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THE DRAGON, THE EAGLE AND THE BELOVED DEAR LEADER: UNDERSTANDING THE SINO-AMERICAN *JUCHE* DILEMMA

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JCSP 37

Master of Defence Studies

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By Major Jason C. Guiney, CD, BA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

6 PT- Six Party Talks

ASEAN- Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CCP- Chinese Communist Party

CVID- Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantling

DMZ- Demilitarized Zone

DPRK- Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (North Korea)

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

IAEA- International Atomic Energy Agency

KCNA- Korean Central News Agency (North Korean)

KPA- Korean Peoples' Army (North Korean)

KWP- Korean Workers' Party (North Korean)

LWR- Light Water Reactor

NLL- Northern Limit Line

NPT- Nonproliferation Treaty

NSS- National Security Strategy (United States)

PLA- Peoples Liberation Army (Chinese)

PRC- Peoples' Republic of China

PSI- Proliferation Security Initiative

ROK- Republic of Korea (South Korea)

UN- United Nations

UNSCR- United Nations Security Council Resolution

US- United States

USD- United States Dollar

USS- United States Ship

WMD- Weapon of Mass Destruction

ABSTRACT

The Korean Peninsula remains the last frontier of the Cold War, frozen in distrust and fear. Kim Jong-Il's constant intimidation and hostility, coupled with his nuclear ambitions, have the major powers keeping a close eye on the region.

The Korean conundrum is less about North and South Korea than it is about their superpower underwriters. Both China and the United States have equally important strategic interests at stake in the Korean Peninsula yet have remarkably divergent foreign policy goals towards North Korea. China's peaceful rise as a global superpower is based on regional stability which North Korea puts in jeopardy. Therefore, the Chinese approach to North Korea is focused on maintaining stability within the North Korean regime as they have much to lose if North Korea were to destabilize either internally or by external conflict. Conversely, in the post 9/11 world, the United States fears North Korean nuclear proliferation to non-state actors. Thus, American foreign policy practices towards North Korea are more coercive in pressuring the Kim Dynasty to cease their nuclear program. Naturally, these two remarkably different approaches cause tension between the two superpowers. In simplistic terms, China rewards Kim Jong-Il with the carrot whilst the US threatens him with the stick.

However, this Sino-American tension is merely the symptom of a far more complex cause. Central to the issue is the North Korean *Juche* ideology which is the catalyst between the divergent Chinese and American approaches towards North Korea. Thus, the author proposes this phenomenon as the "*Juche* dilemma" and argues that the *Juche* ideology is fuelling tensions between China and the United States.

THE DRAGON, THE EAGLE AND THE BELOVED DEAR LEADER: UNDERSTANDING THE SINO-AMERICAN JUCHE DILEMMA

INTRODUCTION

We know more about distant galaxies than we do about North Korea.

Anonymous Western Diplomat¹

Obviously, we gotta stand with our North Korean allies.

Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin, 23 November, 2010²

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK- North Korea) displaces a disproportionate amount of grief to the world in comparison to its contribution to the global society. Under the autocratic rule of the Kim Dynasty since its founding in 1948, the DPRK has exported nothing of value but diplomatic burden. The 1950-53 Korean War ended not in decisive victory for either side but rather an armistice which has only served to fuel over sixty years of tension. While the post-war years brought a slow rise to prosperity in the Republic of Korea (ROK- South Korea), the Northern economy has collapsed several times and the country has frequently plunged into famine. Relations between the North and South have deteriorated in recent months to the brink of war. The two Koreas remain just as polarized with their Chinese and American counterparts today as they were over sixty years ago.

The Korean conundrum is less about North and South Korea than it is about their superpower underwriters. Both the People's Republic of China (PRC- China) and the

¹ Mark McDonald, "Low Profile of an Heir Reinforces a Mystery" *New York Times Online Edition*, 7 January, 2011, Available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/08/world/asia/08kim.html?pagewanted=all>; Internet; Accessed 10 January, 2011.

² Tucker Reals, "Sarah Palin Mistakenly Calls N. Korea an 'Ally'" *CBS News Online Edition*, no date, Available from http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20023899-503544.html, Internet; Accessed 13 January, 2011.

United States (US) have equally important strategic interests at stake in the Korean Peninsula. With the 'China Rising' phenomenon, the US has seen a gradual shadowing of its regional hegemony. China and the United States have worked hard to open the Chinese economy to the globe as increased trade between the former adversaries is mutually beneficial. Thus far, China's economic and diplomatic breakthrough in the region has been peaceful and it is in both Chinese and American best interests to keep it that way.

However, the DPRK poses a serious threat to this relationship. In the past year, North Korea has brought the Korean Peninsula back to the brink of war. Throughout 2010, the world watched North Korean military actions and nuclear rhetoric with grave concern. Tensions had just barely cooled off from the March 21 sinking of the South Korean patrol vessel *Cheonan* when the North shelled Yeonpyeong Island in mid-November. The key power brokers in both affairs were not the two Koreas, but rather the US and PRC. Each had a polar opposite response to the incidents. The Chinese blame the Americans for fuelling a DPRK-US "security dilemma" with their military posture in the region. The Chinese view the major US military presence in the area as provocative and a menace to regional stability. Conversely, the Americans are frustrated that China is reinforcing Kim Jong-Il's aggressive behaviour by not using its power to influence the North Korean leader's rogue-like behaviour. By the Chinese government propping up his regime with economic rewards, American policy makers are of the opinion that China is perpetuating the problem.

The question is how can a hyper-isolationist regime with no food, no friends and no funds have such a disruptive impact on Sino-American relations in Asia? A simplified

argument could be the issue of reunification. The political and historical lineage of the two Koreas naturally inclines both the PRC and US to be at odds with one another over the question of reunification. Despite its name, the DPRK is a communist country with strong ideological and historical links to the PRC. Both countries have a long history of mutual support in the face of foreign adversaries. The ROK, on the other hand, has been a *de facto* protectorate under the US since its founding and has had an equally similar ideological lineage with the US. However, as will be discussed later in the paper, reunification is on none of the stakeholders' agendas. The economic, ideological and political discrepancies between the two countries is so great that it is highly unlikely that the two Koreas will ever reunite under a Germany-type arrangement. Who would be the guarantor of a united Korea, the US or China? However, as this study will show, reunification has very little, if anything, to do with Sino-American tensions over the Korean conundrum. It is merely but one symptom of a much larger cancer.

This paper will argue that the *Juche* ideology is fuelling tensions between China and the United States.³ *Juche* is the political ideology crafted by Kim Il-Sung in the post World War Two era that has guided North Korea through its sixty-three year existence, good and bad. In its purest form, *Juche* is the concept of self-reliance or independence from others and it dominates all aspects of North Korean society, politics, and personal life and is heavily embedded in the DPRK's foreign policy. However, the Kim Dynasty has transformed *Juche* into a legitimacy mechanism to perpetuate its grip on power and justify its existence. *Juche* is the lens through which North Korea sees itself in the world and which the rest of the world sees North Korea. Naturally, any isolationist-style of

³ The Anglicized pronunciation of *Juche* is "chu-che."

political ideology is bound to complicate and frustrate foreign affairs. *Juche's* unique incompatibility with the worldly accepted norms of international relations has managed to cause significant tension between Chinese and United States. Both the PRC and US deal with the DPRK in polar opposite means. Joseph Nye offers that in foreign policy, influential "power can rest on inducements ('carrots') or threats ('sticks')." ⁴ In simplistic terms, the PRC rewards Kim Jong-II with the carrot whilst the US threatens him with the stick. Each of these approaches ultimately reinforce the *Juche* philosophy and perpetuates the problem. Thus, the author proposes this phenomenon as the "*Juche* dilemma."

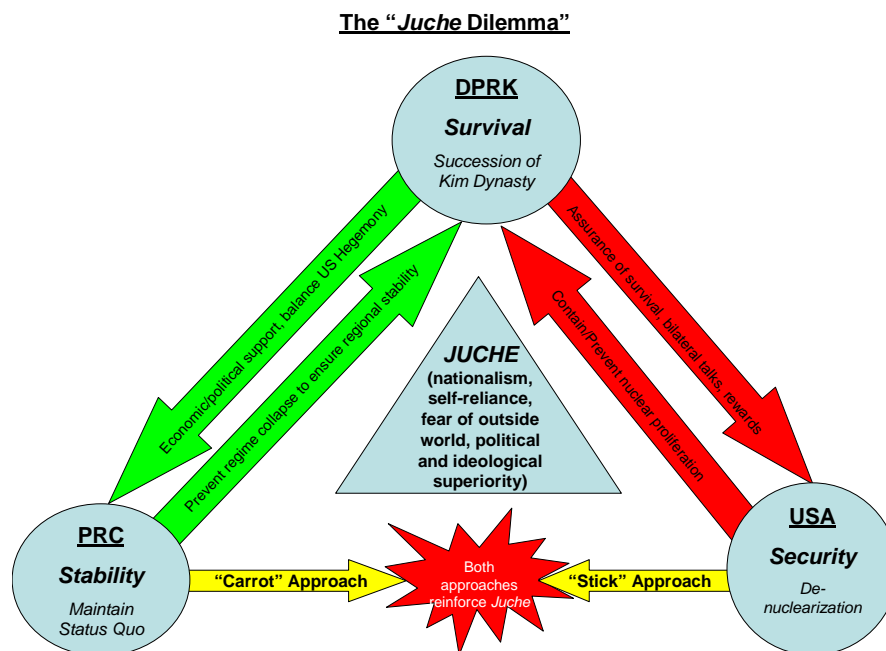


Figure 2.1: The *Juche* Dilemma.

To examine the *Juche* dilemma, the paper will be divided into four functional areas. The first chapter will explore the complexities of the *Juche* philosophy. The

⁴ Joseph S. Nye, "The Changing Nature of World Power," *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer 1990), 181.

underpinning argument will be that the *Juche* philosophy has morphed from a political ideology into the basis for the ruling regime's legitimacy; it is ultimately about the survival of the Kim Dynasty. The chapter will briefly explore the historical events that influenced the development of the *Juche* philosophy then discuss what *Juche* means and how it influences North Korean foreign policy.⁵ It will also examine and assess its nuclear capabilities and intents. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the proposal that *Juche* has ultimately morphed from a simple political ideology into a survival mechanism for the Kim Dynasty. It will argue that Kim Jong-Il is not a rogue actor but rather every move he makes is carefully calculated under the bounded *Juche* rationality which he uses to perpetuate as the basis for the ruling regime's legitimacy.

The second chapter will examine how *Juche* has influenced the PRC's behaviour towards the DPRK and why this puts it at divergence with the American approach. The main argument of this chapter will be that China's policy goals towards DPRK are focused on maintaining stability within the North Korean regime to facilitate China's peaceful rise to power. It will begin by examining the historical and ideological ties between China and the DPRK. Next, it will explore how the 'China Rising' phenomenon justifies China's 'carrot' approach to the Kim Jong-Il regime and perpetuates the *Juche* philosophy which causes friction with the Americans. Finally, the chapter will conclude by examining what China has to lose if the North Korean regime collapses.

⁵ A major breakthrough in the study of *Juche* emerged in 1997 when Hwang Jang-yop, Kim-Il Sung's "architect" of the *Juche* ideology, defected to South Korea. Hwang's defection was a significant embarrassment for the Kim Jong-Il regime as he was the highest level member of the Korean Worker's Party inner circle to ever defect. See Bradley, K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 209, 646, 695, 710 for further reading.

The third chapter will focus on how *Juche* has affected the American position on North Korea. The main argument of this chapter will be that the United States sees the DPRK as a security threat and a potential proliferator of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The chapter will begin by briefly exploring the long and troubled history between the two nations dating back to the division of the two Koreas in 1945. It will then explore the American foreign policy since North Korea announced its nuclear intentions in 1993. This will include an analysis of how both Clinton's Agreed Framework and the 'Bush Doctrine' have failed to achieve any progress in the nuclear deadlock. Next, the chapter will explain how the American 'stick' approach has fuelled a classic 'security dilemma' between North Korea and the United States. This, in turn, is perpetuating Kim Jong-II's *Juche* philosophy. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an analysis of how the 'stick' approach puts the United States at odds with China's 'carrot' approach.

The conclusion will provide an assessment of the uncertain future of the DPRK and what it means for China and the United States. Both the PRC and US are carefully monitoring Kim Jong-II's failing health and his succession has become of greater concern. The chapter will argue that the two recent *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong incidents and nuclear sabre rattling are, in reality, solely aimed at ensuring the succession of the Dynasty to his son Kim Jong-Un. It will also highlight the challenges of the *Juche* Dilemma in the post Kim Jong-II era. With little political and military experience, the question is will his son be a weak puppet leader for the military elite or will his succession bring a new era of hope to the decades of tensions. The section will conclude by arguing that the *Juche* Dilemma is likely to remain unchanged for the foreseeable

future and that both war and reunification are highly unlikely. Ultimately, the near term outlook appears to be more of the same.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING JUCHE

Establishing *Juche* means being the master of revolution and reconstruction in one's own country. This means holding fast to an independent position, rejecting dependence on others, using one's own brains, believing in one's own strength, displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance.

Kim Il-Sung on *Juche*⁶

INTRODUCTION

Kyung-Ae Park said that "the world generally regards the DPRK as an unpredictable rogue state and a source of conflict and alarm to the international community."⁷ North Korea's foreign policy has puzzled and frustrated scholars and diplomats. Because the North Korean ideology is so remarkably different and incompatible with internationally accepted norms, interaction with North Korea can be difficult if not impossible. In his study of the *Juche* philosophy, B.R. Meyers argues that "there is nothing in the North Korean ideology that a child of twelve cannot grasp at once- but for that very reason it has proven itself capable of uniting citizens of all classes, and inspiring them through bad times as well as good."⁸ If a twelve-year-old can understand it, why does the rest of the world have such a problem with so simple a concept? The *Juche* philosophy of self-reliance is the single pillar on which North Korea stands and, as Rudiger Frank argues, it is responsible for everything good or bad the country has been through.⁹

⁶ Barbara Demick, *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2010), 44.

⁷ Kyung-Ae Park, "Preface," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 43-67, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), ix.

⁸ B.R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why it Matters*, (Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2010), 165.

⁹ Rudiger Frank, "Socialist Neoconservatism and North Korean Foreign Policy," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 3-41, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4-5.

Before examining how the North Korean *Juche* philosophy is adversely affecting Sino-American relations, it is important to have a detailed understanding of the philosophy, how it evolved and its domestic and external implications. Frank observes that "ideology has been the central issue for all socialist societies, since it represents the core around which everything else is grouped, including the all-important legitimacy of the leadership, economic policies, or foreign affairs."¹⁰ *Juche* is perhaps one of the most internationally incompatible forms of political philosophy ever created. To the outsider, North Korea is George Orwell's *1984* come to life.¹¹ *Juche* is not merely a North Korean ideology; *Juche* has become North Korea and the two are inseparable. Therefore, to deal with North Korea, whether one is cognizant of it or not, is to deal with *Juche*.

This chapter is divided into four functional parts. The first section will explore the historical events that influenced the development of the *Juche* philosophy. It will broadly look at the Korean Confucian tradition, the influence of the Japanese occupation, the partition of Korea and the rise of Kim Il-Sung. Next, the chapter will explore and define what exactly the *Juche* philosophy is and what it means to North Koreans. It will explain the evolution of *Juche* from Kim Il-Sung's concept of self-reliance to Kim Jong-Il's 'military-first' politics. The third part of the chapter will discuss how North Korea sees itself in the world and why it matters. It will explain how *Juche* has impacted North Korean society and destroyed its economy, which has had a profound impact on how North Korea deals with the outside world. It will also examine and assess its nuclear capabilities and intents. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the proposal that *Juche* has ultimately morphed from a simple political ideology into a survival mechanism for

¹⁰ Frank, 4.

¹¹ Martin, 265.

the Kim Dynasty. It will argue that Kim Jong-Il is not a 'rogue' actor but rather every move he makes is carefully calculated under the bounded *Juche* rationality which he uses to perpetuate as the basis for the ruling regime's legitimacy.

HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

While it is not necessary to recount the entire history of North Korea here, it is important to have a brief understanding of the historical circumstances which influenced the *Juche* philosophy. In 1392, the *Chosun* Dynasty came to power in Korea and, influenced by the Chinese, they introduced Confucianism to Korea. Confucianism entails strong loyalty to one's family and moral remonstrance.¹² Confucianism emphasised the belief that individual happiness was of lesser importance than the harmony of society as a whole. It was strong on family values and saw a nation as a family-state. Neo-Confucianism emerged in the late 16th century and established a social hierarchy of scholar, farmer, artisan, and merchant. The scholar class, the *Yangban*, was given prominence in society as the ruling class and had the obligation to perpetuate the Confucian values to the lower classes. They became the patriarchal (father) figures and the lower classes the 'children.' Confucian scholars had a disdain for commerce and material value which had a significant impact on the early Korean economy. Even as late as the 19th century, Korea had no large commercial cities or commercial class to speak of and trade was stifled.¹³ While it was possible to move from one class to the next, it was

¹² Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005), 21.

