on the peaceful use of atomic energy and research collaboration in nuclear science with Moscow in 1956.¹²⁴

¹¹⁶ Kim Chull-baum, *The Truth about the Korean War* (Seoul: Eulyoo, 1991), 149.

¹¹⁷ Zhihua, 44-68; Warren I. Cohen, "Conversations with Chinese Friends: Zhou Enlai's Associates Reflect on Chinese-American Relations in the 1940s and the Korean War", *Diplomatic History* 11, issue 3 (1987): 283-9; available from <https://academic.oup.com/dh/article-abstract/11/3/283/491736?redirectedFrom=fulltext>; *Ciphered Telegram, Filippov (Stalin) to Zhou Enlai or Mao Zedong (Via Roshchin), July 13, 1950*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110692>; *Telegram from Mao Zedong to I.V. Stalin, June 21, 1951*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112111>; *Telegram from Mao Zedong to Stalin, Conveying 22 January 1952 Telegram from Peng Dehuai to Mao and 4 February 1952 Reply from Mao to Peng Dehuai, February 8, 1952*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113022>; *Cable, Mao Zedong to Filippov (Stalin), February 21, 1952*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123147>

¹¹⁸ Anatoly V. Torkunov, *The Korean Problem: A New Perspective* (Moscow: Ankil, 1995).

¹¹⁹ Glass.

¹²⁰ Kim Il Sung, *Report for the 6th Anniversary for the Liberation*, August 14, 1951 (Pyongyang: Workers Party of Korea Publishing, 1980), 429.

¹²¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers as President of the United States, 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council Series, "166th Meeting of the National Security Council," October 13, 1953, Box 4; McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 238-9.

¹²² Alexandre Mansourov who had personal contact with KIM IL SUNG described him as feeling "shock, anguish, and undisguised fear that one day his country could become helpless prey to the U.S. nuclear [attack]." See Mansourov, 28.

¹²³ Michael J. Mazarr, *North Korea and the Bomb: A Case Study in Nonproliferation* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), 17.

¹²⁴ International Institute for Strategic Studies. *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme* (Hampshire England: MacMillan, 2004), 27.

Suffering huge casualties, an armistice treaty was signed (July 1953) by three parties (DPRK, PRC and US/UN) and the two Koreas agreed to retreat to their respective sides of demilitarised zone (38th parallel).¹²⁵ Notably neither DPRK nor ROK required a peace treaty after this first major armed conflict; both viewed the “legitimate war” to be continuing.¹²⁶ Kim Il Sung’s plans for the future reunification of the nation included removing Washington’s nuclear protection of Seoul to facilitate military occupation of South Korea, while triggering a popular uprising whereby the South Korean people would join Korean People’s Army in resisting American “imperialists” and their “puppet” government.¹²⁷

Kim Il Sung believed he had limited autonomy in (internal) “Korean affairs” and that Stalin prioritised Soviet interests above those of North Korea.¹²⁸ The limited involvement of the Soviets in the Korean War, and the presentation of a minimised Chinese role in domestic propaganda left Kim Il Sung as undisputed defender of the communist regime and seeker of Korean ‘liberation’ from US imperialism.¹²⁹ Whilst unification remained elusive, Kim Il Sung gained great prestige and consolidated his political power. Relying heavily on Soviet economic and military assistance, Kim Il Sung echoed Mao’s Sino-centrism by propagating a Korea-first Kim-Il-Sungism - to pursue Korean interests.¹³⁰ From 1953 the “Great Soviet Union’s” influence weakened enormously in Pyongyang’s internal affairs as evinced in rhetoric.¹³¹

¹²⁵ “By the time the war ended in July 23, 1953, no less than 54,246 US soldiers had been killed and 103,284 wounded; 3,322 other UN soldiers had been killed and 11,949 wounded; while as many as 4 million Korean had been killed throughout the peninsula, two-thirds of them civilians. China also lost as many as one million soldiers.” Cited in Chang Se-moon, “The Saga of US Economic Sanctions Against North Korea,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 21, no. 2 (2006): 112; available from

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23257941.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A38ae822c887f673353846c1b9f0b97a9>

¹²⁶ Franck Robichon, “A Visit to Pyongyang: The Kim’s Dynasty’s Homage to Stalinism”, *The Conversation*, September 21, 2017; available from <https://theconversation.com/a-visit-to-pyongyang-the-kim-dynastys-homage-to-stalinism-80503>; *Confidential Memorandum, before Agreeing to the Armistice Agreement, August 3, 1953*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119405>

¹²⁷ Young-jun, 196. The anticipated massive uprisings in the South however did not happen. Consequently, seeking to mobilise the South Korean people to fight against the South Korean regime became the principle concern in KIM IL SUNG’s post-war reunification strategy.

¹²⁸ John Merrill, *Korea: The Peninsula Origins of the War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 130-51; Chull-baum, 143-55.

¹²⁹ Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, 11; Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 41.

¹³⁰ Bernd Scharfer, *North Korean “Adventurism” and China’s long Shadow, 1866-1972* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 2004), 13.

¹³¹ Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*, 40.

1956-1960

Involvement in North Korean factional deliberations by allies (August Incident” (1956) was not looked on favourably by Kim Il Sung who regarded it as interference. This unsolicited action by allies prompted Kim Il Sung to remove factions that were against his economic policies and personality cult. Kim Il Sung and his *Kapsan* faction acquired absolute power. As socialist allies showed “imperialist” proclivities, Kim Il Sung viewed the USSR and China as no longer reliable. Consequently *Juche* – an ideology and social/economic system aimed toward self-reliance – became the key political ideology orienting domestic development and foreign policy, which afforded the DPRK real sovereignty.¹³²

The birth of *Juche*

An intra-party struggle (1955-56) altered DPRK’s domestic power structure. Before the war, three dominant factions shared political control - *Kapsan*, Chinese and Soviet factions.¹³³ Following Stalin’s death (1953) Soviet and Chinese faction leaders criticised Kim Il Sung’s Stalinist practices such as economic policies and cult of personality.¹³⁴ Having consulted secretly with diplomats from its main allies, DPRK opposition figures advocated de-Stalinisation at the KWP Central Committee Plenum in the “August Incident” (August 30,

¹³² Kim Il Sung believed *Juche* precepts to be superior to other communist dogma and that pan-Korea needed to unify as a superior socialist society under his guidance.

¹³³ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War. Vol. II: The Roaring of the Cataract 1947-1950*, 185-290.

¹³⁴ *Record of The Third Congress of The Korean Workers’ Party by L.I. Brezhnev, April 30, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120183>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Gi Seok-bok, May 31, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111643>; *Record of a Conversation with DPRK Ambassador to East Germany Pak Gil-ryong by S. Filatov for 4 June 1956, June 4, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120805>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Pak Ui-wan, June 5, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114129>; *Memorandum of a Conversation with DPRK Ambassador to the USSR Ri Sang-jo on 16 June 1956, June 21, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114133>; *Memorandum of Conversation with the Head of the Department of Construction Materials under the DPRK Cabinet of Ministers, Li Pil-gyu, July 20, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113366>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK, Nam Il, July 24, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113371>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Charge D’Affaires of the Chinese Embassy Qiao Xiaoguang, August 4, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114134>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Pak Ui-wan, August 29, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114135>; Foot, 41; William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 11-29; *Report by N. T. Fedorenko on a Meeting with DPRK Ambassador to the USSR Ri Sang-jo, May 31, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111641>; Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization*, 1956, 27 & 98.

1956).¹³⁵ Kim Il Sung reacted to what he saw as external collaborative interference with all-pervasive Stalinist control using Kim-Il-Sungism as the ruling modality.¹³⁶

Consequently, anti-foreignism¹³⁷ emerged in domestic political rhetoric and propaganda while the personality cult intensified.¹³⁸ Kim Il Sung oration officially injected *Juche* (“self-reliance”) into domestic politics (December 1955).¹³⁹ *Juche* set three political goals for the DPRK: military self-reliance, economic self-sufficiency and political independence and sovereignty. By 1956 Kim Il Sung purged most political opponents,

¹³⁵ *Diary of Ambassador of the USSR to the DPRK V.I. Ivanov for the Period from 29 August to 14 September 1956, September 1, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114136>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Premier Kim Il Sung, September 1, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113372>; *Speech by Kim Il Sung at the August Korean Workers' Party Central Committee Plenum, August 30, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120166>; *Draft of a Statement by Yun Gong-heum at the CC Plenum of the Korean Workers' Party in August 1956, August 30, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120175>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Charge D'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy Qiao Xiaoguang, August 4, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114134>; *Memorandum of Conversation with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the DPRK Qiao Xiaoguang, September 4, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113373>; *Letter from Ri Sang-jo to N. S. Khrushchev, September 3, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120172>; *Letter from Seo Hwi, Yun Gong-heum, Li Pil-gyu, and Kim Gwan to the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, September 5, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120173>

¹³⁶ *Cable from CDE. Mikoyan From Beijing Concerning the 8th Chinese Communist Party Congress and Conversations with the Chinese Comrades, September 16, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121976>; *Telegram from A. Mikoyan to the CPSU Central Committee, September 17, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120205>; *Conversation Records between Chairman Mao Zedong and the Soviet Communist Party Delegation, September 18, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117838>; *Draft of Record of a Meeting between the Soviet and Chinese Delegations, September 19, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120202>; *Telegram from A. Mikoyan to the CPSU Central Committee, September 21, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120194>; *Minutes of the KWP CC Plenum held on 23 September 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120162>; *Letter from Ri Sang-jo to the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party, October 5, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114152>; *Telegram from USSR Ambassador to the DPRK v.i. Ivanov to A.I. Mikoyan, 'Decision of the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee Plenum', October 11, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120159>; *Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee Report on 8 October Conversation between Ambassador Ivanov and Kim Il Sung, October 15, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114156>; *Letter from DPRK Ambassador to the USSR Ri Sang-jo to Kim Il Sung, October 22, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120157>; *Memorandum of Conversation with the Chinese Ambassador to the DPRK Qiao Xiaoguang, November 5, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113374>; *Memorandum of Conversation with Bak Ui-wan on 22 November 1956, November 22, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117764>; *Notes from a Conversation between the 1st Secretary of the Prol Embassy in the DPRK and Comrade Samsonov, 1st Secretary Ary of the Embassy of the USSR on 20.XII.1956, December 24, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110547>

¹³⁷ This included the Chinese and Soviets. *Juche* ideology integrated anti-foreignism.

¹³⁸ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 9 April 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115599>

¹³⁹ Kim Il Sung, *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*, Speech to Party Propagandists and Agitators, December 28, 1955 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2008).

consolidating his authority.¹⁴⁰ *Kapsan* and Kim Il Sung's family members provided the core political-military leadership.¹⁴¹ Pan-Korean reunification under an ideal "self-reliant" and superior system could only be achieved under Kim Il Sung's leadership.¹⁴²

Consistent with *Juche* principles, Kim Il Sung sought the withdrawal of both US and Chinese troops from the peninsula.¹⁴³ After the "August Incident," the post-war stationing of Chinese Volunteer Forces in DPRK was perceived as undermining North Korean sovereignty.¹⁴⁴ China withdrew by October 1958, transferring its weapons to North Korean forces.¹⁴⁵

With "self-reliance" still being aspirational, Kim Il Sung persistently requested military assistance from communist patrons to subdue the "subversive" ROK and defend against a potential US nuclear attack. It sought economic assistance from Moscow to rehabilitate the war-torn economy and destroyed industries.¹⁴⁶ The Kremlin agreed to help establish a DPRK nuclear research centre dubbed "The Furniture Factory" in September 1959 and construct nuclear facilities in Yongbyon.¹⁴⁷ DPRK sought similar cooperation with China (1959) as Sino-Soviet divergence grew.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁰ *Note Concerning the August Group, Developed on The Basis of Party Documents, As Well As on The Basis of Unofficial Sources of Information*, May 6, 1958; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114972>

¹⁴¹ Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 15.

¹⁴² *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 9 April 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115599>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 11 April 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115601>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 17 April 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115605>

¹⁴³ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 4 June 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115623>; *Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Soviet Ambassador Yudin (Except)*, January 8, 1958; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114173>

¹⁴⁴ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 4 June 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115623>

¹⁴⁵ Jonathan D. Pollack, "Chapter One: A System Like No Other." *Adelphi Series* 50, no. 418-419 (2010): 40; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19445571.2010.583550>

¹⁴⁶ *From the Journal of N.T. Fedorenko, 'Reception of the DPRK Ambassador to the USSR Ri Sang-jo', September 5, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120171>; *Resolution of the August Plenum of the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee on the DPRK Representatives' Trip to Allied Countries and Other Pressing Issues Concerning the Korean Workers' Party, September 8, 1956*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120167>; *Ciphered Telegram from Suzdalev, August 5, 1953*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119620>; *Ciphered Telegram from Suzdalev, August 7, 1953*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119621>; *Ciphered Telegram from Molotov Khrushchev and Malenkov, August 17, 1953*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119622>; *Agreement on Korean Technical Personnel Receiving Training in China and Chinese Technical Personnel Working in Korea Made by the Governments of the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, November 23, 1953*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114168>

¹⁴⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, 27.

¹⁴⁸ It did not show whether the request was approved. Walter C. Clemens Jr., "North Korea's Quest for Nuclear Weapons: New Historical Evidence," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (January -April 2010): 130.

1960-1965

A South Korean anti-government riot (April 1960) resonating with Kim Il Sung's unification strategy through South Korean internal revolution was snuffed out by a military coup. The military dictatorship in Seoul consolidated the US-ROK alliance impeding Kim Il Sung's reunification plans. Offensive military force would now be needed to dislodge the "illegitimate" ROK regime.¹⁴⁹ Following US nuclear-weapons deployment in South Korea (1958), Kim Il Sung continued requesting nuclear knowledge transfer from USSR and China (after its nuclear detonation of October 1964) but without success.¹⁵⁰

To overcome deficiencies of the command economy, Kim Il Sung invented the *Taenan* system (a party-command collectivist economic system) and the *Chollima* movements (an ideology-driven method of labour exploitation to boost productivity). Kim Il Sung's monopoly control in the socialist economy was integrated into development of the superior *Juche* system. The centralised party-command system subsequently consolidated Kim Il Sung's political control and caused further economic distortion.

The fall of the Rhee regime

After liberation from Japan, Koreans from the South and North desired "land reform, debt cancellation, right to employment, democracy and full independence".¹⁵¹ North Korea supposedly took this development path whilst the South did not. Intensified US military aid to ROK from late-1950s fanned anti-war sentiment in South Korea.¹⁵² Demonstrators sought the withdrawal of US troops, de-legitimisation of the Rhee government, Korean reunification and free pan-Korean elections.¹⁵³ At the time, Kim Il Sung's regime characterised its socialist

¹⁴⁹ The new South Korean "puppet" government had allied with (Japanese) colonists and (American) imperialists. Consequently, to build a self-reliant offensive capability, DPRK's national defence budget was increased to one-third of the national budget.

¹⁵⁰ This further reinforced KIM IL SUNG's belief that socialist allies were self-regarding and unreliable.

¹⁵¹ Barry Gills, "North Korea and the Crisis of Socialism: The Historical Ironies of National Division," *Third World Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1992): 108; available from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01436599208420265>

¹⁵² Students and workers demonstrated in central South Korea a month after Rhee's fourth election (March 15). The popular uprising was not only a reaction to economic decline but also to "imperialist" rule. See *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 12 April 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116108>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 11 June 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116117>

¹⁵³ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 12 April 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116108>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 20 April 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116109>; *Journal of Soviet*

economy as transformative and Rhee's ROK as lagging behind - with less favourable material conditions, under a "subordinated" system.¹⁵⁴ Confident of North Korea's superiority during unrest in ROK,¹⁵⁵ Kim Il Sung suggested federation and an interference-free democratic pan-Korean election.¹⁵⁶ Kim Il Sung's Seven-year-plan (1961-1967) emphasised light industry and consumer goods to improve living standards.¹⁵⁷ It sought to enhance Pyongyang's prestige and identity in Seoul so South Koreans would use force to overthrow the "subordinated" ROK government.¹⁵⁸

The coming of Park Administration

A military coup by ROK's Park Chung-hee stole Kim Il Sung's opportune moment for Korean reunification (May 16, 1961). Park normalised diplomatic relations with Japan (1965) targeting military and technological support¹⁵⁹. Seoul's despatching of combat troops

Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 21 April 1960; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116110>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 26 April 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116111>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 1 June 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116116>; *Information Report Sent By Lajos Karsai To Minister of Foreign Affairs Endre Sik, 'Visit of Korean Provisional Charge D'Affaires Baek Cheongwon', June 27, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113406>

¹⁵⁴ *The Economy of the DPRK and South Korea in the Postwar Period, May 16, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116327>; *The Journal of N. Ye. Torbenkov, Record of a Conversation with DPRK MFA Counselor Pak Deok-hwan, June 1, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121622>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 14 June 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119417>; *Report from The USSR Ambassador in the DPRK A. Puzanov to the USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs Cde. A.A. Gromyko, June 12, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116329>; *The Economy of the DPRK, June 11, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116328>; *The Economic and Political Situation of the DPRK, June 12, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116389>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 13 December 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116132>

¹⁵⁵ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 24 May 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116113>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 11 June 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116117>; *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, October 11, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113411>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 7 October 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116131>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 5 October 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116133>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 7 December 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116143>

¹⁵⁶ Kim Il Sung, *The Liberation Day speech* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960).

¹⁵⁷ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 11 June 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116117>

¹⁵⁸ Chung, *The North Korean Economy: Structure and Development*, 146-7.

¹⁵⁹ Park Chung-hee, a military officer and an anti-communist hardliner, purged Rhee and assumed office. The South Korea-Japan normalisation was anathema to KIM IL SUNG - the much-vaunted anti-Japanese freedom fighter. With US and Japanese assistance, Park rapidly developed heavy industry to bolster his military dictatorship.

to Vietnam further upset Kim Il Sung.¹⁶⁰ On the one hand, Kim Il Sung anticipated a possible invasion of DPRK by the ROK-US alliance.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, while Kim Il Sung believed internal revolution for reunification as important, it was “righteous” to use military forces to eliminate a “puppet”, “lackey” and “illegitimate” ROK regime.¹⁶²

The USSR’s attitude in the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) further demonstrated Soviet unreliability to Kim Il Sung.¹⁶³ Anticipating unreliable allies and invading adversaries (US-ROK), Kim Il Sung recast economic plans as a “dual line of economic construction in parallel with national defence” (December 1962) emphasising heavy industry.¹⁶⁴ Pyongyang’s already substantial defence expenditure spiked to 31.2 percent of the budget during 1965-1970.¹⁶⁵

During the Sino-Soviet dispute, North Korea concluded separate military and economic assistance agreements with PRC and USSR (July 1961). To defend itself from an impending US-ROK invasion and possible US nuclear attack, Pyongyang intensified its nuclear activities.¹⁶⁶ Military unreliability of USSR and China extended to external balancing. DPRK resorted to seeking civilian nuclear energy technology from them.¹⁶⁷ The USSR refused Pyongyang’s nuclear requests in 1963 and 1964.¹⁶⁸ After China’s first nuclear

¹⁶⁰ Gills, 115.

