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# The Common Tasks for the Republic of Korea and the United States for the denuclearization of North Korea



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## I. Introduction

North Korea has poses multiple threats to the Republic of Korea and the East Asian region. It is developing its nuclear capability by conducting nuclear tests since 2006. Furthermore Pyongyang has attempted to sink South Korean warship, *Cheonan*, around the Northern Limit Line (NLL) area and shelled *Yeonpyeong* island in 2010. In addition, North Korea is said to be on the brink of so-called contingency in the midst of power succession.

In front of North Korea's uncertainty in term of military and internal politics, the ROK should cope it with comprehensive measures. First, Seoul has to propel its Defense Reform 11-30 to address the frequent North Korea military provocations against the NLL area or other vicinities. Second, the ROK has to equip with its defense postures with the close collaborations with the US, especially against the growing Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities. Third, Seoul must construct a diplomatic coalition with China or other neighboring countries to deter the North Korean aggressive policy to Seoul. Among these measures, the ROK-US alliance shall be the backbone to deter the Pyongyang's hostile will against Seoul. It is undeniable that a robust alliance relationship between the ROK and the US can provide us more reliable security guarantee against any kind of security threats from North Korea.

This joint research by the ROK and the US scholars will focus on the issue how the ROK and the US can cooperate each other to deter the North Korean nuclear development and induce it to a more pacific and reliable counterpart in this region. At the first part of this research, Professor Park

Min-Hyoung of the Korea National Defense University will survey the North Korean military capability and its nuclear program. At the second part of this research, Dr. Bennett of the RAND cooperation in the US will provide us the US perspective on the policy for the denuclearization of North Korea. At the final part of this joint research, professor Park Young-June of the KNDU will suggest the South Korean perspective on the denuclearization of North Korea. The authors in this project strongly hope that this research can contribute a little to invigorate the debate on the path to the denuclearization of North Korea.

## II. North Korean Military Capability and its Nuclear Program: Assessment and Prediction

Min-Hyoung Park

### 1. Introduction

Today the East Asian region has emerged as one of the most dynamic areas of the world in terms of security. The changes in the environment surrounding the Korean Peninsula have been especially rapid and dramatic. North Korea's two nuclear tests – exercised on October 9<sup>th</sup> 2006 and May 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 - and the two North Korean military provocations against the South, including the sinking of the ROK naval warship *Cheonan* caused by a clandestine torpedo attack launched by a North Korean submarine in March 2010 and an artillery attack on the ROK territory of *Yeonpyeong* Island in November 2010, are pertinent cases to be considered. North Korea is at the center of the tense and volatile regional security dynamic and is a troublemaker in terms of regional and global security.

Following German unification in 1990, many scholars, policy makers and political elites forecasted that the North Korean regime would inevitably collapse as in East Germany's case. This would occur, they posited, within three years. These prophets of North Korean downfall assured the international community that the North Korean regime would be dissolved after the charismatic leadership of Kim Il-sung came to an end.<sup>1)</sup> The North Korean regime survives thus far, however, and the

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1) Charles K. Armstrong, "US-North Korean Relations," in John Feffer eds., *The Future of US-*

prohess of the leader has been successfully transferred, without any loss in potency, from Kim Il-sung to his son Kim Jung-il. Currently this sclerotic and despotic power is being transferred again – this time from Kim Jung-il to his third son Kim Jeong-eun. North Korea's political system under Kim Jong-il seems to be far more stable than it was initially predicted to be.

The case remains that in North Korea chronic economic problems, such as food and energy shortages, have continued to blight the country for more than two decades. North Korea, however, still has the world's fourth largest armed forces in terms of the number of military personnel. In addition, more than 70% of the North Korean army is deployed under the Pyongyang-Wonsan line, which enables North Korea to attack the South without the need of an additional movement of its troops.<sup>2)</sup> Moreover, despite its manifold economic crises, North Korea continues to increase its strategic military might. In spite of a number of deaths resulting from starvation due to the shortage in food, North Korean militarism does not show any signs of waning. With these capabilities at its disposal North Korea has demonstrated its hostility to the South in its recent provocative actions.

Some scholars and political elites argue that South Korea has overwhelmed the North in the inter-Korean competition because in terms of military might South Korea has sufficient strength to defend itself against the threat posed by North Korea and moreover it has a manifestly stronger economy, greater access to advanced technology and a significant weight in terms of diplomatic power in international society.<sup>3)</sup> Nevertheless, it is

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*Korean Relations: The Imbalance of Power* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 11.

2) IISS, *The Military Balance* 2011 (London: IISS, 2011), pp. 249-251.

3) Seo Jae-jung, *Power, Interest, and Identity in Military Alliance* (Seoul: Hanwul, 2009), pp. 56-

just in the economic and other non-military fields that South Korea possesses its chief advantages. When including the military dimension of the competition, it is more accurate to state that the race between the two Koreas has not been irreparably resolved just yet. North Korea's military still poses a dangerous threat to both South Korea and neighboring states such as Japan (even, globally speaking, the US) - just as Seoul is within range of some 13,000 North Korean artillery pieces, so Tokyo and Guam can also be directly attacked by North Korea given its now undoubted missile capability.

Threats can be divided into two forms: active and passive threats. An active threat is an empirical expression of intent to harm, and a passive threat is a mere indicator of imminent or potential harm.<sup>4)</sup> The current North Korean regime poses both these forms of threat to its Southern neighbor. It has threatened the South and the US with its rhetoric of belligerence - rhetorical quips speak of a 'sea of fire', an 'all-out war' and a 'sacred war' - and it has maintained and developed its strong and overt military presence on the peninsula. Thus North Korea is an apparent and real threat to the South, to the US and to the key regional actors. North Korea threatens the stability of the peace in Northeast Asia because conflict on the peninsula could pathologically spread from being an inter-Korean local conflict into a total regional war.

Given these circumstances, this article sets out to assess the capabilities of the North Korean military and to posit some predictions as to the future of its militarism. To this end, the theoretical approach subscribed to by the

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92, and Kang Jung-koo et al., *New Paradigm of the ROK-US Relations in Transition* (Seoul: Hanwul, 2005), pp. 266-295.

4) Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, "The North Korean Military as a Security Threat," *East Asia* (Summer, 2003), pp. 5-20.

author will be outlined first in order to examine why North Korea adheres to a policy of increasing its military capability. Some have contended that if North Korea abandons its militarism “its chances of survival will be greater and it will certainly be able to become a normal state in the international community.”<sup>5)</sup> North Korea is highly unlikely, however, to change its strategy for survival. In this section, the reasons for this are explored by addressing four factors: diplomatic, political, economic and ideological. Thereafter, the North Korean military capability will be reviewed by splitting into three parts: conventional, asymmetric (the focus here being on missiles and special forces) and the nuclear program. It is, it must be said, near impossible to obtain completely credible and valid data on the North Korean military. The final section lays out the implications of this data in terms of predicting North Korea’s future use of its military capability.

## 2. North Korea’s adherence to a Policy of Military Expansion: Theoretical Discussion

North Korea is an isolated, heavily militarized and desperately poor country in the global context. North Korea appears to be failing state with a largely failed economy - it has been dependent on substantial foreign aid donations, mainly provided by China.<sup>6)</sup> Although the overall conventional military capability of North Korea has declined in the past twenty years due to the nation’s economic demise, it is still, however, a potent military threat to South Korea, the US and to the regional security dynamic. In

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5) Hwang Ji-hwan, “Getting Out of the Military-First Dilemmas: In Search of North Korea’s Coevolution Military Strategy,” *EAI Asia Security Initiative Working Paper* (June 2011), p. 2.

6) Bruce W. Bennet, “Uncertainties in the North Korean Nuclear Threat,” *Rand Report* (2010), p. 4.

spite of its economic problems, it has relentlessly sought to increase its military might; its defense budget has officially been increased to USD 570 million in 2009, from USD 540 million in 2008, USD 510 million in 2007 and just USD 470 million in 2006.<sup>7)</sup> Why does North Korea tirelessly pursue its policy of building on its military power, including its nuclear weapons? Providing an accurate answer to this question is crucial when it comes to predicting North Korean action in the future and for improving the key international actors' capacity to deal with the current North Korean threat.

## 2.1 Internal factors: Ideology and Economic Collapse

### 2.1.1 Ideology and Military Strategy

In the post-Cold War era, profound changes in the international political system and in North Korea itself made Pyongyang the center of great concern. Amongst these changes, it is evident that the loss of a support system, the isolation policy enacted by the capitalist world and the death of Kim Il-sung were crucial factors in generating hostility on North Korea's part. In order to solve the problems caused by these changes and so as to protect its regime in the new post-Cold War climate of uncertainty, North Korea chose a military-first policy – the so-called *Sungunjungchi* – and strengthened its ideology which is the basis of its self-containment, known as *Juche*.

*Sungunjungchi* is ideologically based on the principle of self-reliance, *Juche* is designed to increase military capability. North Korea has regarded military-first ideology as an invincible banner for its era's cause of

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7) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., "The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States," *CSIS Report* (February 15, 2011), p. 12.

independence.<sup>8)</sup> Therefore, it follows a military-first policy, prioritizing the military with regard to national resources. The military-first policy has been maintained as Kim Jong-il's principal governance strategy. North Korea's military strategy is the Four Point Military Policy: turning the whole nation into fortress, arming the entire population, modernizing the entire military, and instilling cadre potential in every soldier. This military strategy shows that a strategy of conventional warfare was incorporated into the overall concept of the people's war by the mobilization of the entire country through reinforcement of ideological training.<sup>9)</sup> Thus, North Korea focuses its national power on the military and it means that all its people are supposed to learn from the military and think and act like soldiers.<sup>10)</sup>

Kim Jong-il has asserted that his powers come from military power. Thus, he has carried out military reinforcement based on his perception that military control is crucial to maintaining his regime. It is true that North Korean's military does not exist for national security or its people's prosperity but for the survival of Kim's regime. Moreover, the North Korean regime has emphasized that the army's role and its underlying goal is to support building a powerful and prosperous state: "establishment of *gangsongdaeguk* by the year 2012," and in the absence of a strong military including weapons of mass destruction - nuclear arms and intercontinental means of delivery - it would be extremely difficult to accomplish this goal.<sup>11)</sup> Also, existing political and military elites in North Korea will oppose

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8) For details, see <[www.nautilus.org/publications/books/dprkbb/military/militaryfirst.html](http://www.nautilus.org/publications/books/dprkbb/military/militaryfirst.html)>

9) Andrew Scobell and John M. Sanford, *North Korea's Military Threat: Pyongyang's Conventional Forces, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Ballistic Missiles* (Washington D.C.: SSI, 2007), p. 31.

10) Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, "The North Korean Military as a Security Threat," p. 12.

11) Kil B. O. and Kim C. N., "Survivability of North Korea's Military-First Policy and Prospects for the ROK-US Security Alliance Format," *The Journal of KNEA*, Vol. 58(2011), pp. 233-254.

regime change or major societal change, because they would lose their prosperity and power. According to the diversionary theory of war, national leaders use diversionary tactics in the international arena to distract public attention from deteriorating domestic political conditions.<sup>12)</sup> In other words, the best way of preserving a state (regime) and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion and civil war is to find an enemy against whom they can make common cause. Thus, the North Korean elites try to compete with the US and South Korea by maintaining a strong military. In other words, on the basis of the military-first policy, North Korea has attempted to overcome its internal and external crisis through the reinforcement of its military capability.

Moreover, as Scott D. Sagan argued in his norms model, which focuses on norms concerning weapons acquisition, nuclear decisions serve important symbolic functions; both shaping and reflecting a state identity,<sup>13)</sup> North Korea thinks that the military is a symbol of national prestige and the military means a state's identity as a legitimate modern state because North Korea has a strong nationalistic pride that equates foreign influence with imperialistic subjugation.<sup>14)</sup> Furthermore, North Korea has been labeled a "garrison state" or "party-military-state." In such a state, the consuming focus is girding for war and all efforts are directed toward building and supplying a powerful and well-equipped military.<sup>15)</sup> Accordingly, these North Korean ideological bases and military strategies

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12) Jaroslav Tir and Michael Jasinski, "Domestic-Level Diversionary Theory of War: Targeting Ethnic Minorities," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (October 2008), pp. 641-664.

13) Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb," pp. 54-86.

14) Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, "The North Korean Military as a Security Threat," p. 15.

15) Andrew Scobell and John M. Sanford, *North Korea's Military Threat: Pyongyang's Conventional Forces, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Ballistic Missiles*, p. 5.

lead North Korea build a bigger military force.

### 2.1.2. Economic Collapse

North Korea has relied mostly on outside aid to feed its population of 24 million since the mid-1990s. More than 6 million need urgent aid of some 475,000 tons of food.<sup>16)</sup> Moreover, the gulf between the South Korean and North Korean economy has increased for decades. South Korea's GNP, which was about 5 times greater than the North's in 1980, had become 10 times larger by 1990 and about 40 times larger by 2010.<sup>17)</sup> The CIA estimates that North Korea had a GDP in 2010 worth roughly USD 40 billion (ranking 98<sup>th</sup> in the world) and had a GDP per capita worth some USD 1,900 (ranking 196<sup>th</sup> in the world), while the South's GDP was worth some USD 1,467 (ranking 13<sup>th</sup> in the world) and GDP per capita was worth some USD 30,200 (ranking 45<sup>th</sup> in the world).<sup>18)</sup> This means that North Korea does not have enough resources to invest in its military while South Korea has far more resources to use in supporting its national security structure. Thus, North Korea tries to find efficient ways within its budget range such as asymmetric weapons and nuclear weapons. Asymmetric forces including WMD and nuclear weapons could be a low-cost strategic equalizer to the conventional military superiority of the South.<sup>19)</sup>

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16) Shin Hae-in, "N.K. Promised transparency in distribution of Food: WFP," *Korea Herald* (19<sup>th</sup> May 2009).

17) Kil B. O. and Kim C. N., "Survivability of North Korea's Military-First Policy and Prospects for the ROK-US Security Alliance Format," pp. 233-254.

18) CIA, World Factbook, "North Korea and South Korea," <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ks.html>, accessed July 11th, 2011.

19) Andrew Mack, "North Korea and the Bomb," *Foreign Policy*, No. 83(Summer, 1991), pp. 87-104.

Meanwhile, the military industry is one of the main means to acquire foreign currency for North Korea. Thus, the acquisition of foreign currencies is another pertinent perspective for analysis regarding North Korean Military build-up. North Korea has exported ballistic missiles and associated materials to several countries including Iran and Pakistan, and it has helped Syria construct of a nuclear reactor.<sup>20)</sup> In other words, North Korea has raised its governance funds through trade or illicit sale of weapons.<sup>21)</sup> According to the UN Report, even though the official data showed that the DPRK had been exporting arms and related material for more than 3 decades, and transactions involving such exports amounted to US \$22.9 million between 2000-2009, actual DPRK arms and missile exports are believed to be US \$100 million or more per year.<sup>22)</sup> Thus, the North Korean regime has emphasized the correlation between its economy and military as follows:

Regarding the correlation between economy and military, the general view has been economy-oriented so far. That is, military power cannot be strengthened without economic development. However, this is a one-sided perspective. While economic power is the basis for military power, military power is the driving force for economic development. Solid foundation for the strong and self-reliant defense industry will vitalize light industry and agriculture, as well as improving the livelihood of the people<sup>23)</sup>

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20) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., "The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States," p.113.

21) The reason why North Korean weapons are sold to the other states is not because it has high-tech military industry but because 3rd party states could obtain relatively easily articles under an embargo from North Korea.

22) For details, see "Report to the Security Council from the Panel of Experts established Pursuant to Resolution 1874," UN Report (2010), p.23. <<http://www.armscontrolwonk.com/files/SCR1874.pdf>>

23) Lim Soo-ho, "Reform in North Korea's Military-First Economic Policy," *SERI Quarterly*(2010), pp. 127-128.

Simply put, from the North Korean perspective, to build a military, especially with WMD and asymmetric warfare gives a chance to compete with the South, supported by the US, despite the significant gulf in economic capabilities between the two Koreas. It is a state-owned industry to raise the regime's funds by exporting its weapons, associated materials and technology.

## 2.2. External Factors: Political Isolation and Threat Perceptions

### 2.2.1 Political Isolation

Since their inception, states have continuously tried to maintain their national security. Their efforts to fulfill this objective can be divided into two methods: increase of their own capabilities (self-help); cooperation with other states. Behavior which is aimed at increasing the capability of a state in order to sustain its sovereignty is termed "internal balancing," while collaborating with other states is "external balancing."<sup>24)</sup>

In today's geopolitical environment, however, the reality is that no country on earth pursues its national defense strategy independently of its security cooperation with other states. Thus, countries around the world have established multifaceted defense arrangements based on various forms of security cooperation, while also seeking robust self-defense capabilities. Moreover, in the Cold War international structure, a state, regardless of its prowess and ideology, had to rely to a large degree on "external balancing" - forming an alliance with an outside power rather than "internal balancing" - independent arms build-up intended to ensure its national survival and to serve its national interests; interdependence has increased due to the

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24) Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (California: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 168.

globalization.

If a state has a reliable security guarantee from its ally or neighboring states, it is more likely to defend them rather than build its own military power. Yet, states will seek to develop military power when they face a significant military threat to their security that cannot be met through alternative means.<sup>25)</sup> A state with fears for its survival may choose any of a number of different solutions to mitigate them, from “a full-fledged declaration of nuclear capabilities” to “their total renunciation.”<sup>26)</sup>

Since the end of the Cold-War, North Korea lost its biggest military supporters. South Korea normalized its diplomatic relations with Russia and China in 1990 and 1992 respectively. From the South Korean perspective, one of the reasons for such diplomatic normalization was to reduce the security threat posed by North Korea by alienating it from its most important source of military support. Since 1992, Sino-ROK relations have been steadily improving from “full-scale cooperative partnership relationship” in 2003 to a “Strategic cooperative partnership” in 2008. During Lee Myung-bak’s first visit to Beijing as South Korea’s President in May 2008, Lee and Hu Jintao upgraded their relations to the level of a ‘strategic cooperative partnership’, signifying that “South Korea is now in (a rather large) inner circle of countries that have the closest level of relations with China.”<sup>27)</sup> In terms of ROK-Russia relations the ties have grown substantially, because current South Korean economic potential regarding capital and technology has increased, and therefore Russia (the

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25) Scott D. Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb,” p. 54.

26) Etel Solingen, “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2(1994), p.129.

27) Scott Snyder, “Lee Myung-bak’s Foreign Policy: A 250-Day Assessment,” *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 21, No. 1(2009), pp. 1-30.

former Soviet Union) has tried to intensify economic relations with the ROK. Their relations also upgraded in 2009 as a 'strategic cooperative partnership.' Russia has not offered strong support to North Korea as the Soviet Union had done. Thus, North Korea has not been able to obtain sufficient support from the Soviet Union and China, her original and strongest sponsors since the Korean War. It has essentially become isolated and had to rely on its own resources for security.