¹³ Cumings, *Sun*, 80.

rare. The Confucian influence would have a profound impact on Kim Il-Sung's *Juche* ideology.

Japanese Occupation

The Confucian influence was abruptly suppressed with the Japanese occupation in the early 20th century. Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and maintained a substantial military and civil bureaucratic presence on the Peninsula. The Japanese brought substantial modernization to the relatively backwards country. They imposed a modern Japanese political structure and created markets and forced trade upon the country. The economic growth rate of Korea actually surpassed that of Japan in the 1911-38 period. The Japanese created a central bank, a nationalized railway system, ports and modern factories. However, these modernizations came at a price. Author Bruce Cummings notes that the Japanese occupation was both a period of modernization and exploitation.

[the] colonial experience was intense and bitter and shaped Korea deeply. It brought development and underdevelopment, agrarian growth and deepened tenancy, industrialization and extraordinary dislocation, political mobilization and deactivation. It spawned a new role for central state, new sets of Korean political leaders, communism and nationalism, armed resistance and treacherous collaboration; above all, it left deep fissures and conflicts that have gnawed at the Korean soul ever since.¹⁴

Koreans felt like the spoils of their forced modernization were going back to Japan. The Japanese exerted total military, social, political, cultural and ideological control over Korea. They essentially tried to wipe out the Korean culture by forcing the Japanese language and brutally repressing Korean culture.¹⁵ It was a repressive and humiliating

¹⁴ Cummings, *Sun*, 148.

¹⁵ In fact, it was so painful that much of the official history of the Japanese invasion has been wiped from or forever altered in the history books by Kim Il-Sung. See Cummings, *Sun*, 139-41.

time for Koreans and bred xenophobia and mistrust of foreigners. This heavily influenced Kim Il-Sung's ideology of self-reliance.

The Rise of Kim-II Sung

Widespread resistance and demonstrations against Japanese oppression in the early 1920s were met with a heavy hand. Many Koreans fled to China and Russia where they become involved with nationalist and communist groups. In 1925, the Korean Communist Party (KCP) was founded in China and they, along with other expatriates, formed the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) in exile.¹⁶ In addition to these political groups, guerrilla organizations emerged. One of the most prominent Korean fighters was Kim Il-Sung, who joined the Chinese communist party in 1931 and fought with Chinese guerrillas against the Japanese occupation force.¹⁷

Following the surrender of Japan in 1945, the US and Russia quickly sought to devise a way to divvy up the Korean Peninsula into spheres of influence. Both agreed to split the country along the 38th Parallel. The newly-divided Korea was like a pressure cooker under colonial rule that had been suddenly liberated which unleashed a new founded sense of Korean nationalism.¹⁸ Kim Il-Sung and his "people's committees" quickly rose to power in the North while the American-educated Syngman Rhee was backed by the US in the South.

The occupying Soviets in North Korea propped Kim Il-Sung up as a national hero. He had known nothing but foreign oppression and struggle all his life and spent the

¹⁶ Cumings, *Sun*, 159.

¹⁷ Martin, 31.

¹⁸ The 38th Parallel has no historical, geographical or cultural significance whatsoever. Koreans had absolutely no input into the division. See Cumings, *Sun*, 199.

majority of his life in self-imposed ideological exile in China and Russia. In 1946, he established the North Korean Worker's Party (KWP) which was formed with other young revolutionaries who shared his ideological fervour. He used his charisma and youth to rally support across the country. Kim Il-Sung was heavily influenced by Marxism and Leninism from his Chinese and Russian influences, however he quickly developed his own brand of Korean Communism. In the Confucian tradition, he titled himself the 'Great Leader' and adopted himself like a father figure. Although he was relatively young when he came to power, he used this to his advantage. Where the Confucian values give prominence to the elderly, Kim portrayed himself not as "an old man given to reminiscing on past glory but a young man who looks to the distant future."¹⁹

Kim Il-Sung formally proclaimed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on September 9, 1948 with himself at the helm. Within a year Kim Il-Sung put the country on a war footing in response to Syngman Rhee's "unification by force" rhetoric. Increased force posturing and frequent skirmishes finally came to a head when the DRPK launched a surprise attack on the South on 25 June, 1950.²⁰ This was the beginning of the Korean War and for the next two years, both sides were locked in bitter and punishing stalemate until an Armistice was signed in 1953. The Korean War served to polarize both Koreas with their respective Chinese and American underwriters and brought the Cold War to the Korean Peninsula.

¹⁹ Martin, 53.

²⁰ This is a contested fact. Although official DPRK history claims that they were attacked first, there may be some factual evidence to support this contention. On 23 June, 1950, ROK forces began shelling a mountain on the Ongjin peninsula where fighting had taken place a year earlier. Then, on 25 June, it is said that the ROK's 17th Regiment had advanced as far north as Sudong. Either way, *if* the DPRK was in fact attacked first, skirmishes of this size were not uncommon over the past year. The DPRK response on 25 June completely overwhelmed the ROK and US forces. For further reading, see Cumings, *Sun*, 260-1.

The influence of Confucianism coupled with the turmoil of foreign occupation and war deeply influenced Kim Il-Sung's political ideology. His rise to power in 1945 marked the beginning of the Kim Dynasty's hold on the country which continues to this day.

WHAT IS JUCHE?

The distressed Korean history had a profound impact on the political ideology that emerged in the post war years. The newly re-founded North Korean nationalist sentiment did not die with the stalemate of the Korean War. The post-war years proved more than ever that North Korea had to rely on itself to get back on its feet. The destruction of Pyongyang in the war allowed the Kim Regime to rebuild the North Korean capital from scratch and turn it into a model of self-reliance and symbolic propaganda. It had grand statues, elaborate buildings and most important, was all built without outside help.²¹ The country's "children" were nursed back to health again under their "fatherly" leader.²²

It was in the post-war years where *Juche* formally came to life. The ideology was officially proclaimed in public in December 1955. In its literal translation, *Juche* means 'self-reliance' or 'independence from others.' Kim Il-Sung preached that Korea had been suffering from foreign intervention for too long and that foreigners should be kept at arm's length. He stated that Koreans should be proud of their heritage and less reliant on the outside world that had brought them nothing but trouble in their past. Kim Il-Sung told his people that "we are not engaged in the revolution of another country but in our

²¹ Meyers, 76.

²² Martin, 3.

own Korean revolution."²³ He proclaimed that *Juche* was a Korean ideological revolution of nationalism and self-reliance and more than just applying Soviet-style communism to Korea.

Kim Il-Sung gradually transformed *Juche* into a hyper-isolationist, hyper-nationalist school of thought. He saw Korea as the centre of the earth "radiating outward the rays of *Juche* ." ²⁴ His aim was not only to create a unique brand of Korean Marxism-Leninism but build an ideology around which he and his party were at the epicentre. He transformed *Juche* into a societal phenomenon that penetrated all walks of life and embedded elements of Confucian tradition into his new founded ideology. Kim Il-Sung created a social and political structure similar to that in the *Chosun* Dynasty where the Korean Worker's Party (KWP) became the privileged *Yangban* 'scholar' class in society and was seen as the guardian of the ideology.²⁵ Only the privileged were eligible to attend Kim Il-Sung University.

Furthermore, Kim Il-Sung built North Korea into a 'family state' where extended family members and those loyal to the Kim Dynasty form the inner circle of the country. Based on the Confucian value of family, the Kim Dynasty was placed at the centre of power and Kim Il-Sung built a cult of personality revolving around himself as the 'father'. He even changed the Gregorian calendar to the *Juche* calendar where *Juche 1* was the year Kim-Il Sung was born.²⁶ The people became the 'children' of the state:

²³ Martin, 111.

²⁴ Cumings, *Sun*, 414.

²⁵ The official symbol of the DPRK is the Communist hammer and sickle but added to it is the painter's brush which symbolizes the intellectual class.

Building the party into a mother party means that just as a mother deeply loves her children and cares warmly for them, so must the party take responsibility for the fate of the people, looking after them even in the smallest matters, and become a true guide and protector of the masses.²⁷

Meyers argues that this "state sponsored infantilism exerts a strong psychological appeal" in that the fear outside the womb keeps the child close to the mother's breast. Thus, the citizens were expected to be obedient children and the "loving fatherly leader" would be the guardian.²⁸

The emergence of Kim Il-Sung as a personality is important to the *Juche* philosophy. As Meyers states: "the goal is to convey the impression that due to the ruler's unique qualifications and unanimity of the people's love for him, his rule constitutes the perfect fulfillment of ideals."²⁹ His "on the spot guidance" to farmers and factory workers coupled with his presence at military parades and his thousands of volumes of ideological writings gave him the aura of omnipresence. After all, he had founded the country and drove out Japanese and American invaders. How could he not appear as anything but a masterful political genius? Virtually all of the official paintings show him with a smile, amongst the common people or are heroic portraits of him in a military uniform. By the 1970s, *Juche* had dominated all official party documentation and every speech.

The DPRK forced party propaganda even on school children. Since all men were conscripted into military service, women had to work in the factories and on the fields.

²⁶ Even long after his death, Kim-Il Sung still remains the "Eternal President" which reinforces the Confucian idea of longevity. Furthermore, the renaming of the calendar is still used in the DPRK. For example, the year 2011 is officially referred to as *Juche 100* as Kim Il-Sung was born in 1911.

²⁷ Meyers, 80.

²⁸ Meyers, 80.

²⁹ Meyers, 98.

This had a significant social impact. The children went to work with their mothers and were placed in the state-provided day care. After a long day of work, all workers were required to undergo mandatory political indoctrination. This resulted in mothers only seeing the children for a scant few hours at the end of the day. He embedded his political ideology into all walks of life even at very early ages.³⁰

Since DRPK deliberately pulled itself away from the world, it had to ensure that its ideology was mass transmitted and perpetuated. North Koreans have been sheltered from the outside world since Kim took power. They can only buy state controlled radio and televisions that are preset to receive only North Korean stations. They have no internet access and virtually all forms of entertainment, education and literature consists of official party propaganda. This state of affairs since the founding of the country has had a significant social and political impact on the country. *Juche* is firmly entrenched in all walks of life.

Like Father Like Son: Passing the *Juche* Torch and the Rise of 'Military First' Politics

When Kim Il-Sung died from a heart attack in 1994, the world watched North Korea with morbid curiosity. For the first time in the history of the Kim Dynasty, it appeared that succession was going to be an issue. However his son, Kim Jong-Il, had been groomed to succeed him for the preceding 14 years. The transition of power from Kim Il-Sung to Kim Jong-Il was a lengthy and deliberate one. The difficulty was making the transition without making the Great Leader look weak. In 1980, Kim Jong-Il was named as the Secretary of the Central Committee and the Secretary of the Military Commission. This began a gradual transition of power and political mentoring in the

³⁰ Demick, 43.

Juche philosophy. Kim Jong-Il took command of the Korean People's Army (KPA) in 1991 at the age of 49. Kim Jong-Il was referred to as the 'Beloved' or 'Dear' Leader as only Kim Il-Sung could be the Great Leader and would remain Eternal President. Where Kim Il-Sung was the creator of *Juche* the Dear Leader would become the one who carried on and enriched its legacy.³¹

The immediate years of Kim Jong-Il's transition to power were challenging. They were marked by one constant crisis after another. Two years of flooding in 1995 and 1996, a major power outage due to an overburdened power grid, the 1997 drought and the largest famine in Korean history all happened within five years of his inauguration. To the outside world, it seemed like the country was on the verge of collapse.

Tension with the United States steadily increased in the 1990s over the North Korean nuclear program and Kim Jong-Il felt that national survival depended on a strong army. He used his position as Chairman of the Military Committee to transform his leadership into a military dictatorship.³² The policy of *Songun Chonghi* ("Military First") was formally proclaimed in 1995. The "military first" policy increased the size and readiness of the military and lengthened the compulsory military service to ten years.³³ In 1998, the constitution elevated the Military Commission to the level of supreme leadership. The military was charged with the duty as the guardian of the brain.³⁴ This

³¹ Martin, 355.

³² Martin, 485.

³³ Like many countries, this service could be waived for university students, however, that privilege was reserved only for the country's elite.

massive military expansion caused great concern to the United States and the ROK who felt that Kim Jong-Il was putting the DPRK on a war footing.

Kim Jong-Il used *Songun Chonghi* as a survival mechanism. It put the army closer to the political epicentre of the country and also justified giving the army priority for scarce resources such as food and oil. In turn, Kim used his army as a public affairs tool. Soldiers are better fed and perform public duties such as helping with the harvests and food distribution. The DPRK has a history of the gun and after all, they were liberated by the gun and see the KPA as the protectors of the *Juche* ideology.

HOW NORTH KOREA SEES ITSELF IN THE WORLD AND WHY IT MATTERS³⁵

Looking Inwards: The Realities of *Juche* on the Economy

North Koreans doing everything themselves was better, according to Kim Il-Sung's theory, than relying on other communist countries like China or the Soviet Union for Trade... it is a crazy theory. And the more you study it, the less sense it makes. Sometimes I would look around, and I couldn't believe that a whole nation seemed to believe this gibberish... any fool could see that not only would North Korea collapse without trade with other countries, but also that it relied on a steady stream of handouts and gifts just to feed itself.

US Army defector Sgt Charles Jenkins³⁶

The reality of *Juche* is that it has, not surprisingly, had a significant negative impact on the economy of the DPRK. The Confucian-inspired disdain for free markets in the DPRK eliminated any form of a merchant class. Arguably, its dire economic

³⁴ Han S. Park, "Military-First (Songun) Politics: Implications for External Policies," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 89-109, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 98-99.

³⁵ Title of B.R. Meyer's book.

³⁶ Charles Jenkins was a US Army Sergeant who defected to North Korea in 1954. One of only a handful of Westerners to ever live inside North Korea, Jenkins spent most of his adult life in North Korea until he returned to the United States in 2007. See Charles Robert Jenkins, *The Reluctant Communist: My Desertion, Court-Martial, and Forty-Year Imprisonment in North Korea*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 44.

situation has caused North Korea so much strife that it has forced itself to rely on other countries to meet its most basic of needs. Official party propaganda stated that "the DPRK had shown its moral superiority to rejecting, at no small cost to its standard of living, all concessions to capitalism."³⁷

In 1948, the newly independent North Korea was beginning to prosper. Heavy Japanese investments in infrastructure were finally used to North Korean advantage. They had nationwide literacy campaign following a repression of the Korean culture during the Japanese occupation. Farm production went up. North Korea was, to some extent outshining their southern neighbours. Interestingly enough, the division of the two Koreas had a significant effect because of geography. The North is extremely mountainous and has a lot of raw materials for industrial production. However, it lacks sufficient arable land for its population. In 1954, Kim Il-Sung embarked on a massive collectivization program that out shadowed the Soviet 5 year plans.³⁸

In the 1950s, there was a bitter rivalry between China and the Soviet Union. Kim deliberately distanced himself from tying his economy to either country. In the 1960s, Kim rejected Soviet calls to integrate the DPRK economy with the Soviet bloc where each country would "specialize" rather than try and produce a full range of products domestically. Furthermore, the Soviets were preaching economic integration and peaceful competition with capitalist countries to help develop their own economy.³⁹ This was counter to the *Juche* philosophy of self-reliance. Thus, Kim began to drift from the

³⁷ Meyers, 49.

³⁸ At the end of the Korean War, the North's GDP per capita was equal to its southern neighbour, roughly \$56. By 1960, they had boosted that to \$208 while the South had remained the same. See Martin, 104.

³⁹ Martin, 112-3 and 123.

Soviets. The Chinese and North Korea began to diverge in the late 1970s when Deng Xiaopeng's economic reforms embraced market-style reforms and foreign investment. This was heresy to the DPRK and further reinforced the *Juche* philosophy.⁴⁰

These economic halcyon days did not last for long. By the 1970s, a decade of military expansion and limited international trade finally exhausted the economy. However, their counterparts to the south were just entering the beginning of their economic boom. They had fully embraced capitalism and tied themselves economically to other nations with the United States being one of their major trading partners. This served to infuriate Kim Il-Sung and he proclaimed the South as being lackeys to the Americans. Clearly, North Korea could not accept tying the North Korean economy to any other nation as it defied the very basic principles of *Juche*.

In the 1970s, Kim-Il sung went on a spending spree with borrowed money. This was a remarkable departure from *Juche*. The experiment failed horribly. Because of their years of inwardness, the North Koreans lacked the technical expertise and economic know how to invest the money wisely. The military expansion also drained the labour pool.⁴¹ Before long, North Korea became exclusively reliant on foreign aid, mainly from China and the Soviet Union. The DPRK blamed the outside world for their economic woes. They blamed the Arabs for rising the cost of oil in the 1970s. They also had caused many nations to back down on their promise to buy North Korean goods.⁴²

⁴⁰ Lieutenant Michael F. Ginty, "North Korea: The Reality of a Rogue State in the International Order," (Master of Arts in National Security Affairs Thesis, United States Naval Postgraduate School, 2004), 25.

⁴¹ Martin, 155-7.

⁴² Martin, 181.