¹⁶¹ Kim Il Sung, “Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington”, January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 191-201; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970).

¹⁶² Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 57-204.

¹⁶³ KIM IL SUNG viewed the withdrawal of Soviet missiles as a betrayal of Cuba’s revolutionary people. See *Nodong Sinmun*, November 17, 1962.

¹⁶⁴ He aimed to build a strong military capability to “liberate” people in the South. Under the principle of self-reliant defense, KIM IL SUNG announced “Four Military Lines” at the Fifth Plenum (1962). These were to arm the populace (including workers and peasants), fortify the country, train the army as a “cadre army”, and modernise the army (weaponry, doctrine and tactics). See *Nodong Sinmun*, December 6, 1962.

¹⁶⁵ Chung, 146.

¹⁶⁶ The US introduced tactical nuclear weapons in the ROK in 1958. See Pollack, *No Exit: North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and International Security*, 50.

¹⁶⁷ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 21 October 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115942>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 22 October 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115943>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 6 May 1958*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116267>; *Reference Materials for the Sino-Korean Negotiations on Supplying Equipment and Constructing Power Plants*, August 5, 1958; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114175>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 30 March 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116168>

¹⁶⁸ It sought advice from the Soviets about uranium ore deposits and their quality (1963). The USSR declined believing China would receive ore mined by DPRK. See *Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and the German Ambassador*, August 26, 1963; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110608>; *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the*

detonation on October 1964, a DPRK delegation visited Beijing to request nuclear assistance but Mao refused aid.¹⁶⁹

Tae'an system and Chollima movements

DPRK's media criticism of imbalanced Soviet trade relations in early-1960s led to suspension of Soviet aid.¹⁷⁰ Stalinist style central planning¹⁷¹ generated poor outcomes for DPRK.¹⁷² Rapid deterioration of the DPRK-USSR relationship, an inefficient command economy and a war-inflicted labour shortage precipitated Pyongyang's economic downturn.¹⁷³ The DPRK did not follow East European countries to afford greater autonomy to local enterprises in late-1950s. Kim Il Sung was perceived the sole leader who steered development of DPRK's towards an ideal socialist system.¹⁷⁴ The relaxing centralised control during an economic downturn could harm his power and regime credibility.

The 1962 *Tae'an* system reaffirmed socialist economic practices to achieve a *Juche* system that supported reunification. It was a modality for increasing productivity to overcome the economic crisis and maintain Kim Il Sung in power. Nationalisation had brought private enterprises under collective ownership. The *Tae'an* system reaffirmed that all economic activities were under Workers' Party of Korea "guidance".¹⁷⁵ The Workers' Party of Korea directed all aspects of production, planning and technical guidance. *Chollima* movements mobilised (and coerced) the masses to work beyond their physical limitations for

Hungarian Foreign Ministry, January 11, 1964; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110616>

¹⁶⁹ Solingen, 118.

¹⁷⁰ *Nodong Sinmun*, December 3, 1962; Kim Jong Il, *Let's Sincerely Study Military*, Dialogue with Students from Kim Il Sung University, August 17, 1962 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1982), 147-81.

¹⁷¹ Product chains linked suppliers and recipients suffocating innovation.

¹⁷² Office of Intelligence Research. *North Korea: A Case Study of Soviet Satellite*. Report of the Department of State Research Mission to Korea, Dept. of State, Report No. 5600, May 20, 1951, 80-4; available from https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Speeches%20and%20Interviews/20080424_interview.pdf; Economic performance was judged on pre-set quotas and quality was sacrificed in favour of quantity. As the state absorbed profits and losses, there were no incentives to produce goods and services efficiently. See Victor Lippit, *The Economic Development of China* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1987), 203.

¹⁷³ Kim Il, "On the Six Year Plan (1971-1976) for Development of the National Economy of the DPRK," *Nodong Sinmun*, November 10, 1971; Phillip H. Park, *The Dynamics of Change in North Korea: An Institutional Perspective* (Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner, 2009), 12; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 13 May 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115611>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 22 May 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115615>

¹⁷⁴ Kim Il Sung, *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*, Speech to Party Propagandists and Agitators, December 28, 1955 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2008); Kim Il Sung, *Every Effort for the Country's unification and Independence and for Socialist Construction in the Northern Half of the Republic* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1955).

¹⁷⁵ Chung, 63.

the Great Leader (Kim Il Sung).¹⁷⁶ Political-moral incentives rather than material incentives were emphasised.¹⁷⁷ Consequently, Kim Il Sung strengthened party and personal leadership in addressing economic management and boosted production by exploiting labour.¹⁷⁸ Collectivism stultified individual economic interests and further nourished Kim Il Sung's personality cult.

1965-1970

The DPRK's switched identity from the socialist camp to the Third World during this period, non-aligned movement and *Juche* ideologies resonating strongly. Socialist allies being unreliable, Kim Il Sung used neutrality to benefit from Sino-Soviet competition - in accordance with *Juche* policy. Particularly, DPRK extracted basic nuclear technology from USSR. Aligning with non-aligned movement, DPRK viewed the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a new imperialism that disrespected sovereign equality and contradicted self-reliance.

Shift from socialist camp to non-aligned movement

Until 1970s Pyongyang swung between pro-Chinese, pro-Soviet and independent stances on key questions.¹⁷⁹ After the Cuban Missile Crisis and Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-67), Kim Il Sung sought more autonomy *vis-à-vis* communist patrons while exploiting the Sino-Soviet rift.¹⁸⁰ Determined to achieve self-reliant defence against a US nuclear attack,

¹⁷⁶ Similar to "Great Leap" in China.

¹⁷⁷ Phillip H. Park, *The Dynamics of Change in North Korea: An Institutional Perspective*. Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner, 2009, 15.

¹⁷⁸ Kim Il, *Concerning Further Development of Local Industries* (Pyongyang: Korean Labour Party Publishing House, 1959), 28.

¹⁷⁹ North Korea took a pro-Chinese position in the India-China War (1959), Test Ban Treaty (1963), Detente (1972); a pro-Soviet position in Peaceful Coexistence (1956), Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966), Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty (1976); an independent position in the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), Vietnam War (1966-1975), New International Economic Order, Chinese Open Door (1978), Sino-Vietnamese War, Soviet Afghan Invasion. See Dae-Ho Byun, *North Korea's Foreign Policy* (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification of Korea, 1991), 79.

¹⁸⁰ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, July 2, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113407>; *Record of Conversation between the Czech Ambassador in the DPRK with the Soviet Ambassador, July 26, 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113700>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 24-26 July 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119437>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 18 August 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119447>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 13 August 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119444>; *Some Problems of North Korea, August 11, 1961*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112590>

Pyongyang devoted all economic resources to the military.¹⁸¹ Resultant imbalanced economic growth led DPRK to suffer energy and food shortages.¹⁸² In 1968 Kim Il Sung urgently demanded modern weaponry, technology and raw materials from Moscow and food supplies from Beijing.¹⁸³ Vying for leadership of the communist world, Chinese and Soviets continued to provide economic and military assistance, while asking little in return.¹⁸⁴

Kim Il Sung began simultaneously to appreciate the emergence of non-aligned movement in world politics. non-aligned movement and *Juche* principles resonated - respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, national independence, and opposition to domination. non-aligned movement was deemed as “a collective political entity with *Juche* spirit” that was against armed intervention or militarily occupation of other countries’ territories.¹⁸⁵ Kim

¹⁸¹ The NK’s defense expenditure has jumped to 30.4 percent in 1967, 29.2 percent in 1970, 24.6 percent in 1975, and maintained at average 20 percent of whole national budget in 1980s and early-1990s. See Ham Taek-young, *North Korean Socialist Economic Downwards and its Response* (Seoul: Kyungnam University Press, 1995), 122-3; Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea Past and Future*, 114.

¹⁸² *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 8 December 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119490>

¹⁸³ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 17 June 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115627>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 7 July 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115632>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 8 July 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115633>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 10 February 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116279>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 22 March 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116170>; *Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 23 March 1960*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116107>; *Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Ri Ju-yeon, December 13, 1961*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114179>

¹⁸⁴ This nexus made it possible for KIM IL SUNG to cooperate with socialist countries while being committed to *Juche* and advocating mutual respect and equal sovereign rights and non-interference in internal affairs. See *Friendship and Solidarity Among Socialist Countries, November, 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117756>; *From the Journal of A.M. Puzanov, Record of a Conversation with Kim Il Sung, November 13, 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115932>; *Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and North Korean Government Trade Delegation, November 4, 1962*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116540>

¹⁸⁵ Joint Meeting of the Political Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea and the Central People’s Committee of the DPRK, 18 June 1980, 10; Jordon Dinic, “DPRK and Non-Alignment”, *Review of International Affairs* 30, no. 710: 31; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Report, 27 September 1973, Subject: The DPRK and the Non-Aligned Summit in Algiers*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116004>; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Telegram, 22 January 1974, Subject: Cuban-DPRK Relations*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115806>; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Telegram, 21 May 1974. Subject: DPRK-PaKim Il Sungtani Relations*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115809>; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Telegram, 14 November 1974. Subject: Economic Relations between the DPRK and the DRV*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115810>; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Report, 1 May 1975. Subject: Visit of a Laotian Delegation in the DPRK*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116006>; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Report, Military Cooperation between Uganda and North Korea, July 10, 1975*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115817>; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Report, 28 April 1976, Subject: Visit of an Ethiopian Government Delegation in the DPRK*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115818>; *Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Telegram, 2 June*

Il Sung opened diplomatic relations and signed military cooperation treaties with non-aligned movement members from the 1960s.

Pyongyang received full non-aligned movement membership in 1975 while Seoul was denied membership because it hosted US troops.¹⁸⁶ Kim Il Sung condemned Seoul often for shamelessly accepting foreign domination and anti-national values. In contrast, DPRK's identity was highly patriotic, and now de-emphasised relationships with communist allies. Kim Il Sung earned the Third World nations' support for espousing peaceful Korea reunification as it resonated with non-aligned movement principles.¹⁸⁷ Kim Il Sung perceived non-aligned movement as an international grouping wherein DPRK could delegitimise the

1976. Subject: Visit of the President of Mali in the DPRK, June 2, 1976; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115819>; Telegram from the minister of Foreign Affairs, March 8, 1977; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118383>; Telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Deputy Director of the United Nations Division, April 10, 1977; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118384>; Hungarian Embassy in PaKim Il Sungtan, Telegram, 16 March 1978. Subject: DPRK-PaKim Il Sungtani Relations; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116009>; Telegram 067.069 From the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 12, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116428>; Hungarian Embassy in Nigeria, Report, 24 November 1980. Subject: Contacts Between the Korean Workers' Party and the National Party of Nigeria; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115824>; Hungarian Embassy in Bangladesh, Telegram, 28 December 1981. Subject: DPRK-Bangladesh Relations; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116015>; Hungarian Embassy in PaKim Il Sungtan, Ciphred Telegram, 19 October 1982. Subject: PaKim Il Sungtani-DPRK Relations; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115828>

¹⁸⁶ DPRK signed military cooperation treaty with Romania, Angola, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Central Africa, East Germany, Ethiopia, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nicaragua, South Yemen, Togo, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

¹⁸⁷ Telegram 031.589 From the Romanian Embassy in Dhaka to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 14, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116415>; Telegram 066.598 From the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 15, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116484>; Telegram 038.589 From the Romanian Embassy in Islamabad to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 17, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116421>; Telegram 075.205 From the Romanian Embassy in Tehran to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 6, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116499>; Telegram 027.411 From the Romanian Embassy in Cairo to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 17, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116490>; Telegram 066.588 From the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 18, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116404>; Hungarian Embassy in Guinea, Report, 19 May 1978. Subject: Guinean-South Korean Relations; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115821>; Telegram to the Direct of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Report on DPRK's Foreign Minister Heo Dam's Visit to Yugoslavia, etc", April 7, 1979; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118391>; Hungarian Embassy in Indonesia, Ciphred Telegram, 9 February 1983. Subject: The Visit of a DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister in Indonesia; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115829>

South Korean regime and gain international prestige as the true representative of the Korean nation.¹⁸⁸

Non-Proliferation Treaty's injustice

The UN-sponsored Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (1965-1968) negotiated the Non-Proliferation Treaty that came into effect in 1970.¹⁸⁹ Pyongyang acknowledged partial benefits of the Non-Proliferation Treaty such as preventing Japanese remilitarisation, but mainly saw the emerging non-proliferation regime as nuclear hegemony by great- powers.¹⁹⁰ Under *Juche*, it was unjust that superpowers had the right to possess nuclear stockpiles and define and institutionalise their own global responsibilities and power, while others had to accept their “mandate”.¹⁹¹ DPRK refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Continuing to request delivery of a nuclear power plant from USSR in 1966 it was rebuffed.¹⁹² Identical requests sent to German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia were of avail.¹⁹³ However, in 1967 the Kremlin sold Pyongyang a small two-to-four-megawatt research reactor that began operations in Yongbyon in 1967.

1970s

Hanoi's victory (1975) renewed Kim Il Sung's hopes of unifying Korea by internal (South Korean) revolution. This dream was again interrupted when ROK pursued indigenous nuclear capabilities in early-1970s. In anticipation of a ROK nuclear attack, Pyongyang's

¹⁸⁸ “As the Soviet Union faltered, Kim Il Sung concentrated on rallying the non-aligned movement's diplomatic support for his nation.” See C. Kenneth Quinones, “North Korea Nuclear Talks: The View from Pyongyang,” *Arms Control Today*, September 2004, 10.

¹⁸⁹ In a meeting between DPRK diplomats and the Romanian ENCD delegation (1968) both sides agreed that “the big countries that have nuclear capability should ensure that the small countries would also be able to utilise atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The small countries should not suffer a loss as a consequence of the [non-proliferation] treaty.” See *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, February 29, 1968*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110626>

¹⁹⁰ *Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and north Korean Foreign Minister Pal Seong-cheol, August 24, 1962*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110598>; *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, November 12, 1969*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111463>

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, March 13, 1967*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110621>

¹⁹³ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, February 29, 1968*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110626>; *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, February 29, 1968*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110627>

desire for nuclear-weapons intensified. Pyongyang's nuclear aspirations had further diverged from USSR and PRC's security interests during détente, while the DPRK shared the non-aligned movement platform in bargaining with great-powers based on sovereign equality. The *Suryong* ("Leader" – Kim Il Sung) system was introduced to check possible regime instability following a serious economic downturn. Soviet unreliability during the OPEC oil crisis reinforced Kim Il Sung's belief that nuclear energy was essential for economic self-reliance.

Vietnam model of unification and Détente

The unification of Vietnam's two halves under communist Hanoi gave Kim Il Sung hope.¹⁹⁴ Regardless of massive US bombings and use of modern materiel, North Vietnam's robust guerrilla campaigns in South Vietnam achieved national unification on Hanoi's terms. Emulating the North Vietnamese "Spring Offensive" approach, Kim Il Sung continuously used armed guerrillas to destabilise the South and whip up a people's revolution.¹⁹⁵

US-China rapprochement following Kim Il Sung's October 1971 visit augured well for Pyongyang. Kim Il Sung was sanguine about Sino-American reconciliation seeing it as a political victory for anti-imperialist forces.¹⁹⁶ Since Pyongyang believed that Washington's abandonment of Seoul would allow DPRK to shape Korean unification, it actively sought a peace treaty with Washington.¹⁹⁷ Viewing the world situation as favouring

¹⁹⁴ This was a second example (after Chinese Civil War) of feet-on-the-ground winning over cutting-edge mechanised forces.

¹⁹⁵ DPRK sent a 31-member North Korean commando unit to assassinate ROK president Park (1968); "The DPRK wants to create the kind of military situation in South Korea that came into being in South Vietnam before the victory. Taking advantage of the riots against the dictatorial regime of Park Chung Hee, and invited by certain South Korean forces, the DPRK would have given military assistance if it had not been dissuaded from doing so in time... China holds back and opposes any kind of armed struggle that might shake the position of the USA... A new Korean War would not be merely a war between North and South [Korea]. With this end in view, during the Korean party and government delegation's stay in Beijing, the Chinese side strongly emphasised the importance of the peaceful unification of Korea... For his part, KIM IL SUNG said nothing, or hardly anything, about his own proposals to find a peaceful solution. On the contrary, he declared that if a revolution flared up in South Korea, the DPRK could not remain indifferent; it would give active assistance to the South Korean people. And if the enemy started a war, it would be met with a crushing repulse. In such a war, the DPRK could lose only the cease-fire line, but it might achieve the unification of the country, he said." See *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1975*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111468>

¹⁹⁶ He believed "the USA [troops] will have to withdraw next from South Korea, Taiwan, Indochina and Japan". "Embassy of the GDR in the PRC. October 22, 1971. The Position of the DPRK on the Forthcoming Nixon Visit in the PRC," cited in Bernd Scharfer, *Overconfidence Shattered: North Korean Unification Policy, 1971-1975* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 2010); available from https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/NKIDP_WP_2.pdf; *Telegram, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, December 20, 1971*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116621>

¹⁹⁷ *Telegram from Pyongyang and to Bucharest, Secret, Urgent, No.060.180, April 22, 1974*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114085>

DPRK, Kim Il Sung agreed to a direct dialogue with ROK “to create a democratic regime in the South in favour of unification.”¹⁹⁸ DPRK’s had three unification principles: It should be peaceful, exclude foreign interference and accommodate the ROK’s and DPRK’s systems.¹⁹⁹ Kim Il Sung advocated an Asian nuclear-free zone following American military withdrawal. US troop and nuclear-weapons withdrawal from ROK, preconditions given by Kim Il Sung for peaceful unification, were not met.²⁰⁰ Consequently, DPRK continued military preparations anticipating a US-ROK military invasion.²⁰¹

Nuclear escalation in Korean Peninsula

The 1970s was worrisome for both communist (USSR and China) and capitalist (US) sides because both Koreas were pursuing nuclear-weapons and preparing for war.²⁰² ROK’s nuclear-weapons project alarmed Kim Il Sung who feared escalation to nuclear war as long as

¹⁹⁸ On the Visit of a Polish Party and Parliamentary Delegation to the DPRK. cited in Scharfer, *Overconfidence Shattered: North Korean Unification Policy, 1971-1975*, 22; *13th Preliminary Conference between Delegates of North and South Korea at the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, December 17, 1971*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111745>

¹⁹⁹ *Renmin Ribao*, 19 April 1975.