### 2.2.2 Threat Perception

In an anarchical system, any state that seeks to maintain its national security must prepare itself with deterrents.<sup>28)</sup> If a rival state has nuclear weapons or is developing them, or an adversary's conventional military power is superior to a state's own, it is likely to develop a nuclear weapons program. Thus, to understand North Korean motivations for building its military, it is also critical to characterize the security situation that the North Korean regime perceives.

North Korea perceives US policy toward the North Korea as a threat. Since the DPRK's withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 2003 the US has pursued the goals of Complete, Verifiable, Irreversible Disarmament against the North Korean nuclear system. For this goal, it has four principles; "(1) refusal to engage in direct bilateral talks, (2) refusal to offer rewards for bad behaviour, and (3) back-loading benefits until after CVID was assured, and (4) delaying full diplomatic relations until after the North addressed additional security and human rights concerns."<sup>29)</sup>

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28) Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb," pp. 54-86.

29) Curtis H. Martin, "G.W. Bush and North Korea: A Level of Analysis View," *Pacific Focus*, Vol. 22, No. 1(2007), pp. 111-136.

Dissimilar from the former administration, George W. Bush took a more hard-line approach toward North Korea. The Bush administration named North Korea as one of the axis of evil in the president's annual state of Union address in 2002 and also identified North Korea as a potential aggressor towards the US and called North Korea a 'rogue state' in the international community.<sup>30)</sup>

The US's geopolitical interests have undergone a major reorientation as international terrorism and nuclear proliferation became the dominant security concerns. The reason why the US considers North Korea as an immediate threat is that if the North possesses nuclear weapons and WMD which can be shared with terrorists, it may threaten both Northeast Asia and the US. In fact, North Korea has exported Scud missiles and its technology to countries connected to terrorism such as Iran, Pakistan, and Libya since the 1990s and North Korea has also exported nuclear technology to Syria.<sup>31)</sup> In other words, North Korea could sell anything to anyone. Thus, the Obama Administration is considering reinstating North Korea on the list of state sponsors of terrorism from which Bush administration removed North Korea on October 11, 2008, because US' policy rationale for keeping nations on the terrorism list is: 1) maintaining ties to terrorist groups and 2) the capability to manufacture WMD and other destabilizing technologies that can get into the hands of terrorists.<sup>32)</sup> In short, although North Korea is not directly related to the terrorism and it is not clear that whether North Korea has nuclear weapons or not, it has

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30) The definition of a 'rogue state' is one that does not adhere to international law, behaves aggressively and engages in substantial human right violations against its own population.

31) US Congress, "Korea-US Relations: Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress*, RL33567 (2008), pp. 1-20.

32) US Congress, "North Korea: Terrorism List Removal," *CRS Report for Congress*, RL30613 (2010), pp. 1-29.

been regarded as potential terrorist country because of its transaction of WMD with terrorist groups or states.

Beginning with his presidential campaign Obama indicated a willingness to engage with “rogue” governments. Yet, a series of provocations from Pyongyang after he took office changed the North Korean policy of the administration.<sup>33)</sup> North Korea has asserted that the problem originated not from not from North Korea’s military provocations but from the United States’ hostile policy toward the North.<sup>34)</sup> Therefore, it believes that military power is the only way to guarantee its security from external threats.

Furthermore, the ROK-US alliance is strengthening between the Lee Myung-bak and Obama administrations. The US shows its strong commitment to the ROK in the US national military strategy for 2011 as follows; “our commitment to the Republic of Korea is unwavering as North Korea remains a provocative threat to regional stability. We will retain operational control over combined forces on the Korean peninsula through 2015 and provide assistance to South Korea as it expands its security responsibilities.”<sup>35)</sup> And, the decision to delay the transition of OPCON until December 2015, announced by President Lee and President Obama in G-20 meeting, demonstrates the strength and agility of the alliance.

Under this security situation, North Korea who has studies of several operations – operation Desert Storm in Iraq in 1991, Enduring Freedom in

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33) US Congress, “North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy, and Internal Situation,” *CRS Report for Congress*, R41259 (2011), pp. 1-21.

34) Hwang Ji-hwan, “Getting Out of the Military-First Dilemmas: In Search of North Korea’s Coevolution Military Strategy,” p. 6.

35) US Joint Chief of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), p. 13.

Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraqi Freedom in 2003- has reviewed its strategies and emphasized the importance of asymmetric force in countering US and South Korean capabilities during any future war on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>36)</sup> Moreover, from the North Korean perspective, threat is not only a military threat but also political threat. North Korea perceives that the US will pursue regime change in North Korea. The first priority of the North Korean regime is to stabilize its domestic power and protect Pyongyang from international threats. Thus, the regime has invested its capital in the defense industry. In sum, with these reasons, North Korea is forced to rely almost exclusively on its military. In other words, these factors make North Korea continue its military brinkmanship.

### 3. North Korean Military Capability

#### 3.1 Conventional Capability

North Korea's conventional military capabilities have eroded significantly over the past two decades due to its economic problems which caused food shortages, inability to replace aging weapons inventories, and reduced training compared to those of South Korea.<sup>37)</sup> Thus, any North Korean threat to fully invade the South has become less credible. Yet, North Korea is still capable of conducting military provocations that could potentially threaten South Korea and regional security. The sinking of the ROK naval warship *Cheonan* caused by a clandestine torpedo attack launched by a North Korean submarine in March 2010 and North Korea's artillery attack on the ROK territory *Yeonpyeong* Island in November 2010 are cases in point. The

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36) IISS, *The Military Balance* 2011, p. 206.

37) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., "The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States," p.27.

artillery attack was the first on a civilian area since the 1950-53 Korean War.

North Korea is the world's fourth largest military in terms of manpower with the world's largest special forces, behind China, the United States, and India. According to The Military Balance 2011, North Korea has more than 1,190,000 armed forces, which is composed of 1,020,000 army, 60,000 navy, and 110,000 air forces.

Table 1 North Korea's Military Manpower

| Ranks | State       | Population    | Active Troops |
|-------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1     | China       | 1,354,146,443 | 2,285,000     |
| 2     | US          | 317,641,087   | 1,563,996     |
| 3     | India       | 1,214,464,312 | 1,325,000     |
| 4     | North Korea | 23,990,703    | 1,190,000     |

\* Japan (Population / Active Troops): 126,995,411 / 247,746

\* South Korea ((Population / Active Troops): 48,507,717 / 650,000

Source: IISS, The Military Balance 2011(London: IISS, 2011).

North Korea has strong reserve forces comprised of the Reserve Military Training Unit, the Worker and Peasant Red Guard, the Red Youth Guard, and para-military Units. Civilians between the ages of 14 and 60, approximately 30 percent (7.7 million) of the entire population, are subject to wartime mobilization in North Korea. North Korean reserve forces are the largest volume in the world and is undoubtedly the most militarized state on earth in terms of manpower. Among all of these units, the Reserve Training Unit is the core reserve force because it undergoes intensive training to replace the standing forces, if need be, during wartime.<sup>38)</sup> Dissimilar to the ROK Defense White Paper, The Military Balance 2011

issued by IISS does not count Worker and Peasant Red Guard, Red Youth Guard and Para-military unit as a kind of reserve forces. Therefore it estimates North Korean reserve is 600,000. However, considering their military missions in total war, guard of homeland and logistics, and their level of military training for example Red Youth Guard are trained for 300 hours a year and Worker and Peasant Red Guard for 160 hours a year,<sup>39)</sup> they could be potential military forces. Thus, it is more reasonable to count them as a reserve forces.

**Table 2 The Reserve Forces of North Korea**

| Division                       | Strength            | Note                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reserve Military Training Unit | Approx. 0.6 Million | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to combat mobilization                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– men between 17 and 50</li> <li>– women between 17 and 30</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Worker and Peasant Red Guard   | approx. 5.7 million | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equivalent to the ROK’s Homeland Reserve Forces</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |
| Red Youth Guard                | approx. 1 million   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military Organization of middle school students</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |
| Para-military units            | approx. 0.4 million | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body Guard Command, Ministry of People’s Security</li> <li>• Logistics Mobilization Guidance Bureau, Speed War Youth Shock Troops</li> </ul>                                        |
| Total                          | approx. 7.7 million |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

Source: ROK MND, 2010 Defense White Paper (Seoul: ROK MND), p.33.

38) ROK MND, 2010 *Defense White Paper*, pp. 33-34.

39) Lee Chun-keun, “Comparison to Military Capability of Two Koreas,” *CFE Report*(2007), pp. 7-8.

Moreover, these North Korean military has relatively long terms of service, Army 5-12 years, Navy 5-10 years, Air Force 3-4 years, followed by compulsory part-time service to age 40. Thereafter they serve in the worker and Peasant Red Guard until the age of 60.<sup>40)</sup> By serving in the military for more than 5 years, their combat skill is likely to be improved and their ideological training strengthened. Thus, this long-term military service could positively affect on North Korean conventional capabilities by reducing its inferiority to the South.

Even though North Korea's military equipment is outdated in comparison with South Korean and US forces, it substitutes quantity for quality. North Korea's largest conventional capability, in terms of quantity and disposition, is artillery. North Korea has approximately 8,500 artillery pieces and 5,100 MLRS, the vast majority of which are along the DMZ in natural caves, manmade tunnels, and bunkers, comparing to South Korean 5,200 artillery pieces and 200 MLRS.<sup>41)</sup> Even though North Korean artillery does not include contemporary advances such as computerized targeting and radar guided munitions, it has increased the artillery forces quantitatively with lager caliber and faster mobility.<sup>42)</sup> Their accuracy on target seems to be poor,<sup>43)</sup> yet they have enough capability to make severe damage on the target (maybe South Korea). For instance, one battery of North Korean 240mm multiple rocket launchers fired into Seoul would deliver roughly a ton of chemical weapons, which could kill or injure

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40) IISS, *The Military Balance 2011*, p. 249.

41) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., "The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States," p. 94.

42) Andrew Scobell and John M. Sanford, *North Korea's Military Threat: Pyongyang's Conventional Forces, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Ballistic Missiles*, p. 22.

43) In the case of shelling of the Yeonpyeong on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010, North Korea fired 170 rounds, yet just some 80 landed on the island.

thousands or tens of thousands. The Commander of US forces in Korea estimated that a war could result in \$1 trillion in industrial damage and over one million casualties on the peninsula.<sup>44)</sup>

In sum, the threat of North Korean conventional forces is still serious to the South and regional security, because it has a series of capabilities which can severely damage or destroy South Korean society, although any invasion would not be fully successful; having destroyed social infrastructure due to military conflict, the victory in war is not meaningful.

**Table 3 Numerical Comparison of Military Capabilities between Two Koreas**

|                            |      | Classification |                   | ROK     | DPRK      |
|----------------------------|------|----------------|-------------------|---------|-----------|
| Troops (Peace Time)        |      | Total          |                   | 650,000 | 1,190,000 |
|                            |      | Army           |                   | 520,000 | 1,020,000 |
|                            |      | Navy           |                   | 68,000  | 60,000    |
|                            |      | Air Force      |                   | 65,000  | 110,000   |
| Principal Force Capability | Army | Units          | Corps             | 10      | 15        |
|                            |      |                | Divisions         | 46      | 90        |
|                            |      |                | Maneuver Brigades | 14      | 70        |
|                            |      | Equipment      | Tanks             | 2,400   | 4,100     |
|                            |      |                | Armoured Vehicles | 2,600   | 2,100     |
|                            |      |                | Field Artillery   | 5,200   | 8,500     |
|                            | MLRS |                | 200               | 5,100   |           |
|                            | Navy | Surface Ship   | Combat Vessels    | 120     | 420       |
|                            |      |                | Landing Vessels   | 10      | 260       |

44) David C. Kang, "The Balance of Power and State Interests in International Relations: South Korea between China and the US," *EAI Working Paper Series 5* (January 2007), p. 23.

| Classification |  |                        | ROK       | DPRK      |
|----------------|--|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                |  | Mine warfare ships     | 10        | 30        |
|                |  | Support Vessels        | 20        | 30        |
|                |  | Submarines             | 10        | 70        |
| Air forces     |  | Combat Aircrafts       | 460       | 820       |
|                |  | C2-ISR Aircrafts       | 50        | 30        |
|                |  | Air Mobility Aircrafts | 40        | 330       |
|                |  | Training Aircrafts     | 180       | 170       |
|                |  | Helicopters            | 680       | 300       |
| Reserve Troops |  |                        | 3,200,000 | 7,700,000 |

Source: ROK MND, White Paper 2010(Seoul: MND, 2011), p. 316.

### 3.2 Asymmetric Capabilities (Missiles / Special Forces )

North Korea seems not to have enough logistical capabilities to fully invade South Korea with mechanized forces such as armor, field artillery, and aircraft. Even, a North Korean expert suggested that the overall military balance has changed in favor of South Korea since the 1990s.<sup>45)</sup> According to defectors from North Korea, in North Korean military, many units spend their time foraging and farming for subsistence, and equipment is mostly from the 1950s. Shortage of fuel is so severe that pilots can only practice flying their planes for a few hours per year, and the North Korean Army could not supply enough military commodities, even ammunitions, to each soldier.<sup>46)</sup> To replace these disadvantages, however, North Korea has focused its efforts on the establishment of asymmetric forces including at least 600 Scuds, other shorter, more accurate missiles, long-range

45) Suh Jae-Jung, *Power, Interest, and Identity in Military Alliance*, pp. 56-103.

46) This interview was conducted with three defectors who came from North Korea and had experience in North Korean Army.

artillery much of which was moved close to DMZ during the late 1990s, and up to 200,000 special troops.

The North Korean missile program is one of the most dangerous threats to regional security because of their ability to cause mass destruction. North Korea undertook the development of ballistic missiles in the 1970s, and by mid-1980s, it had produced and operationally deployed them. Currently North Korea has a substantial ballistic-missile force, comprising short-range Scud B/C and medium range *Nodong* ballistic missiles and it is also pursuing the development of longer-range rockets including space launch vehicles and intercontinental ballistic missiles.<sup>47)</sup> North Korea deployed *Nodong* missiles which have 1,300km-range and a liquid fuel propellant single-stage ballistic missile in the 1990s, and since 1990s it has been developing ICBM and conducted a test-launch of the *Taepodong-1*, at 1,500km-range and a two-stage liquid fuel propellant ballistic missile, and *Taepodong-2*, 6,000km-range and two-stage missile with new booster, in 1998 and 2006 respectively.<sup>48)</sup> Thus, North Korean missiles can attack South Korea and Japan and the US forces stationed in two states. The *Taepodong* missile which has a range of up to 4,000 kilometers can attack the United States territory on Guam.

Table 4 North Korean Missile Force: 2010

| Name  | Type | Range           | Remarks                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------|------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| KN-02 | SRBM | 100<br>-<br>120 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational</li> <li>• 400-500kg payload</li> <li>• KPA version of the SS-21 Scarab</li> <li>• Introduced to replace aging FROG-7</li> </ul> |

47) IISS, *The Military Balance*, p. 205.

48) ROK MND, 2010 *Defense White Paper*, p. 34.

| Name        | Type | Range               | Remarks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------|------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |      |                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frontline deployment range South Korean targets</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| SCUD-B/C    | SRBM | 300<br>-<br>500     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational</li> <li>• 700-1000kg payload</li> <li>• Korean reporting name is Hwasong-5/6</li> <li>• Single-stage liquid fuelled</li> <li>• Conservative IISS estimates suggest 5-7 launce battalions with 4-6 mobile launchers per battalion plus support vehicles</li> <li>• Deployment ranges all of South Korea</li> </ul>                               |
| Nodong      | MRBM | 1,000<br>-<br>1,500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational</li> <li>• 700-1,000kg payload</li> <li>• Scaled-up SCUD using identical liquid propellants but with larger engine</li> <li>• IISS estimates ten Nodong launchers, organized into 2-3 battalions, implying about 40 deployed missiles</li> <li>• Deployment ranges all of South Korea and most of Japan, but low accuracy is expected</li> </ul> |
| Musadan     | IRBM | 2,500<br>-<br>3,500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely Operational</li> <li>• 650-1,000kg payload</li> <li>• Based on Soviet R-27 (SS-N-6)</li> <li>• Occasionally referred to as Scud-D, Nodong-B</li> <li>• Unveiled in parade in October 2010, NTI assesses 12 field missiles</li> <li>• Deployment ranges South Korea, Japan and U.S. military installations in Guam and Okinawa</li> </ul>              |
| Taepodong-1 | MRBM | 1,500<br>-<br>2,500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test Firing</li> <li>• 750kg payload</li> <li>• Two or three-stage system utilizing Nodong and SCUD-C designs</li> <li>• Could range U.S. military installations in East Asia and potentially Alaska</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                              |
| Taepodong-  | ICBM | 4,000               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown Operational /Development Status</li> <li>• 500-1,500kg payload</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| Name | Type | Range      | Remarks                                                                                                                           |
|------|------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2    |      | -<br>8,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two or three-stage system</li> <li>• Could potentially range continental U.S.</li> </ul> |

\*SRBM : Short-range ballistic missile, MRBM: Medium-range ballistic missile

IRBM : Intermediate-range ballistic missile, ICBM: Intercontinental ballistic missile

Source : Anthony H. Cordesman et al., “The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States,” CSIS Report (February 15, 2011), p.151.

With its missile capability, North Korean special forces is another crucial asymmetric capability. There is considerable disagreement over the precise number of the North Korean SOF. While the number of North Korean SOF is about 80,000 according to US sources, the ROK government estimates they are approximately 200,000. The discrepancy arises from the fact that ROK estimates include original light infantry unit divisions and corps, as well as infantry units converted to light infantry, while the US figures do not.<sup>49)</sup> The special force troops’ primary missions are reconnaissance, establishing a ‘second front’ within the ROK strategic rear, destruction and disruption of the ROK/US C4ISR structure, neutralization of ROK and US air bases, and neutralization of ROK and US missiles and weapons of mass destruction<sup>50)</sup> and this force is composed of seven light infantry divisions, 25 special forces brigades (12 light infantry/mechanized light infantry, three reconnaissance brigades, three airborne brigades, two air force sniper brigades, two navy sniper brigades and three sniper brigades) and between five and seven reconnaissance battalions.<sup>51)</sup>

49) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., “The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States,” p. 90.

50) ROK Ministry of Defense, *2010 Defense White Paper*, p. 30.

51) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., “The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States,” p. 90.