North Korea had a sketchy history of repayment and in the late 1980s its trade partners began calling in the debts. In 1987, the deteriorating Soviet Union drastically reduced its aid to the DRPK and demanded hard currency for imports which the North Koreans did not have. Furthermore, the Soviet Union charged North Korea world market prices for imports as opposed to discounted rates.⁴³ Without cheap Soviet-supplied oil, DPRK production came to a creaking halt and exports plummeted.⁴⁴ The drop in exports further reduced the already limited reserves of hard currency which made it more difficult to imports fuel. The shortage of fuel lead to an acute shortage of energy which closed factories and damaged the economy. Compounding the problem, heavy rains in 1995 and 1997 flooded coal mines and also destroyed crops. All of this combined drove the DPRK into its worst famine ever which lasted from 1995-97.⁴⁵ Even enduring hunger became patriotic duty: "Let's eat two meals a day" became an official party slogan.⁴⁶ The DPRK became reliant on approximately 1 million tons of food per year in aid.⁴⁷ North Korea's years of *Juche*-inspired xenophobia and disdain for trade and capitalism left them with few trading partners or currency reserves.

⁴³ Meyers, 50.

⁴⁴ Demick, 4.

⁴⁵ Helen-Louise Hunter, "North Korea: Dreaming of High-Tech Subsisting on Hand-Outs," Transcript of Lecture to *Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS)* 21 June, 2001, (Washington, D.C., n.p.), Available at www.icasinc.org. Internet: accessed 27 December, 2010, np.

⁴⁶ An estimated 2 million North Koreans died in the famine. However, this figure is difficult to verify because, officially, the Kim regime refuses to admit there was a famine. In 1998, one North Korean defector remarked that the famine was over, not because of anything having changed but the fact that there were fewer mouths to feed. See Demick, 70 and 146

⁴⁷ Mark Manyin, "Food Crisis and North Korea's Aid Diplomacy: Seeking the Path of Least Resistance," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 69-88, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 71.

Despite the emerging crisis, the Kim Dynasty remained steadfast to their belief in *Juche*. After all, what would Kim Il-Sung have felt if he tied his economy to the Soviet bloc when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and the Soviet Union two years later?⁴⁸ When the Soviet Union and its satellites collapsed the DRPK was left without the backing of the Communist brotherhood. It had the choice to either reform or stand alone.⁴⁹ To reform the economy was impossible from a *Juche* perspective. To open up the economy would entail to some extent relaxing the total control they had over everything in the country. It would also signify that the regime had failed to provide for their people. Rather than gracefully admit an error, they chose to endure the hardship for their people. The free market economy was neither taught nor understood.⁵⁰

Juche had a devastating effect on the North Korean economy which drove it to seek desperate aid from the outside world. Between 1996-2005, the DPRK received approximately 2.5 billion in food aid from the US.⁵¹ It also receives a substantial amount of aid from China, its main benefactor.

The simple reality is the DPRK is anything but self-reliant. It depends heavily on aid from both China and the United States. However, the Kim Dynasty is able to portray this aid through his propaganda machine as gifts from other countries. Pyongyang has repeatedly secured food aid from its sworn enemy, the US. Kim Jong-Il has had long-time success in extracting concessions from his friends and foes.⁵²

⁴⁸ Cumings, *Sun*, 437.

⁴⁹ Ginty, 3.

⁵⁰ Martin, 473.

⁵¹ Demick, 145.

⁵² Hunter, np.

Juche as a Foreign Policy: The Nuclear Bargaining Chip

Kim Jong-Il may want nuclear weapons, but is that all he wants? After all, you can't eat plutonium.

Victor Cha⁵³

Since *Juche* does not fit within the recognized international standards of diplomacy, simply coming out up front and asking for aid would be devastatingly embarrassing for the regime. Thus, North Korea relies on its nuclear program to gain concessions for food, energy and guarantees of non-aggression. To simplify North Korean foreign policy, *Juche* is how North Korea sees itself in the world. Frank states that "foreign policy should be understood to a significant degree as a function of domestic [affairs]."⁵⁴ With a good idea of the DPRK's domestic woes, it explains how and why the DRPK interacts with the rest of the world. Since *Juche* places Korea at the centre of the world, it gives legitimacy to what can be viewed as irrational behaviour. To read any North Korean official publication without seeing the word *Juche* is nearly impossible. Ironically, the exact opposite is true when reading about the nations that deal with the DPRK.

The DPRK has always suffered from mass energy shortages which is one of the reasons for why national production has never been very high. This has also caused a shortage in internal trade. Ergo, North Koreans have always had a legitimate need for nuclear power and felt that they were entitled to it. They began nuclear power research as early as the 1960s in conjunction with the Soviet Union. Construction on the Yongbyon nuclear reactor began in 1980 and was completed five years later. In 1974,

⁵³ Victor D. Cha, "Challenges for North Korea's Nuclear Endgame," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 185-203. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 188.

⁵⁴ Frank, 20.

North Korea joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and eleven years later in 1985 signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).⁵⁵

The DPRK nuclear program became an international concern in 1992 when the IAEA found inconsistencies in North Korea's initial report. IAEA inspectors visiting the Yongbyon nuclear reactor questioned the intent and purpose of its reprocessing facility and wondered with suspicion why there was not a sufficient power grid to support the capacity of the plant. The IAEA demanded additional inspections and access to nuclear waste storage sites which were denied. In response, the DPRK threatened that it would withdraw from the NPT. It expelled all IAEA inspectors and threatened to set Seoul on a "Sea of Fire."⁵⁶

In what is now referred to as the "First Crisis," former US president Jimmy Carter was dispatched to the DPRK and met with Kim Il-Sung in June 1994 to diffuse the situation. They signed the Agreed Framework on 21 October 1994. Under the agreement, North Korea was to stop any nuclear weapons programs, shut down its current reactors and account for discrepancies in reporting. In return, they would receive 4.5 billion dollars worth of aid and energy concessions which included 2 light water reactors

⁵⁵ "The NPT is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament." It was signed on 5 March 1970. See United Nations, *Treaty On The Non-Proliferation Of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)*, (New York: UN, 2010), Available from <http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/NPT.shtml>, Internet; Accessed 16 April, 2011.

⁵⁶ Chong Wook Chung, "The Korean Peninsula in China's Grand Strategy: China's Role in Dealing with North Korea's Nuclear Quandary," *RSIS Working Paper Series* no. 192 (March 2010), Available from <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/WorkingPapers/WP192.pdf>, (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2010), Internet; Accessed 26 October, 2010, 6-8.

(LWRs), assurance of non-aggression from the US, food and energy supplies, and full normalization of diplomatic relations.⁵⁷

Kim turned the Agreed Framework into a propaganda victory at home. He portrayed the agreement as an American "surrender" to North Korean demands which he argued was testament to his political genius.⁵⁸ When food aid began arriving in the mid 1990s, the regime explained it as they were paying the DPRK in grain in order to secure rights to visit their nuclear facilities. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) released the following statement with respect to the visit:

[America]: We [the US] Department of Defense hope to have your military facility at Kumchangi revealed to us, no matter what it takes. Please tell us the price to view it.

[North Korea]: Due to your [American] economic blockade and natural disasters we are now going through...difficulties. Looking at things from a humanitarian aspect, and in view of the consequences of our conflict with you, we regard 700 thousand tons of grain as appropriate.⁵⁹

To North Koreans, it appeared as if the superior *Juche* ideology was proven in the face of international aggression. However, the Agreed Framework soon fell apart. Kim did nothing to curb his nuclear ambitions and continued to increase the size of his military. On 31 August 1998, he test launched a medium range missile over Japan.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Australia, Department of Parliamentary Services. *Political Change in North Korea*. (Canberra, Australia: Queen's Printer, 2008), Available from www.aph.gov.au/library; Internet; Accessed 16 November 2010, 4.

⁵⁸ Meyers, 52.

⁵⁹ Meyers, 146.

⁶⁰ John Gittings, "North Korea Fires Missile Over Japan," *Guardian Online Edition*, 1 September, 1998, Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/1998/sep/01/northkorea>, Internet, Accessed 16 April, 2011.

The "Second Crisis" emerged in October 2002. During a visit to North Korea, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly alleged that the DPRK had begun a nuclear weapons program. In November, the US cut off oil shipments and in response, the DPRK removed IAEA cameras in the Yongbyon facility and expelled inspectors. In January 2003, the DPRK withdrew from the NPT and resumed operations at Yongbyon in February.⁶¹ Later in the summer of 2003, they agreed to enter the Six Party Talks with the ROK, US, Japan, China and Russia over its nuclear program.

In August, the first round of Six Party talks began but achieved little. The main DPRK argument was that it never got its LWRs as promised. During the first round of Six Party Talks, Kim Jong-Il portrayed himself the victor. He used the talks as a forum to deliver the message that the DPRK possessed nuclear weapons and his intent to conduct future testing and further development.⁶² Nonetheless, the DPRK secured nearly 2 million tons of food aid from the US via the UN WFP between 1996 and 2003.⁶³ There were a total of rounds of talks between 2003-2007, none of which did anything tangible to curb the DPRK's nuclear program.

International fears were finally realized on 9 October 2006 when the DPRK conducted its first nuclear test. The UN Security Council passed resolution 1718 condemning the testing and imposed weapons and economic sanctions. Later that year, the Six Party Talks resumed in December 2006 and again in February 2007. The DPRKs second nuclear test was conducted on 25 May 2009 which resulted in the UNSCR 1874

⁶¹ Australia, *Political Change*, 5.

⁶² Major H.K. David Lee, "Unification Strategy for North and South Korea: The Most Prudent US Policy Option to Solve the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," (Master of Arts in National Security Affairs Thesis, United States Naval Postgraduate School, 2004), 11.

⁶³ Ginty, 36.

passing yet again more sanctions in response. Of note, during the sanctions, the PRC continued to openly support North Korea with food and economic aid. They were openly defying the sanctions they voted to enforce. The DRPK responded by saying that the sanctions were a "declaration of war" that were orchestrated by the Americans. They also claimed that they would continue refining their plutonium to weapons grade.

What are the specific intents of Kim Jong-II's nuclear program? The author proposes that North Korea has little will or intent to fire a nuclear weapon in anger. Rather, Kim Jong-II has a nuclear bargaining chip. Their nuclear program is focused on long range (strategic) rather than tactical missiles. Their nuclear capacity also drives justification for the US anti-ballistic missile defence which is extremely unpopular. Was the nuclear capability developed as a legitimate offensive weapon or to merely create "strategic space" to allow a regime change to Kim Jong-II's successor? He has successfully used his weapons program to get concessions but he never gave up an inch. Rather than rely on 'conventional' forms of diplomacy, the *Juche* philosophy could not maintain its legitimacy by concessions and negotiations. It has to portray North Korea as strong and independent.

JUCHE AS A SURVIVAL AND LEGITIMACY MECHANISM

The DPRK is more likely to suffer a mass legitimization crisis if the ideology is seen to be failing on its own terms. The most dangerous threat to North Korea is the spread of the reality of the outside world about which North Koreans know nothing.⁶⁴ As B.R. Meyers says, "it is the regime's awareness of a pending legitimacy crisis, not fear of attack from without, which makes it behave ever more provocatively on the world

⁶⁴ Meyers, 168.

stage."⁶⁵ Rudiger Frank also adds that "ideology has been the central issue for all socialist societies, since it represents the core around which everything else is grouped, including the all-important legitimacy of the leadership, economic policies, or foreign affairs." *Juche* is the single pillar on which North Korea stands and it is responsible for everything good or bad the country has been through.⁶⁶ *Juche* and the Kim Dynasty have outlasted every Chinese and American leader since the DPRK's inception in 1948. They have also outlasted war, two major famines, economic collapse and have openly defied the superpowers with their nuclear program. How has the "Hermit Kingdom" managed to survive for so long?

Despite assurances of security from China and the Soviet Union in the 1960s, the *Juche* philosophy stated that the DPRK could not count on anyone but itself and he continued to build up his military. In the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviet Union backed down in the face of the US. To Kim Il-Sung, this was indicative that the Soviets could not be counted upon for security. Thus, his fears appeared justified.⁶⁷

Ever since the Korean War, the ruling dynasty has maintained and perpetuated the fear of an American invasion. The United States has maintained a sizeable presence in the peninsula since the end of the Korean War and still have a massive military presence in Japan. Furthermore, they conduct annual large-scale military exercises within miles of the Northern Limit Line (NLL). Therefore, the Kim Dynasty has always been able to justify both its military expenditures and its nuclear program in light of this fear.

⁶⁵ Meyers, 17.

⁶⁶ Frank, 4-5.

⁶⁷ Martin, 124-5.

The 1990s were perhaps one of the toughest decades for the DPRK. They suffered years of natural disasters (floods and droughts) and lost their Fatherly Leader. They also lost aid from the Soviet Union and industrial and agricultural production plummeted. If there was ever a time where the West thought that the DRPK would collapse, it was surely the 1990s when everything bad seemed to happen. However, strict adherence to *Juche* arguably saved the Kim Dynasty. They were able to maintain complete control over their population. There was no civil disobedience on any scale worthy of mention. What is interesting about the *Songun Chonghi* is that it was proclaimed just a year after Kim Il-Sung's death and during an epic famine. Could this have been a deliberate distraction from the realities of domestic issues?

How did *Juche* help overcome these hardships? The government propaganda machine compared Korea's hard times with those of the Japanese occupation. It blamed its former communist friends for their reforms which ultimately made their markets collapse. They also told their sheltered population that food shortages were happening worldwide. *Juche* was used to prove the need to rely on themselves.

Nuclearization is as much about external stability as internal stability. Kim Jong-Il cannot disarm his nuclear program and hope to stay in power. Ever since he took power, North Korea experienced one catastrophe after another from famine, natural disasters, and failed economic reform resulting in near collapse. The powerful military circle who knows the reality of the US threat, may not even allow him to give it up. It creates the conditions for external pressure which justifies *Juche* as the lack of any international threat may disrupt internal stability. It is unreasonable to expect Kim Jong-Il to give up his nuclear weapons program and commit political suicide since "the

successful development of nuclear weapons is about the only success Kim Jong-Il can present to his people."⁶⁸ Developing a nuclear weapons program in defiance of the international community leaves Kim Jong-Il with a legacy.

Despite heavy reliance on foreign aid, Kim Jong-Il seeks aid on his terms and seeks donors who have minimal conditions on assistance.⁶⁹ He has found these donors in China and South Korea. The North Korean leadership believes that "it is "only right that other races and nations should pay tribute to them by giving them gifts." Although much of the aid paid to North Korea were in fact loans, the DPRK made little to no effort to repay them.⁷⁰ North Korean people are told through propaganda that visits from foreign dignitaries are in fact 'pilgrimages' to pay respect to DPRK.⁷¹ In fact, all visitors to the DPRK are always taken to see the great statue of Kim Il-Sung in Pyongyang and the KCNA propaganda machine takes pictures of foreign dignitaries laying flowers in respect.⁷² However, DPRK is very careful that these are only broadcast internally. Kim Il-Sung believed that to strengthen the DPRK economy was to rely on itself as opposed to other nations.⁷³

Threatening actions have always been done with the goal of drawing the US into bilateral talks. Victor Cha believes that North Korea wants a nuclear deal like India that

⁶⁸ Frank, 32.

⁶⁹ Manyin, 85.

⁷⁰ Meyers, 49.

⁷¹ Meyers, 130.

⁷² North Korea's communications to and from the outside world are transmitted by the state news agency, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

⁷³ Meyers, 50.

allows them to remain armed and without full denuclearization.⁷⁴ Rozman states that ultimately, "Pyongyang intends to maintain its nuclear threat capacity and behave badly to the point where the US will be forced to either negotiate with it on more favourable terms or wage war."⁷⁵

In light of *Juche*, one can answer the question if Kim Jong-II is a lunatic or a rational, predictable, political genius. How is it possible to both vilify America while hold its hand out for aid? When people are starving, there is a reality that no amount of propaganda can deny. They blamed the economic failure on the outside world and the food crisis on the American sanctions. Kim Jong-II is always able to get what he wants: concessions from China and enough tension from the US to justify his *Juche* philosophy, and therefore, the survival of his dynasty. He had emerged from the famine not only with his regime intact, but had gained concessions in the form of aid from his enemies and now boasted a nuclear capability he could wave in the face of the world's last remaining superpower. Even if one could write off 99 percent of the propaganda, according to the *Juche* philosophy Kim Jong-II and his father are political geniuses.⁷⁶ They have created something beyond a personality cult and religion and have complete control over every aspect of North Koreans' lives. They have held the country and ideology together through war, famine, economic collapse and still manage to remain on top. Also, they are not only able to stave off international aggression but draw concession from two of

⁷⁴ Cha, 186-9.

⁷⁵ Gilbert Rozman, "Multilateralism and Pyongyang's Foreign Policy Strategy," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 133-151, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 147.

⁷⁶ Martin, 5.

the world's last remaining superpowers. According to the Kim Dynasty, the people need *Juche* because the outside world cannot be trusted. Isolation means survival.