²⁰⁰ *The Korean Issue at the Third General Assembly of the United Nations, April 20, 1949*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116523>; *The Problem of the Independence of Korea, November 14, 1947*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117705>; *Telegram from the First Directorate to Washington, DC, No. 01/04493, May 5, 1973*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114056>; *Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, Secret, Urgent, No. 060.180, April 22, 1974*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114085>; *Peace Agreement Suggested by North Korea, 1975*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114586>; *Telegram from New York to Bucharest, No. 052648, July 1, 1975*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114099>; *Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, Secret, Urgent, No. 067.046, March 6, 1976*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114108>; *Telegram 084120 From the Romanian Embassy in Washington, DC, To the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 7, 1977*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114868>; *Record of Conversation between Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR A. S. Dzasokhov with the DPRK Ambassador Son Seong-pil, October 9, 1991*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121652>

²⁰¹ Report shows that “the DPRK spend 60, 165, 135, and 140 million dollars on the purchased of arms in 1970, 1971, 1972 and 1973 respectively. During this time the manpower of the army underwent the following changes: it was 438,000 in 1970, 450,000 in 1971, 460,000 in 1972, and 470,000 in 1973. The army of the DPRK has 1,100 T-55 tanks and a substantial number of surface-to-surface missiles. The DPRK ordered a substantial amount of diving suits and facilities in Japan... The number of MiG fighter planes is 200, but they also have Su-7 bombers.” See *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, February 18, 1976*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111472>

²⁰² Park Administration questioned US’s security guarantee and secretly pursued an indigenous nuclear programme called “890 Project”. This project was halted when ROK ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty (April 1975) under US pressure (as a condition for a reactor sale). William Burr, “Stopping Korea From Going Nuclear,” Briefing Book no. 582, *National Security Archive* (March 22, 2017), https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/nuclear-vault/2017-03-22/stopping-korea-going-nuclear-part-i#_edn5

US's nuclear protection to ROK and its military dictatorship continued.²⁰³ Pyongyang saw India's treatment as a *de facto* nuclear-weapon state following its peaceful nuclear explosion (1974) as an example for itself.²⁰⁴ It demanded a nuclear power plant (February and June 1976) from USSR and requested further nuclear cooperation (January 1977) - to no avail.²⁰⁵ Kim Il Sung's active pursuit of nuclear power and preparation for nuclear war irked China and USSR as both sought détente with the US and feared disruption by DPRK.²⁰⁶

Meanwhile, the 1975 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and 1978 United Nations Special Session on Disarmament allowed the Third World to showcase its collective resistance to vertical nuclear proliferation. The DPRK along with other non-aligned countries criticised the Non-Proliferation Treaty's for recognising states as nuclear-weapon state only if they possessed nuclear-weapons before 1 January 1967; others were denied free will to nuclearise. Non-Proliferation Treaty ratifying states needed to be secured by nuclear-weapon state through defence treaties.²⁰⁷ The DPRK simultaneously sourced nuclear knowhow from non-aligned movement near-nuclear countries.²⁰⁸

Suryong system and preserving Juche-economy

Switching to internationalism Pyongyang favoured an export-led economic strategy in the mid-1970s.²⁰⁹ In its view, ROK's integration into the West's exploitive system, as a

²⁰³ *Conversation between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily moskovsky and North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Seong-cheol, August 24, 1962*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110598>; Kim Il Sung's interview, *Sekai*, June 6, 1985.

²⁰⁴ Walter C. Clemens Jr., "North Korea's Quest for Nuclear Weapons: New Historical Evidence," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (January -April 2010): 135; available from

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23418882.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A43015ce4c7cc7362791fcbc1a397304e>

²⁰⁵ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, April 15, 1976*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111473>; *Telegram, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, June 25, 1976*; available from

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111475>; *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, December 8, 1976*; available from

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110125> *Telegram, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, January 20, 1977*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110126>

²⁰⁶ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1975*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111468>

²⁰⁷ Pyongyang perceived that Non-Proliferation Treaty requires near-nuclear countries to surrender sovereignty by pledging never to acquire nuclear-weapons even if they desire and have the capability to acquire them. Nuclear-weapon state- non-nuclear-weapon state negotiations were seen by Pyongyang as unequal exchanges serving only one side's interests.

²⁰⁸ For instance, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Libya and PaKim Il Sungtan.

²⁰⁹ As early as 1973 Park raised the necessity to "open the door to all the nations... including those with different ideologies and political systems...". See ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *White Paper on Foreign Relations* (Seoul: Government Printing Office, 1990), 49; Park said: "For a country like Korea, unendowed by nature and saddled with minuscule markets, only an external-oriented development strategy, making full use of

newly industrialising economy, resulted in abuse of labour and raw materials.²¹⁰ *Juche* doctrine denigrated “export-led” economic policies that created dependence on developed economies. Kim’s self-reliant economic interests made Pyongyang maintain close ties with the Group of 77. Pyongyang’s economy, with its self-imposed impediments, further trailed the South.²¹¹ Declining economic growth hindered Pyongyang’s “legitimate war” with Seoul.

Pyongyang’s nuclear technology demands from socialist and capitalist countries grew its foreign debt. It became more reliant on other states contradicting *Juche* tenets.²¹² Although détente allowed Western European countries to extend credit to communist bloc countries, Pyongyang forfeited creditworthiness being unable to service debts.²¹³ Pyongyang initiated economic relations with Canada, France, Italy, Japan and West Germany to source technology and capital.²¹⁴ Some loans were settled by bartering natural resources.

Although an ideal *Juche* system became increasing unattainable, Kim Il Sung constantly rejected economic liberalisation because the socialist economy was tied to his legitimacy. Declining foreign aid and a growing defence burden led to negative GDP growth in 1970s.²¹⁵ Domestic political opponents criticised the inefficient economy and Kim Il Sung’s skewed economic development. In facing internal challenges, the *Suryong* (Kim Il Sung) system was inserted into the DPRK Constitution (1972) to consolidate Kim Il Sung’s political control.²¹⁶ *Suryong* (the leader) is the nation’s brain, the sole legitimate decision-maker, ideological unifier and people’s revolutionary guide.²¹⁷

the abundant human resources but aimed at exports, appeared relevant” Park Chung-hee, *Korea Reborn: A Model for Development*. Englewood Cliffs (NJ: Prentice Hall, 1979), 72.

²¹⁰ Kim Il Sung, *Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

²¹¹ During the 1970s North Korea’s GDP was only half that of South Korea. See Solingen, 128.

²¹² Kim Il-pyung, *Communist Politics in North Korea* (Seoul: Hanwool, 1986), 134-5.

²¹³ DPRK borrowed nearly \$2 billion from foreign governments throughout 1970s. *Science and Technology Cooperation between the GDR and the DPRK*, Berlin, February 5, 1968.

²¹⁴ Kim himself declared that “North Korea could not satisfactorily meet all the requirements of rapid economic development if the country relied only on communist countries, thus, Pyongyang must actively seek out capitalist markets to produce necessary materials and machinery”. An Tai-sung, *North Korea: A Political Handbook* (Delaware: Scholarly Resource, 1970), 121; *Quarterly Economic Review of China and North Korea*, no.3, 1985.

²¹⁵ Lee Tea-soap, *The Collectivist Development Strategy and the Establishment of the Suryong System in North Korea, 1956-1967* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2011).

²¹⁶ Article 11 of North Korean Constitution articulated that “the DPRK shall conduct all activities under the leadership of the Workers’ Party of Korea”.

²¹⁷ In 1978 many pro-reform politicians were purged among whom were many *Kapsan* members who fought the Japanese alongside KIM IL SUNG.

Oil crisis and self-reliant energy

The OPEC-generated oil crisis (1973) intensified the DPRK's desire for nuclear power for its self-sufficient energy supply. During the oil crisis, the USSR increased oil prices for client states. The DPRK delegation asked the Soviets for 200,000 metric tons of oil and 150,000 metric tons of coking coal under an intergovernmental protocol (November 1976). Moscow called this an "unexpected demand" inconsistent with Council of Mutual Economic Assistance's priorities and complained the DPRK had not fulfilled its obligations under the agreement.²¹⁸ Despite imbalanced trade, North Korea intended to request delivery of more Soviet oil.²¹⁹ While Moscow emphasised Pyongyang should fulfil its own commitments, Pyongyang "consistently insist[ed] on uninterrupted and punctual fulfilment of Soviet export obligations" continuingly pressing for a nuclear power plant. Kim Il Sung perceived the USSR as being a "socialist imperialist" exploiting the DPRK by raising oil prices and refusing resources for its nuclear energy and economic development.²²⁰ Kim Il Sung felt it was unfair that Soviets limited nuclear assistance to Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, and Hungary, noting that Washington had permitted ROK to develop nuclear power. Kremlin afforded little nuclear assistance to DPRK.²²¹

1980s

The Kwangju popular uprising revived hope for Kim Il Sung's reunification plan based on South Korean internal revolution but was snuffed out by the US-backed ROK army. South Korea's "northern policy" further marginalised North Korea's international status in the late-1980s. Piqued by Seoul's economic success, Pyongyang continued guerrilla-style military infiltrations into South Korea and was consequently placed on a US "sponsor of terrorism" list. Moscow finally rewarded Pyongyang for becoming a Non-Proliferation

²¹⁸ "[I]n 1976 Korean shipments had substantially decreased in comparison with the same period of earlier years; the failure to deliver the raw materials that were planned to be imported from Korea caused stoppages in the operation of important Soviet industrial plants, seriously jeopardizing the continuity of production." See *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, December 8, 1976*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110622>; *Memorandum, Branch Office of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Trade in Pyongyang to the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Trade, August 9, 1976*; available from https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP53_web_final1.pdf

²¹⁹ *Telegram, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, January 20, 1977*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110126>

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, February 29, 1968*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110626>

Treaty signatory by committing to build four nuclear plants. However, Gorbachev's "New Thinking" betrayed the DPRK with Soviet nuclear assistance being withdrawn in the late-1980s.

Unification with guerrilla tactics

Internal opposition agents' assassination of Park Chung-hee (1979) caused political turmoil in South Korea. Pyongyang viewed the Kwangju civilian uprising against the military government (1980) as an "anti-US, pro-independence" struggle.²²² More than two thousand civilians were killed when demonstrations were quickly suppressed by US-backed South Korean troops.²²³ North Korea arranging a bomb explosion targeting new ROK President Chun Doo-hwan (October 1983) was a traditional regime destabilisation and revolution invigoration tactic.²²⁴

Chun launched a 'northern policy' seeking normal relations with PRC and USSR, calling for increased non-political exchanges (of economic and cultural goods and people) with countries without diplomatic ties with Seoul.²²⁵ Third World leaders increasingly manifested interest in the ROK economic model. Diplomatic ties were established by Seoul with many socialist and non-aligned countries.²²⁶ In contrast, the US displayed no interest in reconciling with Pyongyang. The ROK model's success, the socialist system's meltdown in the late 1980s and former socialist patrons befriendng the West, further isolated North Korea and threatened the *Juche* system's credibility. But rather than adopt reforms and relax the pure ideology-based system, Kim Il Sung continued to justify "self-reliant" practice as enjoying sole legitimacy in the Korean peninsula.

²²² Kim Il Sung, *Answers to Questions Raised by Foreign Journalists* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House).

²²³ Sup Han, "Kwangju and Byong: Coping with Past State Atrocities in South Korea," *Human Rights Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (August 2005): 998-1045.

²²⁴ To keep the rebellion alive Pyongyang launched an underground organisation called 'South Korean National Democratic Front' (August 1985) to spread "propaganda, agitation, and misinformation against US-ROK interests." See Han S. Park, *North Korea: The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002).

²²⁵ *Korea Times*, December 18, 1990.

²²⁶ Telegram 075.345 *From the Romanian Embassy in Tehran to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, April 6, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116429>; *Hungarian Embassy in Guinea, Report*, 19 May 1978. Subject: *Guinean-South Korean Relations*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115821>; Telegram 016.734 *From the Romanian Embassy in Bangui to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, August 17, 1978; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116498>; *Hungarian Embassy in Guinea, Report*, 22 February 1982. Subject: *Guinean-South Korean Relations*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115825>

In addition to the burgeoning of its economy, Seoul's global prestige was boosted after being chosen to host the Olympic Games (1988). Before the Games, DPRK bombed ROK's international airport (1986) and South Korean Air Flight 858 (1987) to portray Seoul as an unsafe place. Consequently, US government categorised DPRK as a state-sponsor of terrorism (1988).²²⁷ The expanding relationship between Seoul and the rest of world and DPRK regime's continuing use of belligerent guerrilla-style tactics gradually diminished the latter's legitimacy.

Soviet "New Thinking"

In early-1980s DPRK requested East European countries to accept students and trainees for nuclear energy studies.²²⁸ It also asked Hungary to train technicians to operate Pyongyang's nuclear plant (April 6, 1983). Hungary suggested to Pyongyang that it should make a "request directly to the competent Soviet authorities".²²⁹ With no other choice, Pyongyang asked USSR again for nuclear plants (February 1985) for economic and prestige reasons and "to offset the reactor already operated in South Korea."²³⁰ The Soviet side agreed but Pyongyang would have to share costs. Soviets would operate the plant for five years, train DPRK technicians, supply enriched uranium and help survey for North Korean uranium.²³¹ After Pyongyang signed Non-Proliferation Treaty in March 1985, the USSR agreed on December 25 to build four nuclear power plants in Yongbyon; the reactor commenced operations in 1986. Nonetheless, following the Chernobyl incident in 1986, Gorbachev called for "New Thinking" which aimed to reconstruct the international system under a collective security model.²³² Moscow stalled the DPRK nuclear project in consideration of the ROK-USSR economic cooperation.²³³ It also agreed to attend the Seoul Olympics. Certainly, Pyongyang felt betrayed again.

²²⁷ Tatiana Shohov, *US-North Korean Relations since 1948* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2001), 41; State of Government website, "State Sponsors of Terror Overview"; available from <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/65476.pdf>

²²⁸ Many were recalled since the fields they wanted to investigate being "strictly confidential". See *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, April 30, 1981*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110137>

²²⁹ *Letter, Hungarian Foreign Ministry to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, April 6, 1983*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/11014>

²³⁰ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, March 9, 1985*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110142>

²³¹ Ibid

²³² V. Kubalkova & A. A. Cruickshank, *Thinking New about Soviet New Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California, 1989).

²³³ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, May 30, 1988*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110144>

1990-1994

Kim Il Sung experienced internal and external security challenges affecting his *Juche* system's legitimacy - the socialist system collapsed, and internal factions questioned the command economy. Russia and China normalised relations with ROK betraying Pyongyang. US's withdrawal of nuclear-weapons from ROK (1991) did not assure the DPRK as intercontinental ballistic missiles still could reach its territory.

Domestic energy shortage and regime credibility crises prompted Kim Il Sung to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1992) in exchange for civilian nuclear technology. A dispute about DPRK's Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations led to the first nuclear crisis and consequent high-level US-DPRK talks.

Post-Cold War crisis

The DPRK's security environment altered following Soviet-South Korean rapprochement (late-1980s), East Germany's absorption by West Germany (1990) and the USSR's dissolution (1991). Kim Il Sung's "ideal socialist" regime was challenged by the socialist system's collapse and domestic shortages. DPRK believed Russia's befriending US and ROK (1991) was intended at "leading us to 'open doors' and to overthrow the socialist regime in our country".²³⁴ It blamed Russia for failing to "recognise the 'reality' of the 'two Koreas'" and threatened to "quit this [non-proliferation] Treaty".²³⁵ China joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the fourth nuclear-weapon state in 1992, agreeing to restrict nuclear equipment supplies. It, too, normalised ties with the ROK (1992).

Yeltsin's radical economic reforms (1991) reduced trade dramatically with DPRK.²³⁶ China followed Russia in trading in hard currency at world prices. What DPRK characterises as "imperialist rule" was embraced by both. The loss of DPRK's two largest trade partners caused acute energy and food shortage. Defence took up 15 percent of the national budget.²³⁷ Internal factions debated on replacing the defence-orientation of the economy. Conservative

²³⁴ Excerpts from *Recollections by the Former Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Aleksandr Kapto*, 1996; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121977>

²³⁵ Ibid.; Letter from G. F. Kunadze to E.A. Ambartsumov, May 27, 1993; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119254>

²³⁶ By late 1980s, USSR prioritised their economic development by cooperating with ROK. This led to a complete freeze of Russia-DPRK bilateral economic ties.

²³⁷ Joseph Sang-hoon Chung, *The North Korean Economy* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974), 146-7.

groups favoured heavy industry and reformist groups demanded a more balanced growth by focusing on light industry and agriculture.²³⁸

In 1991 US initiated withdrew nuclear-weapons from South Korea.²³⁹ The ROK President Roh Tae-woo publicly declared (December 18, 1991) that “there do not exist any nuclear-weapons whatsoever anywhere in the Republic of Korea.”²⁴⁰ However Pyongyang still feared a ballistic attack. *Rodong Sinmun* said “[i]t is only too natural that we mentioned this US ‘nuclear umbrella’ for South Korea, they would continue to threaten us with nuclear-weapons in the future. Under such conditions, the US nuclear threat to us would not be dispelled, even though nuclear-weapons are taken out of South Korea.”²⁴¹ Despite this, Pyongyang signed an IAEA safeguards agreement in January 1992 after US nuclear-weapons withdrawal.

First nuclear crisis

Disputation over DPRK’s Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations escalated into the first North Korean nuclear crisis (1993-94). After six inspections (1992-1993), the IAEA reported on DPRK’s weapons-grade plutonium reprocessing. Rejecting IAEA-required “special inspections”, Pyongyang threatened to withdraw from Non-Proliferation Treaty,²⁴² which prompted high-level bilateral talks with US (1993).²⁴³ The “1994 Agreed Framework” was proposed after Jimmy Carter’s mission to Pyongyang. The US promised Pyongyang two Light Water Reactors and supply of 50,000 metric tons of crude oil annually if Pyongyang ceased nuclear activities. Seeing nuclear war as inevitable DPRK’s post-Cold War demand was a peace treaty with the US. US-DPRK high-level bilateral talks (the first post-Korean

²³⁸ Kim Sang-hak, “Equilibrium between Accumulation and Consumption and Our Party’s Revolutionary Economic Strategy,” *Research on the Economy* (Pyongyang) 2 (1996): 9-10; Lee Joon-hyuk, “Fulfilment of Revolutionary Economic Strategy and Solidifying Socialist Economic Position,” *Research on the Economy* (Pyongyang) 2 (1996): 14-5.

²³⁹ According to USCINCPAC history: “[t]he President approved the Nuclear Weapons Development Authorisation (NWD) for FY 91 and FY 92 on 5 November 1991 as National Security Directive 64 (NSD-64). This action cleared the way for the actual return of all land-based Naval air-delivered and sea-based tactical nuclear-weapons to US territory, the withdrawal of all nuclear-weapons from Korea ... CJCS advised USCINCPAC that the withdrawal of weapons from Korea had highest priority for transportation assets, with weapon movements to commence before the next meeting of the ROK-US Military Committee and Security Committee (MCM/SCM) scheduled for 20-22 November 1991.” See USCINCPAC, Command History, 1991; available from <http://www.nukestrat.com/korea/CINCPAC91p90-93.pdf>

²⁴⁰ The Withdrawal of US Nuclear-weapons from South Korea, *Nuclear Brief*, September 28, 2005; available from <http://www.nukestrat.com/korea/withdrawal.htm>

²⁴¹ *Rodong Sinmun*, November 1, 1991

²⁴² IAEA, “Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards.”