These special forces could cause instability in the Korean Peninsula by infiltrating a specific area and terrorizing the population and social structure. Historically, there are a number of cases involving North Korean special forces, for instance an attempted presidential assassination, infiltration into the East Sea and espionage. Thus, North Korean special forces are a threat not only in total war but also in limited war and even peacetime.

### 3.3 North Korean Nuclear Program

After the Korean war, the US threatened the DPRK several times with nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea when the North violated the Armistice Agreement.<sup>52)</sup> For example, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger declared in June 1975: “If circumstances were to require the use of tactical nuclear weapons... I think that that would be carefully considered. I do not think it would be wise to test American reaction.”<sup>53)</sup>

This threat may have encouraged the North Korean regime to acquire its own nuclear weapons program. In the 1960s North Korea started its nuclear program with the Soviet Union’s help, and over the next two decades China provided various materials. In the early 1990s, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) predicted that North Korea had the capability to make one or two nuclear weapons from the plutonium it had produced.<sup>54)</sup> The North Korean nuclear issue deteriorated from the early 1990’s and was more complicated during the Bush administration.

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52) Charles K. Armstrong, “US-North Korean Relations,” in John Feffer eds., *The Future of US-Korean Relations: The Imbalance of Power*, p. 13.

53) Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (London: Warner Books, 2001), p. 257.

54) Christoph Bluth, *Korea*, pp. 110-136.

In 2002, the second North Korean nuclear crisis, over the North's secret uranium programme, erupted, sending the region into turmoil. After the US blamed North Korea for operating a secret Uranium enrichment program in *Yongbyon* in October 2002, Pyongyang announced that it would withdraw from the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Although North Korea denied its clandestine nuclear program, the CIA claimed that "North Korea was constructing a uranium enrichment plant that would be able to produce Highly-Enriched Uranium (HEU) for two weapons annually once fully operational, possibly by the middle of the decade."<sup>55)</sup> On February 10 2005, North Korea suggested for the first time that it already possessed nuclear weapons. Furthermore, its nuclear tests have continued. In April 2009, North Korea claimed that it was developing uranium enrichment capabilities to produce fuel for a planned light water reactor and in September of the same year it also announced its enrichment research had entered into the completion phase.<sup>56)</sup>

Through two nuclear tests, it is estimated that North Korea does have adequate fissile material, 50kilograms of plutonium, for at least 5-10 nuclear weapons.<sup>57)</sup> On May 2009, North Korea announced that it had successfully conducted its second nuclear test, despite other states' nuclear experts assessing the test to be a failure. Yet, we cannot assert that North Korea's nuclear test failed in 2009, because it can test what it wants in the nuclear program. Additionally there is a testimony from December 2009 from Pakistani nuclear scientist A. A. Khan claiming that "North Korea was doing uranium enrichment with 3,000 or more centrifuges as

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55) Ibid, p. 113.

56) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., "The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States," p.113.

57) Bennett Bruce W, "Uncertainties in the North Korean Nuclear Threat," pp. 14-15.

early as 2002, which, if true, could mean that North Korea has even more nuclear weapons.”

It is likely that such development was to be used by North Korea as a bargaining chip to assure the survival of the regime. And, North Korea will not likely use its nuclear weapons unless it perceives its regime to be on the verge of military defeat and risks irreversible loss of control. Regardless of the truth of its strategic purpose, any North Korean nuclear program is a critical threat to South Korea because North Korea’s persistence in creating nuclear forces is changing the balance of power on the Korean Peninsula. Conventional power cannot deter nuclear attack by the enemy. Therefore, North Korean nuclear weapons have emerged as a serious threat to neighboring states, especially, South Korea, Japan, and the United States.

**Table 5 Timeline of North Korea’s Nuclear Program**

| Year | Note                                                                                                                                                    |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1979 | North Korea starts to build a nuclear reactor at Yongbyon                                                                                               |
| 1986 | Yongbyon begins operation                                                                                                                               |
| 1993 | Pyongyang pulls out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The first North Korean nuclear crisis develops                                             |
| 1994 | The US and North Korea make first nuclear deal. Pyongyang freezes its nuclear program in return for western help and cash to build light-water reactors |
| 1998 | Pyongyang fires a long-range ballistic missile that overflies Japan before splashing down in the Pacific                                                |
| 2002 | Second crisis develops. The then US president, George Bush, names North Korea as a part a three-strong “axis of evil”                                   |
| 2005 | North Korea says it has a nuclear weapon and demands a civilian light-                                                                                  |

| Year       | Note                                                                                                                      |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | water reactor in exchange for ending its nuclear program-something the US and Japan dismiss as unacceptable               |
| 2006       | North Korea carries out first nuclear test                                                                                |
| 2007       | North Korea agrees to shut down its Yongbyon reactor in return for 50,000 tons of fuel oil or economic aid of equal value |
| April 2009 | North Korea launches a multi-stage rocket and says Yongbyon will restart, UN inspectors ordered to leave                  |
| May 2009   | North Korea says it has successfully conducted a second nuclear test, raising the explosive power of the device           |

Source : James Sturcke, "North Korea and Nuclear Testing: Timeline," The Guardian May25, 2009.

#### 4. Prospect for North Korean Military

North Korea has had sanctions imposed by international society against its military provocation and nuclear tests: UN security Council Resolution 825 (1993), Resolution 1540(2004), Resolution 1695(2006), Resolution 1718, and Resolution 1874 (2009). In particular, after the 2009 nuclear test, the UN and many states condemned the North in the strongest terms and imposed sanctions against them, including encouraging United Nations members to inspect cargo vessels and airplanes suspected of carrying weapons and other military materials. The US' President Barak Obama signed an executive order that added activities such as arms sales, money laundering, narcotics trafficking, and the procurement of luxury goods to the list of areas the US will target in its global efforts to pressure the North Korean regime.

However these international actions did not change North Korean action. In 2006, after the announcement of UN resolution 1695, North Korea

asserted that it considered the resolution as a declaration of war, and then did a nuclear test in 2009. Military pressures on the US could not prevent the North Korea's nuclear program. When the Bush administration, argued for a preemptive strike or preventive attack, North Korea did not give up its nuclear ambition. Rather it tested its nuclear weapons.

Since the first inter-Korean summit, the two consecutive South Korean governments pursued the "sunshine policy" (Kim Dae-jung government) and the "peace and prosperity policy" (Roh Moo-hyun government), which both focused on accommodation and collaboration with North Korea. However, it is not obvious that the threat posed by North Korea has subsided, despite these engagement policies by South Korea. In 1999 there was an naval stand-off between the two Koreas because of the North Korean navy's intrusion into South Korean territorial waters. North Korea launched a multi-staged and long-ranged missile, Taepodong-1, over northern Japan on 31st August 1998. In addition, it conducted nuclear test in 2006. In other words, the engagement policies failed to constrain North Korea's belligerence and use of military threat as its principal tool of diplomacy.

Furthermore, to solve the North Korean issues including nuclear problems, Six-Party Talks have been held several times. "Sep. 19 Joint Statement" was adopted at the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks in 2005 as the fruit of long negotiation among the states. In accordance with this statement, North Korea promised three things: 1) to give up all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, 2) to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and 3) to accept inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The US also promised not to attack or invade the North with nuclear arms or conventional weapons.

Also, the “Feb. 13 Agreement” was agreed by the parties in 2007 to seek a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. Yet, these agreements did not work smoothly, because North Korea have suggested that firstly a peace treaty between the US and the North is the best way to resolve the Nuclear issues.<sup>58)</sup>

North Korean militarism originates in complex factors: ideology, economy, politics and diplomacy as explained previous section. It has three purposes: as deterrence and bargaining tool, and regime survival. Throughout the Cold War, North Korea managed to maintain and increase its military capability for the purpose of reuniting the Korean Peninsula by force. The current situation in the post-Cold War era seems to be different. The strength of the military and the posture of complete hostility towards the US and South Korea is only maintained for the purposes of deterrence and maintenance of national pride. Such belligerence also serves as a bargaining tool for the acquisition of international economic aid. In other words, the key aim of the regime has changed from unification by military coercion to mere regime survival.

In terms of conventional capabilities, North Korea might continue its military build up to press South Korea, US, and Japan. It would also do so to deal with internal unrest by trying to focus the nation on a foreign enemy.<sup>59)</sup> North Korea clearly knows that its regime would be destroyed if it provoked out all-out war again.<sup>60)</sup> Yet, North Korea would use conventional forces to conduct a limited war to achieve its political and

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58) L.E. Easley and Pyon Junbeom, “Prudence for Peace: South Korea-US Coordination Must Come Before Talks To End Korean War,” *PacNet*, 32A (2007), pp. 1-2.

59) Anthony H. Cordesman et al., “The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States,” p. 27.

60) Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, “The North Korean Military as a Security Threat,” p. 10.

economic objectives.

There is no possibility for North Korea to easily give up its nuclear program. Due to the vagueness of its nuclear capability, other states could not easily attack the nuclear facilities in North Korea. North Korea takes this as the success of nuclear deterrence, so Pyongyang will continue its nuclear acquisitions. Thus, North Korea will maintain the ambiguity of its nuclear weapon program, because it strengthens North Korea's strategic position by deterring risk-averse neighbors from taking any serious action against.<sup>61)</sup> Accordingly, in order to draw the attention of the international community, especially the US, the North Korean nuclear program is necessary from the North's perspective. North Korea might think that it can obtain economic aid and political leverage through its nuclear program. Thus there is a high possibility that North Korea is trying to purposefully raise military tension to sustain itself both externally and internally in the future.

In sum, the North Korean regime is likely to maintain its current policy for the time being in the interests of its survival. In other words it might sustain its clandestine programs of weapons of mass destruction so as to raise tension on the Korean Peninsula because it seems that the North Korean elite believe that a substantial policy change is not required for its survival. Thus the North Korean military threat will not disappear until the regime collapses.

North Korea has often mixed provocations with conciliatory gestures to maximize its bargaining power at negotiating table. North Korea will keep strong military capabilities including nuclear program before it is convinced of the possibility of a peace treaty and full diplomatic relations between

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61) Bennett Bruce W, "Uncertainties in the North Korean Nuclear Threat," p. 6.

the US and North Korea. In other words, North Korea will try to establish diplomatic normalization with the US and Japan possessing strong military might. From the North Korean perspective building strong military, especially asymmetric strength and a nuclear program, could be the optimal strategy for its security considering these factors. Accordingly, North Korean military build-up will continue for the time being.

## 5. Conclusion

The security threat can be divided into two primary components: capability and intention.<sup>62)</sup> The capabilities of North Korea remain a threat due to its amount of conventional weapons and asymmetrical forces, including its nuclear program, at its disposal. In addition, North Korea has also continued to maintain its belligerent and uncooperative foreign policy to South Korea and the United States. Therefore it can be said that there still exists a clear military threat on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian region.

North Korea provides three dimensions of threat for regional security. First, it can attack a neighboring state directly. Secondly, even if it does not attack directly with its weapons, their weapons and technology can be transferred to global terrorists whom the regional and international actors consider as a primary threat. Thirdly, if North Korea possesses Nuclear weapons, it can cause an arms race in the region. In other words, if North Korea has nuclear weapons and South Korea and Japan which are strong regional allies of the US only has conventional arms, a severe military imbalance in the Korean Peninsula and the region would exist.<sup>63)</sup> This

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62) Scott Snyder, "Lee Myung-bak's Foreign Policy: A 250-Day Assessment," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 21, No. 1(2009), pp. 1-30.

means the possibility of conflicts and an arms race increases. Thus, as long as North Korea allocates its resources to military build-ups like nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles, and special operational forces, its behavior makes both regional and international security unstable.

It can be considered that North Korea does not have the ability to reunify the peninsula by force and the North Korean threat has decreased since the 2000 inter-Korean summit and that there is less possibility of total war breaking out on the Peninsula, because ROK-US combined forces would overwhelm North Korea. Furthermore, when it comes to total war capability, South Korea has enough capabilities to defend itself against the threat posed by North Korea. This is because it has a strong economy, technological capability and diplomatic power in international society compared to the North.

However, this does not mean that North Korea is not a serious military threat. North Korea still poses an asymmetrical threat and its own offensive power can cause severe damage to South Korean society though any invasion would not be fully successful. North Korea, still pursues military build-up which threatens the South, the US and regional security. Moreover, North Korea will maintain this trend for the time being as a tool for military deterrence and political leverage to obtain economic aid from international society. Thus, it is necessary to prepare for to defend against these capabilities as a preemptive measure. However, one regional actor cannot solve North Korean problems. Accordingly, it is time for close security cooperation with regional actors.

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63) James Przystup, "Dealing with the Twin Dangers of Proliferation and Instability," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 7-29.

### III. An American Perception and Policies toward the Denuclearization of North Korea

Bruce W. Bennett <sup>64)</sup>

North Korea's nuclear weapons pose a severe threat to the ROK and other countries in the region. The ROK/US have sought to peacefully resolve this threat through a series of negotiations, the most recent being the regional Six-Party Talks. Yet a review of the negotiations suggests that North Korea has failed to abide by many of its agreements, and given up very little of its nuclear capability. Much of the international policy community has concluded that North Korea will never give up its nuclear weapons. Yet the community still perceives that the North Korean nuclear weapon threat is severe and needs to be resolved.

This paper examines the options for denuclearizing North Korea. It examines why North Korea is so interested in nuclear weapons. It describes the North Korean nuclear weapon threat and North Korea's pattern of negotiations to date. It then suggests a compromise way forward. This approach involves a partial resolution of the North Korean nuclear weapon threat while building the basis for the long-term resolution of ROK-led unification. The elements of this approach are described. This approach is not without its own risks, but it does provide a peaceful course of action for resolving the North Korean nuclear weapon threat.

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<sup>64)</sup> This paper represents the views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of RAND or its research sponsors.

## Why Does North Korea Have Nuclear Weapons?

North Korea is a failing state. It has difficulty feeding its own people, its leadership forced to go to its neighbors to beg for food. Starvation and state-imposed brutality have led many in North Korea to seek refuge in China, action that is clear rebellion against the North Korean control systems. Its economy has largely failed, and it appears generally unable to repair its decaying infrastructure outside of the Pyongyang area. And North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-Il, has been seriously sick and appeared physically weak; his heir apparent is very young and appears to lack the needed experience and good judgment. To provide a leadership supporting this succession, the regime has already carried out many leadership purges, creating further internal instability. Meanwhile, outside information is leaking into North Korea challenging the regime's propaganda that North Korea is a strong and prosperous state.

The North Korean leadership culture is one that depends upon empowerment, something that the North Korean regime has had difficulty achieving. It has therefore focused on its military as its evidence of power, and on nuclear weapons as its ultimate demonstration of empowerment. North Korea is one of only 9 countries in the world to have developed nuclear weapons. The regime claims that success makes it a peer of the other nuclear weapon states. Nuclear weapons have thus become a source of pride among North Koreans and a symbol of North Korean nationalism.

To excuse its failures, the North Korean regime has adopted a diversionary conflict approach. It claims that the ROK and the United States are the eternal enemies of North Korea, responsible for everything that goes wrong in the North. But because of the military strength of the United States and the ROK, the North Koreans need a means for deterring

them from attacking North Korea, and nuclear weapons are a primary symbol of this deterrence. Nuclear weapons also allow North Korea to create the appearance of military balance on the peninsula.

In short, the North Korean regime gains immense benefits from possessing nuclear weapons across many dimensions. If the regime were to give up its nuclear weapons, what would it have to demonstrate its power? How would it impose deterrence and military balance on the peninsula? Would the Kim family be able to achieve the planned leadership succession?

### Assessing the Threat

Nuclear weapons have the ability to cause immense damage to any area where they are used. Still, some argue that this threat of damage can be stabilizing. Such is not the case with North Korea because the North is a risk taker and could actually motivate a regional nuclear arms race.

#### How Serious Would North Korean Use of Nuclear Weapons Be?

If/when North Korea uses a nuclear weapon, the damage it does will depend upon what the North targets, the performance of the nuclear weapon, and the performance of the delivery means. North Korea appears to be seeking and may already have a capability to deliver nuclear weapons by ballistic missiles,<sup>65</sup> apparently figuring that it would have difficulty delivering nuclear weapons against meaningful targets in the ROK (or in Japan) with other means. And North Korean ballistic missiles are apparently so inaccurate that they could well miss many military targets,

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65) Associated Press, "SKorea: NKorea May Have Miniaturized Nuke Warhead," *The New York Times*, June 13, 2011; Kim Kwang-tae, "Japan's defense paper says N. Korea can miniaturize nukes," Yonhap News Agency, August 11, 2011, at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2011/08/11/18/0301000000AEN20110811008600315F.HTML>.

making cities a likely targeting focus, consistent with the likely coercive nature of North Korean nuclear weapon use.<sup>66)</sup>

If North Korea attacks ROK cities with nuclear weapons, it will do considerable damage. This damage can be measured in part by the number of casualties that would occur.<sup>67)</sup> If North Korean nuclear weapons have a weapon yield (explosive power) of about 10 kilotons, consistent with other early nuclear weapon designs, the damage that could be done to people is illustrated in Figure 1 based upon analyses of nuclear attacks against 5 major ROK cities (Seoul, Pusan, Taegu, Kwangju, and Daejeon).<sup>68)</sup> This figure looks across a range of weapon yield because, even if the North Korean weapons have a nominal 10 kiloton yield, they could explode with more or less power. North Korea may also be able to boost the weapon yield above 10 kilotons. A 10 kiloton warhead yield would cause between 200,000 and 340,000 fatalities and serious injuries in major ROK cities. Some have argued that the North Korean nuclear weapon tests to date have been failures, with the yields only amounting to something below 1 kiloton to maybe a few kilotons. But even a 1 kiloton yield would cause 55,000 to 90,000 fatalities and serious injuries, more than 10 times the 9/11 casualties.

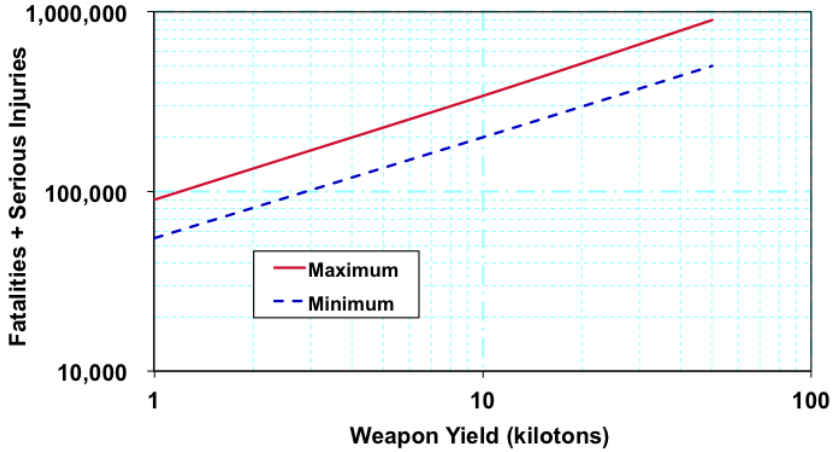
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66) See Bruce W. Bennett, *Uncertainties in the North Korean Nuclear Threat*, RAND, DB-589-NDU, 2010, pp. 27-41.