A North Korean Defector once asked if the Kim dynasty actually had the support of the people. He responded that the proof was evident during the famine as they were having two meals a day, were overworked and yet there was still no civil disobedience or uprising.⁷⁷ Kim Jong-Il give the illusion that *Juche* works and makes North Korea strong. After all, if life in North Korea is that bad, why do not people simply defect in mass numbers or rise in revolt as they did against the Japanese? As Barbara Demick explains in her rare glimpse inside North Korea:

North Korea invites parody. We laugh at the excess of the propaganda and the gullibility of the people. But consider that their indoctrination began in infancy, during fourteen hour days spent in factory day-care centers; that for the subsequent fifty years, every song, film, newspaper article and billboard was designed to deify [the Kim Dynasty and *Juche*]; that the country was hermetically sealed to keep out anything that might cast doubt on Kim Il-Sung's divinity. Who could possibly resist?⁷⁸

Any notion of a popular uprising against the Kim Dynasty is simply not truly reflective of the social and political reality in North Korea.

It is in the Kim Dynasty's best interest to make diversions to create strategic distance from the grim realities of their domestic situation. By provoking the superpowers, Kim Jong-Il creates international confusion between them and maintains the US as a threat to the DPRK and reasserts China as its protector. The DPRK propaganda machine paints Kim Jong-Il as a national hero who is able to fend off the Americans while gaining aid from China. Therefore, he can reinforce to his people that

⁷⁷ Martin, 381.

⁷⁸ Demick, 46.

the *Juche* philosophy is valid. With an understanding of *Juche* it is apparent that Kim Jong-Il is not a 'rogue' actor but rather he is bounded by the rationality of his ideology.

CONCLUSION

Thus, with even a basic understanding of the *Juche* philosophy, it becomes readily apparent that "if outside observers knew North Korean Ideology better, they would understand that it is not as irrational" as it may seem.⁷⁹ But rather than see the DPRK as an ideologically unique society, it is often viewed as a rogue state. When viewed from the outside, externally, *Juche* is completely irrational. However, when looking from the inside out, internally, it is rational. The *Juche* model of foreign relations does not fit the generally accepted norms of international behaviour.

Juche is not just mere rhetoric. *Juche* has been ingrained in the DRPK ranks for so long that it is an inseparable part of who North Koreans are. Paranoid nationalism has guided North Korean policy making, both domestically and internationally, since it was founded in 1948.⁸⁰ Confucianism, communism and the Japanese occupation all heavily influenced Kim Il-Sung's political ideology. Initially, *Juche* was about self-reliance, however, it gradually morphed into a hyper-nationalist, hyper-isolationist ideology. As a result, North Korea destroyed its own economy and painted itself into a corner. Rather than embracing reform and internationalism, the Kim Dynasty chose to militarize, which only further isolated the country and destroy the economy. Nonetheless, despite having no food, no funds and no friends, the Kim Dynasty has been able to cling to power

⁷⁹ Meyers, 165

⁸⁰ Meyers, 16.

because of the *Juche* philosophy. Using their propaganda machine to spin the reality of *Juche* into a false prophecy, the Kim Dynasty has in fact self-perpetuated *Juche*.

It is only in this ideological context that the country's distinguishing characteristics, which the outside world has always found so baffling, make perfect sense to North Korea.⁸¹ Unfortunately for China and the United States, it is this "baffling" ideology that has put their relationship in jeopardy.

⁸¹ Meyers, 16.

CHAPTER 2

JUCHE AND CHINA RISING: THE NEED FOR STABILITY

While China pursues economic development and *realpolitik*, Pyongyang preaches socialist purity and shouts Cold War rhetoric. What does China want from North Korea? In one word, stability. Beijing is quite content with the present status quo on the [Korean] Peninsula...

Eric C. Anderson⁸²

What states want is more important than how powerful they are and it is the question of state intentions, and how they view their own position in the world and their relationship to their neighbours that will ultimately determine whether Northeast Asia continues to move towards stability or instability.

David Kang⁸³

INTRODUCTION

With a good understanding of *Juche*, it is easy to comprehend how North Korea's isolationist policy has left them with few allies. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, its last true remaining ally has become China. To no small degree, North Korea owes its existence to China who has become the underwriter for the Kim Dynasty's *Juche* philosophy since 1948. Through massive economic aid, diplomatic shelter and most important, tolerance, China has helped prevent the collapse of the North Korean regime.

For this reason, China is therefore disposed to be at odds with American interests on the Korean Peninsula. Whereas the United States pursues denuclearization as its main policy goal towards North Korea, China seeks to maintain the status quo. Scott Snyder observes that "there are powerful reasons why China shouldn't abandon North Korea; historical ties, geographical proximity, fears of a refugee influx and uncertainty surrounding the security implications of a sudden regime collapse."⁸⁴ Although Kim

⁸² Eric C. Anderson, "Understanding China's Approach to North Korea," *Huffington Post Online Edition*, 10 December, 2010, Available from www.huffingtonpost.com, Internet; Accessed 10 December, 2010, n.p.

⁸³ David C. Kang, "'China Rising' and Its Implication for North Korea's China Policy," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 113-131, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 115.

Jong-Il's nuclear program and seemingly aggressive behaviour poses a threat to American interests, the Chinese fear the consequences of an instable North Korea. With China as a regional and global superpower, regional stability is essential to China's peaceful rise to power. Therefore, it is in their best interest to maintain the devil they know.

China is in a unique influential position in the economic and diplomatic leverage it has over Kim Jong-Il. It is clearly in the best position to influence North Korea, but do so on its own terms in its own best interests. China has tolerated the Kim Dynasty's questionable internal and foreign affairs policy, including its nuclear ambitions. China is also in an excellent position to use the DPRK's instability to promote its own interests in the area and keep American hegemony in check.

This chapter will explore the *Juche* dilemma from the Chinese viewpoint. It will examine how *Juche* has influenced the PRC's behavior towards the DPRK and why this puts it at divergence with the American policy goals. The main argument of this chapter is that China's policy goals are focused on maintaining stability within the North Korean regime to facilitate China's peaceful rise to power. It will begin by examining the historical and ideological ties between China and North Korea. Next, it will explore how the 'China Rising' phenomenon justifies China's 'carrot' approach to the Kim Jong-Il regime and perpetuates the *Juche* philosophy which causes friction with the Americans. Finally, the chapter will conclude by examining what China has to lose if the North Korean regime collapses.

HISTORICAL LINKS

⁸⁴ Zhu Feng, "China's Policy Towards North Korea: A New Twist?" *PacNet Pacific Forum CSIS* no. 60 (December 2010), Available from www.pacform.org. Internet; Accessed 8 December, 2010.

From Confucianism to the Korean War

China and North Korea share an ideological affinity that has weathered the collapse of communism.⁸⁵ They share over 1800 years of ideological relationships which blossomed when the *Chosun* Dynasty introduced Confucianism to Korea in 1392. Koreans were traditionally seen as China's 'little brother.'⁸⁶ The Japanese occupation attempted to remove the Chinese influence in Korea; however, it only served to strengthen it. China became the ideological and physical safe haven for Korean exiles. Chinese communists strongly influenced Korean revolutionaries who volunteered by the thousands in support of Chairman Mao's armed struggle against the Nationalist Chinese and the Japanese.⁸⁷ The favour was returned by the Chinese to the North Koreans in the 1950s during the Korean War. Only four months into the war, Kim Il Sung's army was on the verge of collapse when United Nations forces pushed it back to the Yalu River. The Chinese entered the war in the fall and repelled the UN to the 38th Parallel. For the next two years, both sides were locked in bitter and punishing stalemate until an armistice was signed in 1953. An estimated 115,000 Chinese died in the Korean War.⁸⁸ The Korean War served to strengthen the bond between China and North Korea in blood.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Andrew Scobell, "China and North Korea: From Comrades-in-Arms- to Allies at Arm's Length," Monograph for *Current History* (March 2004), Strategic Studies Institute, Available from <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub373.pdf>, Internet; Accessed 22 November, 2010, 2.

⁸⁶ Anderson, n.p.

⁸⁷ Anderson, n.p.

⁸⁸ Selig S. Harrison, "The View fom Pyongyang: US Financial Sanctions and the Prospects for Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," Transcript of Lecture to *Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS)* 11 October, 2006, (Washington, D.C., n.p., 2006), Available at www.icasinc.org, Internet; Accessed 27 December, 2010, 2.

⁸⁹ Author Bruce Cumings argues that China came to the aid of North Korea not so much because of the American rollback but rather because of the fact that so many Koreans had participated in their war

Strained Relations - The Cultural Revolution (1966-71)

China and Korea enjoyed good relations until a brief period in the 1960s. In 1966, Mao Zedong embarked on the Cultural Revolution in China which aimed to purge capitalist thought and promote socialism in its "purest" form. Mao's Red Guards publicly denounced Kim Il-Sung's lavish lifestyle and his *Juche* bastardization of socialism. Kim Il-Sung publically denounced the Revolution and proclaimed that he would not allow it to spread to the DPRK. He stated that "we cannot follow one country and make a cultural revolution. So the emphasis on self-reliance is an action of self-defence."⁹⁰ Tensions came to a head in 1969 when the KPA and the PLA engaged in minor skirmishes along the border. During this period China drastically cut aid off to North Korea which turned Kim Il-Sung to the Soviet Union for help. The Soviet Union was engaged in its own friction with China and Moscow attempted to polarize North Korea into its conflict with China, however, Pyongyang restrained knowing that one day it would eventually have to rely on China again.⁹¹

Tensions cooled off in 1969 as the fervour of the Cultural Revolution began to simmer. By September, the two countries re-established normal diplomatic links. In the 1970s with North Korea near economic collapse, China came to its rescue. In 1974, Beijing began supplying Pyongyang with 1 million tons of oil a year.⁹² Despite a brief period of tensions in the 1960s, China remained one of North Korea's few allies. Thus, it

of liberation and the Northern expedition of 1925-27, land reform war in 1927-37 and the anti-Japanese war in 1937-45. See Cumings, Sun, 284.

⁹⁰ Bernd Schaefer, "North Korean 'Adventurism' and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972," *Cold War International History Project*, (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, 2004), 14.

⁹¹ Schaefer, 27.

⁹² Anderson, n.p.

was Kim Il-Sung's steadfast devotion to the *Juche* ideology that caused friction between the two nations.

'CHINA RISING' PHENOMENON

The question is not whether China will become the most powerful nation on earth, but rather how long it will take her to achieve this status.

Kenneth Organski⁹³

Sino-North Korean relations continued to grow in the 1970s and weathered yet another Chinese revolution- this time an economic one. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping embarked China on a long and deliberate path to open its economy to world markets. China took the exact opposite approach to *Juche* by opening itself to the outside world and embraced previously labelled evils of capitalist practices such as joint ventures and foreign investment.⁹⁴ Deng's reforms gradually evolved to include a parallel diplomatic and political opening of its doors. Impaired by past self-imposed isolationism, China sought to gather goodwill and friends around itself. In the 1990s, President Jiang Zemin introduced a new security concept embracing multilateral cooperation. As a result, its foreign policies became more positive, confident and outreaching for and sharing responsibilities. China began to peacefully resolve its conflicts through multilateral dialogue.⁹⁵

⁹³ Ronald L. Tammen et al. *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*. (New York: Chatham House Publishers, 2000), 153.

⁹⁴ Quansheng Zhao, *China's New Approach to Conflict Management: The Cases of North Korea and Taiwan*, (Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), Available from: http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/2006/Zhao_final_complete_2006.pdf, Internet; Accessed 15 December, 2010, 14. Also, since the 1978 market reforms, China has averaged an annual growth rate of 9% per year. In 1980 their economy was less than 10% the size of the US however by 2006, it had expanded to half of the size of the American economy and has recently surpassed that of Japan. For more information, also see Kang, 113

This drastic shift in Chinese economic and foreign policy has turned China into an emerging regional and international superpower and the phenomenon is often referred to as 'China Rising.' It presents a direct challenge to American hegemony not only in the region but globally as well. With the demise of the Cold War and traditional adversaries, the United States became the unquestioned economic and political leader of the international community.⁹⁶ However, this changed after September 11th, 2001 when the United States turned its attention to security concerns. Preoccupied by the Global War on Terror coupled with a financial crisis in 2008 have all set the perfect conditions for China to fill the void.

China has embarked on a massive information operations campaign to reinforce its peaceful intentions. At a lecture to the Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS) in 2006, Chinese 1st Secretary Shao Zheng stated that China was pursuing "an independent foreign policy of peace, so as to build a peaceful, amicable and harmonious new world." China was committed to "building good neighborly relations" but emphasized that "Asia was not the backyard of China."⁹⁷ Zheng further stated that "China's top priority is economic development...Gone are the days when there must be rivalry between two powers in Asia....We can make greater contributions to world peace

⁹⁵ For more reading on this paradigm shift in China's foreign policy, see Chung, 18 and Lieutenant-Colonel Alain Quirion, "Power Transition Theory and The Future of Sino-American Relations: Return to a Bi-Polar World?" (Master of Defence Studies Thesis, Canadian Forces College, 2010), 78.

⁹⁶ Lee, 32.

⁹⁷ Shao Zheng, "China's Rise: Its implications for Asia and the US." Transcript of Lecture to *Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS)* 11 October, 2006, (Washington, DC: n.p, 2006), Available from www.icasinc.org, Internet; Accessed 27 December, 2010, 1-2.

and prosperity."⁹⁸ East Asia views China in the same light. They see China as an economic opportunity rather than a military threat.⁹⁹

Since the turn of the millennium, China has become increasingly involved in regional organizations like ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asian Summit and ASEAN Three Plus. They pledged not to use military means to acquire new territory in a formal legal document "Declaration of Conduct" signed between China and ASEAN in 2002.¹⁰⁰ China is trying to reassure the world that its expansion of power is both peaceful and economic. China is not seeking new territories nor to export its ideology.¹⁰¹ This is a contrast to the United States who has for the past decade been preoccupied with suppressing terrorism vis-à-vis unilateral pre-emptive strikes and openly calling for democratic reforms across the globe.¹⁰²

China and the United States have worked hard to open the Chinese economy to the globe as increased trade between the former adversaries is mutually beneficial. China is America's 3rd largest trading partner.¹⁰³ Mutual Sino-American trade is highly beneficial, but more so to China than the United States.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Zheng, 2.

⁹⁹ Kang, 119.

¹⁰⁰ Christopher P. Twomey, "China Policy Towards North Korea and its Implications for the United States: Balancing Competing Concerns," *Strategic Insights* 5 Issue 7, (September 2006), 4.

¹⁰¹ Edward Carr, "Friend or Foe? A Special report on China's Place in the World," *The Economist*, December 4, 2010, 4.

¹⁰² Editorial, "The Dangers of A Rising China," *The Economist*, December 4, 2010, 15.

¹⁰³ Zheng, 5.

¹⁰⁴ In 2009, China exported \$296.4 billion USD worth of goods to the United States. Conversely, the Americans imported only \$69.6 billion in return meaning a \$226.8 billion trade surplus for China. China exports more than it imports to the tune of \$200 billion. It also holds \$2.6 trillion in world foreign currency reserves. See Quirion, 23 and Carr, 4.

China's economic growth demands access to markets, raw materials and stability. War is not favourable for economic development. The collapse of the Soviet Union convinced Chinese leadership that entering an arms race with the United States would only serve to squander money. Nonetheless, China does continue to modernize and expand its military. The expansion of their ocean-going navy is likely to protect its increasing merchant trade.¹⁰⁵ Yet, with China rising also comes a military bill. If the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wants to hold its grip on to power, it must be able to protect China's access to trade and raw materials. Thus, China is currently undergoing a modernization of its military which includes the procurement of up to four aircraft carriers by 2020.¹⁰⁶ Thus far, China's economic and diplomatic breakthrough in the region has been peaceful and it is in both Chinese and American best interests to keep it that way.

KEEPING JUCHE ALIVE- CHINA'S CARROT APPROACH

With the enormous economic capability and leverage that it enjoys, China now can afford to be less sensitive in framing its foreign policies to fit the western orientations toward North Korea.

Han S. Park¹⁰⁷

Central to the China Rising philosophy is regional peace and stability. Clearly, the Kim Dynasty's *Juche* philosophy and China's ties with North Korea poses a significant challenge. Despite repeated attempts to convince the North Korean regime to open up its economy, the Kim Dynasty has held steadfast to its *Juche* ideology. With the

¹⁰⁵ Carr, 6-9.

¹⁰⁶ John Frewen, "Harmonious Ocean? Chinese Aircraft Carriers and the Australia-US Alliance," *Joint Force Quarterly* 59, (4th quarter 2010): 69.

¹⁰⁷ Han S. Park, "Military-First (Songun) Politics: Implications for External Policies," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 89-109, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 105.

death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994 and over a decade of nuclear tensions and natural disasters, China has taken the 'carrot' approach to prevent North Korea from collapsing.