²⁴³ Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 150-62.

war contact) triggered by DPRK's nuclear activities were considered a diplomatic victory by Pyongyang.²⁴⁴

Conclusion

During 1931-1994, key historical events or personal experience of Kim Il Sung and the ruling elites (*Kapsan* members) that were the main resources for generating their realpolitik ideational bases are identified.

Four recurrent themes in relation to the process of formulating realpolitik ideations were identified: First, the leaders in Pyongyang viewed oppressed (exploited) and oppressors (exploiters) to be oppositional forces in the international system. Kim Il Sung was disappointed by North Korea's erstwhile socialist allies, who he perceived as self-regarding, having unwarrantedly intervened in Korean domestic affairs contravening DPRK's sovereign independence and having imperialist proclivities. Second, unification must be under North Korea's terms because it had superior political and economic systems. National partition was caused by external (imperialist) powers and the just course of reunification was persistently blocked or thwarted by foreign oppressors. Third, use of force to eliminate the unjust oppressors and unfriendly South Korean regime to achieve reunification is righteous. Fourth, Kim Il Sung embodied *Juche* and the construction of a superior system therefore reunification must be under Kim Il Sung's leadership.

Pre-occupied by these perceptions, DPRK leaders made a series of realpolitik responses to external and internal crises. They also applied these beliefs in shepherding North Koreans towards an ideal *Juche* system. Consequently, the DPRK's *Juche* policies transformed the country into one isolated from its socialist allies and international norms. The leaders' realpolitik views of the DPRK's security environment reinforced and consistently shaped their realpolitik ideations. By 1980s, North Korean leaders were unable to trust friends because all great-powers had "imperialist" proclivities. Only state-actors that embraced the value of *Juche* or supported self-reliant systems and sovereign equality could be temporary partners. The DPRK was unwilling to embrace international norms imposed by great-powers which the DPRK leaders viewed as unjust and likely to extract sovereignty compromises.

²⁴⁴ The DPRK published Clinton's separate letter of assurance for the nuclear accord and declared victory in KCNA (North) *Korean Central News Agency*, October 27, 1994.

In understanding the DPRK's nuclear choice during the period 1931-1994, nuclear-weapons are consistent with *Juche*. First, deeply influenced by the Korean War, the leaders' fear of aggression by the US-ROK alliance meant that Pyongyang needed to constantly prepare for nuclear war. Possession of nuclear-weapons can deter a nuclear attack. Second, nuclear-weapons are a self-reliant means of defence. The leaders viewed allies as unreliable; friends could betray; enemies are aggressive and pose zero-sum threats. To achieve indigenous nuclear capabilities was ideal for the perceived realpolitik security environment. Third, the development of nuclear power assured energy security and counteracted the failure of the command economy, which could help maintain Kim Il Sung in power during economic downturns.

CHAPTER IV

CONTINUED REALPOLITIK IDEATIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

This Chapter continues a “process tracing” method to interpret how interactions with others constituted DPRK leaders’ identity and security environment perceptions linked to nuclear choice and strategic behaviour. It covers 1994-2011 when Kim Jong Il took office. The USSR’s dissolution exposed Pyongyang to more direct confrontation/interaction with the US. That nuclear-weapons had played an increasingly essential role in its strategic preferences was empirically evident in Kim Jong Il’s nuclear posture and denuclearisation negotiations.

Kim Jong Il mostly mirrored Kim Il Sung’s political identity. His realpolitik ideations gelled into four recurring frameworks: First, the unipolar international system is highly threatening and unjust. A predominant US’s “War on Terror” portended invasion. Second, self-regarding socialist allies’ betrayal in supporting the Non-Proliferation Treaty -imposed power imbalance contradicted Pyongyang’s view that its nuclear ambition was based on sovereign equality. Third, like Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il resisted economic reform and relaxation of control. He prioritised nuclear-weapons development to generate illicit revenue to bolster the regime and command economy. Fourth, for Pyongyang the US-ROK “engagement” policy was an “imperialist” coercion to follow international norms and practise discordant with its true Korean sovereign identity and system. Consequently, DPRK’s realpolitik ideation was further consolidated and new *Songun* (Military-First) ideations reinforced its nuclear choice and preferences.

The Chapter addresses three questions: (1) Were existing shared ideations used to make sense of new events? (2) What new ideational elements were constituted regarding new

events? Did these ideas grow or inhibit realpolitik ideations? (3) How did ontological perceptions give meaning to nuclear choice and strategic preferences during Kim Jong Il's rule?

1994-2000

Kim Jong Il inherited his father's identity construct. He perceived the US-dominated unipolar security environment as extremely threatening. Since US could attack Pyongyang with its ballistic missiles at will, nuclear capability for North Korea was essential.

When Kim Jong Il took office in July 1994 he lacked domestic influence and charisma. External and internal crises needed resolution under Kim Il Sung's political framework. Like Kim Il Sung, he rejected economic reform and relaxation of control. A *Songun* (Military First) doctrine was written into the Constitution in 1998. Since then Kim Jong Il's identity merged with Kim Il Sung's *Juche* identity. The more centralised political system and a military-prioritised political identity subsequently reinforced Pyongyang's realpolitik ideations and nuclear preference, reflecting on its response to US-ROK "engagement" and denuclearisation talks.

Arrangement of two light water reactors and heavy fuel oil to Pyongyang

Kim Il Sung's death (1994) left monitoring and implementation of the Agreed Framework to Kim Jong Il. To finance the promised Light water reactors (estimated at over \$4.6 billion), the US organised an international consortium composed of Japan, South Korea and some European countries. KEDO was established (March 1995) and these countries contributed in accordance with the Geneva Agreement to secure Pyongyang's energy supply. Japan agreed to contribute US\$1 billion and South Korea agreed to cover 70 percent of the payment.²⁴⁵ ROK's leadership in both KEDO and light water reactors construction²⁴⁶ was unacceptable to Pyongyang as the legitimate representative of the Korean nation and being superior to the "illegitimate" ROK regime that was subordinate to the US.²⁴⁷ DPRK initially

²⁴⁵ Choi Han Kwon, Thomas Crom and John Mulligan, "KEDO's LIGHT WATER REACTOR Project: Unique Challenges in a Nuclear Power Project by Any Standard," International Conference on Nuclear Engineering Arlington V.A., April 2002.

²⁴⁶ "KEDO's estimated cost of the reactors in 1994 is \$4.6 billion. Other estimates have been \$5.5-6.0 billion. South Korea is to supply the reactors through a South Korean company as the main contractor; and South Korea and Japan will provide most of financing." See Niksch, 32; Han S. Park, *North Korea: The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 104.

²⁴⁷ D. Ellsworth Blanc, *North Korea - Pariah?* (Huntington, NY: Novinka Books, 2001), 31-2.

resisted light water reactor project initiatives of ROK and KEDO but accepted US reactors.²⁴⁸ Pyongyang took nine months to conclude a supply agreement with KEDO.

The Clinton Administration encountered huge criticism in Congress for financing oil deliveries and allocating funds to KEDO.²⁴⁹ The promised annual delivery of 500,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil was severely delayed.²⁵⁰ The DPRK made progress in shutting down graphite-moderated nuclear facilities and removing nuclear fuel rods from the 5 MW(e) experimental reactor with IAEA.²⁵¹ As in the early 1990s, oil delivery delays were interpreted by DPRK (with its zero-sum view of conflicts) as an aggressive US seeking its collapse.²⁵²

Songun politics

The DPRK's constitution's incorporation of *Songun* (Military-First) doctrine in 1998 altered the domestic power structure. Kim Jong Il's power waxed after the father-to-son succession was announced at KWP's Sixth Congress (1980).²⁵³ However he only consolidated his power with the constitutional modification in 1998. From 1980 to 1994, Kim Jong Il and his father always appeared together as "co-leaders".²⁵⁴ The picture of inseparability reflected that Kim Jong Il had not established an image of power distinct from that of Kim Il Sung. Meanwhile factionalism re-surfaced in DPRK's ruling party (1980s). Some political rivals were from Kim Jong Il's family with influence in Workers' Party of Korea.²⁵⁵ Kim Jong Il became supreme commander of Korean People's Army (1992) and Chairman of National Defence Commission (1993) but lacking military experience he also lacked popularity.²⁵⁶ There were at least three factions at the time: Senior officers (mainly Kim Il Sung's *Kapsan* opponents); younger officers (Kim Jong Il's supportive schoolmates); and a neutral group. The older generation respected Kim Il Sung but not Kim Jong Il.²⁵⁷ Moreover, frequent droughts and floods affected 30 percent of the country; more than two

²⁴⁸ Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci. *Going Critical* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings institution Press, 2005), 360-70.

²⁴⁹ Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, 335-7.

²⁵⁰ For instance, in 1997, the promised oil was delivered after 15 months of the promised date.

²⁵¹ Department of State, "Agreed Framework," Department of State Archive Website; available from <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/ac/rls/or/2004/31009.htm>

²⁵² Kim Jong Il, *On Preserving the Juche Character and National Character of the Revolution and Construction* (Pyongyang: Korea Workers' Party Publisher, 1997); Jon Chol Nam, *A Dual of Reason Between Korea and US* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2000).

²⁵³ Jong-seok, 119.

²⁵⁴ Guk-Jeon, 763.

²⁵⁵ The power has mainly two division, held by Kim Jong-il's semi-brother Kim Pyong-il or his uncle Kim Yang-chu.

²⁵⁶ Lee Dae-geun, *Why Doesn't the Korean People's Army Make a Coup?* (Seoul: Hanul, 2003), 186.

²⁵⁷ Guk-Jeon, 762.

million people died during the great famine (1994-1998).²⁵⁸ Internal factions intensified debates about economic reform.²⁵⁹

The legitimacy crisis was also addressed through tinkering with norms. The existing political ideology had consolidated Kim Il Sung's sole legitimate leadership and embodiment of the *Juche* spirit. To become a legitimate leader Kim Jong Il needed to craft his own identity within his father's political identity. A three-year "leadership vacuum" in Workers' Party of Korea followed the succession. Rather than rush to occupy the state presidency, Kim Jong Il initiated a constitutional revision (1998) to establish a *Songun* doctrine to gain control over party and army.

The new *Songun* doctrine maintained the *Suryong* (Leader) ruling mechanism but changed the party-army relationship. Under Kim Il Sung's old system, the Workers' Party of Korea and the *Suryong* were integrated. *Suryong* (Kim Il Sung), as General Secretary of the PPC and President of Central People's Committee, played the central role in the autonomous Workers' Party of Korea. Workers' Party of Korea safeguarded the *Suryong* system, guided the government, and had the army under direct control as its revolutionary military force (Figure 2).²⁶⁰ In contrast, Kim Jong Il's constitution abolished the Central People's Committee (the highest leadership body) and the presidency, strengthened National Defence Commission and the cabinet, and separated the government, army and party placing them under *Suryong* supervision (Figure 3). *Suryong* (Kim Jong Il) was General Secretary of the PPC, Chairman of the National Defence Commission and Korean People's Army Supreme Commander. Kim Jong Il enhanced his power at the Workers' Party of Korea's expense introducing a "military-first" imperative to domestic politics.

²⁵⁸ Buzo, 175; *Washington Post*, 13 March 1999.

²⁵⁹ *Sang-hak*, 9-10; *Joon-hyuk*, 14-5.

²⁶⁰ *North Korea Constitution* Article 46.

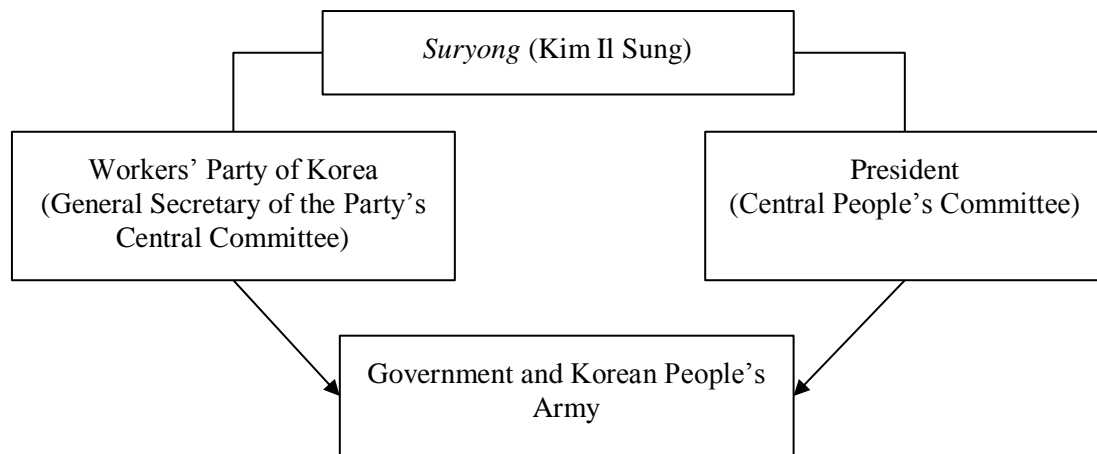


Figure 2 Ruling structure in Kim Il Sung regime (author, 2018)

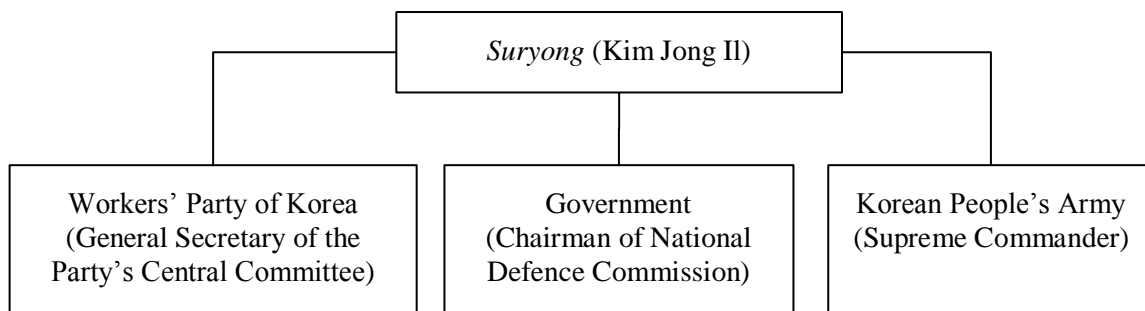


Figure 3 Ruling structure in Kim Jong Il regime (author, 2018)

Songun politics immediately solved three problems. First, the fall of communist regimes left the one-party state bereft of ideological attractiveness; DPRK was unable to effectively mobilise the masses vis-à-vis external challenges. The Workers' Party of Korea had to isolate domestic society and intensify ideological indoctrination to maintain power. The great famine further diminished its authority. The regime believed that the internal shock caused by external environmental change could be absorbed through elevation of the role of the army, which could best foster a mass revolutionary spirit.²⁶¹ Support of older generation officers (*Kapsan* policy-beneficiaries with military and pro-Kim Il Sung identity) would strengthen Kim Jong Il's power.

²⁶¹ Kim Dong-nam, *The Great Leader Kim Jong-il's Songgun Politics is a Decisive Guarantee for Building a Socialist Powerful Great State* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishers, 2000), 6-8.

Second, Kim Il Sung's fear of losing his grip on power led to the resistance of economic reform and loosening centralised control. Similarly, Kim Jong Il's *Songun* politics coupled with military prioritisation were used to justify the failing economic development model. In consequence, economic isolation, energy and food shortage and plummeting living standards forced Kim Jong Il regime's acknowledgement of the need for economic reform.²⁶² But reform was meant to be within the prevailing system. The *Tae'an* system (with party-led economic management) was superseded by the Kim Jong Il-centred *Suryong* system. Meanwhile, the Workers' Party of Korea lost its economic decision-making role.²⁶³ Radical economic reformists were excluded, *Juche*-oriented socialist economics continued to dominate. In 1990s, although Kim Jong Il paid lip service to light industry, Pyongyang continued to emphasise heavy industry under a command economy.²⁶⁴ The DPRK's economic growth strategy reverted to labour exploitation under the second *Chollima* movement.²⁶⁵

Third, the party-government-army equilibrium blocked internal challenges.²⁶⁶ Kim Jong Il successfully mustered support from military officers who had hidden behind the political core for decades. The army's growing political influence was obvious but limited. While controlling the military, Kim Jong Il dangled "honours" and material (luxury goods) rewards to inner circle officials.²⁶⁷ These incentives consolidated his dictatorship. Increasing inter-institutional competition prevented organisations from becoming over-powerful. Kim Jong Il gave associates high-ranking positions in the cabinet and security agencies reinforcing personal control across the spectrum.²⁶⁸ By 1998 Kim Il Sung's mantle of charisma had fallen on Kim Jong Il.²⁶⁹ Kim Jong Il controlled the military, instituted tight surveillance and held supreme positions in all political institutions. There was little opportunity for revolution or coups d'état.

²⁶² Jeong-chul, 213.

²⁶³ Kap-sik, 100.

²⁶⁴ Kim Jong-il has introduced many reform economic policies and slogans such as Light Industry First, Agriculture First, and Trade First, but the figures show even much more investment went to heavy industry. According to *North Korean Central News*, April 7, 1999. "The share of the people's economy that included light industry increased 2 percent compared to the previous year, while electric, metal, transportation increased 15 percent, 10 percent and 10 percent, respectively, in the 1999 budget."

²⁶⁵ Kim Jong Il, *Let's Start a New Transmission by Using Chegando Province as the Model* (Pyongyang: Korean Labour Party Publisher, 2000).

²⁶⁶ Guk-Jeon, 765.

²⁶⁷ Jong-seok, 122.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁶⁹ *Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1998), 22-4.

Songun politics was a reconstructed North Korean society in a military mould. Since 1998 the new DPRK slogan has been *kangsong taeguk* - “a great country that is militarily strong and economically prosperous” - linking military expenditure with national pride and prosperity.²⁷⁰ Nuclear energy was critical for DPRK’s economic self-reliance.²⁷¹ Military interests permeated all social development and economic strategy. Pyongyang sent nuclear personnel to Syria to engender “nuclear commerce”.²⁷² Weapons were exported to conflict zones (Nicaragua and Iran). Pyongyang and Tehran were deemed complicit in ballistic missile commerce and development.²⁷³ Middle Eastern partners could pay in oil. The nuclear programme became essential for Kim Jong Il’s power-consolidation by “opening up alternative revenue” in military and court economies.²⁷⁴ It was hardly surprising that international sanctions failed to change DPRK’s nuclear choice.