67) Generally speaking, direct industrial and infrastructure damage would be roughly correlated with casualties. In addition, secondary damage would result from the destruction of viable modern society in the area of a nuclear detonation, causing even more casualties and other damage due to the loss of electrical power and other utilities, the loss of hospitals and other medical care, the lost availability of food and other commerce near the nuclear explosion, and the loss of various inputs needed for economic activity in the explosion area.

68) These numbers are derived from Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

Figure 1. The Potential Casualties Caused by North Korean Nuclear Weapons Targeted on Major ROK Cities



The linearity of the relationships in Figure 1 shows that the maximum serious casualties (fatalities plus serious injuries in Seoul) are a function of weapon yield (Y) in kilotons:<sup>69)</sup>

$$\text{Casualties} \cong 90,000 * Y^{0.588}$$

The minimum serious casualties would be roughly 60 percent as high. It is not clear how far beyond this range of yield that this relationship would continue, though it should roughly continue out to 100 kilotons or

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69) In classical nuclear weapon analysis, it is estimated that the area covered by nuclear weapon effects is proportional to  $Y^{0.6667}$ , consistent with a simplistic estimate of how the area affected by nuclear blast scales with weapon yield. But in practice the exponent is lower below about 50 kilotons because the predominant casualty causing effect in this range of yield is prompt nuclear radiation; these radiation effects are not as sensitive to the weapon yield as are blast effects. And above 100 kilotons, the area affected could go beyond the most dense area of a city, especially given the inaccuracy in missile delivery, also reducing the effect of weapon yield.

so, at which point the maximum casualties would be in the 1.35 million range (caused by a single nuclear weapon).

### Sizing the Threat

The other key factor that would influence the amount of damage done would be the number of weapons that North Korea is able to deliver. There are various estimates of how many nuclear weapons North Korea possesses.

Most estimates of the North Korean nuclear weapon inventory focus on plutonium-based nuclear weapons. Typically, experts estimate that North Korea might have somewhere between 5 and 12 nuclear weapons today,<sup>70)</sup> based upon North Korean production of plutonium. But Dr. A.Q. Khan of Pakistan said, "...that during a visit to North Korea in 1999, he toured a mountain tunnel. There his hosts showed him boxes containing components of three finished nuclear warheads, which he was told could be assembled for use atop missiles within an hour."<sup>71)</sup> Three nuclear weapons would be more than the U.S. estimate of 1 to 2 weapons available at that time based on the plutonium that North Korea had produced,<sup>72)</sup> suggesting that North Korea may have had an external source of plutonium.<sup>73)</sup> It therefore seems

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70) Albright, David, and Paul Brannan, "The North Korean Plutonium Stock," Washington, D.C.: Institute for Science and International Security, February 20, 2007, at <http://www.isis-online.org/publications/dprk/DPRKplutoniumFEB.pdf>

71) Smith, R. Jeffrey, and Joby Warrick, "Pakistani Scientist Depicts More Advanced Nuclear Program in North Korea," *The Washington Post*, December 28, 2009; "A. Q. Khan's Network," GlobalSecurity.org, no date, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/dprk/khan-dprk.htm>.

72) "North Korean Nuclear Weapons: CIA Estimate for Congress," FAS.org, November 19, 2002, at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/dprk/nuke/cia111902.html>.

73) One possibility comes from a Russian intelligence report in 1993 that North Korea had received 56 kilograms of plutonium from Russia, enough for perhaps 10 nuclear weapons. See Niksch, Larry A., *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program*, Washington, D.C.:

likely that North Korea has between 5 and 20 plutonium-based nuclear weapons today.

Highly enriched uranium can (HEU) also be used to produce nuclear weapons. North Korea may already have weapons built from HEU: Dr. A.Q. Khan of Pakistan said that North Korea had 3,000 centrifuges (of an older, less effective design) operating by 2002.<sup>74)</sup> 3,000 first generation centrifuges that run full-time and are properly configured can produce enough uranium for roughly one nuclear weapon per year.<sup>75)</sup> After perhaps 10 years, North Korea may have produced sufficient HEU for 5 or 6 nuclear weapons, given likely down-times and constraints on HEU production.

In moving to the future, North Korea appears to have shifted its production of nuclear weapons from plutonium to HEU. North Korea has dismantled its nuclear reactor used to produce plutonium. But the North Korean uranium enrichment facility shown to Dr. Siegfried Hecker and colleagues in November 2010<sup>76)</sup> apparently has the capacity to produce the equivalent of 1 to 2 nuclear weapons worth of highly enriched uranium (HEU) per year.<sup>77)</sup> And “South Korean government officials ... suspect

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Congressional Research Service, October 9, 2002, p. 7. Consistent with this, “Hwang Jang-Yop . . . said that Jong Pyong-Ho, a senior party official in charge of military matters, had told Hwang in 1996 that North Korea had five plutonium-based nuclear weapons.” International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2004. Jong was the, “official in charge of DPRK nuclear weapons development.” “North Korea’s New Military Regime—Top 30 Leaders’ Photos and Careers; Military Seizing Leadership,” Tokyo *Flash* (in Japanese), July 26, 2010.

74) Smith and Warrick, op. cit.

75) Lee Chun-geun, “North Korea’s nuclear program: a history,” *The Korea Herald*, June 15, 2009, at [http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html\\_dir/2009/06/15/200906150057.asp](http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2009/06/15/200906150057.asp); Borger, Julian, “Decision time for US over Iran threat,” *The Guardian*, November 16, 2007, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/nov/16/usa.iran>.

76) Hecker, Siegfried S., “A Return Trip to North Korea’s Yongbyon Nuclear Complex,” Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, November 20, 2010, at <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23035/HeckerYongbyon.pdf>.

that the North has three or four more undisclosed uranium enrichment facilities in addition to the one in Yongbyon it showed Hecker last month .”<sup>78)</sup> The combination of these facilities would allow North Korea to make 2 to 5 or more HEU-based weapons per year.

Thus the North Korean total number of weapons could be between 5 and 25 today, and the upper bounds of that number could be increasing by 2 to 5 per year in the future.

### Some Limitations of the Threat

North Korea has performed few tests of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. As a result, North Korean nuclear weapons delivery can be expected to be unreliable and inaccurate. For example, North Korean nuclear weapons might only have 40 to 60 percent probability of successful delivery by a ballistic missile and subsequent detonation. If so and North Korea has between 5 and 25 nuclear weapons, only 2 to 15 of them might actually detonate on or near targets. At the casualty rates shown in Figure 1, this implies that North Korea could potentially cause at least several

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77) “North Korea could use the 2,000 P2 centrifuges at the Yongbyon plant as part of a 3,000 centrifuge system to make approximately 50 kg of WGU per year.” David Albright and Paul Brannan, “Disabling North Korea’s Uranium Enrichment Program,” Institute for Science and International Security, January 20, 2011, at <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/disabling-north-koreas-uranium-enrichment-program/10>. Pakistani nuclear, “... weapons are based on an implosion design that uses a solid core of highly enriched uranium, requiring an estimated 15–20 kilograms per warhead.” “Pakistan’s Nuclear Forces, 2001,” NRDC Nuclear Notebook, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 2002, pp. 70-71. This appears to be the design that Pakistan shared with North Korea. See Seymour M. Hersh, “The Cold Test: What the Administration Knew About Pakistan and the North Korean Nuclear Program,” *The New Yorker*, January 27, 2003. 1998. Thus 50 kgs of HEU would be sufficient for about 3 nuclear weapons.

78) “Activity at N.Korean Nuclear Sites Sparks Frenzied Speculation,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, December 15, 2010, at [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2010/12/15/2010121500311.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/12/15/2010121500311.html).

hundred thousand serious casualties up to perhaps as many as 5 million or so, a significant percentage of the ROK population. It is thus clear why North Korean nuclear weapons are considered an unacceptable threat.

If North Korea is building nuclear weapons from the HEU it produces each year, its nuclear threat will be growing. Eventually, it will have enough weapons for more extensive testing that should improve nuclear weapon reliability and accuracy. And the increased numbers of North Korea nuclear weapons would put a larger percentage of the ROK population, economy, and society at risk each year. It is therefore critical to stop the North Korean uranium enrichment program promptly.

### Are North Korean Nuclear Weapons Bad?

While most in the international security community have argued that nuclear weapons are dangerous and destabilizing, others have argued that these weapons are a good thing. Will having more states with nuclear weapons destabilize regional relationships, or will it stabilize them? In a 1981 Adelphi Paper, Professor Kenneth Waltz argued that the gradual proliferation of nuclear weapons to other states would create a more peaceful world: Nuclear weapons will make war less likely because nuclear states are unlikely to attack other nuclear states or their clients, knowing the damage they could suffer in retaliation.<sup>79)</sup> In his view, nuclear weapons would strengthen deterrence of war and facilitate a meaningful defense for even otherwise militarily weak nuclear weapon states. If Waltz view is correct, North Korea's having nuclear weapons could actually be a good thing because it will discourage war and encourage peace in

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79) Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better," Adelphi Papers, Number 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981).

Northeast Asia.

But the Waltz argument has two key flaws when applied to a country like North Korea. First, the Waltz argument fundamentally assumes that nuclear weapons discourage conflict because the states involved are risk averse. In fact, North Korea is a failing state that cognitive deterrence (prospect theory<sup>80</sup>) characterizes as a risk-taker with regard to a range of behaviors. A review of North Korean history reveals North Korea as relatively aggressive even when confronting a nuclear state like the United States (e.g., in its capture of the USS *Pueblo* in 1968, in its nuclear weapon tests in 2006 and 2009, and in its nuclear proliferation to Syria).

The North Korean regime has used military provocations as a means for managing internal instability, seeking to strengthen regime survival. These military provocations have sought in part to demonstrate regime empowerment to the North Korean people and especially the elites. As noted earlier, the regime also tries to divert its people's attention from the regime's problems, shifting their attention to the threat posed by North Korea's external enemies, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States. But because these provocations have been diversions rather than resolutions of the underlying North Korean problems, the North Korean regime may find itself needing ever-escalating provocations, including limited or even more serious warfare to manage its failures and weaknesses. This is particularly true given the illness of Kim Jong-Il, the weakness of the succession he appears to be orchestrating, and the ongoing government purges to support that succession. In a worst case, the regime may invade the ROK to avoid its fear of impending overthrow, a classical

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80) See, for example, Levy, Jack S., "An Introduction to Prospect Theory," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 13, No. 2, June 1992, pp. 171-186.

diversionary war.<sup>81)</sup>

Many in the ROK national security community believe that North Korean nuclear weapons provide a “nuclear shadow” that supports North Korean provocations. The nuclear shadow makes its victims afraid to threaten or take strong responses to the provocations for fear of escalation eventually to nuclear weapon use. North Korean nuclear weapons thus encourage North Korean acts of war, an appropriate characterization for many of its provocations.

For decades the United States and the ROK have generally refrained from militarily responding to North Korean provocations, trying to sustain the peace and avoid North Korean escalation and perhaps even miscalculation on both sides. But North Korea committed two serious provocations in 2010, leading to a demand from many in the ROK for serious ROK retaliation against future North Korean provocations. The ROK government has now threatened to retaliate “strongly and thoroughly” to future North Korean provocations,<sup>82)</sup> and the ROK JCS Chairman threatened that “South Korea will ‘completely crush the enemy’ if North Korea attacks again, ...”<sup>83)</sup> Many in the ROK believe that North Korea is a “paper tiger” with regard to its limited military attack provocations, and that the North will be deterred by serious threats. But if the ROK miscalculates, a North Korean response to ROK retaliation could create an escalatory spiral that eventually does lead to North Korean nuclear weapon

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81) See, for example, Levy, Jack S., “The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique,” in Manus I. Midlarsky, ed., *The Handbook of War Studies*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1989, pp. 259-288.

82) “South Korea vows strong response if North Korea attacks,” *Channel News Asia*, June 16, 2011, at [http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_asiapacific/view/1135327/1/.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/1135327/1/.html)

83) “Military chief says Seoul will ‘completely crush’ North if attacked again,” Yonhap News Agency, December 9, 2010, at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2010/12/09/0200000000AEN20101209007100315.HTML>.

use. In short, North Korean aggressiveness and risk taking coupled with the evolving ROK/US response to North Korean provocations is potentially quite destabilizing.

The second flaw relates to the potential that North Korean nuclear weapons could generate a regional nuclear weapons arms race. While Northeast Asia has traditionally included two recognized nuclear weapon states, Russia and China, their nuclear weapons have not induced a regional nuclear arms race. Indeed, the Japanese public is generally very much against Japan developing nuclear weapons. The United States has shielded its regional allies, Japan and South Korea, from the Russian and Chinese nuclear weapon threats by providing a so-called “nuclear umbrella”: a commitment to use US nuclear weapons, if necessary, in defense of the US allies. Japan and South Korea have generally felt that the US nuclear umbrella would prevent Russian and Chinese nuclear weapon threats because Russia and China are risk averse. But Japan and South Korea are less certain about the viability of the US nuclear umbrella in deterring North Korean nuclear weapon threats, especially given the North Korean risk-taking propensity.

Skepticism about the US nuclear umbrella’s effect on North Korea comes in several forms. Some argue that while North Korean nuclear weapons provide a nuclear shadow that allows North Korean provocations, the US nuclear umbrella has not prevented North Korean provocations. Others argue that the nuclear umbrella has not been strong enough to induce North Korean nuclear disarmament.<sup>84)</sup> And others argue that North Korean nuclear weapons shift the military balance on the Korean peninsula

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84) See, for example, Kim Dae-joong, “Time for S.Korea to Develop Its Own Nuclear Arms,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, January 11, 2011, at [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2011/01/11/2011011101486.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/01/11/2011011101486.html).

in favor of North Korea,<sup>85)</sup> despite the US military commitment to the ROK. And some simply fear that at some point the United States will abandon its ROK ally.<sup>86)</sup> The result has been a number of calls this year for US redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons onto the peninsula,<sup>87)</sup> which the United States has rebuffed.<sup>88)</sup> For some in the ROK, the alternative is an independent ROK effort to develop its own nuclear weapons.<sup>89)</sup> This attitude is partially borne out by ROK opinion polls which several times have shown two-thirds of those polled supporting a ROK nuclear weapon program.<sup>90)</sup>

If North Korean nuclear weapon threats push the ROK into developing its own nuclear weapons, the results could be a regional nuclear arms race that would be highly destabilizing. To develop nuclear weapons, the ROK

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85) “North Korea’s nuclear bomb reverses the military balance on the Korean Peninsula, tilting it towards the North. Up to now, it was generally believed that South Korea, combined with the U.S. Forces in Korea, enjoyed a relative superiority over North Korea. North Korea’s nukes make such superiority meaningless because the South has no nuclear deterrent against nuclear forces.” Lee Sang-hyun, “Security implications of N. Korea’s nuke test,” *The Korea Herald*, Oct. 20, 2006.

86) Kim Dae-joong, “Abandoned at a Nuclear Crossroads,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, March 12, 2007, at [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2007/03/12/2007031261029.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2007/03/12/2007031261029.html)

87) See, for example, Kang Hyun-kyung, “Chung calls for redeployment of nukes in South,” *The Korea Times*, February 25, 2011, at [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/03/116\\_82114.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/03/116_82114.html). There were also some earlier calls for US tactical nuclear weapon redeployment: “The United States should consider redeploying tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea to effectively deter North Korea’s nuclear threats.” See Lee Jong-heon, “Calls for nuclear weapons in South Korea,” UPI, October 21, 2009, at [http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Special/2009/10/21/Calls-for-nuclear-weapons-in-South-Korea/UPI-51191256130461/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2009/10/21/Calls-for-nuclear-weapons-in-South-Korea/UPI-51191256130461/).

88) “U.S. Has No Plans to Redeploy Tactical Nukes to S.Korea,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, March 20, 2011, at [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2011/03/02/2011030201144.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/03/02/2011030201144.html).

89) See Kim Dae-joong, 2007, *op. cit.*, and Lee Tae-hoon, “Debate heats up over Seoul’s pursuit of nukes,” *The Korea Times*, March 8, 2011, at [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/03/116\\_82696.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/03/116_82696.html)

90) This was true in 2006 and 2011. See Shin, Chang-un, “In Poll, 78% Say Engagement Policy Should Change,” *Joongang Ilbo*, October 12, 2006, at <http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2825906>, and “Two-Thirds of S.Koreans Support Nuclear Armament,” *The Chosun Ilbo*, February 25, 2011.

would have to leave the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), undermining that treaty. Moreover, the ROK would face the United States with a difficult problem: Could the United States retain a close alliance with a country that undermined the NPT and which in some future conflict could use nuclear weapons in ways the United States did not approve (especially since the alliance relationship would imply that the United States did approve)? Facing declining military manpower, the ROK might feel it would have to substitute nuclear weapon capabilities to offset the decline in the numbers of its conventional forces, and perhaps to hedge against the US withdrawal from the alliance. A ROK nuclear weapon program would thus likely strive for superiority over the North Korean program, implying the deployment of at least many dozen nuclear weapons.

Such developments would put extreme pressure on Japan, then the major regional non-nuclear power, as it faced growing nuclear threats. Japan would likely conclude that it had no choice but to match the regional nuclear threats. And Japan is positioned as a virtual nuclear power with many tons of plutonium in storage. In 2002, a leading Japanese opposition politician, Ichiro Ozawa, argued that, "If China, which has nuclear weapons, became too powerful, 'We have plenty of plutonium in our nuclear power plants, so it's possible for us to produce 3,000 to 4,000 nuclear warheads.'"<sup>91)</sup> Japanese and ROK development of even a few dozen nuclear warheads each could press China into a nuclear arms race with its neighbors, as China would want to retain the appearance of regional nuclear superiority.<sup>92)</sup> Such an arms race would be highly

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91) Carla Anne Robbins and Gordon Fairclough, North Korea Sparks Proliferation Fears Throughout Asia," *Wall Street Journal*, June 16, 2005.

92) There is some debate over the size of China's inventory of nuclear weapons; see Bret Stephens, "How Many Nukes Does China Have?" *Wall Street Journal*, October 25, 2011, p.

destabilizing, with the participating countries each seeking to justify to their citizens the high costs of rapid nuclear weapon development and production. The countries would have little choice but to justify these expenditures by arguing that their neighbors are determined adversaries posing deadly threats. This vilifying would raise tensions and animosity, creating a new “Cold War” that could go hot in any crisis. The United States would have difficulties continuing its alliances with the ROK and Japan under these conditions, especially with them accusing each other of deadly threats.