Economic Aid to North Korea

China has repeatedly tried to convince the DRPK to abandon *Juche*-style economics which prevent the country from becoming economically self-sufficient. In a March 2000 trip to China, North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun was shown economic development projects and offered insight on how to prop up the North's almost non-existent economy, however, North Korea has declined to implement any major reforms.¹⁰⁸

China has maintained a steady lifeline of energy supplies and food into North Korea to keep it alive. China provides the majority of North Korea's food and fuel imports with very little trade in return.¹⁰⁹ Food is DPRK's largest form of aid. Recent estimates put it at receiving one million metric tons per year.¹¹⁰ Through good times and bad, China has always provided. North Korea prefers aid from China because it has very little monitoring attached to it. There is no evidence that China made any attempts to determine where the food is going-to the military or the population.¹¹¹ Thus, China

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, n.p.

¹⁰⁹ 70-90% of their oil and over 40% of sustenance needs come from China. See Captain John Michael Ives, "Four Kilograms to Tip the Scale: China's Exploitation of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," (Master of Arts in National Security Affairs Thesis, United States Naval Postgraduate School, 2007), 31-2.

¹¹⁰ Manyin, 71.

¹¹¹ There are reports of food aid often being diverted to the military. This is undoubtedly true as it is normally the military who distributes food aid to the population. How much, if any, is retained by the military for its own purposes cannot be confirmed.

ultimately does not care where the food goes to, just that North Korea gets it and does not collapse.¹¹²

Regardless of Kim Jong-II's publically stated nuclear ambitions, China has always provided for North Korea. From an outside view, it could easily appear as if China is rewarding Kim Jong-II's behaviour. In 1999, Pyongyang's imports from China were \$329 million USD and nearly doubled to \$628 million in 2003 when North Korea withdrew from the NPT. This happened again between 2004 and 2006 when imports jumped from \$799 million in 2004 to \$1.2 billion in 2006. Chinese imports were estimated at exceeding \$2 billion in 2008.¹¹³ It is important to note that these remarkable increases in trade virtually all took place during UN-imposed sanctions which China supported.¹¹⁴ Following the 2009 nuclear test, Chinese Premier Wen Jaibo visited Kim Jong-II in Pyongyang and made a considerable economic aid commitment.¹¹⁵

Naturally, this 'carrot' approach reinforces the *Juche* philosophy in that Kim Jong-II is able to use his nuclear program to draw concessions from China.¹¹⁶ He is fully cognizant of the importance the Chinese place on regional stability and knows that China would prefer to keep the regime intact. However, Beijing is more than capable of cutting

¹¹² Manyin, 76.

¹¹³ Chung, 5.

¹¹⁴ Resolutions 1718 in 2006 and 1874 in 2009 were passed in response to North Korean Nuclear tests. China did not use its veto power nor did it abstain from **the vote**. See United Nations, *Security Council, Acting Unanimously, Condemns In Strongest Terms Democratic People's Republic Of Korea Nuclear Test, Toughens Sanctions*, (New York: UN, 2009), Available from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9679.doc.htm>, Internet; Accessed 16 April 2011.

¹¹⁵ Han S. Park, 105.

¹¹⁶ Estimates of North Korea's trade deficit with the PRC is \$7 billion USD from the mid-1980s to 2006. Since 2002, DPRK exports to China have doubled but imports from China have quadrupled.¹¹⁶ Total trade to the DPRK from China increased by 41.3% in 2008 (two years after the 2006 sanctions). See Kang, 126.

the North off from aid and has done so once. In 2003, China shut off the pipelines for two days officially citing "technical reasons." In 2006, following the underground nuclear test, Hu Jintao delayed oil shipments until he sent his foreign minister to see Kim Jong-Il in person and told him to stop nuclear testing.¹¹⁷ However, following the talks, China immediately resumed aid during the sanctions. Clearly, this 'carrot' approach naturally disposes Chinese interests in stability to be at odds with the United States.

AT ODDS WITH AMERICA

If [the Chinese] are going to be a superpower, they're going to have to act like it.

US Senator John McCain¹¹⁸

The best way to make China an enemy is to treat it like one.

Joseph Nye¹¹⁹

American diplomats and foreign policy makers openly blame China for not using their influence over North Korea in the nuclear crisis. US Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that China has a responsibility to reign in North Korea.¹²⁰ The Americans argue that if China wants to become a superpower, then it will have to put its international responsibilities and duties above those of maintaining the Pyongyang regime. The problem is that many Americans tend to view North Korea as a Chinese province under their control, which it is clearly not.¹²¹ Washington may wish for Chinese action in solving the crisis, but Beijing's logic and priorities are not the

¹¹⁷ Ives, 32.

¹¹⁸ Ives, 7.

¹¹⁹ Carr, 13.

¹²⁰ Haddick, n.p.

¹²¹ Anderson, n.p.

same.¹²² America wants a fast resolution of the crisis, whereas China is willing to wait it out in favour of a diplomatic solution.

Accepting the "Slow Boil" Effect Of Nuclearization

The issue dominating the American agenda of North Korea is denuclearization. Whereas the United States calls for immediate and complete denuclearization, the Chinese are willing to accept the likely reality of a nuclear-armed North Korea. China was furious over both North Korean nuclear tests as they made a mockery of China's good neighbourly relations. It was a slap in the face for China as Premier Hu Jintao personally told Kim Jong-Il not to conduct the testing.¹²³ Ultimately, China does not wish to see any nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula (neither American nor North Korean) but appear willing to accept the reality of it. There is no evidence in history of a country willingly giving up a nuclear program it developed on its own. Furthermore, as discussed in the last chapter, it would be nearly impossible for Kim Jong-Il to cede up his nuclear program in light of *Juche*. To China, moving forward on the nuclear issue means accepting North Korea as a nuclear power.

China is paving the way to facilitate this by 'slow boiling' the world into accepting Kim Jong-Il's nuclear program. In his master's thesis, John Ives proposes that the North Korean nuclear program has been a gradual escalation and that "each step in the process is slightly worse than the one before" and is in essence the equivalent of the 'slow boil' theory.¹²⁴ Each step they have taken in their nuclear program has been progressive since

¹²² Ives, 46.

¹²³ Ives, 41.

¹²⁴ John Ives explains, a slow boil is gradually heating up the temperature until it eventually boils. He uses the classic frog analogy: If you throw a frog into boiling water, it will jump out, but if placed in a pot and gradually increase the temperature over a long time, the frog will boil. See Ives, 41.

they shut down the reactor to extract plutonium in 1989 to their first nuclear test in 2006. Ives proposes that since the Kim regime is not likely to give up its nuclear program that China could help ease the world into accepting a nuclear North Korea.¹²⁵

In examination of China's diplomatic efforts, the country makes little effort to provoke or threaten North Korea into dismantling its nuclear program. Rather, China seeks multinational dialogue to resolve the matter which is reflective of the regional and peaceful approach to China Rising. It was China who proposed and hosted the Six Party Talks in 2003. However, China's role as a mediator in the nuclear issue has been one of controversy. China played the role of broker, negotiator, mediator, facilitator at the Six Party Talks. China often sees itself as the mediator between the US and DPRK. The US therefore wants China to be a 'responsible stakeholder' in the issue.¹²⁶ Chung argues that because China played these roles it did not play its most important role as an honest broker in the talks themselves.¹²⁷ They prefer pushing for economic incentives rather than coercive sanctions and pressure. Even after Pyongyang's nuclear test in 2009, China said that this would be a good opportunity to return to the Six Party Talks.¹²⁸

China has been focused on "urging restraint" rather than demanding concrete and verifiable action from North Korea. China has continuously insisted that the core motivation for the DPRK nuclear program has its roots in the mistrust American intentions in the region. The United States does, after all, maintain and exercise a large

¹²⁵ Ives, 41.

¹²⁶ Carpenter and Bandow, 82.

¹²⁷ Chung, 17.

¹²⁸ Charles Burton, "North Korea Can Always Count on China," *Toronto Star*, 28 November, 2010.

military in the region. The Chinese also believe that a US-DPRK political relationship would help diffuse this tension.¹²⁹ However, any direct dialogue with North Korea that does not involve the ROK would jeopardize the American-South Korean relationship.

In summary, Beijing does not fear a nuclear North Korea like the United States. In fact, China already has three other nuclear neighbours, Russia, India and Pakistan (more than any other country in the world) and the two latter are arguably closer to nuclear conflict than North Korea and the United States are.¹³⁰ China also borders several countries with questionable stability (Afghanistan, Burma, Former Soviet Republics, and Taiwan). Thus, China is no stranger to having the potential of conflict on its border. If the United States hopes to secure Chinese assistance with resolving the North Korean Nuclear issue, they must convince China that a nuclear DPRK is more perilous to the PRC's rise to power and stability than the risk of short term instability.¹³¹ After all, North Korea has never threatened Chinese interests with its nuclear program. For the meantime, China would prefer a nuclear North Korea to a collapsed one.

Cheonan and Yeongpyong Incidents

However, it is not only the nuclear issue where Sino-American opinions over North Korea diverge. In the past year, North Korea has openly provoked South Korea to the brink of war on two occasions. On 26 March, 2010, the KPA Navy sunk the South Korean warship *Cheonan* in South Korean territorial waters killing 46 sailors. The attack came without warning and was particularly startling in that it was not close to the

¹²⁹ Charles L., Prichard, Scott Snyder and John H. Tilelli Jr., "US Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," Independent Task Force Report No. 64, *Council on Foreign Relations*, Available from www.cfr.org, Internet; Accessed 26 December, 2010, 21.

¹³⁰ Twomey, 2.

¹³¹ Pritchard, x.

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) or the Northern Limit Line (NLL).¹³² Initial evidence pointed to North Korea's involvement but Pyongyang immediately denied any responsibility. China's initial response was muted as they wanted to remain objective and not jump to conclusions until a joint international report published its findings. They expressed support to the ROK's "scientific and objective investigation."¹³³ China did not offer condolences to South Korea until two months after the attack but hosted Kim Jong-Il in Beijing for aid talks just days after the event took place. The joint international report concluded that the *Cheonan* was sunk by a torpedo fired from a North Korean submarine, however, the DPRK held fast to its claim and China refused to condemn North Korea for the attack.¹³⁴ It appeared that the Chinese again silently endorsed Kim Jong-Il's aggression and provocation.

Only seven months later, North Korea again brought the peninsula one step closer to conflict. On 24 November 2010, the KPA fired an artillery barrage on Yeongpyong Island killing two South Korean Marines and causing extensive collateral civilian damage.¹³⁵ North Korea says it responded to a South Korean exercise in which they claim the ROK Army fired shells into North Korean territorial waters. The event marked the first artillery strike since the end of the Korean War.¹³⁶ Again, China's initial

¹³² The NLL is the de facto maritime demarcation between the two countries. See Evans J.R. Revere, "After the Cheonan: Where do we go from Here?" Paper Presented at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies Symposium on "Post-Cheonan Regional Security," Center for US-Korea Policy and the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, (Seoul, South Korea, 2010), 1.

¹³³ Scott Snyder, "Implications for Northeast Asian Stability: The *Cheonan* Reckoning." *The Oriental Economist* (June 2010), 8.

¹³⁴ Rozman, 140.

¹³⁵ Interestingly enough, the incident came only a few days after a US scientist reported that DPRK had built a new uranium enrichment facility.

response was hesitant to place blame on North Korea. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said that China had taken note of relevant reports and expressed concern but that "relevant facts need to be verified, and we hope both parties make more contributions to the stability of the Peninsula."¹³⁷ China even suggested that it may have been the South Korean drill that may have sparked the response. China sent a diplomat to South Korea for them to urge restraint.¹³⁸

Whereas the United States tends to flex its military and diplomatic muscle in reaction to North Korea's provocations, China's generic response has been to "urge restraint" to all parties and is not quick to lay blame on North Korea. Therefore, China used these incidents as an opportunity to call for all parties to return to the Six Party Talks. The Chinese blame the Americans for fuelling a DPRK-US 'security dilemma' with their military posture in the region. The Chinese view the ongoing major American military presence in the area as provocative and a menace to regional stability. The US provokes China by maintaining a massive military presence in the area and by conducting annual exercises. China also sees these incidents as systemic of the fact that the Korean War ended in an armistice and that the border at sea was never properly delineated.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Peter M. Beck, "What is Kim Jong-Il Up to Now?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, Available from www.cfr.org/publication/23513/what_is_kim_jong_il_up_to_now.html, Internet; Accessed 14 December, 2010, 1.

¹³⁷ CNN, "After North Korean Strike, South Korean Leader Threatens 'Retaliation'," *CNN Online Edition*, 26 November 2010, Available from <http://cnn.site.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=After+North+Korean>, Internet; Accessed 26 November 2010.

¹³⁸ Francois Godement, "It Isn't Only About North Korea," *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 29 November, 2010, Available from http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_it_isn't_only_about_north_korea, Internet; Accessed 29 November, 2010.

The United States continues to pressure to China to use its influence on Pyongyang; however, China is not willing to bring the full brunt of its economic and diplomatic influence. The Chinese have too much to lose from the potential of a collapsed North Korean regime.

WHY STABILITY IS IMPORTANT- WHAT CHINA HAS TO LOSE

In light of the China Rising phenomenon, it is clear why regional stability is so important to China. *Juche* has created unfavourable conditions because Kim Jong-Il is seen as so irrational and provocative. *Juche* presents a fundamental challenge to Chinese interests. Recent Wikileaks cables reveal China's frustration with North Korea. But this is not surprising or nothing new. Over the past thirty years, China has taken a remarkably divergent path towards reform than North Korea.¹⁴⁰ Chong Wook Chung observes that "the confrontational posture North Korea has exhibited in rejecting the repeated demands by the international community for transparency of its nuclear programme has turned into a considerable strategic burden on China."¹⁴¹ Pyongyang's choices have consistently had negative consequences for China.¹⁴² North Korea has shown little gratitude for Chinese hospitality, support and tolerance. Chinese aid that keeps the Kim Dynasty afloat is never publically acknowledged in North Korea and the Chinese sacrifice in the Korean

¹³⁹ Drew Thompson, "China's Perspective of Post-Cheonan Regional Security," Paper Presented at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies Symposium on "Post-Cheonan Regional Security," Center for US-Korea Policy and the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, (Seoul, South Korea, 2010), 1.

¹⁴⁰ Feng, n.p.

¹⁴¹ Chung, 1.

¹⁴² Feng, n.p.

War is excluded from the official accounts.¹⁴³ There is little doubt that without help from China, North Korea as a state is simply not viable.¹⁴⁴ However, the author proposes that the price China pays for maintaining a stable North Korea is outweighs the potential second and third order effects of a collapse scenario.

Buffer State

The first and perhaps most obvious advantage North Korea provides is a physical buffer state between the United States and China. Although tensions between the two countries have significantly cooled off in the past decade, memories of the United States' involvement in the Korean War have not vanished. Watching the Global War on Terror and the Iraq War, China has valid concerns with the Bush Doctrine. Since the United States did not seek multilateral engagement nor UN permission for invading Iraq there is always the likelihood, in Chinese opinion, that they could take similar action against North Korea.¹⁴⁵ The last thing China wants is another war in its backyard. Furthermore, China is already in competition with American influence in Asia. North Korea forces the United States to devote a considerable amount of military, diplomatic and political effort towards the Korean Peninsula while China can focus on expanding its influence.

The Looming Refugee Crisis

Another factor China has to fear is a potential looming refugee crisis should North Korea implode. China shares a 1500 km long border with the DPRK and as many as 300,000 North Korean refugees have sought refuge in China.¹⁴⁶ The *Juche* situation has

¹⁴³ Burton.

¹⁴⁴ William, Tobey, "Ignore North Korea, Offer Beijing a Choice," *Huffington Post Online edition*, 16 June, 2010, Available from www.huffingtonpost.com; Internet; Accessed 10 December, 2010, n.p.

¹⁴⁵ Chung, 20.

produced a number of economic and political illegal migrants along the border. An internal collapse could send hundreds of thousands across the border. Since China is a signatory to international conventions on the treatment of refugees, an influx of North Korean refugees would, by international law, be entitled in international scrutiny by organizations such as the UN and Red Cross. This also means that they would be entitled to better living conditions than their own population. Since China already faces intense international scrutiny over its human rights record, China does not need any more attention brought to its domestic problems.¹⁴⁷

Economic

Furthermore, a collapsed North Korea poses considerable risk to thirty years of Chinese economic expansion. A collapsed or destabilized North Korea would likely draw South Korea into the fray in some capacity or another which could upset Sino-South Korean trade. China enjoys profitable relations with the ROK. In 2004, China became South Korea's largest trading partner with \$79.3 billion USD in annual trade. China's trade with the ROK is almost 70 times greater than with the North.¹⁴⁸ To ensure its nuclear program remained intact, China would have to intervene in North Korea and a Chinese occupation of North Korea could provoke a deeper defensive alliance between China's other trading partners, the Americans and Japanese.

Political

¹⁴⁶ Scobell, "Comrades," 7.

¹⁴⁷ Ives, 31.

¹⁴⁸ Zhoa, 15.

Perhaps the biggest threat that North Korea poses to China is the loss of political face which is essential for China's quest for superpower status. John Ives remarks that China is paralyzed by its "fear of the consequences of action" against the North Korean Nuclear program. They could stand to lose face as a regional power if their attempts to force denuclearization are not successful. In terms of diplomatic efforts, "no result" and "bad result" scenarios have equally damaging effects on Chinese credibility. The ultimate bad result is regime collapse, while no result is a diplomatic slap in the face and can be perceived as weakness. How can China become great again if a small hermit kingdom can defy it?¹⁴⁹ Clearly, China has much at stake to lose if North Korea were to collapse.