In addition, the *Songun* doctrine naturally prioritised self-defence and nuclear-weapons acquisition. The army’s revolutionary spirit evinced determination to build military might. Nuclear acquisition signified the national system’s superiority in developing a nuclear programme indigenously - being technologically sophisticated.

ROK-US engagement

Both ROK and US pursued engagement policies towards DPRK in late-1990s. It influenced Kim Jong Il’s nuclear strategy in pursuing uranium and a path to nuclear-weapons while simultaneously pursuing denuclearisation talks. Kim Dae Jung’s administration launched (1998) a “Sunshine Policy” aimed at low-political engagement to ease tensions, viz.

²⁷⁰ Kim Jong Il, *Songun Revolution Line is Our Epoch’s Great Revolutionary Line, Our Revolution’s All-Winning Banner*, Talk with responsible officials of the Workers’ Party of Korea Central Committee, January 29, 2003 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2011); Ri Jong Chol, *Songun Politics in Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2012); Kim Jong Il, *Songun - Politics of Kim Jong Il* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2013).

²⁷¹ Soon after the meeting with Jimmy Carter in June 1994, Kim Il-sung gave the speech saying, “we must resolve the problem of electrical power... it will take too long to construct an atomic power plant to resolve the power shortages... Crude oil-power plants are optimal.” See Kim Il Sung, *On Making the New Revolutionary Change in Socialist Economic Construction*, 6 July 1994 (Pyongyang: Korean Workers Party Publisher, 1996), 474-81.

²⁷² Office of the DNI, “Background Briefing with Senior U.S. Officials on Syria’s Covert Nuclear Reactor and North Korea’s Involvement,” Office of the DNI, April 24, 2008; available from https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Speeches%20and%20Interviews/20080424_interview.pdf

²⁷³ John S. Park, “The Leap Ballistic Missile Program: The Iran Factor”, *NBR Analysis Brief*, December 19, 2012; available from https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/121812_Park_NKoreaMissile.pdf

²⁷⁴ Benjamin Habib segmented the DPRK post-1990s economy into five parallel economies: The formal economy, the military economy, the illicit economy, the court economy and the entrepreneurial black market. Also See Habib, “North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Programme and the maintenance of the *Songun* System”, 43-64.

inter-Korean cultural and economic exchanges. In step with ROK, US announced easing of sanctions (January 20, 1995). Following the “Perry Report,”²⁷⁵ the US lifted more economic sanctions and conducted limited business with DPRK.²⁷⁶ Viewing increase the Pyongyang’s interaction with the world would lead to Pyongyang reforming by adopting international norms and practices, the Clinton Administration pledged to “move toward full normalisation of political and economic relations”²⁷⁷ in engaging a missile-testing DPRK.

Pyongyang’s strategic ambiguity during negotiations (1999-2000) was guided by its assessment of its security environment and adversaries. It desired improved US-DPRK relations and lifting of economic sanctions. However, *sans* a peace treaty and with a US security commitment to ROK, Pyongyang believed Washington-Seoul could unleash a military attack on Pyongyang.²⁷⁸ The “engagement” talks allowed tension-easing before Pyongyang sought nuclear self-defence capability.

In fact, the DPRK viewed “engagement” as a direct existential threat. Seoul’s “Sunshine Policy” was suspected of aiming to absorb DPRK on its terms.²⁷⁹ DPRK believed that compromises with adversaries would lead to its collapse like the USSR or succumbing to imperialism like post-reform China.²⁸⁰ The true representatives of the Korean nation – the DPRK leadership and ruling political and economic system – would die. However, energy supplies and humanitarian aid from diplomatic talks ensured maintenance of DPRK’s basic functions.²⁸¹ Pyongyang’s nuclear demand not assuaged, it secretly continued uranium enrichment and weapons-grade nuclear development in the late-1990s.²⁸²

²⁷⁵ US appointed former secretary of defence William Perry to coordinate North Korea policy in 1999.

²⁷⁶ Jeffrey R. Smith, “Clinton Slightly Lowers Some Bars to US trade with North Korea,” *Washington Post*, January 21, 1995; *US-DPRK Joint Communiqué*, Nautilus Institute, October 12, 2000.

²⁷⁷ IAEA, “Agreed Framework of 21 October 1994 Between the United States of America and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, November 2, 1994,” International Atomic Energy Agency; available from <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB87/nk17.pdf>

²⁷⁸ Jon Chol Nam, *A Dual of Reason Between Korea and US* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2000).

²⁷⁹ Kim Il Sung, “Let Us Strengthen Tactical Training: Speech Delivered to the Officers Who Took Part in a Tactical Exercise of the Infantry Battalion Held at the First Central Military Academy, July 20, 1949,” in *Kim Il Sung Selected Works Vol. 5* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1981), 158-9; Kim Jong Il, “A New Transmission of Revolutionary Task,” *Kim Jong Il Selected Work 14* (Pyongyang: Korean Workers Party Publisher, 2000), 258-63.

²⁸⁰ Kim Jong Il, “A New Transmission of Revolutionary Task,” *Kim Jong Il Selected Work 14* (Pyongyang: Korean Workers Party Publisher, 2000), 258-63.

²⁸¹ Pyongyang had engaged in 109 negotiations on denuclearisation between 1994 to 2000, including bilateral talks (DPRK-US), Three-Party Talks (US-DPRK-ROK), and Four-Party Talks (US-PRC-DPRK-ROK). CSIS, *US-DPRK Negotiations and North Korean Provocations*.

²⁸² International Institute for Strategic Studies, 27.

2000s

The 2000s were a crisis management period for Kim Jong Il through the combination of belligerent nuclear posture and frequent denuclearisation talks. “911” prompted George W. Bush to adopt a pre-emptive strike doctrine and pursue regime change in Iraq. US launched the “War on Terror” lumping Iran, Iraq and North Korea in an “Axis of Evil”. The DPRK linked its nuclear development to equal sovereignty. Viewing the ignominious branding as enemy imagery by the US for its allies, DPRK believed an attack was imminent and became more active in nuclear acquisition.

Nuclear tests baited the US into bilateral talks during Bush Administration from 2001-2008. Presidents Barack Obama (US) and Lee Myung Bak (ROK) had scant (serious) interest in engagement, so the DPRK walked away from Six Party Talks to actively develop nuclear-weapons. Military revenue offset the limiting effects of sanctions on DPRK’s nuclear choice.

The injustice being branded “Axis of Evil”

George W. Bush took office (2001) during an ROK “Sunshine” phase. Oil shipments to DPRK remained on hold while the two light water reactor projects continued. The CIA reported that DPRK had pursued uranium enrichment for several years.²⁸³ The US and DPRK blamed one another for welching on the agreement.²⁸⁴ During the 1990s, Pyongyang empathised with the few hard-core Third World proliferators (including Iraq, Iran, India and PaKim Il Sungtan) that resisted the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime. Facing economic isolation and defaulting on foreign debts, DPRK earned hard currency through arms exports and illicit trade.²⁸⁵ Despite the DPRK’s immediate condemnation of the 9/11 terrorist attack,

²⁸³ Mike Chinoy, *Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2008), 100-4.

²⁸⁴ US accused DPRK of testing long-range missiles and questioned the use of heavy oil, while DPRK blamed US for not delivering on its promises of LIGHT WATER REACTORS and oil shipments to Pyongyang. See Eichensehr, 11-2; Wolfsthal, “Asia’s Nuclear Dominos?”; Panda, 229; Bruce Cumings, “The North Korea Problem: Dealing with Irrationality,” *Current History* (September 2009): 284-90. Available from <http://www.currenthistory.com/Article.php?ID=705>; Selig S. Harrison, “Did North Korea Cheat?,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 1 (January/February 2005): 99-110; available from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2005-01-01/did-north-korea-cheat>

²⁸⁵ North Korea’s illicit trade in nuclear materials with nuclear proliferators and rogue states has been thoroughly researched by numerous scholars such as Benjamin Habib (2011), John S. Park (2012), Sharon A. Squassoni (2006). As the central concern of this dissertation is North Korea’s nuclear choice, the issue of illicit trade is not excavated. Other well documented illicit activities include counterfeiting, dealing in illegal drugs, cybercrime and human trafficking. These activities are coordinated by Central Committee Bureau 39 of the Workers’ Party of Korea (Bureau 39; Division 39; Office 39). Claudia Rosett (15 April 2010). “Kim Jong Il’s ‘Cashbox’,” *Forbes*. Mark Landler (30 August 2010). “New sanctions aim at North Korean elite,” *The New York Times*. Marcus Noland, “How North Korea Funds Its Regime”, April 25, 2006, Testimony before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security

Bush drew it into his “Axis of Evil”, i.e. states producing and proliferating weapons of mass destruction (29 January 2002). DPRK saw the Non-Proliferation Treaty as injurious manipulation of world power and subordination of nuclear-weapon state’s sovereign equality. Pyongyang’s “innocence” was based on constant expectation of a US nuclear attack, which compelled its development of nuclear-weapons by seeking nuclear technology from the “rogue” network. The US was seen to have a long history of military aggression and had violated the Armistice Treaty consistently.²⁸⁶ Washington’s “regime change” strategy and military interventions in the “Axis of Evil” heightened DPRK’s external threat perceptions. After expelling IAEA inspectors in December 2002, Pyongyang withdrew from Non-Proliferation Treaty in January 2003.

The Six Party Talks

The Six Party Talk began in 2003 - with China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, US - as a multilateral platform for negotiating denuclearisation issues with North Korea.²⁸⁷ Pyongyang, desired speedy normalisation of relations with Washington but disavowed connections with international terrorist groups. Washington refused bilateral negotiations with Pyongyang during the first two years (2003-04). The Bush Administration emphasised the possibility of pre-emptive strikes, making no concessions. DPRK responded by declaring itself a nuclear-weapon state (February 10, 2005). Things changed when Bush’s team²⁸⁸ failed to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The Bush Administration decided to engage in diplomatic dialogue with Pyongyang.²⁸⁹ Appointed as negotiator, Christopher Hill established several practical principles in considering DPRK’s security and energy concerns.²⁹⁰ US decided on an agreement with DPRK, in Six Party Talk’s fourth round, in which US “affirmed that it has no nuclear-weapons on the Korean Peninsula and has no intention to

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs United State Senate, *Peterson Institute for International Economics*. <https://piie.com/commentary/testimonies/how-north-korea-funds-its-regime>

²⁸⁶ As noted in a Soviet report “[by 1972], the Americans violated the [armistice] treaty 106,200 times: 800 times in airspace, 1103 times on the sea. They initiated cannon fire 5360 times inside and brought weapons 1690 times into the demilitarised zone. ... to the end of May [1972], the armistice pact was violated 7530 times by the enemy [US/ROK], including 6 times in airspace. Groups of spies were sent 5 times into the DPRK.” See *Report from Kadas Istvan, ‘The Visit of Korean Ambassador Pak Gyeong-sun’, June 24, 1972*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123106>

²⁸⁷ Kelsey Davenport, “The Six-Party Talks at a Glance,” Arms Control Association; available from <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6partytalks>

²⁸⁸ It included Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security advisor Condoleezza Rice.

²⁸⁹ Peter Baker, *Days of Fire: Bush and Cheney in the White House* (New York: Doubleday, 2013), 363-4.

²⁹⁰ Chinoy, 236.

attack or invade the DPRK with nuclear or conventional weapons”.²⁹¹ North Korea “committed to abandoning all nuclear-weapons and existing nuclear programmes and returning, at an early date, to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear-weapons and to IAEA safeguards.”²⁹² US also promised to replace Pyongyang's reactors with less proliferation-prone light water reactors (not recorded in the agreement).²⁹³

Tensions rose again when US imposed further economic sanctions to force DPRK to abandon its nuclear-weapons programme. Approximately \$25 million of funds earmarked for North Korea were frozen.²⁹⁴ With increasing contact with the DPRK, the US began to criticise the regime's human rights record and illegal activities, calling it an “outpost of tyranny”.²⁹⁵ Pyongyang characterised the Bush administration's “hawkish engagement” as unilateral and “imperialistic”. The US was viewed as trying to induce DPRK to adopt foreign norms and practices.²⁹⁶ Diplomatic talks being stalled by US sanctions, DPRK carried out seven ballistic missiles tests in July and its first nuclear test on October 9 (2006), made DPRK the cynosure for regional actors and US.

Beijing developed a “new concept of security” in mid-1990s.²⁹⁷ Northeast Asian peace and stability became more important for China than supporting a bellicose DPRK.²⁹⁸ A Chinese diplomat once re-interpreted the mutual defence treaty for Kim Jong Il after the DPRK's nuclear testing by saying “if North Korea would first attack South Korea and, as a result, there were full-scale armed clashes, China wouldn't aid North Korea”(2010).²⁹⁹ The former “blood ally” becoming party to global economic sanctions against the DPRK since 2006 and opposing its nuclear tests, reinforced Pyongyang's “self-help” on its nuclear path. A

²⁹¹ Department of State, “Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks,” September 19, 2005; available from <https://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>

²⁹² Department of State, “Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks,” September 19, 2005; available from <https://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>

²⁹³ Chinoy, 250.

²⁹⁴ John McGlynn, “Banco Delta Asia, North Korea's Frozen Funds and US Undermining of the Six-Party Talks: Obstacles to a Solution,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (June 9, 2007); available from http://japanfocus.org/articles/print_article/2446

²⁹⁵ “Spokesman for DPRK Foreign Ministry on Contact between Heads of DPRK and US Delegations,” *Korean Central News Agency*, July 10, 2005.

²⁹⁶ Document 37 (Appendix B).

²⁹⁷ Lee Kihyun and Kim Jangho, “Cooperation and Limitations of China's Sanctions on North Korea: Perception, Interest and Institutional Environment,” *North Korean Review* 13, no. 1 (2017): 28-44; available from <https://search.proquest.com/openview/63979b2b2975a07625f420d146355116/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2035667>

²⁹⁸ Lee Jong-Seok, ‘China-North Korea Relations in The Post-Cold War Era and New Changes in 2009’, *The Chinese Historical Review* 21, no. 2 (2014): 143-61.

²⁹⁹ According to Lee Myung-bak's memoirs *The Uncharted Path*, Chinese diplomat has explained to Kim Jong-il that “if North Korea would first attack South Korea and, as a result, there were full-scale armed clashes, China wouldn't aid North Korea.”

North Korean diplomat responded to Chinese officials “we are only doing what you did four decades ago.”³⁰⁰

The US made compromises and unfroze \$25 million in funds to Pyongyang, so the Six Party Talk continued and a “Denuclearisation Action Plan” was concluded on February 13, 2007. Pyongyang agreed it “will shut down and seal for the purpose of eventual abandonment the Yongbyon nuclear facility, including the reprocessing facility and invite back IAEA personnel to conduct all necessary monitoring and verifications” and promised to provide “complete and correct declaration of all nuclear programmes and disablement of all existing nuclear facilities.”³⁰¹ The other parties agreed that “shipment of emergency energy assistance equivalent to 50, 000 tons of heavy fuel oil will commence within the next 60 days.”³⁰² In exchange for DPRK’s denuclearisation, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea would offer economic, energy and humanitarian assistance. US also promised to remove the pejorative label of “sponsor of terrorism”.

This agreement triggered many problems. Russia delayed its heavy fuel oil delivery. Japan raised the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by DPRK in 1970s and refused to deliver fuel oil.³⁰³ DPRK delayed its submission of the “complete and correct declaration” while the US intelligence agency suspected DPRK had an uranium enrichment programme.³⁰⁴ But by the mid-2008, both sides had implemented several obligations under the 2007 agreement.³⁰⁵ In August, US proposed a slightly revised verification plan that sought “full access to any site, facility or location”.³⁰⁶ Pyongyang expressed its intention to withdraw from Six Party Talk as disputes continued with US and other parties over the fulfilment of the signed agreement and the new verification plan.³⁰⁷ DPRK believed no-one was whole-heartedly

³⁰⁰ Jonathan D. Pollack, “North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program to 2015: Three Scenarios,” in *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Future of International Nonproliferation Policy*, eds. Nathan E. Busch and Daniel H. Joyner (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 269.

³⁰¹ Department of State, “North Korea - Denuclearisation Action Plan”, Department of State Archive Website, February 13, 2007; available from <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/february/80479.htm>

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Mark Manyin and Mary Beth Nikitin, *Foreign Assistance to North Korea*, Congressional Research Service, April 2, 2014; available from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40095.pdf>

³⁰⁴ Arms Control Association, “Chronology of US-North Korean Nuclear Missile Diplomacy,” Arms Control Association; available from <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>

³⁰⁵ DPRK destroyed the reactor’s cooling tower and submitted a more detailed report of its plutonium inventory and transferring report in 2008.

³⁰⁶ Glenn Kessler, “Far-Reaching US Plan Impaired N. Korea Deal,” *Washington Post*, September 26, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/25/AR2008092504380.html>

³⁰⁷ “Foreign Ministry Spokesman Holds Some Forces Accountable for Delayed Implementation of Agreement,” November 13, 2008, <http://www.kvna.co.jp/item/2008/200811/news1113-18ee.html>

engaging Pyongyang based on equal sovereignty and that the security environment remained hostile.³⁰⁸

End of the “engagement”

Immediately after Barack Obama and Lee Myung Bak took office (January 2009), Pyongyang’s high expectations for new “engagement” nosedived. The “Sunshine” doctrine faded out in Seoul with the Lee administration imposing further restrictions on economic assistance to Pyongyang. North Korea took umbrage and past agreements under the Inter-Korean Dialogue were nullified.³⁰⁹ President Obama said in his inaugural speech that the US will “extend a hand” to enemies who were prepared to “uncle their fist”.³¹⁰ But at this stage Pyongyang could not believe in engagement by the US – its nuclear path was determined. Its attempted satellite launch (April 13) that contravened UN Security Council Resolution 1718 was strongly condemned by UN Security Council. In response, US-ROK-Japan mobilised “nine Aegis destroyers, submarines, surveillance aircraft, satellites, and radar systems” and launched the most significant “Team Spirit” military exercises.³¹¹ This led to Pyongyang walking away from Six Party Talk (April 14) and conducting its second nuclear test (May 25); and subsequent UN Security Council economic sanctions. A US-ROK Joint Vision Statement was signed identifying “common values” of a broader alliance. Soon DPRK threatened never to return to Six Party Talk. As the North Korean delegation once said, “... our agreement to the 19 September joint statement started precisely from the principled position of denuclearisation through the normalisation of relations, not the normalisation of relations through denuclearisation.”³¹²

The Bush Administration’s “War on Terror” had strengthened the DPRK’s perception of the security environment’s hostile nature and Obama Administration reinforcing the ROK-US alliance was a real threat as an unfinished inter-Korean civil war could explode into a major military conflagration at any moment. In practice, Pyongyang’s priority was to

³⁰⁸ Kim Jong Il, “A New Transmission of Revolutionary Task,” *Kim Jong Il Selected Work 14* (Pyongyang: Korean Workers Party Publisher, 2000), 258-63.