In short, the circumstances in North Korea and in the Northeast Asia region more generally make North Korean nuclear weapons dangerous and destabilizing. They encourage North Korea adventurism and could escalate any limited military action toward nuclear weapon use.

### Options for Denuclearization

The United States and its allies have several basic options available for denuclearizing North Korea. Among these, US efforts have focused on a negotiated denuclearization via the 6-Party Talks. This effort has tried to get North Korea to voluntarily denuclearize in exchange for some package of benefits that the other countries involved in the talks would offer. In contrast, the ROK/US could perform military attacks against North Korea seeking to destroy its nuclear capabilities and program. A third option is ROK-led unification, wherein North Korean nuclear weapons could hopefully be secured in the unification process and eliminated thereafter.

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17. If China already has many hundreds or thousands of nuclear weapons, ROK/Japanese efforts to develop nuclear weapons may simply be met by Chinese announcements of its actual nuclear capabilities, which could then really lead to an arms race as the ROK and Japan seek to catch up.

And a fourth option posits a partial North Korean denuclearization in exchange for many benefits, an interim solution until one of the first two options can be achieved. This section explores these options.

### Negotiated Denuclearization

Within the international community, there is a strong preference for peaceful resolution of regional military threats. Some believe that while North Korea will require the promise of substantial benefits before agreeing to North Korean denuclearization, the cost of those benefits would be far less than the costs of the war that could accompany either ROK-led unification or denuclearization by military attack. But others believe that North Korea is unwilling to denuclearize at any price—that the North Korean nuclear weapons provide too many benefits for the regime. Instead, they feel that North Korea uses negotiations to secure benefits and then does not take the promised actions. Indeed, North Korea is well known for violating its nuclear weapons-related commitments.

**Early Negotiations.** North Korea has been involved in negotiations on nuclear weapons for more than two decades. Initially, North Korea acceded to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985, largely under pressure from the Soviet Union and the international community. Still, for years it refused to sign a nuclear safeguards agreement despite its obligation to do so under the NPT. It was not until early 1992 that North Korea signed a nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It also made a bilateral agreement with the ROK in the same period:

In late 1991 North and South Korea signed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges and Cooperation and the Joint Declaration on

the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The Joint Declaration called for a bilateral nuclear inspection regime to verify the denuclearization of the peninsula. The Declaration, which came into force on 19 February 1992, states that the two sides “shall not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons,” and that they “shall not possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities.”<sup>93)</sup>

After a major confrontation with the United States and the international community over plutonium reprocessing at the Yongbyon nuclear weapons facility and North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT, North Korea entered the Agreed Framework in 1994 with the United States. In that agreement, North Korea promised to end operations at the Yongbyon nuclear facility, to resume participation in the NPT, and to implement its safeguards agreement.

**The Reality of North Korean Historical Treaty Commitments.** North Korea was apparently in violation of these agreements as soon as they were reached. According to Siegfried Hecker, who was recently shown North Korea’s latest uranium enrichment facility, “A North Korean uranium enrichment program has long been suspected. I believe they started early, perhaps in the 1970s or 1980s, but then did not try to accelerate the effort until their dealings with A.Q. Khan in the 1990s.”<sup>94)</sup> Also, North Korea already had a plutonium reprocessing facility when the 1991 agreement was reached. Both uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing were in violation of the 1991 bilateral agreement.

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93) Federation of Atomic Scientists, “North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program,” at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/dprk/nuke/index.html>.

94) Siegfried S. Hecker, “A Return Trip to North Korea’s Yongbyon Nuclear Complex,” (Stanford, Calif.: Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, November 20, 2010), p. 6, at <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23035/HeckerYongbyon.pdf>.

“Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf claimed in his memoir that A.Q. Khan delivered 20 P1 and four P2 centrifuges to North Korea around the year 2000. In late 2001, the CIA reported to Congress that North Korea attempted to acquire ‘centrifuge related materials in large quantities to support a uranium enrichment program.’”<sup>95)</sup> Such uranium enrichment capabilities were also in violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework (which through its NPT provision prohibits any work on nuclear weapons by states like North Korea). When the United States questioned North Korea about its uranium enrichment efforts in October of 2002, the North Korean representative initially admitted to a uranium enrichment program, but Pyongyang later denied it. As noted above, North Korea likely has several different sites where it is doing uranium enrichment, further violating its past agreements. A recent defector has talked about one such facility built between 2001 and 2006.<sup>96)</sup>

North Korea may have also been very active in developing its nuclear weapons during the 1990s, thereby violating the 1994 Agreed Framework as well as the 1991 Bilateral Agreement. Dr. Khan’s quote above about seeing 3 nuclear weapons in 1999 would suggest that while plutonium production may have ceased under the Agreed Framework, the actual production of nuclear weapons may have been quite active, in part using an external source of plutonium. This observation would be consistent with North Korea actively carrying out nuclear trigger tests in that period, performing about 3 tests in 1997, and then some 70 tests from 1998 to

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95) Siegfried S. Hecker, “Redefining denuclearization in North Korea,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Dec. 20, 2010, at <http://thebulletin.org/web-edition/features/redefining-denuclearization-north-korea-0>

96) “N.Korea 'Has New Uranium Enrichment Facility,’” *The Chosun Ilbo*, Oct. 20, 2011, at [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2011/10/20/2011102001069.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/10/20/2011102001069.html).

2001.<sup>97)</sup> The latter tests appear to have come in the aftermath of the Pakistani HEU nuclear weapon tests in 1998, in which the Pakistani weapons had far less yield than had been announced. Since North Korea did trigger tests for its plutonium weapons in the 1980s, the tests in the late 1990s may have been in support of developing HEU-based nuclear weapons, and perhaps in cooperation with Pakistan.<sup>98)</sup> All of these actions would have been contrary to the agreements that North Korea had made.

The bottom-line is that North Korea has generally not abided its previous nuclear weapon agreements. While it did shut down its Yongbyon nuclear reactor in 1994 and again in 2007, the Yongbyon reactor is often described as being very unsafe (“a disaster in the making”<sup>99)</sup>) and reaching the end of its life. Meanwhile, the North has hidden ongoing nuclear weapon activity, denying the world information on either its ongoing nuclear weapon production efforts or the overall accomplishments and failures of its nuclear program. The United States lacks even the basic information that it needs to negotiate a true denuclearization of North Korea, including how many weapons have been produced, what technologies have been applied, how much fissile material is available, where the nuclear weapons and fissile materials are located, and who the key scientists are. While North Korea supposedly provided this and related information in 2008, we

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97) “Yongdok-dong High-Explosive Test Site,” at [http://www.nti.org/e\\_research/profiles/NK/Nuclear/facilities\\_other.html#yongdokdong](http://www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/NK/Nuclear/facilities_other.html#yongdokdong). “According to other reports in late 2002, the tests are said to be conducted deep inside two mine shafts to elude detection by satellites. ... South Korean newspapers have reported that in late 1997, a North Korean soldier provided samples of topsoil from the area to a South Korean intelligence agent. The soil samples reportedly contained radioactive particles typical of residue from a full-scale high-explosive test using fissile material.” “Kusong”, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/dprk/kusong.htm>.

98) See Bruce W. Bennett, “Military Implications of North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons,” *KNDU Review*, Korea National Defense University, December 2005.

99) “N.Korea's Nuclear Facilities 'a Disaster in the Making,’” *The Chosun Ilbo*, April 19, 2011, at [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2011/04/19/20110419011041901290.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/04/19/20110419011041901290.html).

know now that it did not divulge its uranium enrichment efforts and other parts of its program in those documents, and we certainly expect that North Korea did not divulge other key information, either.

**Expectations for the Future.** As noted at the beginning of this paper, North Korea clearly believes that its nuclear weapons are too valuable to completely abandon. North Korea has made this clear in the aftermath of the Western action against Libya: “A North Korean statement that Libya’s dismantling of its nuclear weapons program had made it vulnerable to military intervention by the West is being seen by analysts as an ominous reinforcement of the North’s refusal to end its own nuclear program.”<sup>100</sup> Indeed, in response to a question from Kim Il-Sung in the early 1990s about whether North Korea should give up its nuclear weapons when pressed by the United States, Kim Jong-Il reportedly replied: “‘Nuclear weapons are Chosun,’ he said, using the North Korean word for Korea. ‘If we destroy our nuclear program, we may as well destroy ourselves.’”<sup>101</sup> And after the United Nations imposed sanctions on North Korea for its second nuclear weapon test, North Korea said very clearly that, “‘It has become an absolutely impossible option for [North Korea] to even think about giving up its nuclear weapons.’”<sup>102</sup>

Can anyone really expect that North Korea will give up its nuclear weapons? And if it said it had, could the world really trust the North?<sup>103</sup>

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100) Mark McDonald, “North Korea Suggests Libya Should Have Kept Nuclear Program,” *New York Times*, March 24, 2011, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/world/asia/25korea.html>.

101) Jack David and Melanie Kirkpatrick, “Kim Jong Il’s Nuclear Resolve,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 28, 2011, p. 19.

102) “UN action spurs more Pyongyang nuclear threats,” *The JoongAng Ilbo*, June 15, 2009, at <http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2906143>.

103) At best North Korea may at some point agree to “abandon” its program and surrender some of what it has done while covertly retaining some nuclear weapons and other materials. But even doing this is unlikely because much of the benefit North Korea derives from having

## Denuclearization by Military Attack

At the other end of the spectrum from negotiation is North Korean denuclearization by ROK-led military attack. This option raises two key questions: (1) Can the ROK and the United States destroy the North Korean nuclear weapon capabilities with confidence, and (2) if the ROK and US launched such an attack, how would North Korea react (what would be the price paid?)?

**Can the ROK/US Destroy North Korea's Nuclear Weapons?** The ROK and the United States likely cannot destroy the North Korean nuclear weapon capabilities with confidence. It seems quite clear that the ROK and the United States do not know how many nuclear weapons North Korea has. Therefore, even if they could seize or destroy some, they would not know whether all nuclear weapons had been destroyed. And unless they could simultaneously destroy all fissile material and other inputs to nuclear weapons, North Korea might be able to build new nuclear weapons in the aftermath of the attack. Moreover, an attack to denuclearize North Korea would be large: “There are about 100 sites related to the nuclear’ program in North Korea, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Tae-young told lawmakers during a parliamentary audit.”<sup>104)</sup> And that is the number of sites that are known and before North Korea would attempt to disperse its weapons when it realizes an attack is imminent.

The North Korean targets would also prove difficult to destroy. Many are likely associated with underground facilities that may have multiple blast doors. It may be possible to block the entrances of these facilities (if

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nuclear weapons is associated with brandishing them.

104) “Seoul suspects about 100 sites in N.K. linked to nuclear program,” *Korea Herald*, October 5, 2009, at <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20091005000097>.

all entrances are known), but the weapons might still survive such that they could eventually be dug out. In addition, the ROK and the United States would find it challenging to destroy 100 both large and geographically dispersed targets simultaneously. And the North Korea air defenses may force the ROK/US forces to first suppress the air defenses and then pursue the nuclear targets.

**Potential North Korean Responses.** But if the entire attack cannot be carried out simultaneously, the North Korean leadership may feel compelled to use their nuclear weapons before they lose them. This “use them or lose them” quandary is a classical problem with counterforce attacks. If North Korea launched even a few successful nuclear weapon strikes on targets in the ROK, hundreds of thousands of people could be killed or seriously injured, as noted above.

A ROK/US attack designed to destroy North Korea’s nuclear weapon capabilities could also push the North Korean government into a broader response. If the North Korean regime failed to respond in kind (hard to do) or escalate, they would appear weak to the North Korean elites, making them potentially vulnerable to internal rebellion. Almost any proportional or greater response would be at the very high end of an escalation ladder, and if coupled with North Korean “use them or lose them” nuclear strikes might be indistinguishable from total war on the peninsula. Such a war could be very costly.

**Are Military Attacks a Viable Option?** The bottomline is that military attacks on the North Korean nuclear weapon program would cost too much (in terms of damage done and lives lost) and would be unlikely to achieve the desired outcome, denuclearization. The two primary problems with this option are a lack of firm intelligence on the North Korean nuclear weapons

program and insufficient strike capabilities to destroy that program promptly. The ROK and the United States could work on both of these problems in the next few years if they want to make this a viable option, but there is no guarantee that the problems they face can be resolved.

### ROK-Led Unification

A third alternative means of denuclearizing the North would be to expedite the unification of the Koreas under ROK leadership. The ROK is a member of the NPT, and it would thus be required to surrender any nuclear weapons it received from the former North Korea to one or more of the nuclear powers identified in the NPT (Russian, China, France, Britain, and the United States). So a ROK-led unification should eliminate North Korean nuclear weapons.

However, if the North Korean government were to collapse tomorrow, it is unlikely that the ROK would be able to achieve peaceful unification. The North Korean elites generally believe that ROK-led unification would be a disaster for them. Thus, some factions within North Korea would likely militarily oppose the ROK trying to impose unification, leading to serious conflict. While the conflict would probably not be as serious as in the previous option, some North Korean factions could still use weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, against advancing ROK forces or the ROK itself.

Thus in the short-term, while ROK-led unification has the potential to accomplish North Korean denuclearization, the ROK and United States would almost certainly need to fight North Korean factions to achieve unification. North Korea could likely evolve into insurgency like Iraq did in 2003, except that the North Korean active duty forces are three times

those of Iraq in 2003, and the North Korean reserves are ten times as much. The resulting insurgency and criminal activity could make a true, stabilized unification impossible.

The ROK and the United States therefore need to begin preparing the North Korean population and especially the North Korean elite to recognize that ROK-led unification is in their best interest and will give them a better life. It may take many years and considerable effort to convince key members of the North Korean elite, and even then some may decide to rebel against unification.<sup>105)</sup> Still, ROK-led unification is likely the only means for truly denuclearizing North Korea, and therefore the process of gaining acceptance to this approach among North Koreans needs to begin in earnest.

### Negotiate Partial Denuclearization, Prepare for Unification

If negotiations won't denuclearize North Korea and attacks or unification will lead to serious conflict in the short-term, the fourth alternative would seek to buy the time needed to prepare for unification while trying to control the growth of the North Korean nuclear weapon program. In this approach, the ROK/US and other members of the 6-Party Talks would negotiate with North Korea to reduce the North Korean nuclear weapons program as much as possible, and in particular to stop North Korean uranium enrichment. Meanwhile, the ROK/US would also work on preparing the North Korean population for unification under ROK leadership. It would not be possible to predict when unification would

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105) The ROK should avoid aggressively pursuing unification by subverting the North Korean government, which would likely cause a seriously negative international reaction, especially from China.

occur, but as much as possible would be done to avoid war and constrain the North Korea threat until that time.

North Korea is facing various developments that could lead to the regime being deposed. These include the regime's agricultural and economic failings, but also the jeopardy the regime is applying to some of its elites who may be purged as part of regime succession. The regime may be prepared to trade resolution of these short-term risks for an increase in the long-term risks associated with the inflow of outside information and influence. Naturally the regime will try to limit what it gives up, but its short-term needs are great, potentially making the regime ready to deal. At the same time, the regime may attempt to continue its provocations to demonstrate its empowerment and make severe demands for anything from its nuclear program that it gives up.

By being willing to negotiate and make reasonable trades, the ROK/US may gain some of the leverage needed for eventual unification. Most outside information getting into North Korea will tend to undermine the regime, and this is especially true with regard to market and business information that demonstrates the personal financial opportunities of free markets. And food and related aid to North Korea can be traded for and contingent on North Korean abandonment of provocations.

This approach would still have its risks. The North Korean regime will not like the ROK/US actions taken to prepare the North Korean elites for unification, and will likely seek to stop such actions by threatening conflict. Sooner or later they will understand the implications of the ROK/US strategy, and will seek to defeat it. The ROK/US need to anticipate these North Korean actions and be prepared to make North Korea's actions fail.

## The ROAD Forward

ROK-led unification of the two Koreas is the most likely ultimate resolution of the North Korean nuclear weapon threat. The North Korean regime cannot be counted on to denuclearize on its own, and a military attack to denuclearize North Korea would probably be unsuccessful and disastrous. And while unification is the most attractive long-term solution, it is not a short-term solution given the lack of preparation for unification. Meanwhile, North Korea appears to have the ability to make 2 to 5 nuclear weapons per year, and perhaps more. Its growing nuclear arsenal is not just a minor concern: a growing nuclear weapon force will likely make North Korea more confident in its ability to carry out limited warfare without serious ROK/US retaliation, and will make North Korea more dangerous should North Korean instability and/or its provocations lead to major war.

This author thus prefers the fourth option for denuclearizing North Korea in the short-term: Negotiate partial denuclearization while preparing for eventual unification. In practice, even if North Korea were to voluntarily denuclearize and agree to a peaceful unification, the ROK and United States would still need to prepare the North Korean people for a successful unification. Moreover, this approach does not abandon the prospects for negotiating full North Korea denuclearization—it simply considers that there is little prospect for such an outcome.

The details of this option are critical. These details include the negotiation strategy to be pursued, the process of securing the information needed to successfully pursue this option, the plans and actions for preparing the conditions for unification, and the procedures for handling North Korean misbehavior including provocations and warfare. In practice,

the situation in North Korea is sufficiently uncertain that any planning must be done under conditions of considerable uncertainty and risk. Thus the strategy for this option must be robust across a range of uncertainties and risk.

## Negotiations

Historically, North Korea has used denuclearization negotiations to obtain items that it has wanted while giving up as little as possible of its nuclear weapons program. This is hardly surprising: A country in as poor shape as North Korea must seek maximum benefit from any negotiation, and will presumably continue to do so. The ROK and the United States will therefore need to be creative in identifying incentives for North Korea that are difficult for it to decline while establishing concrete requirements for North Korea receiving those benefits, requirements which can be reasonably enforced. The ROK/US will not want to appear to be arbitrary in trying to enforce negotiated conditions.

**What North Korean Nuclear Actions to Limit?** Negotiations with North Korea can be easily bogged down in details. The ROK/United States must therefore focus on the most critical limitation, that being full disclosure and cessation of the uranium enrichment program.<sup>106)</sup> Subsequent efforts could pursue the actual building of nuclear weapons and other related activities.

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106) In practice, it would be more valuable to start with limiting the North Korean nuclear weapon production efforts from plutonium and highly enriched uranium. But those efforts may be very difficult to identify, and may be dispersed to many locations. The uranium enrichment efforts will likely be easier to locate, concentrated in fewer facilities, and easier for the public to understand their significance. Unfortunately, this effort could become a lot like the Agreed Framework that succeeded in limiting the production of plutonium but failed to stop the transformation of plutonium into nuclear weapons. Such limitations highlight the need for negotiations to go on beyond the stoppage of the uranium enrichment program.