Does Beijing Strategically Profit from *Juche*?

Whether China is the mighty dragon rising to fight or the panda joining the international community, the North Korean crisis is most decidedly advantageous to Beijing.

John Ives¹⁵⁰

However, is there merit in the possibility that China somehow profits from the instability caused by *Juche*? To some degree, it can be argued that a disruptive, but stable, North Korea benefits Beijing for a number of reasons.¹⁵¹ First, *Juche* puts China in a position where it can reinforce its own image as a regional peace broker and at the same time make the United States look like the aggressor. Because the American demands for denuclearization are not realistic, China's rhetorical urging of "dialogue" and "restraint" have seemed to work. After all, North Korea has never offered to concede its

¹⁴⁹ Scobell, "Comrades," 21.

¹⁵⁰ Ives, 71.

¹⁵¹ Ives, 49.

weapons but has engaged in talks with South Korea and has technically restrained itself by not waging all out warfare.

Furthermore, China could use the North Korean nuclear dilemma to gain leverage over its conflict with Taiwan. American regional concerns have shifted to Taiwanese sovereignty to North Korean nuclearization. Ives proposes that in the future China may be willing to flex more muscle in favour of supporting denuclearization if it could gain concessions on the American position over Taiwan.¹⁵²

Finally, perhaps the most lucrative venture that the Chinese gain from *Juche* is political leverage over the United States. By not taking a hard line stance against North Korea, China has forced the United States to make the hard decisions. American demands and sanctions against North Korea have repeatedly gotten nowhere closer to denuclearization and it makes the American policy approach appear ineffective. The Six Party Talks have also caused fissures in the ROK-US alliance. North Korea repeatedly demands bilateral talks with the United States however Americans could never hold bilateral talks without jeopardizing relations with South Korea.¹⁵³ In the end, China can remain at arm's length from the friction and increase its trade with South Korea.

Americans state that China loses its credibility as an international power when it does not act accordingly to North Korean defiance and aggression. However, China asserts its own independent approach to the North Korean issue as it must to be seen as an emerging regional superpower. It is highly likely that China may, to a degree, be deliberately withholding pressure to show the United States that it is pursuing its own foreign policy on its own terms. China has decided it will not have its diplomacy dictated

¹⁵² Ives, 50.

¹⁵³ Rozman, 146.

to it by the United States. Thus, although *Juche* is a thorn in the side to China's foreign policy, we have seen that there is perhaps some benefit the PRC is able to leverage from it.

CONCLUSION

The Chinese perspective on the *Juche* dilemma could best be summarized by two words: maintain stability. China's historic links with North Korea predispose it to be more naturally aligned with its neighbour than the United States. Through good and bad, China has always been a reliable underwriter for the Kim Dynasty. When China emerged from isolation and pursued a peaceful rise to power, regional stability dominated its approach to foreign policy just as much as economics. Although North Korea was never a profitable economic relationship for China, investing in its stability is a vital part of it.

Kim Jong-Il's nuclear ambitions and occasional aggression have been a persistent challenge for China since his rise to power in 1994. However, because the *Juche* philosophy causes so much internal decay of North Korean society, China is unwilling to risk the remotest possibility of regime collapse. Thus, for the foreseeable future, China will not put any undue pressure on Kim Jong-Il to change his ways. At this point, China is looking for the prevention, not the cure.

This chapter broadly touched upon how the Chinese approach to North Korea has caused friction with American foreign policy goals. The next chapter will in turn examine the American side of the coin in more detail.

CHAPTER 3
JUCHE AND AMERICA: THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR
PROLIFERATION IN A POST 9/11 WORLD

Although the prospect of North Korea possessing a nuclear arsenal is unsettling, the other component of the North Korean Nuclear program is the most troubling...What the United States cannot tolerate is North Korea becoming the global Wal-Mart of nuclear technology.

Ted Carpenter and Doug Bandow¹⁵⁴

The American people face no greater or more urgent danger than a terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon...Our efforts to contain these dangers are centered in a global non-proliferation regime that has frayed as more people and nations break the rules.

United States National Security Strategy, May 2010¹⁵⁵

INTRODUCTION

In viewing the *Juche* dilemma through American lenses, there is a reasonable concern that Kim Jong-Il has the potential to proliferate his nuclear technology abroad. Given that North Korea has had little respect for international norms in its *Juche* philosophy, America has a justifiable cause for concern. Whereas the Chinese value stability above all in their policy goals towards North Korea, the United States seeks one goal: the complete and verifiable dismantling of Kim Jong-Il's nuclear arsenal.

Juche type behaviour has caused the United States to view North Korea as a rogue state and treats it as such. Whereas China placates the North Korean regime with economic and political support, the United States applies the 'stick' in an attempt to force Kim Jong-Il to give up his nuclear weapons program. Naturally, this approach perpetuates Sino-American tensions over the North Korean dilemma. It also legitimizes

¹⁵⁴ Ted Galen Carpenter and Doug Bandow, *The Korean Conundrum: America's Troubled Relations with North and South Korea*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 96

¹⁵⁵ United States, *National Security Strategy 2010*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), Available from http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf, Internet; Accessed 26 December, 2010, 23.

Kim Jong-II's *Juche*-fuelled concerns of American intentions towards North Korea, thus creating a North Korean-American security dilemma.

This chapter will focus on how *Juche* has affected the American position on North Korea. The main argument of this chapter will be that the United States sees the DPRK as a security threat and a potential proliferator of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The chapter will begin by briefly exploring the long and troubled history between the two nations dating back to the division of the two Koreas in 1945. It will then explore the American foreign policy since North Korea announced its nuclear intentions in 1993. This will include an analysis of how both President Bill Clinton's Agreed Framework and the 'Bush Doctrine' of the George W. Bush administration have failed to achieve any progress in the nuclear deadlock. Next, the chapter will explain how the American 'stick' approach has fuelled a classic 'security dilemma' between North Korea and the United States. This, in turn, is perpetuating Kim Jong-II's *Juche* philosophy. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an analysis of how the 'stick' approach puts the United States at odds with China's 'carrot' approach.

HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS

The United States and North Korea have a long and troubled history of tension and conflict. From first contact in the 19th century to this day, the United States and North Korea have never engaged in peaceful or prosperous relations of significance. The first encounter between the two nations occurred in 1866 when the American schooner *General Sherman* sailed to Pyongyang. The expedition was supposed to open up Korea for trade with the West in a similar fashion to the Perry expedition to Tokyo in 1853.

The *General Sherman* was sunk by Koreans and five years later, the United States sent a punitive expedition in retaliation. Hundreds of Koreans were killed and although the United States won a military victory, the Koreans still refused to open up for trade. Eventually, the two countries signed a peace and commerce treaty in 1882. This treaty lasted until the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, which the Americans did not refute. This upset many Koreans as they felt betrayed by the lack of American protection.¹⁵⁶

American interest in Korea was revived with the end of the Second World War. After dividing the country, the Americans backed Syngman Rhee who frequently sabre rattled about forceful reunification of the two Koreas. The United States had a vested interest in preventing the spread of Communism that was sweeping through Asia at the time. The DPRK's embrace of communism put it on a path that the United States could never accept. Therefore, the Americans maintained a fairly sizeable military presence in South Korea which they maintain to this day. Naturally, the presence of such a sizeable force has fuelled the Kim Dynasty's fears of American hostility towards North Korea.

JUCHE THROUGH THE AMERICAN LOOKING GLASS- NORTH KOREA: A ROGUE STATE OUTSIDE THE NPT FOLD¹⁵⁷

Since the end of the Korean War and the rise of the *Juche* philosophy, North Korea and the United States have been practically ideological arch enemies. Simply put, *Juche* is everything that America does not stand for nor tolerate. The very existence of

¹⁵⁶ Lee, 14-5.

¹⁵⁷ Ralph C. Hassig, and Kongdan Oh, "North Korea: A Rogue State Outside the NPT Fold," *eJournal of America.gov*. Available from <http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2005/March/20080815121936XJyrreP9.679812e-02.html>, Internet; Accessed 22 March, 2011.

the North Korean political system is completely unfathomable. *Juche* is the polar opposite of freedom and democracy.

Since the concept of the *Juche* ideology is so far removed from what Americans value, one has to ask the question if American leaders and policy makers actually understand the dynamic that *Juche* has created. Do they understand *Juche* and ignore it because it is so unacceptable to them or do they simply not understand the rationality of the Kim Dynasty? Either way, what is interesting in this debate is that the word '*Juche*' itself does not even appear in any official United States foreign policy statements regarding North Korea.

Therefore, how does this ignorance of *Juche* impact perceptions and foreign policy towards North Korea? Essentially, the Americans view the Kim Dynasty as a 'rogue state' rather than a rational actor. In his master's thesis, Michael Ginty proposes that North Korea has labeled itself as a rogue state because it does not fit the internationally recognized norms of behaviour in its diplomacy with the outside world.¹⁵⁸ He also debates if North Korea is acting irrationally as a rogue actor or responding in kind to American pressure put upon it. Certainly, there is no other state in the world that has a philosophy that comes even close to *Juche*.

Perceptions Since 9/11- Fear of Proliferation

Just as North Korean policy operate within the rationality of their ideology, American policy makers are equally bounded by their own ideological beliefs. Internal politics, therefore, are as such a factor to the Americans as they are to North Korea. Since the 9/11 attacks, the American way of life was directly threatened for the first time in US history. The National Security Strategy (NSS) of September 2002 drastically

¹⁵⁸ Ginty, 1.

changed US foreign policy. American traditional concepts of containment and deterrence shifted to pre-emptive strikes and unilateralism.¹⁵⁹ The greatest fear to the United States is the use of a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) on American soil by a non-state actor. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, contemporary conflict has undergone a paradigm shift to non-state actors. This makes retaliation difficult because no one particular country can be easily targeted.

Since the North Korean nuclear program was announced in 1993, the United States has maintained a close watch on it. The nuclear program itself was not so much of a concern as was the North Korean threat to withdrawal from the NPT in 1993. This created the nightmare scenario that the United States feared most- the proliferation of nuclear technology. By even threatening to withdraw from the NPT, North Korea signaled to the Americans that it would consider exporting its nuclear technology. The concern only became even greater when ten years later, in 2003, they followed through with their threat and withdrew from the agreement.¹⁶⁰

There is much proof to back up this concern. In 2004, Libya surrendered two tons of processed uranium to the United States when it abandoned its nuclear program. The Americans were certain that they acquired this uranium from North Korea.¹⁶¹ An especially acute danger is that Pyongyang may proliferate its nuclear technology to al-

¹⁵⁹ Lee, 73.

¹⁶⁰ North Korea is the only state, nuclear or non-nuclear, to ever have withdrawn from the NPT. Major Ken Craig, "The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: Achieving International Security Through Diplomacy," *Canadian Military Journal* 8, no. 1, (Spring 2007), Available from <http://www.journal.dnd.ca/vo8/no1/craig-eng.asp>. Internet; Accessed 16 April, 2011, n.p.

¹⁶¹ Major Arnold W. Nash, "Intelligence Reform and Implications for North Korea's Weapons of Mass Destruction Program," (Master of Arts in National Security Affairs Thesis, United States Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 3.

Queda or other terrorist organizations. This is a nightmare scenario for a security heightened United States.

North Korea's track record on missile proliferation does not offer much encouragement either. In 2001, North Korea generated \$560 million in missile sales abroad.¹⁶² Although this figure seems comparatively low in the global arms market, the figure represents significant revenue for the cash starved country. Pyongyang is desperate for foreign hard currency and its nuclear technology offers a handsome export to many of America's non-nuclear adversaries who have been trying to acquire it for years. According to a recently leaked Wikileaks document, in 2007 the US government formally requested China to stop a shipment of ballistic missile parts from Pyongyang to Iran that passed through Beijing.¹⁶³ Furthermore, the *Juche* mentality has little respect for other nations telling it what it can or cannot sell and to whom.

Therefore, it is not so much the North Korean nuclear program itself *per se* that concerns the Americans but rather North Korea's potential to proliferate the technology. Given the perception of Kim Jong-Il as a 'rogue' actor through American eyes, the United States cannot accept North Korea as a nuclear power like China can.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS NORTH KOREA SINCE 1993

Americans tend to blame problems in US-DPRK relations on whomever happens to be in the oval office, thinking him either too hard or too soft on Pyongyang.

B.R. Meyers¹⁶⁴

The United States [has] created the worst possible negotiating dynamic.

Ted Carpenter and Doug Bandow¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Carpenter and Bandow, 97.

¹⁶³ Robert Haddick, "This Week at War: China's North Korean Folly," *Huffington Post Online Edition*, 10 December 2010, Available from www.huffingtonpost.com. Internet; Accessed 10 December, 2010.

¹⁶⁴ Meyers, 167.

Since 1993, 100% of American foreign policy efforts to North Korea have been aimed at denuclearization. The absence of the word *Juche* in American foreign policy is made up for by use of the word denuclearization. To concede any acceptance of a North Korean nuclear arsenal would be a diplomatic failure for the United States. Such capitulation would have the US lose face with other emerging nuclear powers such as Iran and make negotiations with them difficult, if not impossible.¹⁶⁶ This dynamic only intensified after 9/11.

Clinton's Appeasement- The Agreed Framework

The George H.W. Bush years marked a relatively passive era towards North Korea. In 1990-91 he drastically scaled back the massive joint 'Team Spirit' exercises with South Korea and withdrew all tactical nuclear weapons from the Peninsula.¹⁶⁷ Although tensions with North Korea were still existent, the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from the Peninsula was seen as a great leap forward in US-North Korean relations.

However, this nuclear *détente* came to an abrupt end with North Korea's 1993 announcement to withdraw from the NPT. With only three short months in office, President Clinton was faced with one of the world's most significant nuclear predicaments since the Cuban Missile Crisis. He dispatched former US President Jimmy

¹⁶⁵ Carpenter and Bandow, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Pritchard, 12.

¹⁶⁷ However, the US still maintains the submarine and bomber borne weapons, though, and is capable of hitting North Korea from the continental US. The North Koreans still view this as a threat and a justification for a long range missile program. Harrison, 6.

Carter to Pyongyang to engage in negotiations with Kim Il-Sung. The negotiations resulted in the Agreed Framework of 1994.

The Agreed Framework drew intense domestic political criticism against Clinton. Critics claimed that he was rewarding North Korea's rogue behaviour and that they were offering the carrot when they should have been offering the stick. Some often compared his diplomatic approach to that of Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler in 1938. Senator Bob Dole exclaimed that it was "always possible to get an agreement when you give enough away."¹⁶⁸ In all fairness to Clinton, the United States had never dealt with a nuclear power like the North Koreans before. The US hoped that disarmament talks with North Korea could be conducted along rational, logical lines as with Moscow.¹⁶⁹

However, Clinton's 'carrot' approach did not end with the Agreed Framework. He embarked on a further path that would only result in failure and frustration in dealing with North Korea's nuclear program. In 1998, North Korea test fired the Taepodong 1 medium range ballistic missile. Clinton condoned the testing but also offered to ease embargo restrictions on North Korea if they agreed to cease further testing and continue to work towards the Agreed Framework.¹⁷⁰

Although many Americans were quick to point fingers at North Korean disregard for the Agreed Framework, they failed to mention that America failed to follow through with its 1994 commitments.¹⁷¹ It took nearly three years to actually plan the design of the

¹⁶⁸ Carpenter and Bandow,, 47.

¹⁶⁹ Myers, 15.

¹⁷⁰ Lifting the Embargo had little effect. North Americans were reluctant to invest in North Korea anyways as they had little to offer. Furthermore, North Koreans lacked the hard foreign currency to import anything of use from the United States. Carpenter and Bandow, 52.

¹⁷¹ Carpenter and Bandow, 3.

light water reactors (LWR) and another two after that to sign contracts for construction. This meant that construction would not be completed until 2007.¹⁷² The North learned long ago that no positive steps would be forthcoming from America.

In 1998, Clinton appointed former Secretary of Defense William Perry as a special envoy on the North Korean issue. He conducted a nine month review on US policies. In his final report *US Policy Towards North Korea* he said that the US had no other option to diplomacy and negotiation other than war. It called for normalized diplomatic relations with North Korea once it gave up its nuclear program. It emphasised that the priority for dealing with North Korea would be ending its long range missile and nuclear programs.¹⁷³ Again, this only drew more criticism from those who felt he was not taking a hard enough approach to North Korea.

In June 2000, South Korean President Kim Dae-Jun and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il signed a historic document vowing to resolve their differences peacefully. Dubbed the "Sunshine Policy," Clinton expressed his support and Secretary of State Madeline Albright planned a visit to Pyongyang in October 2000. She was the highest level diplomat ever to visit North Korea. This was to pave a way for a US presidential visit to North Korea later that year.¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, this happened too late and Clinton was elected out of office before the visit took place. Despite efforts towards a peaceful and conciliatory approach to the North Korean nuclear dilemma, President Clinton was unable to draw the crisis any closer to resolution.