³⁰⁹ “All agreements adopted between the North and South in the past have already become dead letters and blank sheets of paper... nullify all agreed upon matters related to resolving the state of political and military confrontation between the North and the South”, See Pyongyang Korea Central Broadcasting Station, January 29, 2009.

³¹⁰ “President Barack Obama’s Inaugural Address”, January 21, 2009, White House website, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address>

³¹¹ Samuel S. Kim, “North Korea’s Nuclear Strategy and the interface between International and Domestic Politics,” *Asian Perspective* 34, no. 1 Special Issue on North Korea’s Nuclear Politics (2010): 79.

³¹² “DPRK Foreign Ministry Spokesman Press Statement on Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula,” *KCNA*, January 13, 2009.

improve US-DPRK relations and sign a peace treaty before it acquires nuclear defence capabilities. Nuclear tests would directly coerce the US and other parties to offer material inducements to DPRK to return to the negotiation table. Simultaneously the DPRK continued to develop nuclear-weapons to preserve defensive self-reliance and sovereign independence. However, Obama's strategy was not to engage DPRK after Pyongyang's nuclear test; rather, it sought to reinforce US-ROK-Japan alliance and work closely to pressure DPRK to re-join negotiations.³¹³ This was seen by DPRK leaders as highly provocative. *Sans* peace treaty and showing no interest in equally exchanging ideas with the DPRK, US-ROK alliance was perceived as trying to bully North Korea into implementing the 2005 Joint Statement.

2011

2011 offered the DPRK a new opening. Kim Jong Un succeeded his father in office retaining his faith in nuclear-weapons. The Libyan case further reinforced DPRK's realpolitik ideations to interpret its security environment and had prolonged influence on the new leader.

Welcome, Kim Jong Un, here is the Libya case

Libya and North Korea both had long histories of prioritising their nuclear-weapon programmes; Bush's derogatory epithets were applied to both; they were hard-core socialist non-aligned movement countries with personality cults. Like DPRK, Libya had rich uranium deposits that could be used for developing nuclear-weapons. They shared similar perceptions of the security environment and viewed their adversaries as highly aggressive and friends as unreliable.³¹⁴ Facing a domestic economic crisis, in December 2003 Gaddafi announced his intention to abandon nuclear-weapons in exchange for sanctions removal.³¹⁵ Persuaded by UK and US, Gaddafi destroyed all Libyan weapons of mass destruction in 2004 but soon expressed regret in an interview complaining that "Libya's denuclearisation could have become a good sample for other proliferators, however US and UK didn't realise their

³¹³ William H. Tobey, "Obama's 'Strategic Patience' on North Korea is Turning into Strategic Neglect," Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, February 14, 2013; available from <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/obamas-strategic-patience-north-korea-turning-strategic-neglect>; "President Obama & South Korean President Lee at G20 Summit," White House website, June 27, 2010; available from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/photos-and-video/video/president-obama-south-korean-president-lee-g20-summit#transcript>

³¹⁴ Malfrid Braut-Hegghammer, "Libya's Nuclear Turnaround: Perspectives from Tripoli", *Middle East Journal* 62, no. 1 (Winter, 2008): 59.

³¹⁵ In 1990s, UN sanction restraints on Libya's oil exports which shared more than 90 percent of its revenue. It caused Libya's economic crisis.

commitments. So, it is reasonable for Iran and North Korea not to follow us.”³¹⁶ In 2011 “Arab Spring” anti-regime protests spread to Libya which descended into civil war. As the “February 17” uprising broke out, the UN passed UN Security Council Resolution 1973 and tightened economic sanctions on the regime, NATO-led coalition forces commenced military intervention. Gaddafi was executed by compatriots.

The Libyan case was tutelage for DPRK leaders on self-survival. Kim Jong Un was designated as the next leader after Kim Jong Il’s stroke in 2008. Like Kim Jong Il in 1980s, Kim Jong Un was inexperienced and unpopular. He was surrounded by contemptuous senior officials who might have discarded him. With international “engagement” stalled and UN economic sanctions ratcheted-up, the regime failed to meet its people’s basic needs. Possible popular revolt and factional competition in the political inner circle presented an unprecedented crisis for the untested leader. It would be hardly surprising if Kim Jong Un’s perception of the security environment was more realpolitik-driven. He would not deviate from his predecessors’ political operational framework. The nuclear option remained Kim Jong Un’s sole strategic choice.

Conclusion

Through “process tracing”, it was empirically evident that Kim Jong Il inherited his father’s realpolitik ideations. He interacted with other actors through existing recurring narrative themes and the new norms of “military-first” were used to justify the existing political identity and overcame the crisis of regime credibility following the end of the Cold War.

From 1994 to 2011, Kim Jong Il used existing shared realpolitik ideation to interpret the post-Cold War security environment with four recurring themes: First, Kim Jong Il believed the emergence of an unipolar international system to be more hostile. An expected nuclear war was seen as more imminent after the “War on Terror” given the US’s willingness to use nuclear-weapons on DPRK. Second, former socialist allies had joined imperialist oppressors to isolate the DPRK for their own interests to maintain the unjust non-proliferation regime which embedded the power imbalance between nuclear-weapon state and the rest of the world. So, pursuing military self-reliance was necessary. Second, the

³¹⁶ “Gaddafi says, ‘as we abandoned nuclear weapon, we had nothing in return’,” *TianFu Morning News*, March 4, 2007.

failure of DPRK's *Juche* economic system was continuously justified by the sole legitimacy of the DPRK model in Korean peninsula through *Juche-Songun* narratives. The South Korean regime was labelled inferior and subordinate to the US "imperialist" powers. Fourth, US-ROK's "engagement" policies were deemed duplicitous as they sought to seduce DPRK into relinquishing its autonomous development and embracing imperialist heteronomy.

New ideational elements were constituted during Kim Jong Il's internal power struggle. Like Kim Il Sung who rejected any loosening of centralised control, Kim Jong Il generated leadership charisma and legitimacy by modifying his father's party/Kim Il Sung-command system to a more centralised Kim Jong Il -command internal power structure, integrating the military sector with the decision-making body. New norms emerged under the *Songun* doctrine where everything relates to military (social stability, economic development and external defence) and military is the solution for all problems.

Existing realpolitik ideations were reinforced and integrated into the new domestic "military-first" strategic preferences. The DPRK's nuclear choice could be understood as follows: First, consistent with *Juche* and *Songun*, the acquisition of nuclear-weapons is a means for DPRK's self-reliant defence and maintenance of sovereign independence. Second, the military also offers solutions for economic self-reliance i.e. through increased military and nuclear-weapons revenue and trading with nuclear technology clients. Third, DPRK's nuclear posture could effectively bring the US to bilateral negotiation based on equal exchange and increase Kim Jong Il's prestige. The improvement of US-DPRK relations could increase a level of security assurance before an indigenous nuclear-weapons was required. Fourth, as the supreme leader of Korean People's Army, Kim Jong Il had his charisma raised by military-first policy and justified the huge self-reliant defence budget regardless of poor domestic economic conditions. Fifth, nuclear-weapons programmes were source for Pyongyang's national pride and regime legitimacy as a true Korean nation that had superior capability in comparison with the South regime.

CHAPTER V

DPRK'S STRATEGIC-CULTURE AND NUCLEAR CHOICE

Introduction

The Chapter summarises North Korean leaders' ontological perceptions of DPRK's security central paradigm in relation to its nuclear choice. As Chapter III and IV disclosed, the DPRK had changed marginally since its inception. From 1950s the self-reliance credo had consistently restrained and impacted its behaviour. The DPRK's leaders believed a socialist system with self-reliant defence, a self-sustaining economy and absolute independent sovereignty, free from foreign interference, would eventually unify Korea achieving independence. However, interacting with other actors, DPRK leaders found great powers were the main obstacles to reunification. Pyongyang interpreted the international system as unjust and highly threatening. Friends and allies proved unreliable and self-regarding. Leaders' realpolitik ideations consistently helped interpret new events and their strategic choices were limited by and based on shared ideations. Based on the previous two chapters empirical interpretations, the analysis focuses on three ontological perceptions – how DPRK leaders perceived “the role of war in human affairs,” “the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses” and “the efficacy of the use of force.”³¹⁷

The chapter then discloses why nuclear choice was perceived as the best strategic choice within their political frameworks. The growing ties between Pyongyang's political identity and its nuclear preferences were empirically observed in Chapter III and IV. Influenced by internal beliefs, Pyongyang joined an international group embracing *Juche*

³¹⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 223.

values. It had flipped its collective identity from the socialist camp to non-aligned movement membership, contradictorily becoming a hard-core proliferator. As DPRK leaders' nuclear interest and international norms clashed, there were material and ideological challenges. As the result of rejecting economic reforms and loosening centralised power, pursuing a nuclear-weapons programme with opportunities for nuclear bargaining was Pyongyang's only strategic choice to fulfil material needs in concord with ideology.

Combining the realpolitik ideations and ideation-driven nuclear preference, this Chapter reveals the DPRK's overall strategic-culture and meanings attached to its nuclear choice.

North Korea's Central Paradigm

The DPRK's central paradigm, according to Johnston's model, consists of three core beliefs about the nature of conflict, the nature of the enemy and the role of violence. The first focus of analysis, "the role of war in human affairs" aims to disclose how leaders perceive the nature and frequency of conflict in the international system. The DPRK's perception of conflicts are zero-sum, the regime being strongly committed ideologically; losing signifies extinction. North Korean leaders viewed the world as having the oppressed and the oppressors. Even the DPRK's friends could become enemies and exploiters. Their seeing conflict in zero-sum terms reveals leaders' assessment of "the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses." The anti-Japanese guerrilla experience underpinned Kim Il Sung and his *Kapsan* faction's power and national leadership. Competition for sole legitimacy in the Korean peninsula, zero-sum relationships with the ROK and the US were constructed since 1948 and the Korean War respectively. Although DPRK viewed the conflict with the USSR and China was not antagonistic, these "allies's" unreliability subsequently shaped the DPRK's "self-reliant" nuclear choice. The third focus of analysis, "the efficacy of the use of force" identifies perceptions about legitimate purposes for use of force. DPRK leaders believed use of force to "liberate" South Korean people from "imperialist" rule to be righteous. To eliminate South Korean "puppet" presidents was just since they blocked popular revolution in ROK. This triad constituting the DPRK's "hard" realpolitik central paradigm provided a filtering lens for making strategic choices in relation to nuclear-weapons.

The role of war in human affairs

Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il viewed conflict to be ubiquitous and inevitable. Oppressors and the oppressed are locked in incessant revolutionary struggle, this being an inevitable historical stage of social progress.³¹⁸ Early in the Cold War the struggle was between imperialists and anti-imperialists; counter-revolutionaries and revolutionaries.³¹⁹ The Chinese-Soviet collaborative intervention (1955-56) fanned anti-foreign sentiment in DPRK.³²⁰ From the 1970s, the DPRK criticised all forms of domination (colonialism, imperialism and capitalism) that sought territorial occupation or bartering of sovereignty of Third World nations.³²¹ Imperialist and capitalist forces perennially install an exploitative system, their aggressive self-interest precipitating disorder and endangering world peace.³²²

³¹⁸ Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity", Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 562; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Promote The Building of Socialism by Vigorously Carrying Out The Three Revolutions", Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 145; Kim Il Sung, "The Non-Alignment Movement Is A Mighty Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Force of Our Times", Treatise Published in the Inaugural Issue of the Argentine Magazine, "Guidebook to the Third World", December 16, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 237; Kim Jong Il, *On The Juche Idea*, Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, March 31, 1982 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 2.

³¹⁹ Kim Il Sung, "Our People's Army Is An Army of The Working Class, An Army of The Revolution; Class and Political Education Should Be Continuously Strengthened, Speech Delivered to People's Army Unit Cadres above the Level of Deputy Regimental Commander for Political Affairs and the Functionaries of the Party and the Government Organs of the Locality, February 8, 1963, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 466; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 2&12; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Promote The Building of Socialism by Vigorously Carrying Out The Three Revolutions", Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 145.

³²⁰ *Nodong Sinmun*, April 30, 1956; *Note Concerning the August Group, Developed on The Basis of Party Documents, As Well As on The Basis of Unofficial Sources of Information*, May 6, 1958; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114972>

³²¹ Kim Il Sung, "The Non-Alignment Movement Is A Mighty Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Force of Our Times", Treatise Published in the Inaugural Issue of the Argentine Magazine, "Guidebook to the Third World", December 16, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 233-7; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 252; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Build Up The Strength of The People's Army Through Effective Political Work, Speech at the Seventh Congress of Agitators of the Korean People's Army, November 30, 1977, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 394.

³²² Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 190; Kim Il Sung, "Our People's Army Is An Army of The Working Class, An Army of The Revolution; Class and Political Education Should Be Continuously Strengthened, Speech Delivered to People's Army Unit Cadres above the Level of Deputy Regimental Commander for Political Affairs and the Functionaries of the Party and the Government Organs of the Locality, February 8, 1963, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 470; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October

Even friends can become exploiters and imperialists. Pyongyang was prepared to battle socialist or capitalist countries that oppressed other nations.³²³

North Korean leaders perceived Korea was historically a victim of great-power competition that suffered humiliating subjugation, particularly through Japanese colonialism.³²⁴ National partition that followed liberation was another imperialist intervention.³²⁵ Bisection resulted from great-powers' strategic competition when imperialist aggressors occupied the South.³²⁶ The North progressively achieved *Juche* (self-sustaining economy, independent political sovereignty and self-reliant defence).³²⁷ The South had "fallen into the road of colonial slavery and reaction" - becoming economically, politically

5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 5; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Intensify The Anti-Imperialist, Anti-U.S. Struggle", Article Published in the Inaugural Issue of the Theoretical Magazine *Tricontinental*, Organ of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, August 12, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 538; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Promote The Building of Socialism by Vigorously Carrying Out The Three Revolutions", Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 146; Kim Il Sung, "Theses on Socialist Education", Published at the 14th Plenary Meeting of the Fifth Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, September 5, 1977, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 357.

³²³ Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 191.

³²⁴ Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 189; Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 191; Kim Il Sung, "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and The South Korean Revolution", Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia April 14, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 202; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 4; Kim Jong Il, *On The Juche Idea*, Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, March 31, 1982 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 29; Ri Jong Chol, *Songun Politics in Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2012), 2.

³²⁵ Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 191.

³²⁶ Kim Il Sung, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is The Banner of Freedom and Independence for Our People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism", Report at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the DPRK, September 7, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 131; Kim Il Sung, *On the Immediate Tasks of the People's Power in Socialist Construction* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 24.

³²⁷ Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 9; Kim Il Sung, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is The Banner of Freedom and Independence for Our People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism", Report at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the DPRK, September 7, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 130.

and militarily subjugated by US imperialists.³²⁸ Thus the revolution to achieve national-liberation remains unfinished.³²⁹ All Koreans need to fight against imperialists' armed intervention and rule (in whatever guise) and liberate South Koreans from an exploitative and oppressive system.³³⁰

From 1970s onwards, lacking material incentives the regime relied on ideological incentives to shore up legitimacy. Its leaders believed that despite conflicts being omnipresent and the superior material strength of imperialists, man is master of the universe and can achieve anything he desires.³³¹ *Jucheism's* triumph in achieving Korean reunification will be the inexorable conclusion; therefore *Juche*-spirit struggles are desirable.³³² The

³²⁸ Kim Il Sung, "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and The South Korean Revolution", Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia April 14, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 202; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 4; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 249; Kim Il Sung, *On the Immediate Tasks of the People's Power in Socialist Construction* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 24.

³²⁹ Kim Il Sung, "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and The South Korean Revolution", Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia April 14, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 202; Kim Il Sung, "The Non-Alignment Movement Is A Mighty Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Force of Our Times", Treatise Published in the Inaugural Issue of the Argentine Magazine, "Guidebook to the Third World", December 16, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 237.

³³⁰ Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 190; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity", Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 562; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Promote The Building of Socialism by Vigorously Carrying Out The Three Revolutions", Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 148; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 249.

³³¹ Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity", Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 547; Kim Il Sung, "Some Problems of Manpower Administration", Concluding Speech at the 18th Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Fourth Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, November 16, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 276; Kim Jong Il, *On The Juche Idea*, Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, March 31, 1982 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 4&7.

³³² Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 189; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 5; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Intensify The Anti-Imperialist, Anti-U.S. Struggle", Article Published in the Inaugural Issue of the Theoretical Magazine *Tricontinental*, Organ of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, August 12, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 539-40; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Promote The Building of Socialism by

imperialist system being semi-feudal, the masses will transform it into an advanced socialist one.³³³ The progressive masses will overthrow the reactionary “lackey system” using *Juche* principles.³³⁴ Rather than material achievement, human dignity and the will to perfect of one’s life spur revolutionary struggle against domination.³³⁵ In the post-Cold War age, friends embraced imperialist heteronomy and North Korea’s struggle became purely ideological. Losing the competition meant the demise of the utopian regime.

The nature of adversary and the threat it poses

Japan

Kim Il Sung’s anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare directly supported his legitimacy and DPRK’s militaristic culture.³³⁶ Hostile sentiment originating from humiliation by Japanese imperialists lingers in DPRK.³³⁷ Kim Il Sung and *Kapsan* guerrilla forces were national

Vigorously Carrying Out The Three Revolutions”, Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 145; Kim Jong Il, *On The Juche Idea*, Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, March 31, 1982 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 2-3 & 8-9 & 23-25.

³³³ Kim Il Sung, “On The Occasion of The 30th Anniversary of The Workers’ Party of Korea”, Report Delivered at the Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 9, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 198.

³³⁴ Kim Il Sung, “Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity”, Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People’s Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 547; Kim Jong Il, *On The Juche Idea*, Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, March 31, 1982 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 24-9.

³³⁵ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 189; Kim Il Sung, “On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People’s Army”, Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People’s Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 3; Kim Il Sung, “On The Occasion of The 30th Anniversary of The Workers’ Party of Korea”, Report Delivered at the Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 9, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 198.

³³⁶ Kim Il Sung, “Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington”, January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 193; Kim Il Sung, *Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 13; Kim Il Sung, *For the Future Development of Light Industry* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 68-9.

³³⁷ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 190; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 3; Kim Jong Il, *Let’s Sincerely Study Military*, Dialogue with Students from Kim Il Sung University, August 17, 1962 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1982), 135.

heroes who expelled the Japanese.³³⁸ Since *Kapsan* represented the first revolutionary spirit believing in an independent Korea, Kim Il Sung ordained that Korean People's Army must inherit the glorious anti-Japanese tradition.³³⁹ Stories of the spirit of Kim Il Sung (eternal national DPRK leader) and how he fought Japanese colonists bare-handed, were propagated through compulsory national education.³⁴⁰ When the Seoul-Tokyo relationship was normalised in 1965, Pyongyang branded the ROK as an unpatriotic lackey regime that was in league with evil imperialists.³⁴¹ Although it resisted joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Pyongyang viewed it as preventing Japanese remilitarisation, a common interest shared with China and the USSR.³⁴² During the Six Party Talks, by raising the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by DPRK in 1970s, Japan delayed humanitarian aid promised under the 2005 Joint statement. Pyongyang surmised Japan was awaiting Pyongyang's collapse. In addition to the normative importance of anti-Japanese sentiment in domestic political identity in pan-Korea,

³³⁸ Kim Il Sung, *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*, Speech to Party Propagandists and Agitators, December 28, 1955 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2008), 588; Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 4; Kim Il Sung, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is The Banner of Freedom and Independence for Our People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism", Report at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the DPRK, September 7, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 131; Kim Il Sung, *For the Future Development of Light Industry* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 70.