**Basics of an Agreement.** The challenge for the ROK and United States will be limiting North Korea's nuclear program (and thus its "bragging rights") at the same time they avoid North Korean provocations. If North Korea agrees to stop or slow its uranium enrichment program, it may believe that it needs to increase the frequency of its provocations to maintain internal stability. Therefore, negotiations need to link these two issues, perhaps in a kind of "broad bargain," not quite the "grand bargain" that some have proposed.<sup>107)</sup>

To achieve the limited objectives of stopping North Korean uranium enrichment, the ROK/US could offer a humanitarian aid package to North Korea that is contingent on no uranium enrichment. This package should require North Korean identification of all of its uranium enrichment facilities (which, as noted above, must be more than just the facility at Yongbyon), and regular monitoring of those facilities to verify that they are not being used. In exchange, the ROK/US might provide North Korea with a given amount of humanitarian aid per month (perhaps 50,000 tons), though the aid quantity would be reduced by perhaps 80% for any days in which HEU-related activity is observed, including production at newly discovered facilities that had not been previously declared.

The ROK/US would then make this aid also contingent on no North Korean provocations. This is necessary because North Korea committed provocations even during the so-called "Sunshine Policy" of the previous ROK administrations. Thus a return of North Korea to nuclear negotiations would not necessarily prevent provocations; other approaches need to be considered. This part of the agreement could adjust the baseline aid

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107) See, for example, Walter C. Clemens Jr., "Time for a grand bargain in Northeast Asia," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, October 24, 2011, at <http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/op-eds/time-grand-bargain-northeast-asia>.

provided as follows:

- If North Korea goes at least 9 months without a provocation, the ROK/US will provide 40% of the 50,000 tons of humanitarian aid per month.
- If North Korea goes at least 18 months without a provocation, the ROK/US will provide 100% of the 50,000 tons of humanitarian aid per month.
- If North Korea commits a provocation, no ROK/US humanitarian aid will be offered for the following 9 months.

The durations and percentages suggested here are nominal; the ROK/US need to decide what they want to offer. They would also need to strictly define provocations in order to dissuade North Korea (which will try to take advantage of the ROK otherwise). For example, are cyber attacks included,<sup>108)</sup> and how clear does the evidence of North Korean involvement need to be before the provocation is attributed to the North and aid suspended?

With agreements on humanitarian aid, it will be important to explain the specifics of the agreement to both of the Koreas and internationally. The North Korean elites and even the common people need to understand that this aid is contingent on North Korean behavior, and that if North Korea does not behave, the suspension of aid is entirely the North Korean regime's fault. The North Korean regime will want to blame any suspension of aid on ROK/US enmity toward North Koreans; the North Korean elites and other people must come to understand that such is not

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108) If cyber attacks are excluded, the ROK will open itself to an increase in cyber attacks by North Korea since those would not affect aid provided and the North Korean regime might substitute cyber attacks for other kinds of provocations. Thus the choice of what provocations to include or exclude will not be a simple decision.

true, thereby helping to break decades of North Korean government indoctrination. The ROK population and the international community also need to understand that the North Korean regime is the villain in such cases.

One challenge of this ROK/US approach is in demanding that many denuclearization steps be essentially irreversible, while primarily offering North Korea reversible benefits. For example, the ROK/US will want the North Korean uranium enrichment centrifuges to be destroyed while offering humanitarian aid or security guarantees that can be discontinued at any time. North Korea complained about a similar disconnect in US/British negotiations and eventual interactions with Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, the US and its allies eventually acting counter to the security guarantees made to Gaddafi.

The ROK/US can provide incentives for North Korea by taking relatively irreversible steps such as the repair of North Korean infrastructure, and of its electrical grid in particular. While not irreversible, such repairs would be effective for a long time, and are necessary before any major effort at electrical power production in or delivery to North Korea can be very meaningful. And since electrical power would improve the life and economic circumstances of even the North Korean elite, such repairs would be of great value to the North Korean regime. They would moreover significantly facilitate eventual unification.

### Collecting information

To truly denuclearize North Korea, the ROK/US must learn far more about the North Korean nuclear weapon program. There are several ways that this can be done. The most productive way is to secure several senior

defectors from the North Korean nuclear weapon program. Defectors would be able to tell the ROK/US about the level of North Korean nuclear technology, how many nuclear weapons have been produced, where nuclear-related facilities are located (including uranium enrichment facilities other than at Yongbyon), who the prominent North Korean nuclear scientists are, and the problems being experienced by the nuclear program. Without this information, the ROK/US may not be able to truly stop the North Korean uranium enrichment program—North Korea might not reveal all of its facilities and continue to operate those that are not discovered. The more senior scientists will likely have more of this information than other scientists.

By analogy, in the late-1980s the United States thought that the Soviet Union had terminated its biological weapon programs, consistent with its obligations under the Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention. But in the early 1990s the United States acquired two Soviet senior scientist defectors from their biological weapons program, and they provided the United States with information on the reality of Soviet activities and the action necessary to counter the Soviet program.

Securing the required defectors may be difficult, but could be done in various ways. For example, the ROK/US could warn North Korea that if it does another nuclear weapons test, the ROK/US will begin seeking such defectors. If North Korea then does a nuclear test, the ROK/US could send massive quantities of leaflets into the area around the Yongbyon nuclear facility and other North Korean nuclear facilities. The leaflets could offer to pay North Korean defectors from the nuclear program 5 billion Korean won (or some other number) for senior scientists and 2 billion Korean won for mid-level scientists. Of course, the ROK/US authorities would need to

be alert against North Korean agents who planned to provide false information. But real defectors could provide information that the ROK/US have not had, likely causing Kim Jong-Il severe distress. To retain as much secrecy as possible on his program, Kim Jong-Il could be forced to change operating locations and other aspects of the nuclear weapons program, something that would slow North Korean nuclear weapon production. And yet even then he would never have the same level of secrecy again because the ROK/US would know about the North Korean level of progress and who the key people are, things Kim Jong-Il could not change without severely disrupting the program.

The ROK/US should also plan to increase and improve the information collection pursued against North Korea. UAVs should be used to sustain more continuous coverage of suspected geographic areas in North Korea, and advanced sensors could improve the information collected. Communications in North Korea could be monitored to identify key players in the North Korean nuclear programs and collect information from them and about them. North Korean personnel associated with the nuclear program (not necessarily the senior scientists) could be approached when traveling outside of North Korea and offered large amounts of money in exchange for information. And special intelligence compilation and verification authorities need to be employed to synthesize the information collected into more comprehensive observations.

### Plans and Actions for Preparing for Unification

A North Korean government collapse would lead to starvation and insecurity in the North. Divided into factions, the North Korean military could use its power to seize available food and other supplies and to fight

other factions to obtain their supplies. These conditions would lead to large numbers of internally displaced persons who eventually become refugees attempting to cross the border into China or the ROK. The Chinese do not want such refugees, and could intervene to stop the flow toward their border.

A North Korean collapse could be the ideal opportunity for the ROK to achieve unification. Indeed, the ROK would want to intervene into such a collapse to also resolve the humanitarian disaster. But neither Korea is well prepared for such a situation. Most North Koreans are not convinced that unification would be in their interest. Indeed, many in North Korea, and especially the elite, appear to fear that unification would be a disaster for them personally. If North Koreans approach unification from this perspective, the ROK could face considerable opposition from the North Korean military and security services initially, including open warfare. And even once open warfare ends, opposition could transition to a North Korean insurgency and/or criminal (black market) activity could disrupt stability much as the United States experienced in Iraq. As the ROK forces decline in numbers in coming years because of adverse demographics,<sup>109)</sup> it is not clear that the ROK will have sufficient forces to defeat open opposition and then stop the insurgency/criminal activity.

The ROK and US must therefore cooperate to prepare for unification. They must convince the North Korean people and especially the elites that

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109) The ROK has one of the lowest birthrates in the world, and this pattern began in the 1980s. Since almost all ROK young men serve in the military, most as draftees, the declining age cohorts mean that the ROK military will become smaller. In addition, the conscription period has declined from 26 months for the ROK Army to 21 months. Thus, the ROK military of roughly 690,000 in 2000 has now declined to less than 650,000 today, and is programmed to fall to around 520,000 in 2020 and perhaps 450,000 by 2025. See Bruce W. Bennett, *A Brief Analysis of the ROK's Defense Reform Plan*, RAND, OP-165, done for the Korean National Assembly and distributed by them in Korean, December 2005.

unification is in their interest. The North Koreans need to perceive that the have a future with unification, a future that includes food and medicine and jobs and many other things that are inadequate in North Korea today. To accomplish this, the ROK/US need to prepare the food and delivery means to reach the North Korean people, and demonstrate to the North Koreans that they want to provide this aid and are prepared to do so. They need to have concepts for providing jobs. They need to sustain at least some privileges of the elite to convince them that unification will at least provide as good a life if not a better life for them. While the ROK/US need to make many preparations to achieve these outcomes, they also need to actively mount strategic communications to convince the North Koreans of these concepts.

### Responding to NK Provocations

The ROK/US will try to deter North Korean provocations while pursuing negotiations, but they will likely fail to deter all provocations. The material above suggests several means for responding to North Korean provocations, including significant reductions in humanitarian aid, solicitation of defectors, and generally citing North Korea as violating its commitments. All of these actions and more should be mounted to deter North Korean provocations and respond to them.

Many in the ROK wish to seriously respond to future North Korean provocations, to attack North Korea in response to North Korean attacks. ROK/US unwillingness to pursue such attacks has likely been one reason why the numerous North Korean provocations over the years have not escalated into broader war. If the ROK does pursue serious retaliation to future North Korean provocations, the ROK/US will need to have a

concept for managing the potential escalation that North Korea will pursue. If that escalation gets out of control, a major war could result which could also eventually lead to Korean unification, but at a much higher price in terms of lives lost and damage done on both sides, and a higher likelihood of long-term instability in North Korea. Such outcomes are not desired.

### Conclusions

To date, the ROK and the United States have focused on negotiations as the means for resolving the very serious North Korean nuclear weapon threat. But few people anticipate that negotiations with North Korea will lead to denuclearization: Nuclear weapons are just too valuable to the North Korean regime. Therefore an alternative approach must be pursued to denuclearizing North Korea.

While ROK-led unification appears to be the ultimate solution, neither Korea is prepared for that outcome today. The alternative solution is an interim approach that combines partial denuclearization of North Korea with preparing for unification. This approach would specifically target the North Korean uranium enrichment program, seeking to stop it and thereby prevent significant growth in the number of North Korean nuclear weapons. It would also seek information on the North Korean nuclear weapon program that has to date proven difficult to secure. Meanwhile it would prepare the conditions for unification, including convincing North Koreans (and especially the elite) that life will be good for them post-unification: they will have the food and jobs and other aspects of life that many lack today, while retaining some advantages for the elites. And this food and its delivery means and jobs for North Koreans must also be prepared. The details of such an effort need to be developed.

## IV. South Korea' s Policy Options toward North Korea

Young-June Park

### Introduction

On November 23, 2010, North Korean artillery shelled the Yeonpyeong Island, accusing that South Korean armed forces held the military exercises there. Upon sudden direct attack which has not existed since the end of the Korean War in 1953, South Korean Marine forces responded with counter artillery barrage toward North Korean military bases. However, two South Korean marines and two civilians were killed in the midst of fire attack from North Korea. Prior to that attack, North Korea also attacked a South Korean warship offshore from that island in March 2010. That attack, according to the final report of international inspection team which was released in May, was done by torpedo of North Korean submarines. Like these, military provocations by North Korea have increased these days.

Furthermore, Pyongyang continued to develop its nuclear program by conducting nuclear tests two times in 2006 and in 2009. In June 2009, Foreign Ministry of North Korea issued a statement by saying that its technology of uranium enrichment was successful so as to enter into an experiment step. Subsequently, North Korea unveiled its centrifuge facilities to the delegates from the United States including Dr. Siegfried S.Hecker, director of International Security Cooperation at Stanford University and former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory.<sup>110)</sup>

These are manifest evidences that North Korea is attempting to acquire the uranium enrichment technology in addition to plutonium reprocessing technology. In addition, North Korea continued to develop long-range missile capabilities by launching Taepodong missile in 1998.

Given that, why has North Korea repeatedly waged military provocations to South Korea recently? Why does North Korea continue to develop nuclear program? What is the strategic intention of North Korea? How can we define the state character of North Korea? And how should South Korea address these military provocations and nuclear development by North Korea? This paper tries to review previous studies and policies on these issues and suggest comprehensive approaches to induce North Korea into more open and peaceful nation.

## 1. The state character of North Korea

It has been said that a political system has influenced a lot on each country's foreign behavior. For example, since the publication of Immanuel Kant's *Eternal Peace*, democratic political system has been characterized as more peaceful rather than tyranny or monarchical political system. On the state character of North Korea, North Korea itself declared that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is an independent socialist country<sup>111</sup>). However, lots of scholars do not accept this definition by saying that North Korea differed from ordinary socialist countries.<sup>112</sup>)

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110) David E.Sanger and Joseph Berger, "Arms Bid Seen in New North Korea Plant" *New York Times*, November 22, 2010.

111) Clause 1 of the Constitution of North Korea. North Korean scholars explained that North Korea established its socialist system till the middle of 1960s. See Park Tae-ho, *The History of Foreign Relations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea 2 (in Korean)* (Pyongyang:Sahoigwahak chulpansa, 1987), p.1.

112) Jong Seok Lee, "The Next Kim: Prospects for Peace in Korea" *Global Asia*, vol.5, no.4

Instead, experts on North Korean affairs attempted to define the state character of North Korea in various ways.

Conservative scholars or policy makers are defining North Korea as a failing state or rogue state.<sup>113)</sup> Based on this definition, they underscore the brinkmanship diplomacy by North Korea or foresee the likelihood of regime failure in the end. However, this kind of characterization seemed to lack more precise analysis of Pyongyang's internal dynamics as well as external behavior.

Jacques E.C.Hyman defined North Korea as a neopatrimonial or sultanistic state in that it has been characterized by personality cult and clientalism.<sup>114)</sup> As a sultanistic state, according to Hymans, North Korea has been governed by a father-figure like the traditional Confucius countries. North Korean leadership has showed a tendency of oppositional nationalism; it felt the sense of fear to other countries; simultaneously it represented its nationalism in the form of Juche or Songun (military first) ideology.

Similar observation can be found in the work of Dr. Jong Seok Lee who was one of top advisers to former President Roh Moo-Hyun as a director of National Security Council and a Minister of Unification. Dr. Lee explained that North Korea is characterized as monolithic political system (Yuilcheje) which has been established since 1967. <sup>115)</sup>In that system,

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(Winter, 2010), p.78.

113) President George W. Bush referred North Korea as one of rogue states in 2002. Also see Bruce Bennett, "Defining Proactive Deterrence" seminar presentation at Korea National Defense University on April 20, 2011.

114) Jacques E.C. Hyman, "Assessing North Korean Nuclear Intentions and Capacities: A new Approach" *Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol.8, no.2 (May-August, 2008), p.274. According to Hyman, already Juan J. Linz observed North Korea as a sultanistic regime. See Houchnag E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz, eds., *Sultanistic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

Great Leader himself is brain, whereas most of the people are limb who should obey to the leader. Great leader is the apex of whole nation and society, like the sun over the solar system. The obedience to the Great Leader is the most important virtue for all the people in North Korea. The cult of personality has been justified in the context of Juche ideology.

By the way, Focusing on the external behaviors of North Korea, Dr. Seung-Ji Woo tried to categorize North Korea as a revisionist state in contrast to the status quo state. Dr. Woo explained that North Korea has pursued the change of existing order on the Korean peninsula as well as on international arena as a revisionist state.<sup>116)</sup>

Given that North Korea can be categorized as monolithic or sultanistic state which pursues a change of its external surroundings. Every military or diplomatic activity by it can be roughly interpreted as measures to elevate the glory of its Great Leader in the one hand and to change its environment in line with its national interests in the other hand. I will survey this issue more thoroughly in next chapter.

## 2. The North Korean Leadership Changes and its External Behaviors

### 1) The Rise of Kim Jong-Il as a new Leader and the Development of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the late 1990s and early 2000s

Kim Jong-Il became the practical national leader in 1998 after concluding three-years funeral ceremony for his father, late President Kim Il-Sung. However, right after taking power, Kim Jong-Il found that his

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115) Jong Seok Lee, *op.cit.*,p.78.

116) Seung-Ji Woo, "Is North Korea a revisionist state?: A hypothesis for the analysis of North Korean state character" a paper presented at the seminar by the Department of International Relations of the Seoul National University, May 21, 2011.

position as a supreme leader was surrounded by unfavorable situations; natural disasters assaulted North Korea; lots of people suffered from poverty and famine; traditional allies such as Russia and China already kept a distant position from North Korea by normalizing their diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea. Economically and diplomatically, North Korea was impoverished isolated. However, from his father, Kim Jong-Il inherited the sultanistic state-system in which supreme leader should be a position of head in the entire state. His legitimacy should be elevated to the highest point of that state by exerting internal or external power.

It was not accident that we witnessed the frequent launching of long-distance missiles in the late 1990s. North Korea fired long-range missile, Taepodong 1, in 1998 which crossed the Japanese archipelago. By brandishing high-level military technology, North Korea intended to fortify new leader's leadership and prestige internally and externally. North Korea gradually moved to the development of nuclear weapons. Pyongyang declared that it will depart from the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003. And, North Korea began to test its nuclear warheads in 2006 and in 2009, demonstrating its capability to make nuclear bombs with the explosive force of 20 kilo ton. Based on these technologies, North Korea seemed to devote its energies not only to develop lighter and smaller warheads which can be loaded on ballistic missiles, but also to devise a uranium enrichment technology.

In June 2009, North Korean Foreign Ministry declared that it would embark on the uranium enrichment as well as weaponizing the extracted plutonium. In June and July of 2010, North Korea Foreign Ministry repeatedly referred to the fortification of nuclear deterrent capability by a new method. After his visit to North Korea in November 2010, Dr.