¹⁷² Carpenter and Bandow, 49.

¹⁷³ Dr. William J. Perry, *Review of United States Policy Toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), Available from http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eap/991012_northkorea_rpt.html, Internet; Accessed 16 April 2011.

¹⁷⁴ Carpenter and Bandow, 57.

The Bush Years- The Stick Approach

The American policy towards North Korea shifted remarkably from that of Bill Clinton with the election of George W. Bush in 2000. Bush's approach to North Korea has been characterized as ABC (anything but Clinton) as his administration took US foreign policy on a remarkably different path.¹⁷⁵

In the early Bush years, Secretary of State Colin Powell carried on with Clinton's efforts with the Agreed Framework and promoting the Sunshine Policy. However, in a frigid summit with Kim Dae-Jung in March 2001, President Bush distanced himself with his predecessor and referred to the Agreed Framework and the Sunshine Policy as "rewarding bad behaviour."¹⁷⁶ He later even publically announced that he loathed Kim Jong-Il. Bush's approach damaged his relations not only with the DPRK but with South Korea as well. Many South Koreans viewed the United States as a liability to the Sunshine Policy and a threat to the peace process and argued that their aggressive foreign policy towards North Korea poses a greater security threat to it than North Korea itself.¹⁷⁷

The 9/11 attacks only served to deepen the wound between the two countries. During his infamous 2002 State of the Union Address, Bush placed the DPRK in the 'Axis of Evil' with Iran and Iraq and proclaimed North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism. Relations worsened later that year when Assistant Secretary of State for Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly visited Pyongyang in October 2002. The intent of the visit was to repair worsening relations but had the complete opposite effect. Kelly publically

¹⁷⁵ L. Gordon Flake, "Domestic Determinants of US policy toward North Korea and Ramifications for Pyongyang," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae Park, 173-184, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 180.

¹⁷⁶ Flake, 180.

¹⁷⁷ Rozman, 146.

sought to uncover Pyongyang's deceptions of the Agreed Framework violations and demanded North Korean transparency.¹⁷⁸ This took the crisis to a whole new level. He proclaimed that Pyongyang had been enriching Uranium during the duration of the Agreed Framework. Rather than hide it, North Korea admitted it in justification to "the American hostile posture towards their country."¹⁷⁹ A year later in 2003, the DRPK pulled out of the NPT and America's worst fears were on the brink of realization.

Carpenter and Bandow argue that Bush's approach to North Korea was as a result of the post 9/11 environment where "war is, the logical outgrowth of the [Bush] administration's doctrine of preventative war, first used against Iraq." Bush also called North Korea a terrorist regime which is perhaps the most justifiable reason for attack in a post 9/11 world.¹⁸⁰

Naturally, the North Korean response to Bush's policy was hostile. In 2003, he declared that "all options are on the table" in dealing with North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT and resumed the Team Spirit annual exercises in the Yellow Sea. North Korea demanded bilateral talks with the United States, however, the Bush Administration refused to engage directly with North Korea until they had complied with "CVID" (complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantling) of their nuclear program.¹⁸¹

Thus, in the post 9/11 security fuelled environment, President Bush's North Korean policies were predicated on fears of nuclear proliferation and his approach was to treat the DPRK as a rogue state. Like his predecessor, Bush's hardline approach failed to

¹⁷⁸ Carpenter and Bandow, 26.

¹⁷⁹ Carpenter and Bandow, 59.

¹⁸⁰ Carpenter and Bandow, 29.

¹⁸¹ Hassig

bring the crisis any closer to resolution. The climax of American bungled diplomacy resulted in failure when North Korea pulled out of the NPT in 2003 and conducted a nuclear test in 2006.¹⁸² Clearly, the Bush approach to North Korea only served to further reinforce the *Juche*-fuelled paranoia of American aggression on the Peninsula.

Obama- Anything But Clinton and Bush?

The word 'again' seems to be used with alarming frequency in regard to [policy towards] North Korea.
L. Gordon Flake¹⁸³

There has been a pattern in the past where North Korea behaves in a belligerent fashion and if it waits long enough, it is rewarded. I think that is the pattern they have come to expect.

President Barak Obama¹⁸⁴

In 2009, President Barak Obama was left a rather messy start state for American-North Korean relations from his two predecessors. Clinton's appeasement and the Bush Doctrine had clearly failed to move the bar any further forward and China's protection of the Kim regime was not helping either. The Six Party Talks had also been called off after the 2006 nuclear test. President Obama was not in a good position.

After only four short months in office, the Obama administration was given an early wake up call to the realities of dealing with *Juche* when North Korea conducted a second long-range missile test in April 2009 and a another nuclear test in June.¹⁸⁵ The April 2009 missile test occurred only hours before Obama in a speech committed to promoting reduction of global nuclear weapon stocks worldwide.¹⁸⁶ A year later, he

¹⁸² Flake, 178.

¹⁸³ Flake, 177.

¹⁸⁴ Editorial, "Lee, Obama Warn Against North Korea," *The Korea Herald Online Edition*, 17 June, 2009, Available from <http://www.asianewsnet.net/home/news.php?sec=1&id=6337>, Internet; Accessed 16 April, 2011.

¹⁸⁵ Flake, 174.

¹⁸⁶ Prichard, 31.

would again be challenged by North Korean aggression with the *Cheonan* and Yeongpyong incidents.

Obama has indicated that he seeks to continue to work with China and sees that relationship as important. He has indicated that he wants to return to the Six Party Talks and has considered the idea of bilateral talks directly with North Korea. This is in contrast to Bush's refusal to "negotiate with terrorists."¹⁸⁷ However, the problem with moving ahead on the nuclear crisis with bilateral talks is that not all stakeholders' interests will be represented and they would undermine the Six Party alliance.

Yet despite these four major challenges/provocations from North Korea within his first year in office, the Obama administration struggles to develop a comprehensive North Korean policy. Obama has made it clear that there will be no repeat of the Agreed Framework on his watch and will "not pay for the same horse a third time to get North Korea to live up to the treaties and agreements it has [already] signed."¹⁸⁸ His administration is left with a legacy of approaches that have achieved nothing. In the eyes of the Obama administration, North Korea has crossed every line in the sand they have drawn.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, Obama is reluctant to draw any more lines and make his foreign policy a failure. In the meantime, Obama continues to maintain an aggressive military presence in the region and make bold statements about Kim Jong-Il as a threat to international nuclear security.

PERPETUATING THE SECURITY DILEMMA

¹⁸⁷ Flake, 175.

¹⁸⁸ Rozman, 147.

¹⁸⁹ Prichard, 8.

If Japan is Pyongyang's arch enemy, then the United States is its nemesis. Most experts agree that North Korea's expressions of fear of the US military power are real.

Rudiger Frank¹⁹⁰

Even paranoids have real enemies.

Henry Kissinger¹⁹¹

The only way to guard the nation's peace...is to have a strong deterrent against war.

KCNA¹⁹²

In light of American foreign policy towards North Korea, it can thus be argued that the Americans perpetuate the *Juche* philosophy similar to their Chinese counterparts. Whereas the Chinese prop up the Kim Dynasty with economic aid, the Americans fuel *Juche* with the fear that keeps it alive. The United States and North Korea have intertwined themselves in John Herz's classic model of the 'security dilemma.'

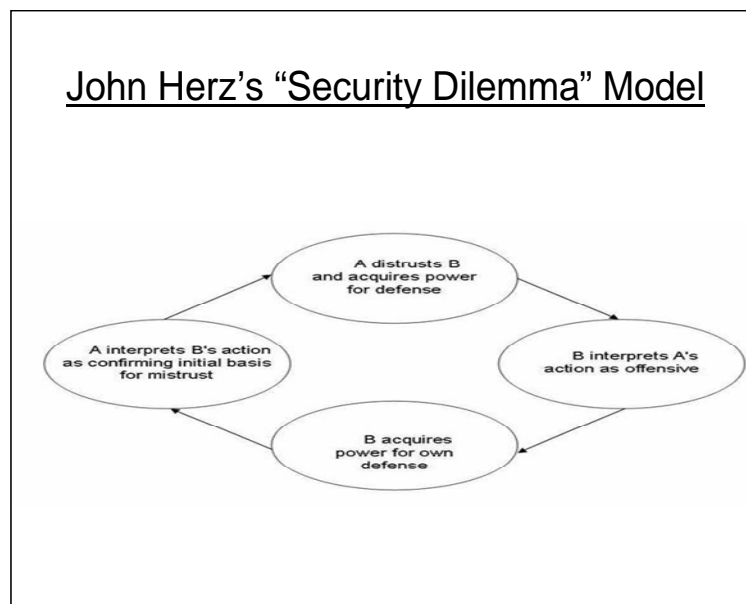


Figure 1.2: John Herz "Security Dilemma" Model.

Source: Pahlavi, "Introduction to Strategic and Security Studies," Lecture to JCSP 37 and Herz. "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma."

Thus, if the model was applied to the US-DPRK dynamic, it would resemble the diagram below.

¹⁹⁰ Frank, 27.

¹⁹¹ Carpenter and Bandow, 74

¹⁹² Meyers, 56.

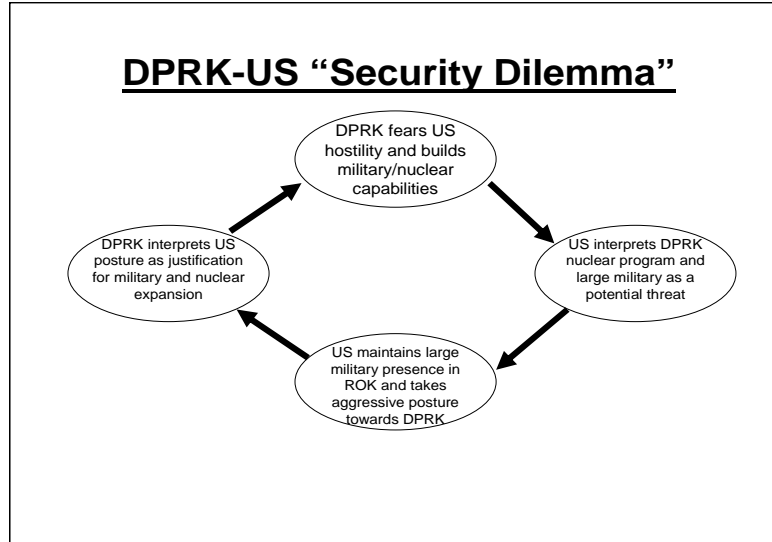


Figure 1.3: DPRK-US Security Dilemma.

The more pressure that the United States places on the DPRK, the more likely it is actually bolstering the regime's legitimacy and provoking aggression. Gordon Flake argues that if the United States isolates North Korea too much it could cause "the cornered rat to bite the cat."¹⁹³

Military Posturing

At the heart of the security dilemma is the American military posture on the Korean Peninsula. Since the end of the Korean War, the United States have maintained a massive military presence in South Korea and in Asia. American troops still occupy outposts along the border and in the event of war, South Korean forces would be placed under American operational control. Thus, North Korea still sees South Korea as a 'puppet state' under American military dominance. This is frequently broadcast in *Juche* propaganda. North Koreans only have to travel to their borders to see the massive American military machine poised at their doorstep.

¹⁹³ Flake, 183.

In the 1970s, the US began the annual Team Spirit series of joint manoeuvres with the ROK. These massive exercises saw rapid build up of American forces on the Peninsula. They practiced amphibious raids which invoked memories of the famed Inchon landings. According to former North Korean Diplomat Ko Young-hwan, Kim Jong-Il specifically uses the Team Spirit exercises to manipulate North Koreans' fears of an invasion.¹⁹⁴ This gives justification to maintaining his large conventional and nuclear forces and to his 'military-first' politics.

To add up the numbers, currently there are some 28,000 troops stationed in the ROK and another 40,000 in Japan. This is backed up by a substantial air component in Guam and a carrier battle group in the Yellow Sea on a regular basis.¹⁹⁵ Carpenter and Galen argue that the American garrison in the ROK is an impediment to resolving the nuclear issue and in fact even refer to the American forces as 'nuclear hostages.' They put Washington in the centre of the controversy in that DPRK's neighbours are looking to America to seek an answer. If they were not there, they argue, it would be more of a regional issue.¹⁹⁶ North Korea also possesses a large conventional threat to the region. It has the capacity to field over one million soldiers, 600 Scud missiles and can fire 3-500,000 shells a hour into Seoul which is only 40 miles from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).¹⁹⁷ The Teapodong II missile tested in 2009 has the range to potentially hit Hawaii and Alaska.¹⁹⁸ Thus, both countries maintain large forces in the area.

¹⁹⁴ These mock landings had a profound effect on North Korean propaganda. The famed Inchon landings in 1950 turned the tide of the war to the American side. Kim Il-Sung proclaimed that the Americans were rehearsing a repeat of the Korean War and North Korea must be always prepared to strike back. See Martin, 139.

¹⁹⁵ CNN "After North Korean Strike"

¹⁹⁶ Carpenter and Bandow, 5.

In 2003 the American press reported that invasion plans for North Korea were being developed as contingency planning. Operational Plans 5026 and 5027 called for massive deployment of US forces to the Korean peninsula. The plans also called for increased surveillance flights to force DPRK to scramble their aircraft and burn scarce fuel.¹⁹⁹ This increased presence forced Kim Jong-Il to maintain a high level of military readiness which its economy could not sustain. There is speculation that the North Korean nuclear program is in no small part motivated by Pyongyang's neorealist calculation of deterrence. North Korea believes that, according to *Juche* the United States is waiting to strike. They believe that the US is pursuing denuclearization so that they can then strike at a weakened North Korea.²⁰⁰

The US created the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in June 2003 after the first Six Party Talks ended in failure. This allowed the United States to interdict all North Korean Ships and Aircraft to prevent the sale, transport and spread of nuclear technology. Although it was officially directed at "all rogue states," it was aimed primarily at North Korea.²⁰¹ The North Koreans see the PSI as tightening a stranglehold on their economy.

The 2010 National Security Strategy

Bush's 2002 'axis of evil' speech confirmed, in Kim Jong-Il's mind, the American position on North Korea that his dynasty had been preaching since the 1950s. This

¹⁹⁷ Carpenter and Bandow, 91.

¹⁹⁸ Cha, 188.

¹⁹⁹ Carpenter and Bandow, 64.

²⁰⁰ Frank, 27.

²⁰¹ Carpenter and Bandow, 64.

confirmed the *Juche* belief of mistrust of outside intentions and further justified the 'military first' politics established in 1998. North Korea had, after all, been staring down the barrel of American nuclear weapons for decades.²⁰² But by early 2003 the situation was very dangerous. Bush said "all options are on the table" and both China and North Korea considered that this could mean a pretext for an invasion of the DPRK. After all, they had just invaded Iraq.²⁰³ As Karen Elliot House from the *Wall Street Journal* notes "the lesson Kim Jong-II almost surely has deduced from the [war] with Iraq is that all that stands between his fate and Saddam's is his credible confession that he has a nuclear capability and a credible fear abroad that he might use it."²⁰⁴

Although the Obama administration has yet to devise a comprehensive North Korea policy, sections of the 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) seem to be directly aimed at the DPRK without explicitly stating so:

As long as any nuclear weapons exist, the United States will sustain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal, both to deter potential adversaries and to assure US allies and other security partners that they can count on America's security commitments.²⁰⁵

This statement can easily be interpreted to the Korean Peninsula dynamic. Furthermore, the NSS takes specific aim at North Korea's withdraw from the NPT.

...we will also pursue meaningful consequences for countries that fail to meet their obligations under the NPT or to meet the requirements for withdrawing from it...if North Korea eliminates its nuclear weapons program...they will be able to proceed on a path to greater political and economic integration with the international community. If they ignore their international obligations, we will pursue multiple means to increase

²⁰² Martin, 665.

²⁰³ Kang, 120.

²⁰⁴ Carpenter and Bandow, 73.

²⁰⁵ United States, *National Security Strategy*, 23-4.

their isolation and bring them into compliance with international non-proliferation norms.²⁰⁶

Thus, it is clear that the United States has promised further isolation and provocation against North Korea's nuclear program.

The American Track Record in the Eyes of North Korea

From a North Korean Point of view, the United States became the uncontested hegemon of the world since the end of the Cold War. The United States has an "extraordinary record of global belligerence" in that since the end of the Cold War, it has:

- Toppled Manuel Noriega in Panama
- Deployed forces to Somalia
- Bombed the Bosnian Serbs into accepting a peace accord
- Forced the Haitian President out of office (twice)
- Bombed Serbia into submission over the Kosovo invasion
- Launched cruise missiles on Sudan and Afghanistan
- Invaded Afghanistan and installed Hamid Karzai
- Invaded Iraq (twice) and forcibly removed Saddam Hussein
- Bombarded military targets and enforced a no-fly zone over Libya²⁰⁷

In addition to these rather drastic events, the American military is virtually omnipresent across the globe. Thus is it any surprise that the Kim Dynasty has been so easily been able to sell anti-American propaganda to its masses?

UPSETTING THE CHINESE- THE US VIEW ON CHINA

Washington and China may sit at the same table in the Six Party Talks but they are playing different games.
John Ives²⁰⁸

It takes a village to raise a child.