³³⁹ Kim Il Sung, "On The Occasion of The 20th Anniversary of The Workers' Party of Korea", Report Delivered at the Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 10, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 291-3; Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 1-5; Kim Il Sung, *For the Future Development of Light Industry* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 71.

³⁴⁰ Kim Il Sung, "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and The South Korean Revolution", Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia April 14, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 251; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity", Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 548; Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 9; Kim Il Sung, *For the Future Development of Light Industry* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 73.

³⁴¹ Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 199.

³⁴² *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, November 12, 1969*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111463>

even during Pyongyang's greatest economic difficulties, amelioration of relations with Japan was sluggish and limited.

United States

US is seen as the main imperialist aggressor with potential to unleash a (nuclear) war on Korea.³⁴³ Zero-sum confrontation was expected since the Korea War. In DPRK's view the US/UN's territorial partition on Korea and its disruptive influence consistently impeded reunification.³⁴⁴ The southern half became a "colony" hosting US bases.³⁴⁵ The US stationed increasing numbers of regular and nuclear-armed forces on (south) Korean territory, ostensibly to "protect" the ROK from 'invasion' by DPRK.³⁴⁶ *Sans* peace treaty, it could attack ROK at will.³⁴⁷ North Korean leaders viewed Washington as unwilling to improve relations. Continuing US security commitments to South Korea and the ongoing inter-Korean "legitimate" zero-sum competition convinced North Korean leaders that ROK-US intended to militarily intervene or undertake regime change in the DPRK.³⁴⁸ The Bush Administration's "War on Terror" and slurring North Korea as an "Axis of Evil" member reinforced fears of

³⁴³ Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 192; Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 193; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 3; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 240.

³⁴⁴ Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 6&9; Kim Il Sung, "Report to The Fifth Congress of The Workers' Party of Korea on The Work of The Central Committee", November 2, 1970, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 410; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 240&252; Kim Il Sung, *Report at the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1958), 195.

³⁴⁵ Kim Il Sung, "On The Occasion of The 20th Anniversary of The Workers' Party of Korea", Report Delivered at the Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 10, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 315; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 240.

³⁴⁶ Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28, 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 240 & 248.

³⁴⁷ Washington did not conclude a Pyongyang-requested peace treaty. See Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28, 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 238-41; Choe Jung Chol and Won Chung Guk, *Korea's Division and Its Truth* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2014).

³⁴⁸ Jon Chol Nam, *A Dual of Reason Between Korea and US* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2000); Ri Jong Chol, *Songun Politics in Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2012); Kim Jong Il, *Songun - Politics of Kim Jong Il* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2013), 17-9.

an impending war.³⁴⁹ The strengthened US-ROK-Japan alliance during the Obama Administration consolidated the belief that US sided with South Korea to delegitimise therefore eliminate North Korea regime.

Pyongyang perceived international norms and institutions to be inherently imperialist.³⁵⁰ It decried states such as Seoul and Tokyo that subordinated themselves to imperialist heteronomy in exchange for material rewards.³⁵¹ It viewed the non-proliferation regime as simply a means for nuclear-weapon state to facilitate their shared interest in curbing horizontal proliferation and legitimate their central power position in world politics.³⁵² The US attempted to force DPRK to embrace Western norms and practices in post-nuclear testing talks.³⁵³ They sought to destroy DPRK's existing *Juche* system and increase reliance on the country's enemies, leading to regime collapse as in other socialist countries.

South Korea

The two Koreas were involved in a zero-sum competition since the 1940s when they independently developed different systems. For Pyongyang, ROK's puppet government, bourgeois reactionaries, landlords and comprador capitalists, subordinated themselves to US heteronomy to secure their own interests and wealth.³⁵⁴ These forces invited imperialist

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ It viewed US-led international economic organisations (International Monetary Fund and Asia Development Bank) as tools to extend US economic interest in the developing world. See Kim Jong Il, *Songun Revolution Line is Our Epoch's Great Revolutionary Line, Our Revolution's All-Winning Banner*, Talk with responsible officials of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee, January 29, 2003 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2011); Kim Il Sung, *For The Development of the Non-Aligned Movement* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1995), 132-4.

³⁵¹ Kim Jong Il, *Songun Revolution Line is Our Epoch's Great Revolutionary Line, Our Revolution's All-Winning Banner*, Talk with responsible officials of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee, January 29, 2003 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2011), 7.

³⁵² Kim Il, *Concerning Further Development of Local Industries* (Pyongyang: Korean Labour Party Publishing House, 1959), 37-40.

³⁵³ Jon Chol Nam, *A Dual of Reason Between Korea and US* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2000).

³⁵⁴ Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 141; Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 199; Kim Il Sung, "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and The South Korean Revolution", Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia April 14, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 202; Kim Il Sung, "On The Occasion of The 20th Anniversary of The Workers' Party of Korea", Report Delivered at the Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 10, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 315; Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of

exploitation of Korea and restored the landlord-capitalist system, stoking the fratricidal north-south conflict.³⁵⁵ Consequently, two polarised courses (social development, economic, military and political sovereignty) emerged. Pyongyang viewed Seoul has shamelessly relied on foreign powers for defence; its export-led economy has made it dependent on Western markets.³⁵⁶ ROK has bartered its political sovereignty for material gain.³⁵⁷ Its soulless government blindly follows foreign countries and believes that relying on external forces brings durable prosperity and peace.³⁵⁸ DPRK's *Juche* spirit has led to social development, independence and autonomy.³⁵⁹

Korea Publishing House, 1976), 6; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Promote The Building of Socialism by Vigorously Carrying Out The Three Revolutions", Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 149; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 257; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Build Up The Strength of The People's Army Through Effective Political Work, Speech at the Seventh Congress of Agitators of the Korean People's Army, November 30, 1977, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 394.

³⁵⁵ Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 141; Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 191; Kim Il Sung, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is The Banner of Freedom and Independence for Our People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism", Report at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the DPRK, September 7, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 133; Kim Il Sung, "Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*", March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 249; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Build Up The Strength of The People's Army Through Effective Political Work, Speech at the Seventh Congress of Agitators of the Korean People's Army, November 30, 1977, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 394; Kim Il Sung, *Report at the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1958), 195.

³⁵⁶ Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Build Up The Strength of The People's Army Through Effective Political Work, Speech at the Seventh Congress of Agitators of the Korean People's Army, November 30, 1977, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 394.

³⁵⁷ Kim Il Sung, *For the Future Development of Light Industry* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965), 4-6&12; Kim Il Sung, *For The Development of the Non-Aligned Movement* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1995), 123.

³⁵⁸ Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 193; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 49; Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Promote The Building of Socialism by Vigorously Carrying Out The Three Revolutions", Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 171.

³⁵⁹ Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 9; Kim Il Sung, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is The Banner of Freedom and Independence for Our People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism", Report at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the DPRK, September 7, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 130; Kim Il Sung, "Report to The Fifth Congress of The Workers' Party of Korea on The Work of The Central Committee", November 2,

Kim Il Sung believed the *Juche* national identity would engulf the ROK regime. Since the late-1970s South Korea normalised relations with post-imperial Japan and pursued export-led economic development. The ROK achieved tangible material superiority. The DPRK relied on *Juche* ideology to shape its economic and military policies, believing the intangible *Juche*-spirit would outweigh South Korea's material superiority.³⁶⁰ The ROK's "Northern Politics" (1980s) seeking normalisation of relations with USSR and China, added to Pyongyang's perception of zero-sum competition. "Sunshine Policy" administrations (1998 to 2009) targeting inter-Korean cultural and people exchange were viewed as aggressive. Such a non-political exchange had a high-political purpose since the ROK regime was aiming to absorb the North as West Germany had absorbed East Germany.³⁶¹ North Korean elites could not allow people in Pyongyang to witness a superior material-based lifestyle, revealing the utopian regime's failure. DPRK leaders are acutely suspicious about ROK's intentions. Such inducements were perceived as aggressive and zero-sum in nature.

Soviet Union/Russia

Kim Il Sung respected and emulated Stalin's economic model and built-up its military capability. The Soviets were the largest contributor for rehabilitation of the DPRK's war-torn economy.³⁶² The friendship gradually soured since 1950s when the USSR increasingly prioritised Soviet security and economic interests over those of DPRK. USSR avoided being directly involved in the Korean War reneging on promised air cover. The Kremlin's co-sponsorship of the Non-Proliferation Treaty with the US and later withdrawal of ballistic missiles from Cuba were perceived as betrayals of world revolution. Pyongyang saw as unfair

1970, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 420-4.

³⁶⁰ Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 9; Kim Il Sung, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is The Banner of Freedom and Independence for Our People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism", Report at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the DPRK, September 7, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 130; Kim Il Sung, *For the Future Development of Light Industry* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1965); Kim Il Sung, *For The Development of the Non-Aligned Movement* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1995), 117-44.

³⁶¹ Kim Il Sung, *On Making the New Revolutionary Change in Socialist Economic Construction*, 6 July 1994 (Pyongyang: Korean Workers Party Publisher, 1996); Kim Dong-nam, *The Great Leader Kim Jong-il's Songgun Politics is a Decisive Guarantee for Building a Socialist Powerful Great State* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishers, 2000).

³⁶² Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 196.

the USSR offering of nuclear assistance wholeheartedly to East European allies but not to Pyongyang.³⁶³ Moscow also reneged on a promise to provide nuclear knowhow and technological support to Pyongyang in 1990 and established diplomatic relations with the ROK.

The “August Incident” was perceived as foreign intervention in DPRK’s internal affairs by USSR and China.³⁶⁴ Moscow raised oil prices during the global energy crisis and terminated oil deliveries to Pyongyang when the DPRK failed to fulfil commitments under the USSR-led Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. These were criticised by Pyongyang as imperialist practices.³⁶⁵ By 1980s, although Pyongyang’s perception of Moscow was not antagonistic, it perceived Moscow as a socialist imperialist.³⁶⁶

China

Kim Il Sung’s Manchurian guerrilla and Chinese Civil War experience influenced his vision for Korean People’s Army.³⁶⁷ Kim Il Sung absorbed the Maoist dictums “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun” and “mass-line revolution”, applying these in his political struggle and reunification strategy.³⁶⁸ Only China sent the Chinese Volunteer Forces to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with North Koreans in the Korean War. Although DPRK downplayed its role, China saved the regime from defeat by US, underscoring the Sino-DPRK “teeth and lips” relationship. The reciprocity-based Cold War relationship was temporarily disturbed by “August Incident” and Chinese Cultural Revolution. China and DPRK reacted similarly to Non-Proliferation Treaty (1960s) but China “betrayed”

³⁶³ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, February 29, 1968*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110626>

³⁶⁴ *Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 9 April 1957*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115599>

³⁶⁵ *Telegram, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, January 20, 1977*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110126>

³⁶⁶ Kim Il Sung, “Let Us Intensify The Anti-Imperialist, Anti-U.S. Struggle”, Article Published in the Inaugural Issue of the Theoretical Magazine *Tricontinental*, Organ of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, August 12, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 542; Kim Il Sung, “Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity”, Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People’s Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 567.

³⁶⁷ *The Korean People’s Army, November 20, 1948*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116521>

³⁶⁸ Kim Il Sung, *Every Effort for the Country’s unification and Independence and for Socialist Construction in the Northern Half of the Republic* (Pyongyang: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1955), 6; Kim Jong Il, *On The Juche Idea*, Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, March 31, 1982 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 8-9.

Pyongyang by joining it in 1992.³⁶⁹ Pyongyang has not publicly criticised China, but Chinese opening-up (1970s) was a betrayal, an embrace of imperialist influence and deviation from the glorious revolutionary line. However, historically China had not been a harmful neighbour although it opposes DPRK's nuclear acquisition. Compared to wartime fraternity, post-nuclear testing, the Sino-DPRK relationship is largely based on material rather than their political identity.

Efficacy of the use of force

The Korean People's Army's use of force was justified in three situations according to Pyongyang's political morality. The first is the military imperative of defending the North from an US military attack.³⁷⁰ Military deficits contributed to humiliating historical subjugation of Korea.³⁷¹ As US imperialists are aggressively preparing a new war in Korea, Pyongyang has to develop warfighting capability to defend and retaliate against the US.³⁷² Equipping Korea with superior military power is an uncompromising principle to deter

³⁶⁹ Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, November 12, 1969; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111463>

³⁷⁰ Kim Il Sung, *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*, Speech to Party Propagandists and Agitators, December 28, 1955 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2008), 12; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 9; Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 3.

³⁷¹ Kim Il Sung, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea", September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 189; Kim Il Sung, "Reply to the Letter of the President of the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington", January 8, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 191; Kim Il Sung, "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and The South Korean Revolution", Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia April 14, 1965, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 202; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 4; Kim Jong Il, *On The Juche Idea*, Treatise Sent to the National Seminar on the Juche Idea Held to Mark the 70th Birthday of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, March 31, 1982 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), 29-30.

³⁷² Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 4; Kim Il Sung, "On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People's Army", Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People's Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 7-8.

surprise attacks from imperialists.³⁷³ Use of violence in a revolutionary struggle against imperialist aggressors is always just, under *Juche*³⁷⁴

Reunification by war was the second situation. The use of force to “liberate” the oppressed South Koreans is justified under *Juche*. The “nuclear option” in war was discussed especially in 1970s when the ROK was also developing nuclear weapons.³⁷⁵ Given the zero-sum competition between two systems (revolutionary forces and imperialist forces), a world war was inevitable.³⁷⁶ To prepare for a world revolutionary war, DPRK needed to concentrate on strengthening its military capabilities.³⁷⁷ Workers’ Party of Korea will lead the Korean People’s Army and the North Korean people will firmly fight in the socialist camp to defeat imperialists.³⁷⁸ When the world war breaks out, revolutionary forces will annihilate enemies and reunify Korea.³⁷⁹ However DPRK’s literature emphasises that reunification through world war is not preferred.

³⁷³ Kim Il Sung, “On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People’s Army”, Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People’s Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 7; Kim Jong Il, *Songun - Politics of Kim Jong Il* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2013), 132.

³⁷⁴ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 195; Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 5; Kim Il Sung, “The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is The Banner of Freedom and Independence for Our People and a Powerful Weapon for Building Socialism and Communism”, Report at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the DPRK, September 7, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 133; Kim Il Sung, “Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*”, March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 248.

³⁷⁵ *Conversation between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily moskovsky and North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Seong-cheol, August 24, 1962*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110598>; Kim Il Sung’s interview, *Sekai*, June 6, 1985.

³⁷⁶ Kim Il Sung, *The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party*, Report at the Conference of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 5, 1966 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970), 3.

³⁷⁷ Kim Il Sung, “On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People’s Army”, Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People’s Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 3.

³⁷⁸ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 71 & 64 & 204; Kim Il Sung, “On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People’s Army”, Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People’s Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 2-4.

³⁷⁹ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 141; Kim Il Sung, “On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People’s Army”, Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People’s Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 2.

Rather, Pyongyang preferred a “peaceful reunification” with the use of force characterised as guerrilla tactics. Korean People’s Army is obliged “to ensure the successful carrying-out of socialist construction in the northern half” and a “national conscience in south Korea”.³⁸⁰ First, to construct a superior northern half of Korea, it required a materially superior and solidly independent economy, military, technology and science.³⁸¹ Possessing nuclear-weapons while the South relied on US’s nuclear umbrella demonstrated the North’s superiority.³⁸² Second, guerrilla warfare tactics were used to construct the North’s superiority. Force was used to raise political consciousness and engineer an internal revolution among South Koreans.³⁸³ Military infiltration is a resource for fanning popular revolution in ROK to remove the ROK regime and destabilise domestic politics.³⁸⁴ Subsequently all patriotic and revolutionary ROK forces will join anti-imperialist struggle and unify Korea on North Korea’s terms.³⁸⁵

The Korean People’s Army not only defends the DPRK border from aggressive US forces, but also it has two righteous purposes - to accomplish unification by peaceful or non-

³⁸⁰ Kim Il Sung, *On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*, Speech to Party Propagandists and Agitators, December 28, 1955 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2008), 12; Kim Il Sung, *Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 28.

³⁸¹ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 59 & 72-9 & 85-7; Kim Il Sung, “Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity”, Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People’s Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 555; Kim Il Sung, “On The 20th Anniversary of The Founding of The Korean People’s Army”, Speech at a Banquet Given in Honour of the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the Heroic People’s Army, February 8, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 2-5; Kim Il Sung, “Report to The Fifth Congress of The Workers’ Party of Korea on The Work of The Central Committee”, November 2, 1970, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 426; Kim Il Sung, “On The Occasion of The 30th Anniversary of The Workers’ Party of Korea”, Report Delivered at the Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Workers’ Party of Korea, October 9, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 199.

³⁸² Kim Jong Il, *Let’s Sincerely Study Military*, Dialogue with Students from Kim Il Sung University, August 17, 1962 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1982), 13.

³⁸³ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 57; Kim Il Sung, “Some Problems of Manpower Administration”, Concluding Speech at the 18th Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Fourth Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea, November 16, 1968, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 5 (Pyongyang: The Workers’ Party of Korea Publishing House, 1976), 276; Kim Il Sung, “Talk with The Chief Editor of The Japanese Political Magazine *Sekai*”, March 28 1976, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 248.

³⁸⁴ Kim Il Sung, “Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers’ Party of Korea”, September 11, 1961, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 137 & 195.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 72-3; For instance, three attempts were made to assassinate ROK presidents (1968, 1982, 1983) and bombs were detonated in South Korea’s international airport (1986) and on ROK Air Flight 858 (1987).

peaceful means.³⁸⁶ The use of force is for (1) ROK's border defence; (2) reunification and freeing DPRK's people during a world war; (3) engineering an internal revolution among South Koreans by either projecting DPRK's advanced system or by de-stabilising the ROK system through military infiltrations.

Strategic Preferences and Nuclear Choice

As presented above, North Korea has a "hard realpolitik" central paradigm where the leaders' strategic choices are restrained by these ideational filters. The following section assesses a set of empirically observable DPRK strategic preferences that lead to nuclear-weapons possession. DPRK leaders have consistently pursued a self-reliant strategy in development and foreign policies. They resisted compromises even when facing a trust-no-one international system alone. The regime wanted to achieve (1) a security guarantee; (2) national independence as a sovereign state; (3) regime legitimacy; (4) economic prosperity. Nuclear-weapons acquisition was the most effective strategic option to attain these goals.