Siegfried S. Hecker of Stanford University reported that he witnessed over 2,000 centrifuges in Yeongbyon, a facility which could enrich uranium.<sup>117)</sup>

By developing nuclear weapons, North Korea intended to elevate its leader's prestige and leadership internally and externally. These military activities naturally gave birth to the challenge to the existing norms and regimes concerning nuclear weapons. Such an attempt by North Korea to develop and fortify nuclear weapons capability poses three-fold challenges to existing arrangements surrounding Korean peninsula. First, it challenges to the existing agreement between the two Koreas. In 1991, the two Koreas already issued a Joint Statement on Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in 1991. In that statement, South and North Korea promised not to experiment, produce, possess, deploy and use the nuclear weapons. In light of this agreement, Pyongyang's endeavor to develop nuclear weapons is manifest challenge to existing nuclear arrangement by the two Koreas. Second, it poses severe challenges to the existing agreement and norms among major countries in East Asia. In September 2005 and in February 2007, all the participants in the Six Party Talks released joint statement on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In these September 19 or February 13 agreements, North Korea pledged to scrap all the nuclear development programs in return for gradual economic assistance and diplomatic normalization with it from other member countries. However, by continuing its nuclear development program, North Korea is challenging to the existing norms in East Asian nuclear order. Finally, on the world arena, there have been diverse norms and rules to regulate the development of nuclear weapons and spread of nuclear

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117) David E. Sanger and Joseph Berger, "Arms Bid Seen in New North Korea Plant" *New York Times*, November 22, 2010.

materials such as the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, North Korea does not join the CTBT till now and expressed its intention to withdraw from the NPT in 2003. It implies that North Korea is emerging as a revisionist state to the existing nuclear order in the international arena.

Concerning the real intention of nuclear development program by North Korea, many experts, such as Victor Cha and David Kang, pointed out that North Korea is propelling nuclear program to utilize it as a tool for coercive diplomacy or to keep its balancing position in the post cold war environment.<sup>118)</sup> Narushige Michishita, Japanese expert on North Korean military affairs, also explained that the nuclear program by North Korea intended to beef up its deterrent capability against the United States as well as to induce more economic assistance and eventual diplomatic normalization with the U.S. and Japan.<sup>119)</sup>

Admitting the pertinence of this realistic viewpoint, it should be noted that any military or strategic behaviors by North Korea is closely related to the leadership of its Great Leader. In sum, based on the view that North Korea can be defined as sultanistic or monolithic state, all the military operations or all the important strategic decisions like the nuclear development in North Korea has been under direct control of its paramount leader, Kim Jong-il. Without his approval, any military activities or any strategic decisions could not be possible with the exceptional case of a

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118) Victor Cha and David Kang, *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies* (2003), Jacques E.C. Hymasn, *op.cit.*, p.261.

119) Narushige Michishita, "The 13 February Action Plan and the Prospects for the North Korean Nuclear Issue", a paper which was presented at the international conference by the Korea Association of International Studies with the title of North Korean Strategic Choice after Nuclear Test and February 13 Agreement and the Future of the Korean Peninsula . April 16, 2007.

military coup against him.

Unfortunately, in essence, North Korea is challenging to the stability of the Korean peninsula and the international nuclear order by provoking military provocations in the NLL area and by developing nuclear weapons. Then, what are strategic intentions of North Korea? Is it be a just rogue state? Or is it a rational choice to perform some strategic objectives?

## 2) The Rise of Kim Jong-Un and the Military Provocations on the NLL area

Kim Jong-il is trying to hand over his absolute power to his youngest son, Kim Jong-un who is said to be just 27, 29 years-old. The youngest son was inaugurated as the General of the North Korean Army as well as deputy commissioner of the ruling Workers Party's Military Commission in September 2010. However his father might be well aware that the exceptionally rapid promotion of his youngest son in his late twenties could ignite a political backlash among power groups in North Korea, where strong Confucius tradition revering the elders still remains. Being aware of these latent problems, the supreme leader would feel the necessity to elevate his son's legitimacy as a leader in the North Korean military as well as in the ordinary public.<sup>120)</sup> Kim Jong-un is said to be majoring in military science, especially artillery tactics, during his school days at the Kim Il-Sung Military University. Considering his military career, adamant artillery attack to the South Korean marine bases could probably attribute to the younger Kim's genius-like military craft. That is the reason why North Korean armed forces seemed to challenge the existing order surrounding the Northern Limit Line (NLL) area by waging limited warfare

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120) On the similar view, see Jong Seok Lee, *op.cit.*,p.79.

against South Korea.

The NLL was established in August 1953 to set the limit line for the activities of US warships and air planes by the United Nations Commander General Mark W. Clark at that time.<sup>121)</sup> North Korea did not express any opposition to it till the early 1970s. However, North Korea began to take a defiant attitude to the presence of this line from 1973, when North Korea enacted a Law on Territorial Water which included the NLL area into North Korean boundary of territorial sea. At the 346th Military Armistice Commission which was held in December 1973, North Korea urged that every ROK's and UNC's ships sailing to the NLL area should get prior permission from North Korean authorities. In response to it, South Korea began to take a *sasu* (defense to the death) policy for the protection of the NLL area from 1974 onwards.<sup>122)</sup>

The latent conflict between the two Koreas on the issue of the NLL was temporarily resolved in 1991 when North and South Korea issued a Joint Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchange and Cooperation. In that Basic Agreement, the two Koreas agreed that they would preserve the practical demarcation line till a final agreement on maritime buffer zone will be established. But, despite this agreement, North Korea unilaterally declared the West Sea Military Demarcation Line in July 1999. Even North Korean Navy attacked South Korean patrol-ships on that region in 1999 and in 2002 successively.

Right after the Lee Myung-bak administration's taking power in 2008, the headquarters of the North Korean Navy announced that the NLL became a ghost line. On January 30, 2009, the North Korean Committee

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121) Nan Kim, "Korea on the Brink: Reading the Yonpyong Shelling and its Aftermath" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.70,no.2(May, 2011),p.339.

122) Nan Kim, *op.cit*, p.341.

on the National Peaceful Unification issued a unilateral statement that they would scrap related clauses on the legal status of the NLL, which was included in the Joint Statement between the two Koreas ratified in 1992.<sup>123)</sup> Furthermore, the representative of the North Korean Armed Forces at Panmunjeom declared that they could not guarantee the safety of South Korean ships passing through the NLL areas.<sup>124)</sup> In addition, the headquarters of North Korean Navy posed a verbal threat to South Korea by saying that they would make the NLL area a site of its artillery exercises.<sup>125)</sup>

It should be noted that, in February 2009, General Kim Kyok-sik, then the chief of staff of the North Korean Armed Forces and one of close entourages to Kim Jong-il, moved, not demoted, to the commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Armed Corps which controls the south-western coast of North Korea.<sup>126)</sup> We can notice that the military provocations by North Korea remarkably increased after General Kim's appointment as the supreme military commander of this region, including its attack on South Korean patrol ships in November 2009, the Cheonan incident in March 2010, and the Yeonpyeong Island shelling in November 2010. In a nutshell, North Korea intended to override South Korea's sovereign control of the NLL area and its neighboring islands.

In sum, waging of military attacks to South Korea on the NLL area has been used as a tool to augment the new leader's prestige and legitimacy in North Korea. Continuing the nuclear development program or conducting another nuclear test can also be a good event to consolidate

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123) JoongAng Daily, January 31, 2009.

124) JoongAng Daily, May 28, 2009.

125) JoongAng Daily, December 22, 2009.

126) JoongAng Daily, March 17, 2009.

new sultan's prestige and leadership

### 3. South Korea's Strategic Options toward North Korea

Given that North Korea is pursuing the strategy of elevating its rising leader's prestige and legitimacy by posing a threat of limited warfare or continuing the nuclear development program to South Korea, how should Seoul respond to it? Thus far, plural sets of policies toward North Korea have been suggested and implemented by South Korea and the United States.

#### 1) Engagement Policy

Some experts insisted that the United States and South Korea should take engagement policy toward North Korea focusing on the continuation of dialogue and diplomatic contacts. Former South Korean government officials who were deeply involved in the implementation of Sunshine policy continue to vindicate this policy. Dr. Jong Seok Lee, former Minister of Unification serving President Roh Moo-Hyun, supports the continuation of dialogue with North Korea to ease the military tensions during power transition period of North Korea.<sup>127)</sup> He asserted that South Korea should mitigate the bellicosity of North Korea and eventually convert it from rogue state to a normal state by opening bilateral dialogue as well as resuming multilateral talks.<sup>128)</sup>

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127) Jong Seok Lee, "The Next Kim: Prospects for Peace in Korea" *Global Asia*, vol.5, no.4 (Winter, 2010), p.81. Mr. Bong-Jo Lee, former vice minister of Unification, also urged the return to dialogue track with North Korea to resolve the current stalemate at the seminar which was held by the Research Institute for National Security Affairs of the KNDU. July 21, 2011.

128) Jong-Yun Bae pointed out that every Korean administration since 1960s has pursued an

Among the American policy makers and scholars, we can also find many supporters for engagement policy toward North Korea. After finishing his visit to Pyongyang in August 2010, former President Jimmy Carter maintained that the US should resume dialogue with North Korea because Pyongyang really wanted the peaceful normalization with the U.S.<sup>129)</sup> Mr. Donald Gregg, former ambassador to South Korea, also concurred Carter's opinion. He urged the necessity of resuming diplomatic talks with North Korea raising criticism to Obama administration's stance of strategic patience to Pyongyang.<sup>130)</sup> Chinese scholars, such as Dr. Jin Jingyi, also advocated the maintenance of dialogue with North Korea, pointing out that Lee Myung-bak administration is intending to topple Pyeongyang regime.<sup>131)</sup>

However, lots of South Korean people remembered that the engagement policy with the name of the so-called 'sun-shine policy' by the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations did not result in any desirable results. Despite summit meetings and the issuance of the joint statements

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engagement policy toward North Korea. Jong-Yun Bae, "South Korean Strategic Thinking toward North Korea: The Evolution of Engagement Policy and Its Impact upon U.S.-Rok Relations" *Asian Survey*, vol.59, no.2(2010),pp.340-341.

129) Jimmy Carter, "North Korea Wants to Make a Deal" *New York Times*, September 16, 2010.

130) Donald P. Gregg, "Testing North Korean Waters" *New York Times*, August 31, 2010. Similar opinions were put forth by several journalists. See Joel S. Wit, "Don't Sink Diplomacy" *The New York Times*, May 19, 2010. Leon V. Sigal, "Sinking Strategy" *International Herald Tribune*, May 29-30, 2010. Even Mr. Selig S. Harrison made a case that the U.S. and South Korea should redraw the NLL line, moving it to the south, and the U.S. should held a peace negotiation with North Korea and China to replace the current armistice state on the Korean peninsula. Selig S. Harrison and John H. Cushman, "Drawing a Line in the Water" *New York Times*, December 13, 2010. But Mr. Harrison's viewpoint, reflecting North Korea's official position, does not take South Korea's policy into consideration concerning the NLL and a peace negotiation at all and turn a deaf ear to the real causes of the military provocations on the North Korean part.

131) Jin Jingyi, "A Time for Calmer Minds to Prevail" *Global Asia*, vol.5, no.2 (Summer, 2010), pp.73-74.

between the two Koreas in 2000 and in 2007 respectively, North Korea did not give up its nuclear development program. Furthermore plenty of North Korean people are still suffering from famine and food shortage. As Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland exactly pointed out, ruling groups in North Korea have eagerly shown the addiction to the benefits from the economic aid projects from the outside world, not paying attention to the issue of real economic development for the benefit of general people.<sup>132)</sup> In such circumstances, the effects and benefits from an engagement policy toward Pyongyang would not convert into the practical improvement of the ordinary people's life as well as a critical change of the North Korean political system. In sum, Engagement policy cannot change the North Korean sultanistic political system itself which has been given birth the challenging external behavior.

## 2) Coercive Policy

As an alternative to engagement policy, more coercive policy by economic or military means toward Pyongyang could be considered. In fact, South Korea, the United States and Japan began to impose a more strict economic sanction on North Korea right after the passage of the UN Security Council's resolution 1874. Every export to North Korea has been controlled and the ships departing from the ports of North Korea could be under strict scrutiny by international inspection. Obama administration's posture of strategic patience is an expression of the enduring will of the coercive policy.

However, in the process of its implementation, the coercive policy

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132) Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "Sanctioning North Korea: The Political Economy of Denuclearization and Proliferation" *Asian Survey*, vol.50,no.3 (2010).

reveals some problems. First of all, China, the only ally of Pyongyang, hesitated to join the frontline of the coercive policy, continuing to provide its economic and energy aid to North Korea. Without China's active participation, the coercive policy could not result in desirable change in North Korea. In addition, the coercive policy could not directly inflict loss upon the North Korean ruling elite groups. Instead, they have converted the loss and suffering from external sanctions to general peoples under the banner of self-reliance strategy.

Raising the limitations of the coercive policy, plural experts of South Korea and the United States promulgate more targeted coercive options toward North Korea. Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind proposed a changed coercive policy targeting the core-elite groups in North Korea by implementing the embargo of luxury items to North Korea and the freeze of overseas assets.<sup>133)</sup> Furthermore they urged a likelihood of an all-out war against North Korea as a possible option for the United States and South Korea. In parallel with this claim, Dr. Park Hwee-rak, former ROK Army's colonel, also urged that South Korea should prepare a preemptive attack option toward North Korea to clear away its nuclear weapons. According to him, deleting the North Korean nuclear weapons by preemptive attack would be better for South Korean people than being imposed by constant nuclear threats by Pyeongyang.<sup>134)</sup>

Furthermore, Dr. Lind, in a seminar which was held in November 2010 at the Fletcher School, suggested a joint military preparation between the

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133) Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind, "Pyongyang's strategy: Tools of Authoritarian Control in North Korea", *International Security*, vol.35, no.1 (Summer 2010).

134) Park Hwee-rak, "Search for Options against North Korean Nuclear Capability"(in Korean), *The Research for Defense Policy*, vol.27, no.2 (Summer, 2011),pp.118-120. He pointed out that Israeli's preemptive attacks to Iraqi nuclear facilities in 1981 and to Syria's nuclear reactor in 2007 were eventually recognized by international society.

U.S. and South Korea in the case of benign collapse of the North Korean regime. In such circumstance, she asked the South Korean armed forces to form special task-forces, with the close collaboration with the U.S. armed forces, which will be responsible for roles of stabilization in North Korea, dissolution of the North Korean armed forces, discarding of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the border control of North Korea alongside China and Russia.<sup>135)</sup> Considering the present difficulties and missions of the U.S. armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan during and after the war on terrorism, South Korea needs to pay attention to Lind's policy suggestions. But, the scenario of an all-out war against North Korea, even though it could bring out an eventual military victory by South Korea and the United States, could cost too much for Seoul which has accomplished considerable economic development since the armistice of the Korean War.

In a nut-shell, coercive policy from foreign countries reversely can consolidate North Korea's leadership. By stressing the external security threats, North Korean leader can extract more support and resources from its impoverished people who are located in the paucity of information.

### 3) A New Approach: Strategic Engagement Options

And then, what strategy should South Korea take to resolve the North Korean problems; ease the tension on the disputed sea areas between the two Koreas, get North Korea to scrap its nuclear development program, and eventually induce it to be more opened country to international society. Taking North Korea's state character into consideration, we can reach some consensus on North Korea's future strategy and behaviors; North Korean

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135) Jennifer Lind, "The Collapse of North Korea: Military Missions and Requirements" which was presented at the seminar of the Fletcher School, Tufts University, in November 18, 2010.

leadership will want to fortify its new leader's position internally and externally; by provoking limited military provocations, North Korean leadership would like to consolidate new leader's prestige and capability as a military commander as well as political leader; by continuing nuclear development, North Korean leadership will try to take a leverage to induce economic assistance and diplomatic normalization from the United State and other major; it will also contribute a lot to consolidate the power base of a new sultan. .

Considering these strategy and intentions by North Korea, we can foresee the vicious cycle of constant military provocations, nuclear tests, and brinkmanship diplomacy by North Korean sultanistic leadership in the future. For South Korea, this scenario cannot be acceptable. Our strategic option should be aimed to sever this vicious cycle at some points. In that sense, strategic engagement option should be adopted as our policy prescription toward sultanistic North Korea. This option consists of multiple approaches to deter further North Korean military provocations, nuclear development, and brinkmanship diplomacy.

To deter further military provocation by North Korea using limited warfare or asymmetrical weapons, South Korea should strengthen its military capability focusing on surveillance, missile defense, and strategic targeting capabilities.<sup>136)</sup> At the same time, we should mitigate the bellicosity of North Korean new leadership by holding strategic dialogues with North Korea bilaterally and multilaterally. Furthermore, we should aim at a gradual regime evolution by alternative political powers in North Korea. To put it differently, we should foster change in North Korean

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136) Bruce Bennett, "New Ways are needed to deter provocations" *Global Asia*, vol.5, no.2 (Summer, 2010),p.76. See also Bruce Bennett, "Defining Proactive Deterrence" presentation at the seminar which was held at the Korea National Defense University on April 20, 2011.

internal politics to bring about a new political leadership who will propel the economic reform as well as stabilize its external relations by discarding its nuclear program in return for economic or energy assistance from the outside world.

In fact, this strategy of gradual regime evolution is not new to concerned experts on the Korean peninsula. Richard N. Haass, former director of the Policy Planning in the State Department, already explained two types of the U.S. foreign strategies which had been applied to the adversaries of the United States: according to him, the United States pursued the strategy of regime change against Germany and Japan during the Second World War period; and the U.S. patiently adopted the strategy of regime evolution toward the Soviet Union during the long cold war period.<sup>137)</sup> He urged that the U.S. should take the strategy of regime evolution toward North Korea by disseminating information on the developed outer world into North Korea or using China's influence upon Pyongyang. Dr. Andrei Lankov also suggested a necessity of forging alternative political groups in North Korea by adopting the tactful combination of engagement and subversion.<sup>138)</sup> Based upon the experience of the collapse of the Eastern bloc's regime, he maintained that information diffusion into North Korea by means of radio, DVD, and internet can be a catalyst to change the North Korean people's perception to the outer world and this can result in a driving force to conduct political reform. When a sunshine policy, the representative engagement policy by Seoul toward North Korea, was originally formulated, one of its planners called it a strategy to dissolve the cold-war structure on the Korean peninsula.<sup>139)</sup> A new strategy of forming an

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137) Richard N. Haass, "Regime Change and Its Limits" *Foreign Affairs*, vol.84, no.4 (Jul/Aug 2005).

138) Andrei Lankov, "Changing North Korea" *Foreign Affairs*, vol.88, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2009).

alternative political power in North Korea by dissemination of information can be called a strategy of dissolving the autocratic and closed political regime in Pyongyang.

#### 4. Conclusion: Some Policy Suggestions

This strategy of forming an alternative political power in North Korea has some benefits compared to the coercive strategy or all-out war strategy. First of all, the conscious North Korean people themselves would decide their eventual political system and their destiny so that it will not cost too much burden to South Korea and neighboring countries. The North Korean people's economic conditions can be improved if new rising political powers would take more opened and dynamic reform measures. If new political powers would want to develop its economy and stabilize its foreign relations, it will discard the nuclear development program in return for the massive economic assistance from outside worlds. If this scenario would come true, it will greatly benefit North Korea as well as the surrounding countries in terms of economy and security.