Hillary Clinton²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ United States, *National Security Strategy*, 23-4.

²⁰⁷ Carpenter and Bandow, 73.

²⁰⁸ Ives, 9.

²⁰⁹ Flake, 184.

Clearly, the American government is challenged by the *Juche* dynamic in dealing with North Korea. However, it views the *Juche* dilemma as an international and regional problem in which China plays a vital role. Washington sees China as a part of the problem, not part of the solution. American diplomats, policy makers and presidents have frequently lashed out their frustration on China's appeasement of Kim Jong-Il as counterproductive to denuclearization efforts.

America's main issue with the Chinese is that, in their view, China does not use its influence over North Korea to curb its nuclear intentions and aggression. The Chinese do not view the North Korean problem as a nuclear one. In fact, the United States is the only country actively and desperately seeking denuclearization in the Six Party Talks as its main agenda.²¹⁰ American officials expect China to exert its full diplomatic weight into resolving the nuclear crisis and sees it as an impediment to progress. But China has repeatedly insisted that the United States enter direct negotiations with North Korea without preconditions and engage in open talks.²¹¹ Currently, there is no vessel for dialogue between the United States and North Korea directly because of the Six Party Talk dynamic.

Since the Chinese see North Korea as a threat to 'China Rising,' the United States attacks Chinese credibility as a rising global power. Americans argue that with becoming an international superpower, comes international responsibility. The Americans argue that if China wants to become a superpower, then it will have to put its "international

²¹⁰ Although denuclearization is the main effort of the talks, it is not the only item on the agenda. South Korea uses the forum to push for reunifying families on both sides of the border and the Japanese also seek the return of its kidnapped personnel. For more details on the national agendas of Six Party Talk nations, see Pritchard, 4.

²¹¹ Carpenter and Bandow, 82.

responsibilities and duties" above those of marinating the Pyongyang regime.²¹² The Chinese frequently water down the effects of UN imposed sanctions which they played a part in drafting and passing, which the United States says destroys their credibility as a permanent member of the Security Council. However, the United States has to be somewhat cautious in their approach as to not force China into using its veto power against resolutions targeted at North Korea.

US Reaction to the *Cheonan* and Yeongpyong Incidents

The *Cheonan* and Yeongpyong incidents tested Sino-American relations by virtue of their vastly different reactions to the situation. Americans were frustrated by China's reaction to the *Cheonan* incident. At the G8 Summit in June 2010, President Obama said "there is a difference between restraint and wilful blindness" towards the incident. He also stated that the United States was not going to be able to have serious negotiations with the North Koreans if China failed deal resolutely with the incident.²¹³ The Americans had hoped that the *Cheonan* incident would have brought China more on board with containing North Korea but instead the Chinese reaffirmed their commitment to the Kim Dynasty.²¹⁴

In response to the *Cheonan* incident, the United States reaffirmed its defensive alliance with South Korea and flexed its military might. They conducted a joint exercise, 'Invincible Spirit,' with South Korea in the Yellow Sea a few weeks following the sinking of the *Cheonan*. A State Department press release said that the exercise wa60s designed

²¹² Anderson, n.p.

²¹³ Revere, 5.

²¹⁴ Ralph A. Cossa, "Post-Cheonan Regional Security: Where are we now? - A US Perspective," Paper Presented at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies Symposium on "Post-Cheonan Regional Security," Center for US-Korea Policy and the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, (Seoul, South Korea, 2010), 5.

to "send a strong, clear message to North Korea in response to the sinking of the *Cheonan*" and was "designed to send a clear message to North Korea that its aggressive behaviour must stop, and that we are committed to together enhancing our combined defensive capabilities."²¹⁵ Since part of the exercise took place in the Yellow Sea, Beijing was not impressed and some Chinese officials felt it was partially designed as a show of force to China over their reaction to the incident.²¹⁶

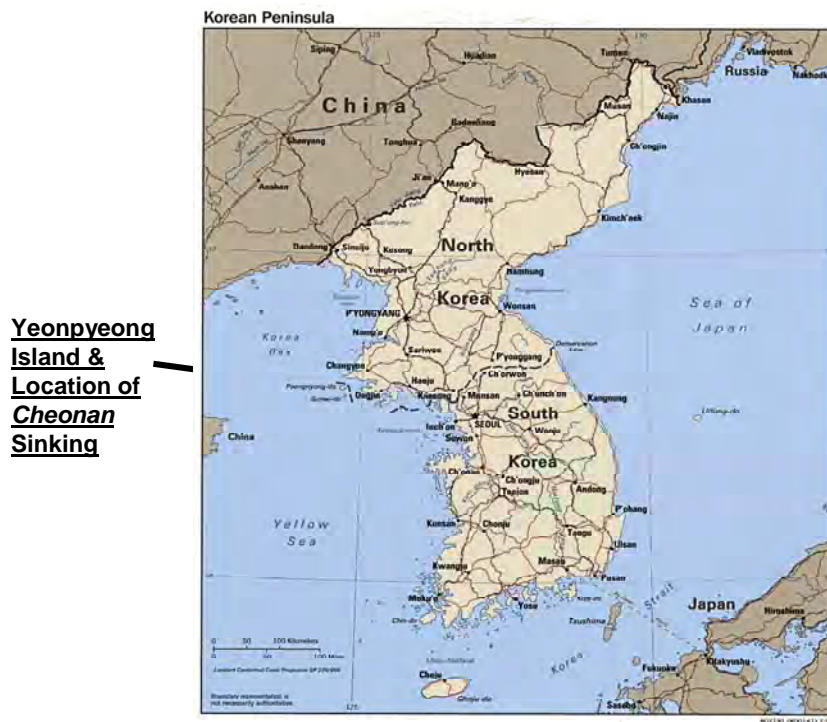


Figure 1.4: Map of the Korean Peninsula. ²¹⁷ (<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/55a/130.html>)

The American reaction to the Yeongpyong incident was strikingly similar to that of the *Cheonan*. They dispatched the nuclear aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* to

²¹⁵ Jim Garamone, "U.S.-Korean Defense Leaders Announce Exercise Invincible Spirit," *American Forces Press Service*, 20 July 2010, Available from <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=60074>, Internet; Accessed 3 April, 2011, n.p.

²¹⁶ Revere, 3.

the Yellow Sea for military exercises on 28 November, just four days after the artillery strike. Pyongyang stated that the proposed US-ROK exercise was putting the Korean Peninsula in a state of "ultra-emergency."²¹⁸ The combined military exercise was, according to the White House press release, to show "the close security cooperation between [the US and ROK] and to underscore the strength of the alliance and commitment to peace and security in the region."²¹⁹ China was again upset by this provocative show of force and urged all parties to show restraint.

Through American lenses, Kim Jong-Il showed a willingness on North Korea's part to actively engage in provocation not only with South Korea but with the United States as well. Kim Jong-Il is fully aware that any hostilities directed at his southern neighbour will automatically draw the United States into the conflict. The Chinese response, or in the American opinion, the lack of an appropriate one, fuels the tension in the region which further reinforces and legitimizes the *Juche* philosophy.

The American decision to continue to exercise its military on North Korea's west coast rather than the east coast is seen as provocative to China.²²⁰ This places US and ROK forces close to Chinese territorial waters which is seen as a threat to their shipping lanes. In response, China is undergoing a modernization of their military and naval fleets. This has the potential to fuel a Sino-American security dilemma in the Yellow Sea. The Chinese media portray the increased military presence as a move to

²¹⁸ CBC News, "China Calls for Korea Talks Next Month," *CBC News Online Edition*, 28 November, 2010, Available from <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2010/11/28/koreas/html>, Internet; Accessed 28 November, 2010.

²¹⁹ CNN, "After North Korean Strike"

²²⁰ Thompson, 3.

intentionally humiliate the Chinese people and keep them in check.²²¹ This makes a mockery of their peaceful rise to power.

CONCLUSION

We've learned over and over again...that when you apply pressure on North Korea, you get a bad response...so whatever you think about the justice of applying more sanctions...there's no reason to believe that pressure will produce anything but more negative results.

Selig Harrison²²²

Clearly, the American approach to the *Juche* dilemma is drastically different from that of China. Historically, relations between the United States and North Korea have never been smooth.²²³ The rift between the two nations only deepened in the mid 1990s when Kim Il-Sung died and his son threatened to pull out of the NPT. Since then, denuclearization has dominated the American agenda towards North Korea.

However, the United States has never had a successful track record in pushing North Korea closer to denuclearization. Clinton's Agreed Framework was an abysmal failure and George W. Bush's administration served only to provoke Kim Jong-Il into lashing out against the United States even harder. The climax of the diplomatic failure finally came to fruition in two phases, first with the DPRK withdrawal from the NPT in 2003 and then with the successful nuclear test in 2006.

President Obama has been left with a legacy of failed policies towards North Korea which is perhaps why he is reluctant to pen any new foreign policy. His reactive

²²¹ Heungkyu Kim, "Post-Cheonan Regional Security: Where are we now? (PRC Perspective)," Paper Presented at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies Symposium on "Post-Cheonan Regional Security," Center for US-Korea Policy and the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, (Seoul, South Korea, 2010), 7.

²²² Harrison, 14.

²²³ Carpenter and Bandow, 10.

approach to North Korea has already been put to the test twice in his administration with the *Cheonan* and Yeongpyong incidents.

The United States' aggressive posture towards North Korea fuels *Juche* with the fear it needs to maintain its legitimacy and has spiraled them into a classic 'security dilemma' situation. Furthermore, their aggressive military and diplomatic posturing have also put them at odds with China. The American approach towards North Korea is to deal with the symptoms (nuclearization) rather than the cause. The United States is inseparably involved in the *Juche* dilemma and the world is now looking to the United States for answers which it cannot provide.²²⁴

²²⁴ Carpenter and Bandow, 2.

CONCLUSION LOOKING AHEAD INTO A BLEAK FUTURE

I have read the *New York Times* daily for forty years and never have I seen a serious investigative article on the origin, background and nature of the North Korean Regime...a psychiatrist must know intimately the background and experience of a patient if there is any hope of a healing mind.

Bruce Cumings²²⁵

CONCLUSION

If outside observers knew the North Korean ideology better, they would understand that it is not as irrational as all that.

B.R. Myers²²⁶

Zeev Sternhell says that an ideology is "a conceptual frame of reference which provides criteria for choice and decision by virtue of which the major activities of an organized community are governed."²²⁷ The Kim Dynasty's *Juche* ideology has warranted the disapproval of much of the world, including its last remaining friend, China.²²⁸ This paper proposed that the *Juche* ideology is a major source of tension between China and the United States. The essence of *Juche* is isolationism and self-reliance.²²⁹ North Korea projects itself in the world under the bounded rationalism of *Juche* which is often misinterpreted, misunderstood or outright ignored by those who are forced to interact with it. B.R. Meyers contends that the *Juche* ideology has defined who and what the DRPK are make perfect sense to them but no one else. Heavily influenced

²²⁵ Bruce Cumings, "Rapprochement in Postwar history: Implications for North Korea," In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by Kyung-Ae 62, 205-222, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 220.

²²⁶ Myers, 165

²²⁷ Meyers, 16.

²²⁸ Ginty, 4.

²²⁹ Ginty, 9.

by the Confucian tradition and scarred by frequent foreign invasion, *Juche* morphed into a form of hyper-isolationism and self reliance which has been passed on through the Kim generations. Naturally, this form of isolationism has not boded well for North Korea's economy and the country has plunged into economic despair. Despite natural disaster and economic hardship, the Kim Dynasty has managed to hold on to power because of *Juche*. By shutting out the outside world and creating fear of foreign invasion, Kim Il-Sung and his son have managed to hold steadfast their grip on power. Kim Jong-Il's nuclear program has only further complicated this dynamic. He uses it to gain concessions from China and maintain tension with the United States. This, in effect, legitimizes the *Juche* philosophy. Kim Jong-Il is well aware of the Sino-US rift and will likely continue to exploit it.²³⁰

China has a vested interest in maintaining the current status quo within North Korea. Although certainly not a desirable arrangement by any means, China feels better off with the 'devil they know' rather than risk a North Korean regime collapse. The China Rising phenomenon is based on regional stability, multilateralism, and peaceful economic expansion. Clearly a nuclear-armed North Korea poses much potential to threaten everything China has achieved in the past three decades. Thus, it is in China's best interests, even at the expense of upsetting the United States, to maintain regional stability. China is likely to continue on its path of appeasement of the North Korean regime unless there is a guarantee that a different approach will bring any better result.

Naturally, China's approach to dealing with North Korea puts it at divergence with American policy goals. The United States has known nothing but conflict and tension with the DPRK since the division of the two Koreas it imposed in 1945.

²³⁰ Rozman, 149.

However, it was not until 1993 that the United States looked at North Korea as a serious threat to world peace. When Kim Jong-Il threatened to withdraw from the NPT in 1993, American foreign policy towards the DPRK became entirely focused on denuclearization. Despite Clinton's Agreed Framework and Bush's hard line approach, North Korea continued with their nuclear program. President Obama was handed over nearly two decades of failed policy approach and continues to struggle, or simply refuses to develop an effective means of curtailing North Korea's nuclear program.

Ironically, the *Juche* ideology of self-reliance and isolationism has created a unique frictional dynamic between the world's two remaining superpowers. While the Kim Dynasty has managed complete internal stability, it has in essence exported instability to the region. The tension on the Korean peninsula is less about the two Koreas themselves but rather about how China and the United States approach the *Juche* dilemma. Both countries are equal stakeholders in the conundrum and ultimately, any interaction with North Korea without an understanding or acknowledgement of the *Juche* philosophy is doomed for failure.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Kim Jong-un: Reformer or Conformer?

The future of *Juche* is looking good for the Kim Dynasty. Since the early 1950s, it has been the only political ideology allowed in North Korea and is so deeply ingrained in the society, military and political structure it is not likely to be replaced anytime soon. Since the Kim Dynasty has such a tight grip on its people, North Korea has virtually no internal dissent nor any form of political opposition. *Juche* was able to endure the transition from its founder to Kim Jong-Il mainly because of a long and deliberate power

transition. Kim Jong-Il was named as Secretary of the Military committee in 1980 and thus had fourteen years of political and ideological mentorship when he took power in 1994. However, what will the next power transition look like?

Just as the world watched Kim Il-Sung's death in 1994 and wondered what would happen with North Korea's fragile nuclear program, a similar shockwave was sent through the world in 2008. On 8 September of that year, Kim Jong-Il failed to show up for North Korea's 60th anniversary parade because he had suffered a stroke.²³¹ Virtually nothing was known about the North Korean succession plan until this point as no public acknowledgement was ever made. Kim Jong-Il's failing health had the potential to explode into a worst-case scenario. The DPRK had withdrawn from the NPT, had test fired long-range ballistic missiles and had conducted a nuclear test and was then on the brink of losing its leader. The world was uncertain what the fate of North Korea would be if Kim Jong-Il suddenly died.

It was not until late September 2010 when the Kim Dynasty's next leader was made officially known. Kim Jong-Il's youngest son, Kim Jong-un, was formally announced as the new Vice Chairman of the Military Commission of the KWP, meaning he would be next in line to take leadership of the country.²³² Little is known about Kim Jong-un except that he is relatively young (28 years old), studied abroad and has little to no experience in politics or the military. Nonetheless, his father appointed him as the equivalent of a four star general in charge of the world's fourth largest army. What worries diplomats is that given Kim Jong-Il's seemingly failing health, the young and

²³¹ Meyers, 63.

²³² Kim Jong-Il's oldest son, Kim Jong-nam was ruled out as the successor after repeated follies abroad. His lavish travel has embarrassed his father. This came to a climax in 2001 when he was detained in Japan travelling under a falsified Thai passport. See Martin, 696.

inexperienced Kim Jong-un could suddenly be thrust into leadership of the country.

Any hopes of Kim Jong-un being a nuclear reformer are unlikely. As an inexperienced politician, it is highly likely that the political and military elite of the inner circle of the KWP would run the country on his behalf. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect North Korea to abandon its *Juche* philosophy in the near future. China has apparently given the stamp of approval for the succession to Kim Jong-un.²³³ However, the Obama administration remains mum on the subject.

Whereas Kim Jong-Il had fourteen years of political mentorship, his son may not have the same luxury. Nonetheless, given the recent *Cheonan* and Yeongpyong incidents, his son has learned much in North Korean-style political behaviour. Could both incidents have been in part 'scripted' for Kim Jong-un to gain experience? Certainly, the model fits the North Korean *Juche* behaviour. In both incidents, the United States responded by conducting massive wargames. Peter Beck from the Council on Foreign Relations argues that the provocation was an effort to rally the public around the regime and bring attention to the new leadership. Could this have been a litmus test for Kim Jong-un?²³⁴

The bottom line is that in its 63 year existence, North Korea has only known two leaders, both from the same ruling family, and it appears that the lineage will continue. Undoubtedly, both China and the United States will watch the succession closely and will continue to pursue their same agendas with renewed energy.

²³³ Godement, n.p.

²³⁴ Beck,, 1.

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