Security strategy

Kim Il Sung- Kim Jong Il regimes knew the Korean peninsula had been a strategic hotspot for great-powers' security interest. As its leaders pronounce, the DPRK must develop nuclear-weapons capabilities for defensive purpose while US "hostile" policy continues. The threat of possible US military intervention in North Korea was acute, predating the "War on Terror". The US declared nuclear-weapons maybe used by it during the Korean War. The armistice left war option as a possibility. With memories of massive US bombing and a near nuclear-war situation, Pyongyang was acutely sensitive to the US nuclear threat. Subsequent US armed intervention in Asia and other regions led DPRK leaders to believe that the aggressive nature of imperialists would lead to another Korean War. The post-Cold War US-led military intervention in Iraq and Libya confirmed DPRK's belief that the US armed invasion was imminent. Acquisition of nuclear-weapons, given this experience, would deter the US.

³⁸⁶ Kim Il Sung, "Let Us Embody The Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defence More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity", Political Programme of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Announced at the First Session of the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 4 (Pyongyang: The Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1975), 546; Kim Il Sung, *Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 28.

Pyongyang's interactions with Washington became paradoxical since late-1980s when DPRK had opened south-south cooperation and trade relationships with neutral capitalist countries.³⁸⁷ Entering the Western market in 1970s for advanced technological and scientific exchanges (for developing nuclear-weapons), left Pyongyang plagued by foreign debts. The regime's confidence in its self-reliant economic policies was further shaken by economic miracles in neighbouring countries. Washington wanted Pyongyang to embrace international norms and practices like South Korea and rejected its long-standing utopian socialist system. Pyongyang perceived the reduction of US military assets in the ROK (1991) and US engagement (1994-2000; 2003-2007) as an unchanged US-DPRK zero-sum relationship. It believed nuclear-weapons relinquishment would lead to a regime change.

Meanwhile Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons programme and nuclear tests effectively led to DPRK-US bilateral talks - a diplomatic victory in Pyongyang's eyes.³⁸⁸ By engaging in bilateral and multilateral talks, North Korea received humanitarian aid and a temporary security guarantee while continuing nuclear-weapons development.

Sovereign independence

DPRK emphasised equal sovereignty for all powers. A small sovereign state should have free-will to make nuclear choices just as nuclear-weapon state do. As history shows, DPRK faced Moscow's *nyet* and was refused by China in nuclear-weaponisation. It only received limited assistance from nuclear suppliers. DPRK desired equal treatment noting that USSR provided nuclear assistance to Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Hungary; the US permitted Israel and India to acquire nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-weapons programmes are also a diplomatic resource for projecting international influence and power vis-à-vis great-powers. A nuclear proliferation strategy could involve bilateral political dialogue between superpowers (nuclear suppliers) and potential nuclear proliferators. Like in many Third World countries, DPRK elites argued about the economic value of nuclear energy and aimed to achieve a civilian-use nuclear deal with the nuclear supplier (US). A nuclear-weapons programme could also facilitate the

³⁸⁷ Kim Il Sung, "The Non-Alignment Movement Is A Mighty Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Force of Our Times", Treatise Published in the Inaugural Issue of the Argentine Magazine, "Guidebook to the Third World", December 16, 1975, in *Kim Il Sung: Selected Works*, vol. 7 (Pyongyang: Korea Labour Publishers, 1978), 233-7.

³⁸⁸ DPRK published Clinton's separate letter of assurance for the nuclear accord and declared victory in *KCNA (North) Korean Central News Agency*, October 27, 1994.

exchange of ideas and resources based on equal sovereignty, rather than be forced to embrace international norms through US/ROK's "engagement" policy.

Sovereign equality also means treatment should be equal regardless of regime type. The US's categorisation of DPRK as a "sponsor of terrorism," an "Axis of Evil" member and "rogue state," was seen as unfair. The DPRK preserved its system from economic downturns, natural disaster, international economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure by all great powers, and publicly defied international norms. Such behaviour has a resistance character in fighting against an unjust international system and proving the regime can survive autonomously.

Regime legitimacy

Nuclear-weapons are intimately associated with the regime/leader's legitimacy. The waxing of Kim Il Sung's leadership charisma was through his heroism in anti-guerrilla warfare, and his strong nationalism and determination to free Korea from imperialist rule. *Kapsan's* and Kim Il Sung's ascendancy over other Korean nationalist-communist factions was based on military might. Having previously experienced territorial annexation, Korea had a militaristic nature since the-1940s. The promotion of militarism was observed during Kim Jong Il's "Military-First" administration in 1990s. Kim Jong Il never experienced a war, however as Korean People's Army's supreme commander, he was portrayed as a military master. His achievement in bringing US "imperialists" to the negotiation table gave him a strong sense of "success". Both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il's legitimacy was closely tied to military power and nuclear issues.

DPRK preferred "peaceful reunification" of all of Korea, which requires the construction of a "superior system" in the ROK in comparison with its counterpart. Rather than launch a war against Seoul, guerrilla tactics were preferred to precipitate regime instability in the South. Nuclear-weapons were not meant to target the South. Pyongyang's nuclear choice played a symbolic role vis-à-vis the South in portraying the North's superiority. North Korea chose not to rely on comparable Soviet or Chinese guarantees partly because of fear that these great powers were unreliable. More importantly, an indigenous nuclear-weapons programme symbolises a self-reliant security approach, that instilled a sense of superiority in the "legitimate competition" when compared with the ROK's other-reliance security approach. The self-reliant defence also boosted Pyongyang's

international credibility and de-legitimised ROK on the international platform of non-aligned movement as well as maintained the consistency of its political ideology.

Economic prosperity

Given the regime's vulnerability and the leader's high level of insecurity, economic reform had to be within DPRK's political framework. Since DPRK's inception, *Kapsan*/ Kim Il Sung concentrated on military-building allocating one-third of its budget on heavy industry. DPRK's economic planning (1940s) was geared to mobilisation for war. It nationalised the Japanese colonial economic structure and most advanced heavy industrial infrastructure. Post-Korean War rehabilitation of DPRK's war-torn economy continued to privilege heavy industry. The inefficient Soviet model choked economic growth. Believing in a socialist economy and that Kim Il Sung was the only legitimate person in decision-making, DPRK resisted market liberalisation and further centralised economic management with ideology-driven incentives linked to a personality cult. However, these strategic practices further distorted the economy.

Nuclear-weapons acquisition is a way-out for DPRK's failing attempts to create a self-sustaining economy that rejected economic subordination to foreign countries. Since late-1950s world energy production and technologies shifted from coal to oil. Kim Il Sung said in an interview in 1978 "North Korea does not produce oil" and refused to engage in a "US-influenced world oil regime".³⁸⁹ Pyongyang imported oil-based forms of energy such as crude oil and petroleum mainly from USSR. As the oil prices increased several times, Pyongyang could not repay debts to Moscow.³⁹⁰ Because it feared excessive dependence on foreign suppliers and consistent with the self-reliance values of *Juche*, Pyongyang fuelled its heavy industrialisation from its abundant coal deposits. Its *Juche*-economic development strategy expanded use of coal as its main fuel - from 75 percent (1972) to 85 percent (1992) of all fuels.³⁹¹ Kim Jong Il's vision of "a great country that is militarily strong and economically prosperous" offered the remedy for a natural disaster and economic isolation in mid-1990s. DPRK has considerable uranium deposits which are essential for nuclear

³⁸⁹ An interview with Kim Il Sung, *Tokyo Shakaito*, December 22, 1978.

³⁹⁰ *Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, December 8, 1976*; available from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110622>; *Memorandum, Branch Office of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Trade in Pyongyang to the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Trade, August 9, 1976*; available from https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP53_web_final1.pdf

³⁹¹ IAEA, *Energy Statistics and Balances*, International Atomic Energy Agency, 1992.

development. Using these deposits for the nuclear programme matched with the *Juche-Songun* economic strategy.

Kim Jong Il made *Songun* policy a priority to remove internal challenges and leverage the party's political influence in 1990s. Consequently, military interests permeated all social development strategy and the economy. The regime needed foreign currency that the *Juche-Songun* economy could not generate. The leaders interpreted international economic cooperation with socialist countries, non-aligned nations or neutral western countries under terms of mutual respect and equal sovereign rights. The regime began generating revenue through its military since it believes the "military is the solution for everything".³⁹² It built connections with hard-core socialists and proliferators and exported weapons to conflict zones such as Nicaragua and Iran, in exchange for oil.³⁹³ The nuclear-weapons programme could open alternative revenue for the regime and its ruling elites.³⁹⁴

Last, but not least, in North Korea's case, a strategic nuclear-weapon could maximise deterrence while minimising costs. Since 1962 Kim Il Sung announced 'Four Basic Military Policies' and DPRK's national defence budget was maintained at 25-30 percent of the national budget. Developing nuclear-weapons could help Pyongyang relieve its expenditure on conventional weapons.

Conclusion

This Chapter disclosed the central paradigm of the DPRK leaders' perceptions of their security environment. The perceived conflicts inherent in the international system as omnipresent and zero-sum. Notably there are antithetical forces of exploitation and resistance - by the exploited. The Korean peninsula had been historically victimised by exploiters and imperialists. North Korea was encircled by enemies. Even allies could betray and join with imperialists to become exploiters. These conditions necessitated "self-reliance" - the core of the *Juche* doctrine.

Enemies are aggressive and enjoyed overarching military equipment and nuclear-weapons. Losing a zero-sum "legitimate war" with South Korea means North Korea regime's annihilation. The North's "self-reliant" development model had been integrated into its

³⁹² Kim Jong Il, *Songun - Politics of Kim Jong Il* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2013).

³⁹³ Office of the DNI, "Background Briefing with Senior U.S. Officials on Syria's Covert Nuclear Reactor and North Korea's Involvement"; John S. Park, "The Leap Ballistic Missile Program: The Iran Factor."

³⁹⁴ Habib, 43-64.

national identity. For DPRK, to switch to ROK's "other reliant" model would be tantamount to the failure in the inter-Korean ideological competition. The US historically threatened to use nuclear-weapons in North Korea and its security commitment to ROK convinced DPRK's leaders that the possibility of war was real. Fears of war were heightened as US domination of the international system grew. After its nuclear-testing DPRK viewed US-ROK "engagement" initiatives as attempts to seduce North Korea to adopt a capitalist development model and international norms that it perceived would lead to regime collapse. Former socialist allies either became socialist imperialists or betrayed the anti-imperialist revolution. Being self-regarding, friends were unreliable and sought to interfere in DPRK's internal affairs. The DPRK found the non-aligned movement's ideology to be compatible with *Juche* and the non-aligned movement to be a useful platform in resisting the non-proliferation regime.

The use of violence had two legitimate purposes: The first was to defend North Korea from foreign military intervention. The second was to unify pan-Korea. Before the 1970s, North Korean leaders anticipated the breakout of a world-wide confrontation where the use of force by the DPRK and socialist allies would unify Korea. After betrayal by USSR and China, North Korean leaders viewed this as an impossible dream. They adopted a small-scale guerrilla style military infiltration to trigger a popular revolt against South Korean regime. However, this did not fit into nuclear-choice since its nuclear acquisition is mainly for defence and deterrence of US-ROK attacks.

These realpolitik ideations provided a filtering lens through which the DPRK leaders could interpret new events and made ideation-shaped strategic choices. The possession of the nuclear-weapons programme effectively ensured the DPRK's material power, political identity and economic interests. Its nuclear choice gives North Korea a security guarantee, maintains the *Juche-Songun* political system and the regime's legitimacy, and generates prestige and material benefits through military modalities.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Through examining DPRK leaders' realpolitik ideations and their operational preferences in reacting to external and internal security challenges during the Kim Il Sung - Kim Jong Il regimes (1930s-2011), this project offered an alternative vein to structural-realist explanations of the DPRK's nuclear choice. Non-cultural factors were important in shaping North Korean leaders' political identity; at the same time, ideational factors impacted greatly on how decision-makers understand new events and respond to structural changes. The DPRK's nuclear posture needs to be understood within its unique "social reality", where its strategic-culture and domestic preferences were responsible for state behaviour. This chapter outlines a conclusion regarding research results, comments on how insights gleaned are useful in understanding North Korea's seemingly baffling behaviour during the Trump Administration and offers self-reflection and recommendations for future research.

Answering the research question

As mentioned, North Korea's national security, economic interests and political identity will be more effectively protected and sustained through possession of nuclear-weapons. DPRK evolved a comprehensive national ideology around *Juche-Songun* where nuclear-weapons were linked to goals of economic, political and military self-reliance. Its peculiar nuclear route to achieve national goals are better revealed by internal realpolitik ideations.

First, the DPRK's experience of the international system reveals it as more dangerous than structural-realist's anarchical environment where bandwagoning and alliances are available. Pyongyang viewed its adversaries as extremely aggressive. Making concessions or losing conflicts leads to its regime's annihilation. Friends are unreliable, self-regarding and can become exploiters/enemies. Since Pyongyang viewed abandoning nuclear-weapons would end the regime, the regime has an extreme self-help approach.

Second, its division by imperialists through interference in Korean internal affairs was unjust. The DPRK represents the quintessential Korean nation and Korean reunification must be under North Korean terms. DPRK's "independent" system was contrasted with ROK's "dependent" and therefore inferior system - one that DPRK should never descend into as it meant becoming inferior, poorer, losing prestige and legitimacy. This also explained resistance to economic reforms or loosen central control in North Korea's strategic choices.

Third, Pyongyang's paradoxical interactions with the US in the post-Cold War era reflected seemingly "logical inconsistencies." From a cultural lens, it revealed the regime's fear and desire. It fears war a US-launched to be imminent and needs nuclear-weapons for its defence; it desires an improved US-DPRK relationship as a security guarantee before acquiring indigenous nuclear-weapons.

Fourth, DPRK's nuclear-weapons programme, at the core of its military-centred political economy, opened alternative income streams for Pyongyang. International sanctions are unlikely to affect its nuclear choice. Its nuclear-testing attracts potential "clients" who are also "victims" of the unjust non-proliferation regime.

Fifth, the nuclear-weapons programme safeguarded the interests and political status of DPRK's ruling class (consisting of *Kapsan* and Kim Jong Il-promoted military officers). It also symbolised a superior system that was able to develop nuclear-weapons with its technological sophistications, boosting national prestige and popular support.

Trump Era

DPRK is adept at drawing on *Juche-Songun* both for long term strategy and response to emerging opportunities based on contingency. The confluence of Moon's "Sunshine Policy", Trump Administration and the Seoul Olympics prompted DPRK to importunately gain ballistic reach to North America. Its actions would lead either to ostracisation and military threat or diplomatic opportunity. Whichever way, DPRK would have its self-reliant

nuclear capacity - as pure deterrence or as a pile of bargaining chips – for a peace treaty, peninsular denuclearisation and economic benefits. After initial sabre-rattling, the Trump Administration chose a diplomatic route relying on Moon Administration's spadework. It adopted a strategy of "maximum pressure" (economic sanctions) to coerce DPRK to the diplomatic table and insisted Pyongyang should denuclearise before a peace treaty could be signed.

For DPRK, the Trump Administration's best gift appears to have been its arrival. Trump deeply opposed his predecessors' DPRK policies and failure to halt DPRK's nuclear capabilities and activities. Bush had adamantly rejected the Clinton Administration's Agreed Framework. He refused to negotiate in his first term switching to engagement mode in the second. Obama Administration rejected immediate engagement after a nuclear crisis, emphasising strengthening of the ROK-US-Japan alliance. Trump Administration is strongly sceptical or ambivalent about traditional alliances, focusing instead on dealing bilaterally on direct interests of US such as trade and intercontinental ballistic missiles. The series of missile and nuclear tests Pyongyang conducted from late-2017 to early-2018, like those conducted in early-2009 soon after Obama took office, were calculated to make US take DPRK seriously and to meet its concerns promptly. The DPRK leader again successfully brought Washington to the negotiation table.

The "significant" steps Pyongyang has taken to date (November 2018) includes destroying Pyonggyeri nuclear test site and dismantling nuclear facilities. These are not irreversible and will not prevent DPRK from further improving its nuclear weapons technology. Kim Jong Un reaped several benefits and concessions: Cancellation of US-ROK military exercises; improved relations with ROK (on the basis of a superior DPRK nuclear power); diplomatic parity between Kim Jong Un and Trump; clarification of DPRK's relationship with PRC; and a table for *quid pro quo* bargaining - to gain maximum economic advantage *sans* hegemonic influence and unification, under a Korean confederacy, on a denuclearised peninsular - post peace treaty. DPRK uses the setting-up of each bilateral meeting to press for its demands insisting that a lifting of sanctions and negotiation of a peace treaty should precede any discussions of denuclearisation.

Self-reflection and recommendations

The research is innovative in that it is a rich and original empirical study of DPRK's nuclear choice. While the structural-realist approach was dominant in predicting North Korea's nuclear choice, its strategic-culture provided heuristic value vis-à-vis the regime's strategic behaviour. This research relied on salient texts produced by existing literature about the DPRK leaders' decision-making and the leaders' writings on their history of anti-occupation warfare (Japanese and US/UN), inter-Korean competition and self-reliant security maximisation in a dangerous neighbourhood. These texts are viewed as adequate descriptions of ideation around DPRK's nuclear choice. It also drew on Soviet diplomatic records of internal DPRK power struggles in the post-Stalinist period. Again, these documents are considered to be suitable records of internal disputes and are valuable. However, it is undeniable that interviews on the ground with the leadership and other categories of DPRK society would have further enhanced the texture of the thick description in chapters III and IV. It is unfortunate that such interviews would be impossible in the DPRK's case. This project could contribute to the field as an application of strategic-culture to the case of DPRK's nuclear choice. Further research could examine the challenges to Kim Jong Un to justify the existing political framework and make strategic choices when international interactions are growing with regional actors who were perceived as unreliable actors or even as enemies under a zero-sum view of conflict.

Conclusion

Recognising DPRK's nuclearisation to present a challenge to the international community, this study has sought to understand its nuclear choice by examining regime leaders' related ideational factors. This reveals the underpinnings of DPRK's logic and how its *Juche-Songun* national ideology oriented its nuclear choice and maintains a military-led polity, economy and society in addressing security and economic challenges. Ideology alone cannot maintain social cohesion in the face of economic deprivation. There is a broad context of coercion for the *Juche-Songun* national ideology particularly for DPRK citizens outside the charmed circle of the country's elites. Nuclear-weapons for self-reliance is an ideational factor with limits, hence DPRK's growing need to move towards resolution of the DPRK-ROK relationship. Recognition of the extent to which the US and its allies can counteract DPRK's long game peace treaty, reunification, economic benefit and nuclear retention

strategy should be accompanied by an assessment of the extent to which nuclear-weapon state can restrain nuclear proliferation by states in particular contexts. DPRK, India, Israel, Pakistan and South Africa are nuclear-weapon states that either have or once had nuclear-weapons.

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