To accomplish this scenario, South Korea should seek a multi-layered and consistent strategy toward North Korea and other concerned countries. First, South Korea should take measures of a public diplomacy using various contacts with the North Korean technocrats, diplomats, scholars, students, and general people. By disseminating the real information on South Korea and outer worlds, South Korea should help them have more balanced views on their own political system and society. Especially the

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139) Im Dong-won, *Peace Maker: Twenty Years North-South Relations and North Korean Nuclear Issues* (In Korean)(Seoul: JoongAng Books, 2008). Mr. Im served as the national security adviser and the Minister of National Unification during the Kim Dae-jung administration from 1998 to 2002.

South Korean should inform them how South Korea could accomplish the industrialization and democratization overcoming the oppressive political system and underdeveloped economic system through last decades. An enlightened knowledge about the South Korea's experience among the North Korean people can be a catalyst to change their society inherently and gradually.

To conduct this public diplomacy, South Korea should harness the various channels with North Korea such as socio-cultural exchanges, academic exchanges, diplomatic contacts, and even economic contacts. In that sense, the maintenance of the Kaesung Industrial Complex, cautious contacts with North Korean professional figures, and a dissemination of DVD, radio, and cellular-phones can be utilized as tools of a propaganda or public diplomacy toward North Korea. These mutual or multi-level contacts should be cautiously coordinated in terms of a subversive strategy toward North Korea.

Second, to deter possible military threats from North Korea afterwards, the South Korean armed forces should strengthen its defense posture with the close collaboration with the United States. If Pyongyang attempted military provocations again, Seoul should retaliate without hesitation on the spot. Furthermore, South Korea should prepare to provide a support to North Korea if an alternative political power would ask some assistance to develop and stabilize their societies in the future.

In that sense, as Professor Lankov put it, the defectors from North Korea can play an important role to change North Korea into a more developed and democratic society in the case of gradual evolution by alternative political powers. Defectors from North Korea who have a plenty of knowledge about that society as well as experience in the South Korean

society can contribute a lot to guide the North Korean people in going forward into a democratic and capitalist system. To utilize the latent capabilities of defectors, more tailored re-education program for them should be devised and implemented.

Third, to conduct a changed policy toward North Korea, an understanding and cooperation from neighboring countries like the United States, Japan, China, and Russia will be indispensable. To propel the stable regime evolution within the North Korean society, South Korea should maintain a close cooperation with concerned countries, through bilateral or multilateral strategic-dialogue framework.

Reviewing the modern history of great transformation in the East Asian region including the Meiji Restoration in the late 19th century, the modernization of South Korea after the 1960s and the reform of China after the 1980s, the peaceful and evolutionary change of North Korea cannot be possible without the considerable presence of enlightened elite groups and peoples there. To forge such groups in North Korea, a more progressive approach to Pyongyang should be taken to change the people's mind and perception to its own country and the outer world.

## V. Conclusion

It is not an easy task for international society to make a rogue state to relinquish its nuclear capabilities. Since the 1970s, only South Africa, Ukraine, and Libya eventually gave up their nuclear capabilities in return for other benefits from international society. However, India, Pakistan, Israel, etc, have not changed their policy to maintain nuclear capabilities in resistance to international pressure. What path will Pyongyang follow in the future after their nuclear tests?

North Korean nuclear ambition is a triple betrayal. First, it jettisoned its promise with the ROK not to have a nuclear warhead by concluding the Basic Agreement together in 1991. Second, Pyongyang did not abide by the NPT treaty by conducting its nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009. Third, North Korea violated its agreement with the US and Japan not to conduct nuclear tests as well as long-range missile tests by launching its missiles and conducting nuclear tests for the past decades.

North Korea must stop all its attempts to develop nuclear capabilities and return to the NPT system and the Six party Talks. Eventual dismantling of North Korean nuclear capabilities has been a common goal for the ROK and the US. For the past decades, the ROK and the US have pursued diverse policies to induce Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear program. Sometimes the ROK and the US were cajoling North Korea by reaching an agreement in the Six Party talks; in return for gradual economic benefits, the ROK and the US were trying to induce North Korea to denuclearization. Other times, South Korea and the US were imposing sanctions on North Korea with the collaboration with the United Nations.

However, this kind of diplomatic or coercive policies does not bring a affirmative results yet. Military options including an all-out war against North Korea also cannot be a plausible policy considering dreadful result of it.

Given this, we must consider more long-term policy options such as gradual unification of the Korean peninsula or a gradual regime change from the under in North Korea as a way of dismantling its nuclear capabilities. Nuclear capabilities have represents a strong political will of political elite groups in a country. If North Korean political elite group find their interest to keep nuclear capabilities rather than discard it, they will not give up these valuable tools for the maintenance of their political power. Considering these political characters of nuclear capabilities in North Korea, we can say that an advent of another political elite group who will not find any interest in nuclear warheads will be an answer to the nuclear question in North Korea. This implies that we should prepare a situation of regime change in North Korea as a way of reaching a nuclear-free North Korea.

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# 북한 비핵화와 급변사태에 대한 한·미간 협력방안

박영준, 박민형, Bruce W. Bennett

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## I. 북한의 군사력과 핵 프로그램 : 평가 및 전망

### 1. 서론

- 본 연구는 북한의 군사력에 대한 평가와 예측을 그 주요 내용으로 하고 있음.
- 1994년 김정일 사후에 북한이 수 년 내로 붕괴될 것이라는 예측이 많았고, 심지어 어 한국 정부에서도 기정사실화 하는 분위기가 많았음.
- 이미 한반도에서 ‘남북간의 군사력 균형이 이루어졌다’ 또는 ‘남한이 미국과의 군사적 동맹과 압도적인 경제적 능력을 바탕으로 북한을 압도한다’라는 주장도 있음.
- 하지만, 2006년과 2009년 실시한 북한의 핵 실험과 천안함 폭침, 연평도 포격 사건을 통해 한반도 지역 안보의 불안감이 최고조에 이르고 있음.
- 즉, 북한에 의한 한반도내 안보 불안의 조성은 지속되고 있고, 실질적인 피해도 발생하고 있는 상태임.

### 2. 북한의 군사력에 대한 집착: 이론적 논의

- 이론적으로 위협을 판단할 때는 능력과 의도를 그 핵심 요소로 해서 판단할 수 있는데 북한은 능력적으로나 의도적으로 모두 한국 및 동북아 안보에 위협이라고 할 수 있음.
- 또, 위협 구분에 대한 한 연구에서는 위협을 능동적 위협 (active threat) 과 수동적 위협 (passive threat) 으로 나누어서 전자는 적에 대한 확실한

공격의도를 가지고 있거나 표현하는 경우, 수동적 위협은 즉시적이거나 잠재적으로 다른 국가에게 피해를 줄 수 있는 군사력을 보유하고 있을 경우라고 설명하고 있는데

- 이 구분에 의해서도 북한은 한반도는 물론 동북아 더 나아가 국제사회에서 위협적인 존재라고 할 수 있음.
- 이러한 배경을 바탕으로 해서 본 연구에서는 세 가지 research questions에 집중함.
  - 무엇이 북한의 군사적 도발과 군사력 건설에 집착하게 만들고 있는가?
  - 현재 북한의 군사력을 어떻게 평가해야 하는가?
  - 이러한 북한의 군사력에 대한 집착적인 성향에 대한 전망은 어떠한가?
- 북한이 군사력 건설에 집착하는 이유를 크게 내부적, 외부적 요인으로 구분
- 내부적 요인 : Ideology 과 군사전략 / 경제적 요인
  - 외부적 요인 : 정치적 고립 / 위협 인식

### 3. 북한의 군사력 평가

- 북한의 세부 군사력 현황은 재래식, 비대칭 위협 (미사일과 특수전 부대), 핵 프로그램으로 분리하였음.
- 재래식 무기의 경우 지금까지 많은 연구에서도 강조되었듯이 북한의 능력은 한국보다 양적으로 우세한 형국임. 이것을 좀 더 세분화해보면
  - 우선 전체 병력 수는 1,190,000 명으로 세계 4위 수준임. (육군: 1,020,000, 해군: 60,000, 공군 111,000).
  - 그러나 북한의 병력에서 좀 더 우리가 신중하게 분석할 필요가 있는데 지금까지 간과한 것은 예비 병력의 규모로써 북한의 예비 병력(교도대, 노동적위대, 붉은 청년 근위대, 준 군사조직)에 대해 한국 국방백서에는 총 7백7십만 정도로 분석하고 있는데 반해 military Balance 에서는 600,000 정도로 분석.

- 이는 Military Balance 의 경우 교도대에 대해서만 예비 병력으로 보기 때문임. 그러나 붉은 청년 근위대의 경우 1년에 300시간, 노농적위대의 경우 1년에 160시간을 훈련하는 것을 감안하면 엄연한 예비군 조직임을 간과해서는 안 됨.
- 게다가 북한의 경우 남한에 비해 상대적으로 긴 복무 기간을 가지고 있는데 육군의 경우 5-12년, 해군의 경우 5-10년, 공군의 경우 3-4년으로 알려져 있고, 5년 이상 군에 복무함으로써 소부대 전투기술 습득은 물론 사상무장 가능
  - 포병의 경우 재래식 무기 중 한국이 가장 열세임
  - 재래식 무기에 대한 취약함을 보완하기 위해 비대칭 전력에 집중 투자하고 있는데 그 중 미사일과 특수전 부대가 매우 위협적임
  - 우선 미사일의 경우 1970-1980년대에 탄도미사일 개발에 착수하여 1990년대 배치하기 시작하였는데 이중 대표적인 것이 사거리 300-500Km 인 스킨드 미사일과 노동미사일임
  - 현재 시험중인 대륙간 탄도 미사일인 대포동 2호가 실전 배치되면 미국본토의 안전도 위협 가능
  - 특수부대의 경우 한국 국방백서에는 200,000만명으로 예측하나 미국측 자료에는 80,000으로 계산하고 있음. 한국에서는 사, 군단급 경비병부대와 일반 보병으로 위장된 경비병 부대를 포함시키고 있으나 미국자료는 그렇지 않음.
  - 특수부대의 경우 전시 임무수행도 중요하지만, 평시 테러활동 및 국지전 성격의 도발에 가장 큰 역할을 할 것으로 판단됨

#### 4. 전망

- 지금까지 북한에 대한 수많은 국제사회의 제제가 있어왔음
- 남한에서는 포용정책의 기초가 지난 두 정권에서 유지되었고 국제적으로

- 는 6자회담의 형식으로 다자간 노력도 있어왔음
- 그러나 여전히 북한의 위협과 군사우선주의는 변화가 없음
- 이는 앞에서 분석한 네가지 요인이 해결되지 않았기 때문임
- 북한은 자신의 정권 유지 차원에서 국제사외에서 고립되지 않고 경제적 어려움이 타개되고 미국이 적대정책을 자신들에게 보여주지 않아야 군사우선주의를 포기할 것임.
- 그러나 이는 북한 정권의 변화가 수반되어야 하는 것임.
- 고립되지 않고 경제적 지원을 받기 위해서는 경제 개혁 및 군사노선 변경, 예를 들어 military first 에서 economy first 로 이동되어야 하는데 이 자체가 쉽지 않아 보임
- 결국 북한의 이러한 군사주의와 군사력에 대한 집착은 당분간 북한 정권에 변화가 없는 한 지속될 것임

## II. 북한 비핵화를 위한 미국의 인식과 정책

### 1. 왜 북한은 핵무기를 보유하는가

북한은 실패국가이다. 북한 지도자는 병약한 상태에 있다.  
따라서 북한은 핵무기 보유를 통해 국력을 과시하고자 하는 욕망을 가진다.  
핵무기는 북한에게 억제의 수단이기도 하다.

### 2. 위협평가

북한이 핵무기로 한국을 공격할 경우 막대한 피해가 예상됨  
1킬로톤의 핵능력을 가질 경우 5만-9만명 인명피해가 예상됨  
현재 북한은 플루토늄형 5-12개의 핵탄두를 갖고 있을 것으로 추정됨, 그외에  
우라늄농축형 핵탄두 개발도 진행하고 있음

북한 핵탄두는 그 자체로도 위협이고, 동북아시아 핵경쟁을 불러일으킬 수 있다는 점에서도 위협임

### 3. 비핵화를 위한 정책 선택

#### 1) 6자회담 등을 통한 북한 비핵화 추진 시도

그러나 북한은 외교적, 경제적 보상으로 핵무기를 포기하기에 그 전략적 유용성이 대단히 크다고 인식하고 있음

#### 2) 군사적 공격에 의한 비핵화

그러나 이 경우도 여러가지 난점 존재, 우선 북한 핵탄두 및 핵시설이 어디에 위치하는지 정확한 정보 부족

또한 공격정책은 그에 따르는 비용이 너무 큰 반면에 바라는 결과가 달성될런지는 불확실

#### 3) 한국에 의한 통일

한국은 NPT 회원국이어서 한국 주도에 의한 통일 경우 북한 핵을 폐기할 것으로 예상

그러나 통일 과정에서 반군 세력 등장하고 범죄 행위가 증가한다면 통일 어려워짐

#### 4) 부분적 협상, 통일 대비의 정책

전쟁을 회피하면서 점진적으로 통일을 향해 가는 시나리오

결국 한국이 주도하는 통일이 북한 핵위협을 해결하는 가장 궁극적인 해결책이 될 수 있음

다만 통일준비에는 장기간의 시간이 필요, 단기간의 목표가 되기에는 곤란

우선 단기적으로는 북한 핵을 비핵화하고, 협상을 통해 장기적 통일을 준비하는 것이 필요

### Ⅲ. 한국의 대북정책 선택

#### 1. 서론

지금까지 북한이 거듭된 국지도발과 핵실험 감행

2006년과 2009년의 핵실험

2010년 3월, 천안함 피침

2010년 11월23일 연평도 포격

이러한 도발을 대상으로 북한의 국가성격과 전략적 의도가 무엇인가에 대한 고찰 필요

#### 2. 북한의 국가성격

북한을 사회주의 국가론으로 보는 시각이 존재, 그러나 북한은 보통의 사회주의 국가와 구별됨

북한을 불량국가 혹은 실패국가로 보는 시각도 존재, 그러나 학술적 정의라고 보기는 곤란

북한을 술탄적 국가 sultanistic state, 또는 개인숭배 체제라고 보는 시각도 존재

이 시각은 북한 국가성격을 유일체제로 보는 견해와 이어짐

북한을 술탄적 국가, 개인숭배체제라고 규정한다면 북한의 외교적, 군사적 행위는 최고지도자의 권위와 명예를 드높이기 위한 행위로서의 성격을 지님

### 3. 북한 리더십 교체와 대외 군사 행태

#### 1) 김정일 등장과 대량살상무기 개발

북한은 1990년대 중반에 노동미사일을 실전배치하고, 1998년에 대포동 미사일발사 감행

2003년에 NPT 탈퇴하고, 2006-2009년에 핵실험 감행

기존 연구는 이 같은 북한 군사행위를 대미 정책과의 관련에서 해석

그러나 1998년 이후 본격적으로 선군정치 표방하기 시작한 김정일의 정권공고화, 최고지도자로서의 위상 강화와도 맞물려 있음

유일체제하 최고지도자로서 등장한 김정일의 위신과 정당성을 공고화하기 위한 정치적 행위로서 전략무기 개발 시도

#### 2) 김정은 등장과 서해 NLL 지역 도발

1953년 설정된 NLL 해역은 1991년 남북기본합의서 체결에 의해 북한도 현실로서 인정해 옴

그러나 2009년 이후 NLL 해역에 대한 북한 도발 거듭되고 있음

2009.1, 북한 조평통 성명, NLL의 법적인 성격 무시

2009.12, 북한 해군이 NLL 해역을 사격구역으로 선포

이 같은 도발은 2009년 9월, 김정은이 당중앙군사위 부위원장으로 취임하고 권력후계자로 등장하면서, 그의 군사적 위신과 정통성을 공고히 하기 위한 포석으로 해석될 수 있음

### 4. 기존 대북 정책 평가

#### 1) 관여정책

미국 일각에서 연평도 피격 이후에도 북한에 대한 대화와 협력 재개 주장하는 여론 적지 않음, 지미 카터 전 대통령, 도널드 그레그 전 주한대사,

단 김대중, 노무현 정권하 대북 화해협력 정책을 실시했지만, 북한의 대외행태를 변화시키는데 근본적 한계를 보임

또한 대북 화해협력 정책의 결과 제공되는 경제적 지원이 북한 주민들의 실질적 생활개선에 도움이 된다는 보장이 없음

## 2) 강압정책

2009년 핵실험 이후 UN 결의안 1874 등에 의해 대북 경제적, 군사적 제재가 실행되고 있음

그러나 중국이 대북 경제제재에 본격 동참하지 않으면서, 북한에 대한 실제적 지원을 시행, 따라서 강압정책의 효과를 거두고 있지 못함

## 5. 새로운 대북 정책 모색 : 전략적 관여정책

북한의 유일체제적, 술탄적 국가성격을 고려할 때, 새로운 리더십 등장에 따라 새로운 군사적 도발이 연속적으로 감행될 가능성 농후

이 경우 북한의 체제변화를 궁극적 목표로 하는, 그러나 방식면에서 강압적인 방식이 아니라 전략적 관여를 수단으로 하는 정책선택이 필요

전략적 관여 정책은 중층적, 다층적 대북 접근으로 이루어짐

북한의 군사도발을 억제하기 위해 한국은 전략적 억제개념에 바탕한 맞춤형 전력증강과 합동성 강화를 도모해야 함

동시에 북한과의 다양한 접촉을 통해 외부 세계의 정보와 대한민국 정치체제에 대한 동경이 싹트도록 대북 공공외교 혹은 선전전을 병행해야 함

이러한 정책은 북한의 민주화, 국제화를 궁극적 목표로 집요하게 전개되어야 함

나아가 이러한 대북 전략에 대한 국제적 컨센서스를 조성하고 협력을 조달받기 위해 미국은 물론, 일본, 중국, 러시아, 나아가 UN 등의 국제기구와 긴밀하게 전략적 협의를 거듭해 나가는 안보외교가 필요

## 유의사항

1. 본 연구보고서 내용은 연구진의 개인적인 견해이며 소속 기관의 공식적인 견해가 아닙니다.
2. 본 연구보고서는 정책입안시 참고자료로만 활용하고 타 기관에 불필요한 자료유출을 삼가하여 주시기 바랍니다.

## 국제공동연구프로젝트

|         |                                           |
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